

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Gabriela Mihaela Ion
Certificate 266871

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on February 13, 2024. On September 19, 2023, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Gabriela Mihaela Ion a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate. The SCDE has verified Ms. Ion's address, the certified letter was returned unclaimed, and the letter sent via regular mail has not been returned. On December 6, 2023, the SCDE informed Ms. Ion via regular mail that the State Board would meet on January 9, 2024, or as soon thereafter as is feasible, to consider action against her educator certification. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Ms. Ion has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. She has not contacted the SCDE to request a hearing and is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Ion's educator certificate, retroactively commencing on September 25, 2023, and ending on February 21, 2024.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Ion holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. She has over twelve years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the allegations, Ms. Ion was employed as an elementary special education teacher in Georgia.

On September 1, 2023, the SCDE learned that Ms. Ion was reported to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission by her principal for falsification of federally required documentation for Individualized Education Programs, meeting notes, and attendees to the meetings. According to the Georgia order, Ms. Ion stated she followed the protocols required by

her administration. However, she did enter a consent order for the suspension of her Georgia teaching certification from September 25, 2023, to February 21, 2024.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Ms. Ion's educator certificate 266871, retroactively commencing on September 25, 2023, and ending on February 21, 2024.

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. Ion engaged in unprofessional conduct by falsifying student documents. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Ms. Ion's educator certificate 266871, retroactively commencing on September 25, 2023, and ending on February 21, 2024.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Gabriela Mihaela Ion educator certificate 266871, is suspended, retroactively commencing on September 25, 2023, and ending on February 21, 2024. If Ms. Ion 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. Ion 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. Ion'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.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

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

Columbia, South Carolina
February 13, 2024