

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of Disciplinary Action)
)
of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Candace McGuinness,)
)
Certificate 204099)
_____)

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered the matter on November 14, 2017. On September 1, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Candace McGuinness a notice letter informing her that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding the possible disciplinary action of her educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, delivery restricted to addressee. Ms. McGuinness received the notice on September 14, 2017, as evidenced by the signed postal receipt. She has not responded or requested a hearing in this matter and is in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. McGuinness' educator certificate for a period of two calendar years, commencing on November 14, 2017, and ending on November 13, 2019.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. McGuinness holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over eighteen years of teaching experience. Richland County School District One (District) employed Ms. McGuinness as a science teacher at Crayton Middle School (School). Ms. McGuinness was placed on administrative leave on September 28, 2016, after allegations arose that she appeared to be intoxicated while on duty and was acting inappropriately in front of students.

Ms. McGuinness had been employed by the District for several years before the incident on September 28, 2016. Students reported that Ms. McGuinness had been acting oddly during her first period class. They noted that she erased a lesson from the board and then began crying over a perceived slight. Ms. McGuinness then blamed the students for erasing the work on the board. She also became angry at the students for having their laptops on their desks and began shutting the laptops by slamming the laptop covers. Several students noted Ms. McGuinness had

asked them to take out their computers. She then began admonishing the class, using profane language.

School administration was summoned to Ms. McGuinness' classroom. Other staff members were requested to supervise the students and help escort Ms. McGuinness from the school. In their statements, staff members asserted Ms. McGuinness appeared to be under the influence of something. After it was determined that Ms. McGuinness could not be allowed to drive herself home, the School's resource officer convinced Ms. McGuinness to call her husband to drive her home. Similar concerns of Ms. McGuinness' behavior have been dealt with by the District in the past.

On October 14, 2016, the District informed the SCDE of Ms. McGuinness' administrative leave and the allegations against her. The District did not offer her a contract for the 2017-2018 school year. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. McGuinness' educator certificate for a period of two calendar years, commencing on November 14, 2017, and ending on November 13, 2019.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2016); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. McGuinness engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of her inappropriate and unprofessional conduct towards and in the presence of students and coworkers during her employment with the District. Accordingly, the evidence presented supports the State Board's determination that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Candace McGuinness, Educator Certificate 204099, for a period of two calendar years, commencing on November 14, 2017, and ending on November 13, 2019.

If Ms. McGuinness wishes to have her educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services and shall meet all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement. Ms. McGuinness shall also be responsible for the payment of the applicable reinstatement fee. The suspension of Ms. McGuinness' Educator Certificate 204099 shall be reported to the NASDTEC

Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: _____


Ivan Randolph, Ph.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
November 14, 2017