

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Discipline)
)
of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Leah Harper Waters)
)
Certificate 252125)

**CONSENT ORDER OF
PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 14, 2017. On January 26, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Leah Harper Waters notice that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding the possible disciplinary action against her educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. On January 31, 2017, after receiving the notice, Ms. Waters contacted the SCDE concerning this matter. Her attorney has informed SCDE that Ms. Waters has agreed to waive her right to a hearing and accept a public reprimand. After considering the information presented by the SCDE, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Waters holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over six years of teaching experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Ms. Waters has been employed by Charleston County School District (District) as a special education teacher at Burke High School (School). On September 23, 2016, the District placed Ms. Waters on administrative leave following allegations that she allowed two students to drive her car to get food, knowing that the student driver had no driver's license. Ms. Waters admitted that she allowed the students to drive her car in violation of District policy. No criminal charges are pending in this matter. Ms. Waters regrets her error in judgment and agrees to abide by District policy in the future.

Ms. Waters acknowledges that she engaged in unprofessional conduct by allowing an unlicensed student drive her car and leave the School campus with another student, an action in violation of District policy. She waives her right to a hearing and understands that the terms set forth are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or

Leah
Harper
Waters
252125



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Date

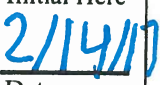
judicial review. Ms. Waters consents to the public reprimand, subject to the following terms: (1) a Public Reprimand shall be issued by the State Board, (2) Ms. Waters shall enroll in a SCDE approved class in maintaining professional boundaries within six months of this order, (3) the Public Reprimand shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order, and (4) the Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's website and shall be maintained as a public record in the SCDE's Office of General Counsel. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand with the terms set forth above.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (Rev. 2004); The State Board may, for just cause, issue a public reprimand. 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2011). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-2-160 (Rev. 2004). The State Board finds that the evidence presented supports its conclusion that just cause does not exist to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of Leah Harper Waters and that the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. Waters by the State Board is an appropriate sanction in this matter. The State Board finds that the record outlined above demonstrates that Ms. Waters engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of her violation of District policy in allowing an unlicensed student to drive her car and leave the School campus with another student.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the Consent Order of Public Reprimand is accepted and a public reprimand is issued to Leah Harper Waters, certificate 252125. The public reprimand of Ms. Waters, certificate 252125 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

Leah Harper Waters 252125

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Date

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

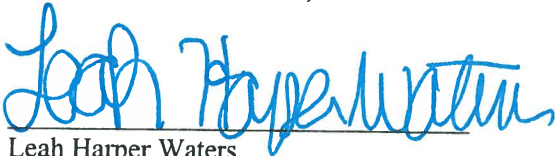


Ivan Randolph, Ph.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

March 14, 2017

I, Leah Harper Waters, S.C. Educator Certificate 252125, understand there has been an investigation concerning alleged violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of educator certificate holders and that I have waived my right to a hearing in this matter. I understand that the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Public Reprimand are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I have read the Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of three pages, and I freely and voluntarily agree to the terms set forth therein. I understand that this Order will be presented as signed to the South Carolina State Board of Education on March 14, 2017.



Leah Harper Waters

2/14/17
Date