

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Laurie E. Smith
Certificate 164063

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on June 14, 2022. On March 4, 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Laurie E. Smith a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate. Ms. Smith received the notice on March 15, 2022, as evidenced by signed postal receipt. Ms. Smith attempted to contact the SCDE but did not request a hearing. SCDE staff made several attempts to return Ms. Smith's call but were unable to reach her. On April 8, 2022, the SCDE notified Ms. Smith that the matter would be presented to the State Board on May 17, 2022, or as soon thereafter as is feasible. She has not attempted further communication and is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Smith's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on June 14, 2022, and ending on June 13, 2023.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Smith holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. She has over thirty years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Ms. Smith was employed as an educator by the Charleston County School District (District).

On May 7, 2021, District staff reported that Ms. Smith appeared to be under the influence while at work. District supervisors met with Ms. Smith and made arrangements for her to be escorted to a testing facility. The test results showed Ms. Smith had a blood alcohol content of 0.18% at that time. She was allowed to resign from the District in lieu of termination.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Ms. Smith's educator certificate 164063 for a period of one year, commencing on June 14, 2022, and ending on June 13, 2023.

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 (Rev. 2004); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2016). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Smith engaged in unprofessional conduct by being under the influence of alcohol at school. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Ms. Smith's educator certificate 164063 for a period of one year, commencing on June 14, 2022, and ending on June 13, 2023.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Laurie E. Smith educator certificate 164063, is suspended for a period of one year, commencing on June 14, 2022, and ending on June 13, 2023.

If Ms. Smith wishes to have the certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Ms. Smith shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Ms. Smith's educator certificate 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 State Board of Education

s/Alan Walters
Alan Walters, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
June 14, 2022