

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of Disciplinary Action)
)
of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Shirley Matthews Jones)
)
Certificate 115937)

**CONSENT ORDER OF
PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on June 10, 2015. On May 6, 2015, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Shirley Matthews Jones regarding the possible disciplinary action of her educator certificate and her right to a hearing. On May 9, 2015, Ms. Jones received the notice. On May 22, 2015, Ms. Jones' legal counsel informed the SCDE that Ms. Jones desired to reserve her right to a hearing and discuss an alternative resolution of this matter. Ms. Jones' legal counsel subsequently informed the SCDE that Ms. Jones had agreed to waive her right to a hearing and accept a public reprimand of her educator certificate. After considering the information presented by the SCDE, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Jones holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over twenty-nine (29) years of teaching experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Ms. Jones has been employed by the Lancaster County School District (District) since 1983 as a teacher at Buford Elementary School (School). On December 16, 2014, the District placed Ms. Jones on administrative leave during an investigation into allegations that Ms. Jones made physical contact with a student when addressing his conduct in her classroom. The incident demonstrated Ms. Jones's failure to exercise acceptable professional judgment in her interaction with the student. Ms. Jones voluntarily resigned from the District, for purposes of retirement, effective January 23, 2015.

On May 6, 2015, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Shirley Matthews Jones regarding the possible disciplinary action of her educator certificate and her right to a hearing by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. On May 9, 2015, Ms. Jones received the notice as evidenced by a signed postal receipt bearing her signature. On May 22, 2015, Ms. Jones' legal counsel informed the SCDE that Ms. Jones desired to reserve her right to a hearing and discuss an alternative resolution of this matter. Ms. Jones' legal counsel subsequently informed the SCDE that Ms. Jones had agreed to waive her right to a hearing and accept a public reprimand of her educator certificate.

Ms. Jones acknowledges that she has engaged in unprofessional conduct. She waives her right to a hearing and understands that the terms set forth are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or

Accepted: Shirley Matthews Jones 115937  Initial Here <u>6-2-15</u> Date
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judicial review. Ms. Jones consents to the public reprimand of her educator certificate, subject to the following terms: (1) a Public Reprimand shall be issued by the State Board, (2) the Public Reprimand shall be reported to all school districts in South Carolina, and (3) the Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's website and shall be maintained as a public record in the SCDE's Office of General Counsel. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand with the terms set forth above.

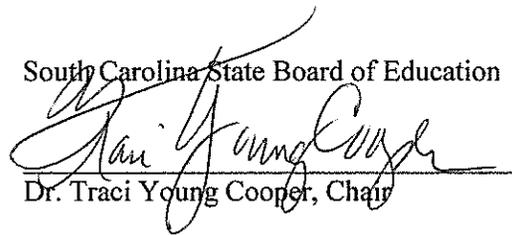
CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"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 (Rev. 2004); The State Board may also, for just cause, issue a public reprimand. 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2011). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-2-160 (Rev. 2004). The State Board finds that the evidence presented, which is undisputed by Ms. Jones, demonstrates that Ms. Jones engaged in unprofessional conduct, as a result of an incident involving her interaction with a student and that just cause exists to publicly reprimand Ms. Jones. The evidence presented supports the State Board's decision to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the Consent Order of Public Reprimand is accepted and a public reprimand is issued to Shirley Matthews Jones, certificate 115937. The public reprimand of Ms. Jones educator certificate 115937 shall be reported to all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

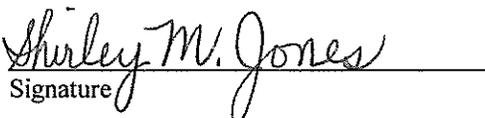
South Carolina State Board of Education

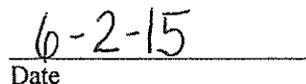


Dr. Traci Young Cooper, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
June 10, 2015

I, Shirley Matthews Jones, S.C. Educator Certificate 115937, have read the Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of two pages, and I freely and voluntarily agree to the terms set forth therein. I agree to the proposed Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of two pages, and understand that this Order will be presented as signed to the South Carolina State Board of Education on June 10, 2015.


Signature


Date

Accepted: Shirley Matthews Jones 115937  Initial Here <u>6-2-15</u> Date
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