

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Lewis Morant
Certificate 905984

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on November 8, 2022. On November 30, 2021, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Lewis Morant a notice via regular and certified mail of his right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of his South Carolina educator certificate. On December 31, 2021, the SCDE sent Mr. Morant a final notice. He received the notice and timely requested a hearing. The hearing was scheduled for October 21, 2022. After receiving notice of the hearing, Mr. Morant informed the SCDE he no longer wanted to pursue a hearing. He has waived his right to a hearing and is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Mr. Morant's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on November 8, 2022, and ending on November 7, 2024. Mr. Morant will be required to complete the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course prior to reinstatement of his educator certification.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Morant holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. He has over three years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Mr. Morant was a teacher at Carvers Bay High School (School) with the Georgetown County School District (District). He resigned from the District on October 8, 2021.

On September 9, 2021, the District received notice of allegations Mr. Morant had engaged in a physical altercation with a student. Mr. Morant had received two previous reprimands concerning physical interactions with students, including instructions not to engage in horseplay that could be construed as a physical altercation. During the District's investigation into the 2021 incident several student statements were taken before a student video of the incident surfaced.

The video begins during a verbal argument between Mr. Morant and the student. During the argument, Mr. Morant makes inappropriate threats towards the student and uses inappropriate language. Approximately four minutes into the video Mr. Morant walks to the classroom door to show the student out of the room. As the student begins to exit, Mr. Morant grabs the student's hair and pulls him down. The view of the student is then blocked by classroom furniture as the video ends. Police were notified of the incident.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Mr. Morant's educator certificate 905984 for a period of two years, commencing on November 8, 2022, and ending on November 7, 2024.

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 (2020); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2020). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2020); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2021). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Mr. Morant engaged in unprofessional conduct by engaging in inappropriate physical contact with a student. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Mr. Morant's educator certificate 905984 for a period of two years, commencing on November 8, 2022, and ending on November 7, 2024.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Lewis Morant, educator certificate 905984, is suspended for a period of two years, commencing on November 8, 2022, and ending on November 7, 2024. Mr. Morant will also be required to complete the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course prior to the reinstatement of his educator certification.

If Mr. Morant wishes to have the certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Mr. Morant shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. He will be responsible for submitting proof of completion of the required courses before the reinstatement of his

Lewis Morant, Certificate 905984
Order of Suspension
November 8, 2022
Page 3 of 3

educator certification. The suspension of Mr. Morant'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
November 8, 2022