

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Shavar Stephenson
Certificate 313375

ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on May 15, 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 Shavar Stephenson, educator certificate 313375, as a result of his arrest for felony possession of a firearm on school property.

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Stephenson holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over four years of educator experience. At the time of the incident, Mr. Stephenson was a teacher for Greenville County School District (District).

On May 7, 2024, Mr. Stephenson was found to have a firearm in his backpack on school grounds. According to a report from the Greenville County Sheriff's Department, Mr. Stephenson did possess a 9mm semi-automatic handgun unlawfully within the building of Tanglewood

Middle School. Mr. Stephenson did not have the permission of the authorities in charge of that property to possess a firearm on school property. He was subsequently arrested for felony possession of a firearm on school property.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Mr. Stephenson may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students who may be under her instruction, and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Mr. Stephenson'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. Stephenson 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. Stephenson'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 felony possession of a firearm on school property, there is reason to believe Mr. Stephenson may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required.

Accordingly, the educator certificate of Shavar Stephenson, certificate number 313375, is summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved.

Shavar Stephenson, Certificate 313375

ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION

May 15, 2024

Page 3

The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Mr. Stephenson of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina Board of Education

s/David C. O'Shields

David C. O'Shields, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

May 15, 2024