

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Amy J. Crutchfield
Certificate 191536

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 13, 2024. On May 21, 2024, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Amy J. Crutchfield a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate. Ms. Crutchfield received the notice, as evidenced by a signed postal receipt. On June 3, 2024, Ms. Crutchfield contacted the SCDE and waived her right to a hearing. She is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Crutchfield's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on August 13, 2024, and ending on August 12, 2025.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Crutchfield holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. She has over 28 years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Ms. Crutchfield was employed by Lexington County School District One (District) as a teacher at Gilbert Middle School (School).

On January 25, 2023, School staff observed Ms. Crutchfield to have an unsteady gait, inability to walk in a straight line, and a change to her usual speech pattern. Staff members reported their concerns to administration. Ms. Crutchfield was taken to be tested for drugs and alcohol by her principal and the school nurse. The first alcohol screening registered a .202% blood alcohol concentration and a second test administered fifteen minutes later registered a .190% blood alcohol concentration. The drug screen was negative.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Ms. Crutchfield's educator certificate 191536 for a period of one year, commencing on August 13, 2024, and ending on August 12, 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 (2020). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2020); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2021). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Crutchfield engaged in unprofessional conduct by being under the influence of alcohol at work. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Ms. Crutchfield's educator certificate 191536 for a period of one year, commencing on August 13, 2024, and ending on August 12, 2025.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Amy J. Crutchfield educator certificate 191536, is suspended for a period of one year, commencing on August 13, 2024, and ending on August 12, 2025.

If Ms. Crutchfield wishes to have the certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Ms. Crutchfield shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Ms. Crutchfield's educator certificate shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days of the date of this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/David C. O'Shields
David C. O'Shields, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 13, 2024