

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the

Disciplinary Action of the

Educator Certificate of

Elizabeth Carolina Delaney McDonald

Certificate 280849

**McDonald Elizabeth Carolina Delaney Order
of Summary Suspension**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on February 2, 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 Elizabeth Carolina Delaney McDonald, educator certificate 280849, as a result of her arrest on two felony counts of manufacturing/possession of schedule I,II,III, or flunitazepam or analogue, with intent to distribute; one felony count of drug trafficking; and twenty-one felony counts of possession of a weapon during a violent crime.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. McDonald 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. McDonald'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. McDonald of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. McDonald holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over six years of educator experience. At the time of her arrest, Ms. McDonald was employed by the Lancaster County School District as a teacher at Indian Land High School.

On January 26, 2023, law enforcement executed a search warrant at Ms. McDonald's residence as part of a narcotics investigation. Law enforcement found suspected illegal drugs, digital scales, and several firearms in the residence. Ms. McDonald was arrested and charged with two felony counts of manufacturing/possession of a drug with intent to distribute; one felony count of drug trafficking; and twenty-one felony counts of possession of a weapon during a violent crime.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Ms. McDonald 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. McDonald'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. McDonald 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. McDonald's unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United States, due to her arrest and multiple felony charges, there is reason to believe Ms. McDonald may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required.

Accordingly, the educator certificate of Elizabeth Carolina Delaney McDonald, certificate number 280849, is 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. McDonald 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

February 3, 2023