

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation or)
Suspension of the Educator Certificate of)
Elizabeth Heaton Taylor,)
Educator Certificate 275227)
_____)

ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The Chair of the South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on February 20, 2018. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2016), § 59-5-10 (2016), and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) requested that the Chair of the State Board summarily suspend the educator certificate of Elizabeth Heaton Taylor, educator certificate 275227, as a result of the pending criminal charges against her. Ms. Taylor has been charged with two felony counts of Sexual battery with a student 16 or 17 years of age, S.C. Code Ann. §16-3-755(A) (2017) and one misdemeanor count of Giving false information to law enforcement, fire dept., or rescue dept., S.C. Code Ann. §16-17-725(B) (2017). The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Taylor may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students, who may be under her instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Taylor's educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Taylor of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Taylor holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has over two years of teaching experience. Ms. Taylor was employed by Greenville County School District (District). She served as a Biology teacher and track coach at Greer High School (School) during the 2017-218 school year. Ms. Taylor resigned from the District on February 16, 2018.

On February 16, 2018, the Greenville County Sheriff's Office charged Ms. Taylor with two felony counts of Sexual battery with a student 16 or 17 years of age, S.C. Code Ann. §16-3-755 (2017) and one misdemeanor count of Giving false information to law enforcement, fire dept., or rescue dept., S.C. Code Ann. §16-17-725 (2017). It is alleged Ms. Taylor engaged in inappropriate actions of a sexual nature with a male student. Ms. Taylor was discovered in a car with the student by a police officer during a property check of a business parking lot. When the officer asked for her identification, Ms. Taylor gave the officer an incorrect name. When the officer could not find her information, Mr. Taylor admitted to the lie and provided the officer with her real name. The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Ms. Taylor may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students who may be under her instruction, and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Taylor's educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Taylor of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

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 (2016). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, dishonesty, immorality, any conduct involving moral turpitude, crime against the law of this State, and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2016). In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2016), "If the agency finds that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action, and incorporates a finding to that effect in its order, summary suspension of a license may be ordered pending proceedings for revocation or other action." Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann § 59-5-10 (2016) and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the Chair of the State Board finds that as a result of the allegations of Ms. Taylor's unprofessional conduct, dishonesty, immorality, conduct involving moral turpitude, evident unfitness for position for which employed, her arrest for sexual battery with a student and giving false information to law enforcement, there is reason to believe Ms. Taylor may pose a threat to

the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required. Accordingly, the educator certificate of Elizabeth Heaton Taylor, educator certificate 275227, is summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Taylor of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: Sharon Wall

Sharon Wall, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
February 20, 2018