

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Mark Thomas Zaranec
Certificate 283525

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

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 9, 2022. On May 11, 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Mark Thomas Zaranec a notice via regular and certified mail of his right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of his South Carolina educator certificate. Mr. Zaranec received the notice on May 17, 2022, as evidenced by signed postal receipt. He 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 Mr. Zaranec's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on August 9, 2022, and ending on August 8, 2023.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This case concerns a formal complaint of Lexington County School District Two (District) seeking the suspension of the educator certificate of Mr. Zaranec 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 April 30, 2021, Mr. Zaranec signed a contractual agreement with the District to serve as an educator for the 2021-22 school year. On November 17, 2021, Mr. Zaranec submitted his resignation to the District, effective December 17, 2021. On January 28, 2022, the District informed Mr. Zaranec in writing that he would not be released from his contract unless and/or until the District Board of Trustees approved resignation. The District Board voted to report Mr. Zaranec's breach of contract to the SCDE on February 24, 2022. The District reported the matter to the SCDE on May 6, 2022.

After considering the evidence, the State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Mr. Zaranec breached his contract with the District, and that just cause

exists to suspend Mr. Zaranec's certificate 283525 for a period of one year, commencing on August 9, 2022, and ending on August 8, 2023.

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 Mr. Zaranec 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 Mark Thomas Zaranec for a period of one year, commencing on August 9, 2022, and ending on August 8, 2023.

If Mr. Zaranec 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 Services, and shall meet all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement. Mr. Zaranec shall also pay the applicable reinstatement fee. The suspension of Mr. Zaranec's educator certificate 283525 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,

Mark Thomas Zaranec, Certificate 283525

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

August 9, 2022

Page 3 of 3

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/Alan Walters

Alan Walters, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

August 9, 2022