

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Thomas Lang
Certificate 309345

ORDER OF PERMANENT REVOCATION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on September 12, 2023. On May 31, 2023, July 3, 2023, and July 18, 2023, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Thomas Lang a notice via regular and certified mail of his right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension or revocation of his South Carolina educator certificate. Mr. Lang received the notice on August 3, 2023, as evidenced by signed postal receipt. He has contacted the SCDE but has not requested a hearing and is now in default. On August 16, 2023, the SCDE informed Mr. Lang via regular mail that the State Board would meet on September 12, 2023, to consider action against his educator certification. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Mr. Lang has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. He has not contacted the SCDE to request a hearing and is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Mr. Lang's educator certificate 309345, effective September 12, 2023.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Lang holds a valid South Carolina educator certificate and has one year of teaching experience. He has no prior disciplinary history with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Mr. Lang was a career and physical education teacher with the Berkeley County School District (District) at Berkeley High School (School).

On March 23, 2023, the SCDE learned that Mr. Lang resigned following an investigation into allegations of unprofessional behavior which involved inappropriate conduct with a student. A police incident report dated March 6, 2023, revealed that Mr. Lang admitted to kissing a student at the School. He further admitted to spending time with the student in his office during

class time and giving her his personal phone number after she turned eighteen. He continued to communicate with the student over social media. Mr. Lang was subsequently arrested for the misdemeanor offense of enticing an enrolled child from attendance in school. The criminal case remains pending as of the date of this order.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Mr. Lang's educator certificate 309345, effective September 12, 2023.

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 (2016). 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 (2016); S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2016).

The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE supports its decision that just cause exists to permanently revoke education certificate 309345, issued in the name of Mr. Lang, effective September 12, 2023. The permanent revocation of Thomas Lang's educator certificate 309345 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

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
September 12, 2023