

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Quin Romont Rawls
Certificate 185040

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on April 11, 2023. On April 1, 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent a notice via regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, to Quin Romont Rawls concerning the pending action against educator certificate 185040. Dr. Rawls thereafter timely requested a hearing which was held on February 8, 2023. This matter is properly before the State Board pursuant to S.C Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2017) and referred to a hearing officer pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. 59-5-70 (2004). After considering the evidence, testimony, and the report and recommendations presented, the State Board voted to suspend Dr. Rawls' certificate 185040, for a period of one year, commencing on April 11, 2023, and ending on April 10, 2024.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This case concerns a formal complaint of Charleston County School District (District) seeking the suspension of the educator certificate of Dr. Rawls for breach of contract. The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2020) and S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-530 (2020).

Dr. Rawls served under a continuing contract as an itinerant strings teacher with the District during the 2021-22 school year. In November of 2021, Dr. Rawls was diagnosed with pneumonia and obtained FMLA leave in order to recover. He was expected to be out through December 26, 2021. On December 20, 2021, Dr. Rawls submitted his resignation to the District, citing an opportunity to become a full time pastor. Dr. Rawls was informed his resignation would be considered a breach of contract. He did not return to work with the District.

In considering the evidence, the Hearing Officer stated that the District met its burden of proving Dr. Rawls breached his contract. The Hearing Officer noted the overwhelming evidence demonstrated Dr. Rawls quit because he was dissatisfied with his working conditions. The Hearing Officer found Dr. Rawls did not meet the exception of resignation due to serious illness because the reason was not the one provided in Dr. Rawls' resignation and Dr. Rawls was not too ill to work, as he was still working as a senior pastor. Other mitigating circumstances introduced by Dr. Rawls at the hearing were found to not constitute extenuating circumstances for the breach of contract. Therefore, the Hearing Officer recommended a one year suspension of Dr. Rawls' educator certification.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board finds just cause for the suspension of Dr. Rawls' educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on April 11, 2023 and ending on April 10, 2024.

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) (2020). Pursuant to 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2) and (14) (2021), the State Board of Education has 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 Dr. Rawls 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

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educator certificate of Quin Romont Rawls for a period of one year, commencing on April 11, 2023, and ending on April 10, 2024.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina Board of Education

s/Crystal F. Stapleton, Ed.D.

Crystal F. Stapleton, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

April 11, 2023