

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
April Lynn Richey
Certificate 258764

ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on November 11, 2020. On September 30, 2020, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent April Lynn Richey a notice letter by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail, regarding potential action against her educator certificate. Ms. Richey received the notice, as evidenced by postal tracking. She has not requested a hearing in this matter and is now in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to issue a public reprimand to Ms. Richey and approve this Order of Public Reprimand.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Richey holds a valid South Carolina educator certificate and has eight years of educator experience. At the time of the incident, Ms. Richey was a teacher at Pinecrest Elementary School (School) in Greenwood School District 50 (District).

At the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, Ms. Richey was discussing a student behavior issue with other teachers during lunch. In expressing her frustration with the student, Ms. Richey stated "I might be the school shooter this year." She made a similar statement on September 16, 2019, when she pointed out a student to another teacher and told them "There is about to be a school shooting." When the other teacher asked if the student had reported something, Ms. Richey clarified her statement to mean one of the teachers may end up shooting the student. Ms. Richey was subsequently terminated from the District.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to publically reprimand Ms. Richey and approve this Order of Public Reprimand.

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 exists to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of April Lynn Richey; however, the evidence that would be presented would support a conclusion that Ms. Richey engaged in unprofessional conduct by making inappropriate comments to students and coworkers. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. Richey by the State Board.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to April Lynn Richey, certificate 258764. 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 Consent 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

s. Michael Brennan
Michael Brennan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
November 10, 2020