

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Jason Michael Koepke
Certificate 226855

CONSENT ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on April 12, 2022. On January 26, 2021, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Jason Michael Koepke a notice letter by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail, regarding possible action against his educator certificate. Mr. Koepke contacted the SCDE and advised that he desired to waive his right to a hearing and pursue an alternative resolution in this matter. Mr. Koepke has agreed to complete the Prevention & Correction course offered by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), within six months of the date of this order. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept this Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Koepke holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over fourteen years of experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Koepke was employed by the Union County School District (District) as a principal at Foster Park Elementary School (School).

In the summer of 2020, the District's email system flagged emails between Mr. Koepke and a female subordinate at the school. As a result, the District conducted an audit of the District emails and found some of the emails between Mr. Koepke and the staff member were inappropriate in nature. The emails demonstrated a negative effect on the school environment.

Jason Michael Koepke
226855
JMK
Initial
3/18/2022
Date

Mr. Koepke has agreed to waive his right to a hearing and resolve this disciplinary matter by entering into this Consent Order of Public Reprimand, subject to the following terms: (1) a Public Reprimand shall be issued by the State Board, (2) 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, and (3) the Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's website and shall be maintained as a public record in the OGC. Further, Mr. Koepke agrees to complete the NASDTEC Prevention & Correction course. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand with the terms set forth above.

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 Mr. Koepke; however, the evidence that would be presented would support a conclusion that Mr. Koepke engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of an inappropriate relationship with a subordinate. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Mr. Koepke by the State Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to Jason Michael Koepke, certificate 226855. The Public Reprimand shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within

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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. Mr. Koepke will submit proof of completion of the NASDTEC course within six months of the date of this order

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/Alan Walters
Alan Walters, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
April 12, 2022

I, Jason Michael Koepke, S.C. Educator Certificate 226855, understand there has been an investigation concerning alleged violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of educator certificate holders and that I have waived my right to a hearing in this matter. I understand that the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Public Reprimand are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I have read the Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of three pages, and I freely and voluntarily agree to the terms set forth therein. I understand that this Order will be presented to the South Carolina State Board of Education for approval on Tuesday, April 12, 2022. I understand this Consent Order will not become effective until approved by the State Board and, if not approved, it shall not constitute an admission against interest in this proceeding or prejudice the right of the State Board to adjudicate this matter. If approved by the State Board, I give the SCDE permission to use my electronic signature in the style of “/S/ name” for required website publication.

S/ Jason Michael Koepke
Jason Michael Koepke

3/18/2022
Date