

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Jamaal Fitzgerald Gray
Certificate 280797

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on May 9, 2023. On April 26, 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice via regular and certified mail, to Jamaal Fitzgerald Gray concerning the pending action against educator certificate 280797. Mr. Gray received the notice and contacted the SCDE to discuss an alternative resolution to a hearing. He thereafter ceased communication with the SCDE prior to an alternative resolution and without requesting a hearing. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Mr. Gray has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. He is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Mr. Gray's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on May 9, 2023, and ending on May 8, 2025.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Gray holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. He has over eight years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Mr. Gray was employed as a special education teacher at Blythewood Academy (School) for Richland County School District Two (District).

During the 2020-21 school year, Mr. Gray was placed on an Improvement Plan to address concerns related to his instructional decisions and duties. When reviewing the plan at the end of the school year, School administration noted a student that did not have proper documentation for their individualized education program (IEP). When School administration requested the documentation, Mr. Gray submitted the completed documents and included a sign-in sheet for an IEP meeting. After checking with other staff members alleged to be present at the meeting, School administration determined that the IEP meeting did not occur and the IEP documents

were falsified. Mr. Gray admitted to falsifying the documents and resigned from the District.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Mr. Gray's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on May 9, 2023, and ending on May 8, 2025.

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 (2021). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2021). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Mr. Gray engaged in unprofessional conduct by falsifying student IEP information. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Mr. Gray for a period of two years years, commencing on May 9, 2023, and ending on May 8, 2025.

If Mr. Gray wishes to have his certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Mr. Gray shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Mr. Gray's educator certificate 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 Jamaal Fitzgerald Gray, certificate 280797, is suspended for a period of two years, commencing on May 9, 2023 and ending on May 8, 2025.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/Crystal F. Stapleton, Ed.D.
Crystal F. Stapleton, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
April 11, 2023