

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Courtney Usher Brown
Certificate 281037

**Brown Courtney Usher Order of Summary
Suspension**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on April 6, 2023. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2020), § 59-5-10 (2020), and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) requested that the Chair of the State Board summarily suspend the educator certificate of Courtney Usher Brown, educator certificate 281037, as a result of her arrest on two counts of sexual battery on a student and two counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Brown may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students, who may be under his instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Brown's educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Brown of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Brown holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over six years of educator experience. At the time of her arrest, Ms. Brown was not employed as an educator. She resigned from the Chesterfield County School District on March 17, 2023.

On or about March 31, 2023, Ms. Brown was arrested on two counts of sexual battery with a student and two counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. It is alleged that Ms. Brown engaged in sexual battery with a student between September 2022 and December

2022, as well as on January 3, 2023. It is further alleged that Ms. Brown supplied and allowed a student to smoke a nicotine vape pen. Ms. Brown also possessed a marijuana vape pen on school grounds.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Ms. Brown may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students who may be under her instruction, and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Brown's educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Brown of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

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, crime against the law of this State, and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2020); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2021). In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2020), "If the agency finds that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action, and incorporates a finding to that effect in its order, summary suspension of a license may be ordered pending proceedings for revocation or other action." Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-5-10 (2020) and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the Chair of the State Board finds that as a result of the allegations of Ms. Brown's unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United States, evident unfitness for the position for which employed, and her arrest for sexual battery on a student and contributing to the delinquency of a minor, there is reason to believe Ms. Brown may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required.

Accordingly, the educator certificate of Courtney Usher Brown, certificate number 281037, is summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is

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otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Brown of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina Board of Education

s/Crystal F. Stapleton, Ed.D.

Crystal F. Stapleton, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

April 6, 2023