

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Emma Harrison
Certificate 303979

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on January 17, 2023. On September 29, 2022, and October 24, 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Emma Harrison a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate. The SCDE has verified Ms. Harrison's address, the certified letter was returned unclaimed, and the letter sent via regular mail has not been returned. On November 10, 2022, the SCDE informed Ms. Harrison via regular mail that the State Board would meet on December 13, 2022, or as soon thereafter as is feasible, to consider action against her educator certification. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Ms. Harrison has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. She 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 Ms. Harrison's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on January 17, 2023, and ending on January 16, 2024.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Harrison holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. Ms. Harrison has over three years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. She has not taught in South Carolina.

On February 25, 2022, the SCDE received a notification from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) that Ms. Harrison was denied educator certification in South Dakota. The application was denied due to two forged out-of-state education certification verification forms from New Jersey. She was prohibited from reapplying for educator certification in South Dakota until July 1, 2023.

Delaware also began an investigation in to Ms. Harrison's certification in their state. Ms. Harrison did not request a hearing, and her Delaware educator certification was suspended for one

year, effective July 11, 2022. Georgia also began investigation, which resulted in the revocation of Ms. Harrison's educator certification in that state on June 9, 2022. Both out-of-state actions were based on the fraudulent activity in South Dakota.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Ms. Harrison's educator certificate 303979 for a period of one year, commencing on January 17, 2023, and ending on January 16, 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 Ms. Harrison engaged in unprofessional conduct by attempting to gain a professional certification through dishonest means. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Ms. Harrison, educator certificate 303979, for a period of one year. Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Emma Harrison, educator certificate 303979, is suspended for a period of one year, commencing on January 17, 2023, and ending on January 16, 2024.

If Ms. Harrison 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. Harrison 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. Harrison'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/Crystal F. Stapleton, Ed.D.
Crystal F. Stapleton, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
January 17, 2023