

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Peter R. Calhoun
Certificate 219747

Order of Summary Suspension

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on July 13, 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 Peter R. Calhoun, educator certificate 219747, as a result of his arrest for sexual battery with a student 18 years of age or older where there is direct supervisory authority.

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Calhoun holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over thirty-two years of educator experience. At the time of his arrest, Mr. Calhoun was an educator at Lakewood High School with the Sumter County School District.

On or about May 12, 2023, Mr. Calhoun was arrested by the Sumter Police Department. On May 15, 2023, law enforcement announced Mr. Calhoun's arrest. The announcement stated police were responding to a report of indecent exposure involving Mr. Calhoun and a student.

Information has led police to believe there may have been multiple encounters between Mr. Calhoun and the student. Currently, Mr. Calhoun is charged with one count of sexual battery with a student 18 years of age or older where there is direct supervisory authority, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-03-0755(D) (2020).

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Mr. Calhoun 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 Mr. Calhoun'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 Mr. Calhoun of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of his 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 Mr. Calhoun's unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United States, and evident unfitness for the position for which employed, due to his arrest for sexual battery of a student, there is reason to believe Mr. Calhoun may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required.

Accordingly, the educator certificate of Peter R. Calhoun, certificate number 219747, is summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved.

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The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Mr. Calhoun of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of his 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
July 13, 2023