

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation)
)
of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Lewis Lee Dawson II,)
)
Certificate 238831)
_____)

ORDER OF REVOCATION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on June 12, 2018. On June 28, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) received a reporting letter alleging that Mr. Dawson engaged in a sexual relationship with a female student. The SCDE sent an initial notice letter to Mr. Dawson on September 22, 2017, regarding the possible suspension or revocation of his South Carolina Educator Certificate by the State Board. On March 29, 2018, the South Carolina Department of Education sent Mr. Dawson a notice letter via regular and certified mail of his right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of his South Carolina educator certificate. The SCDE has verified Mr. Dawson's address and the letter sent via regular mail has not been returned. On April 26, 2018, the SCDE informed Mr. Dawson via regular and certified mail that the State Board would meet on June 12, 2018, to consider the circumstances surrounding his unprofessional conduct. Mr. Dawson declined to sign for the certified mail and the letter sent regular mail has not been returned. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Mr. Dawson has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. Mr. Dawson did not request a hearing and is in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to revoke Mr. Dawson's educator certificate 238831, effective June 12, 2018.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Dawson currently holds a valid South Carolina educator certificate and has nine years of teaching experience. Mr. Dawson was employed with the Charleston County School District (District) and assigned to West Ashley High School (School). The District placed Mr. Dawson on administrative leave on March 10, 2017, while the District investigated an allegation of Mr. Dawson's inappropriate sexual conduct with a student. Mr. Dawson voluntarily resigned on March 13, 2017. Following Mr. Dawson's resignation, the District investigation revealed unprofessional communications between Mr. Dawson and the student.

On March 10, 2017, the Charleston Police Department (CPD) was informed by a mandatory reporter that Mr. Dawson had an inappropriate relationship of a sexual nature with a student. The CPD informed the school principal of this allegation. The CPD subsequently interviewed the students and learned that in addition to the alleged relationship, Mr. Dawson may have engaged in unprofessional communications with the student. Following the interview of the student, CPD and Principal Runyon interviewed Mr. Dawson regarding the allegations. Mr. Dawson stated that he knew the alleged victim and that he was “mentoring” her. On March 12, 2017, Mr. Dawson’s attorney notified Principal Runyon that Mr. Dawson was resigning, effective March 13, 2017. When given the opportunity to make a final statement, Mr. Dawson admitted to flirting with the alleged victim and developing an emotional connection with her. He continued to deny any physical contact with her. No criminal charges were brought against Mr. Dawson following the investigation.

On June 28, 2017, the SCDE received a reporting letter alleging that Mr. Dawson engaged in a sexual relationship with a female student. The SCDE sent notice letters to Mr. Dawson on March 29, 2018, and April 26, 2018. Mr. Dawson did not respond to the SCDE and has not requested a hearing. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to revoke Mr. Dawson’s educator certificate 238831, effective June 12, 2018.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

“The State Board 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.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2016). The State Board finds that Mr. Dawson engaged in unprofessional conduct, as a result of his alleged inappropriate relationship and communications with a female student at the School.

The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE supports its decision that just cause exists to revoke educator certificate 238831 issued in the name of Lewis Lee Dawson II. The revocation of Mr. Dawson’s educator certificate 2838831 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.

(signature page attached)

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South Carolina State Board of Education

By: Sharon Wall
Sharon Wall, EdD, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
June 12, 2018