

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Gregory R. Jeffers
Certificate 291265

**ORDER OF SUSPENSION
(BREACH OF CONTRACT)**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on September 8, 2020. On January 30, 2020, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Gregory R. Jeffers a notice 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. Jeffers' address and the letter sent via regular mail has not been returned. On March 23, 2020, the SCDE informed Mr. Jeffers via regular mail that the State Board would meet to consider action against his educator certification. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Mr. Jeffers has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. Mr. Jeffers has not contacted the SCDE to request a hearing and is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Jeffers' educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing September 8, 2020, and ending on September 7, 2021.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This case concerns a formal complaint of the Greenville County School District (District) seeking the suspension of the educator certificate of Gregory R. Jeffers for breach of contract. The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2018) and S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-530 (2018).

On May 10, 2019, Mr. Jeffers signed a contractual agreement with the District to serve as a teacher for 2019-20 school year. On November 1, 2019, Mr. Jeffers submitted his resignation to the District, effective November 15, 2019. Mr. Jeffers did not state a reason for his resignation. On November 19, 2019, the District informed Mr. Jeffers he

was not released from his contract and the consequences of breaching a contract with the District. The District Board subsequently voted to report Mr. Jeffers' breach of contract to the SCDE on November 19, 2019 and the District reported the matter to the SCDE on November 20, 2019.

After considering the evidence, the State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Mr. Jeffers breached his contract with the District, and that just cause exists to suspend Mr. Jeffers' certificate 291265 for a period of one year, commencing September 8, 2020, and ending on September 7, 2021.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." Just cause includes, *inter alia*, "unprofessional conduct" and "willful violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (3) and (4) (2018). Pursuant to 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2) and (14) (2018), the State Board of Education had the legal authority to suspend a certificate for "failure to comply with the provision of a contract without the written consent of the local school board." With respect to breach of contract, "any teacher who fails to comply with the provisions of his [or her] contract without written consent of the school board shall be deemed guilty of unprofessional conduct." S. C. Code Ann. § 59-25-530 (2018). "Upon formal complaint of the school board, substantiated by conclusive evidence, the state board shall suspend or revoke the teacher's certificate, for a period not to exceed one calendar year." *Id.*

The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Gregory R. Jeffers breached his contract without the consent and/or approval of the District. Accordingly, the evidence presented supports the State Board's determination that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Gregory R. Jeffers for a period of one year, commencing September 8, 2020, and ending on September 7, 2021.

If Mr. Jeffers wishes to have his educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator

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Services, and shall meet all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement. Mr. Jeffers shall also pay the applicable reinstatement fee. The suspension of Mr. Jeffers' educator certificate 291265 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order, with the reason stated as "unprofessional conduct, breach of contract, willful neglect of duty, and failure to comply with the provisions of a contract without the written consent of the local school board."

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/Michael Brennan _____
Michael Brennan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
September 8, 2020