

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Mardrette Alene Kemp
Certificate 145205

ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on December 8, 2020. On September 30, 2020, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent a notice letter to Mardrette Alene Kemp regarding the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina educator certificate. Ms. Kemp received the certified mail on October 5, 2020, as evidenced by the signed postal receipt. The SCDE has verified Ms. Kemp's address, has received a signed receipt, and the letter sent via regular mail has not been returned. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Ms. Kemp has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. Ms. Kemp has not contacted the SCDE to request a hearing and is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to issue a Public Reprimand to Mardrette Alene Kemp's educator certificate 145205.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This is a disciplinary matter involving unprofessional conduct. Ms. Kemp holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over thirty-three years of educator experience. Ms. Kemp has no prior history of disciplinary action with the State Board.

On September 17, 2020, the SCDE received two parent complaints alleging that Ms. Kemp had posted inappropriate posts on social media. Attached to the complaints were social media posts purported to have originated by Ms. Kemp. The posts were mostly of a political/social nature, but one post was vulgar and insensitive to current social movements. The SCDE investigation revealed prior allegations of an inappropriate email sent to the District's email system in 2008 by Ms. Kemp. The District issued a reprimand for her personnel file. Ms. Kemp, in a letter to the District on January 28, 2008, admitted to a lapse of judgment in sending the email, and assured the District she would never make that mistake again. The District met with Ms. Kemp on September 17, 2020 to discuss the matter. Ms. Kemp tendered her

retirement/resignation, effective September 18, 2020, and the District accepted the retirement/resignation.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to issue a Public Reprimand to Mardrette Alene Kemp's educator certificate 145205.

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 (2017); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2017). The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the District would not support a conclusion that just cause does not exist to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of Mardrette Alene Kemp; however, the evidence that would be presented would support a conclusion that Ms. Kemp engaged in unprofessional conduct as result of posting inappropriate content on social media. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. Kemp by the State Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to Mardrette Alene Kemp, certificate 145205. 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 with the grounds listed as "unprofessional conduct." This Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's web site and shall be maintained as a public record in the SCDE's Office of General Counsel.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: s/Michael Brenan
Michael Brenan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
December 8, 2020