

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Courtney Renee Tinsley
Certificate 285631

CONSENT ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on February 14, 2023. On December 1, 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Courtney Renee Tinsley a notice via regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, to Courtney Renee Tinsley regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate 285631. Ms. Tinsley timely requested a hearing on the matter. After Ms. Tinsley received the notice, she contacted the SCDE to request a hearing and to discuss an alternative resolution. Prior to the hearing, Ms. Tinsley contacted the SCDE to discuss an alternate resolution. Ms. Tinsley has agreed to waive her right to a hearing and enter into this Consent Order of Public Reprimand of educator certificate 285631. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand of Ms. Tinsley's educator certificate. Ms. Tinsley has also submitted a letter from a counselor indicating it is safe for her to return to work.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Tinsley holds a South Carolina educator certificate. She has over five years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Ms. Tinsley was employed by the Aiken County Public School District as a school counselor at Oakwood-Windsor Elementary School.

On October 8, 2020, Aiken County Department of Public Safety officers responded to Ms. Tinsley's apartment following a report of an unconscious individual. Law enforcement arrived to find both Ms. Tinsley and her boyfriend unresponsive following an incident where they consumed pain pills that were unknowingly laced with a trace amount of fentanyl. Ms. Tinsley was not breathing at the time law enforcement arrived

but was successfully recucitated. Ms. Tinsley stated she believed she was ingesting a pain pill for back pain; however, the medication was not what she believed. Ms. Tinsley's children were present at the home at the time of her overdose and she was charged with three counts of Unlawful Conduct Towards a Child. All three charges have since been *nolle prossed* by the Second Circuit Solicitor's Office. In a statement to the SCDE, Ms. Tinsley noted her dedication to students, schools, and communities, as well as her professional success as a counselor. Ms. Tinsley has submitted a letter from a counselor indicating it is safe for her to return to work.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand of Courtney Renee Tinsley's educator certificate.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The State Board 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 "incompetence; willful neglect of duty; willful violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education; unprofessional conduct; drunkenness; cruelty; crime against the law of this State or the United States; immorality; any conduct involving moral turpitude; dishonesty; evident unfitness for position for which employed; or sale or possession of narcotics." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2020); S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2021). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Tinsley engaged in unprofessional conduct due to the circumstances that led to her arrest for three counts of unlawful conduct towards a child. The State Board further finds that just cause exists to publicly reprimand Ms. Tinsley's educator certificate.

The public reprimand of Ms. Tinsley's educator certificate 285631 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Courtney Renee Tinsley, certificate 285631, is publicly reprimanded.

Courtney Renee Tinsley
285631
s/CT
Initial
1/25/23
Date

Consent Order of Public Reprimand
Courtney Renee Tinsley, Certificate 285631
February 14, 2023
Page 3

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina Board of Education
s/Crystal F. Stapleton, Ed.D.
Crystal F. Stapleton, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
February 14, 2023

I, Courtney Renee Tinsley, SC Educator Certificate 285631, understand there has been an investigation concerning alleged violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of educator certificate holders and that I have waived my right to a hearing in this matter. I understand the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Public Reprimand are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack, or judicial review. I agree to the terms of this Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the State board for approval on February 14, 2023. I understand this Order will not become effective until approved by the State Board and, if not approved, it shall not constitute an admission against interest in this proceeding or prejudice the right of the State Board to adjudicate this matter. If approved by the State Board, I have the SCDE permission to use my electronic signature in the style of "s/name" for required website publication.

s/Courtney R. Tinsley
Courtney Renee Tinsley

1/25/23
Date

Courtney Renee Tinsley
285631
s/CT
Initial
1/25/23
Date