

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the	)	
	)	
Educator Certificate of	)	CONSENT ORDER OF
	)	SUSPENSION
Dennis B. Cooke	)	
	)	
<u>Educator Certificate 265506</u>	)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on September 12, 2017. On June 29, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice via regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, to Dennis B. Cooke concerning the pending action against his educator certificate 265506. After Mr. Cooke received the notice, he contacted the SCDE to request a hearing. Prior to the scheduling of a hearing in this matter, Mr. Cooke agreed to waive his right to a hearing and enter into this Consent Order of Suspension of his educator certificate 265506 for a period of one year. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension of Mr. Cooke's educator certificate for a period of one year commencing on September 12, 2017, and ending on September 11, 2018.

Dennis B. Cooke 265506
Initial <u>DC</u>
Date <u>8-18-17</u>

FINDINGS OF FACT

Dennis B. Cooke holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. Mr. Cooke has over twelve years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board.

Mr. Cooke was employed by the Anderson County School District Five (District) as a resource teacher at Lakeside Middle School of Inquiry and Innovation (School). During the 2016-2017 school year, Mr. Cooke was often absent due to various health issues. In meetings discussing his absences, Mr. Cooke confessed to falsifying signatures on student IEPs. The District accepted Mr. Cooke's resignation, effective April 5, 2017. On May 3, 2017, the District reported Mr. Cooke's unprofessional conduct to the SCDE.

Mr. Cooke has agreed to waive his right to a hearing and to resolve this disciplinary matter by entering into an alternate resolution to the action against his educator certificate. Mr. Cooke agreed that his educator's certificate will be suspended

for a period of one year. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension 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. 2016); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2016). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Mr. Cooke engaged in unprofessional conduct by falsifying signatures on student IEPs. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Mr. Cooke's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on September 12, 2017, and ending on September 11, 2018.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Dennis B. Cooke, certificate 265506, is suspended for a period of one year commencing on September 12, 2017, and ending on September 11, 2018.

If Mr. Cooke wishes to have his certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Mr. Cooke shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Mr. Cooke's educator certificate 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
September 12, 2017

Dennis B.
Cooke
265506

Initial

Date

Dennis B. Cooke, Certificate 265506
Consent Order of Suspension
September 12, 2017
Page 3

I, Dennis B. Cooke, SC Educator Certificate 265506, 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 the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Suspension are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I agree to the terms of this Consent Order of Suspension, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the State Board for approval on September 12, 2017.



Dennis B. Cooke

8-18-17
Date