

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Timothy Cole Garrison
Certificate 308718

ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on February 26, 2024. 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 Timothy Cole Garrison, educator certificate 308718, as a result of his arrest on the felony charge of criminal solicitation of a minor, S.C. Code of Laws § 16-15-342 (2004).

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Garrison holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over two years of educator experience. At the time of the incident, Mr. Garrison was a teacher for Lexington School District One (District). He resigned from the District on February 9, 2024.

On or about November 8, 2023, Mr. Garrison knowingly communicated with "a person who he reasonably believed to be under the age of 18, for the purpose of or with the intent of persuading, inducing, enticing or coercing the person to engage in sexual activity," according to

an arrest warrant. The alleged communications took place on social media applications. On February 9, 2024, Mr. Garrison was arrested on the felony charge of criminal solicitation of a minor.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Mr. Garrison 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. Garrison'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. Garrison 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. Garrison'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 criminal solicitation of a minor, there is reason to believe Mr. Garrison may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required.

Accordingly, the educator certificate of Timothy Cole Garrison, certificate number 308718, 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 Mr. Garrison of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

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AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina Board of Education

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

Columbia, South Carolina
February 26, 2024