

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Sikheira Higgins-Everette
Certificate 276509

ORDER OF PERMANENT REVOCATION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on April 12, 2022. On April 1, 2020, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Sikheira Higgins-Everette a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina educator certificate. Ms. Higgins-Everette timely requested a hearing, and such was held on February 7, 2022. This matter is properly before the State Board pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2017) and referred to a hearing officer pursuant to S.C. Code ann. § 59-5-70 (2004). After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Sikheira Higgins-Everette's educator certificate 276509, effective April 12, 2022.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Higgins-Everette holds an expired South Carolina educator certificate and has no educator experience in South Carolina. On February 24, 2020, the SCDE learned that Ms. Higgins-Everette had failed to properly disclose the permanent revocation of her North Carolina educator license on December 4, 2007. The North Carolina State Board of Education (North Carolina Board) permanently revoked Ms. Higgins-Everette's North Carolina teaching license for altering grades on her college transcript and submitting fraudulent documents to deceive both state and local school authorities.

On July 7, 2015, Ms. Higgins-Everette submitted an online application for the South Carolina Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE). The application asked if she had ever had a teaching certificate revoked suspended or denied by any state. Ms. Higgins-

Everette responded “no” to this question. On August 28, 2019, Ms. Higgins-Everette submitted a new application for the PACE program. The 2019 application contained a similar question, to which Ms. Higgins-Everette again responded “no.” On both occasions, Ms. Higgins-Everette signed a verification that all information contained in the application was accurate. The applications noted that failure to report accurate information could be grounds for denial of certification pursuant to State Board of Education Regulations.

Ms. Higgins-Everette timely requested a private hearing. A hearing was originally scheduled for October 27, 2021; however, Ms. Higgins-Everette did not respond to the SCDE or the Hearing Officer. In order to ensure Ms. Higgins-Everette had ample opportunity to attend the hearing, the SCDE submitted a request for continuance, which the hearing officer granted. On January 13, 2022, the SCDE notified Ms. Higgins-Everette that the rescheduled hearing would be held on February 7, 2022. Ms. Higgins-Everette did not appear at the hearing and the hearing was held in absentia. The Hearing Officer found that Ms. Higgins-Everette’s conduct constituted unprofessional conduct and dishonesty and recommended that the State Board permanently revoke Ms. Higgins-Everette’s South Carolina educator certificate 276509.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Sikheira Higgins-Everette’s educator certificate 276509, effective April 12, 2022.

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 “incompetence; willful neglect of duty; willful violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education; unprofessional conduct; drunkenness; cruelty; crime against the law of this State or the United States; immorality; any conduct involving moral turpitude; dishonesty; evident unfitness for position for which employed; or sale or possession of narcotics.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016); S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2016).

The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE supports its determination that just cause exists to permanently revoke education certificate 276509, issued in the name of Sikheira Higgins-Everette, effective April 12, 2022. The permanent revocation of

Sikheira Higgins-Everette, Certificate 276509

ORDER OF PERMANENT REVOCATION

April 12, 2022

Page 3

Higgins-Everette's educator certificate 276509 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.

South Carolina Board of Education

s/Alan Walters

Alan Walters, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

April 12, 2022