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BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Voluntary)
Surrender of the Educator)
Certificate of Sam T. Mullis)
Certificate 903478)

**CONSENT ORDER OF
SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 9, 2016. On May 27, 2016, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Mr. Mullis informing him that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding the possible suspension of his educator certificate by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. Mr. Mullis received the notice on June 2, 2016, and requested a hearing. He subsequently informed the SCDE that he desired to waive his right to a hearing and seek an alternative resolution of this matter. Mr. Mullis has agreed to enter into a Consent Order of Suspension of his educator certificate 903478. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Mr. Mullis' educator certificate for a period of one year commencing on August 9, 2016, and ending on August 8, 2017.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Mullis holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has over 21 years of professional teaching experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Mullis had been employed with the Lancaster County School District (District) since 2007 and was serving as a teacher at Lancaster High School (School) at the time of the incident at the School.

The District placed Mr. Mullis on administrative leave on February 16, 2016, during an investigation into allegations that he had made inappropriate comments to a female student in his class. Mr. Mullis admitted he had questioned the female student about her sexual orientation and sexual behavior. Following this admission, Mr. Mullis

Sam T.
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apologized for his actions. After being advised that he would be recommended for termination, Mr. Mullis was allowed to submit his resignation, effective February 26, 2016. The District then reported this matter to the SCDE.

On May 27, 2016, the SCDE sent notice to Mr. Mullis informing him that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding the possible suspension of his educator certificate. Mr. Mullis received the notice on June 2, 2016, and initially requested a hearing in this matter. On July 12, 2016, he informed the SCDE that he desired to waive his right to a hearing and seek an alternative resolution of this matter. Mr. Mullis has agreed to enter into a Consent Order of Suspension of his educator certificate 903478 for one year. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Mr. Mullis' educator certificate for a period of one year commencing on August 9, 2016, and ending on August 8, 2017.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004). The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE demonstrates that Mr. Mullis engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of his inappropriate comments of a sexual nature to a female student. The State Board finds that the information presented supports its conclusion that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Sam T. Mullis on the grounds of unprofessional conduct for a period of one year commencing on August 9, 2016, and ending on August 8, 2017.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Sam T. Mullis, certificate 903478, is suspended for a period of one year commencing on August 9, 2016, and ending on August 8, 2017. If Mr. Mullis wishes to have his certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Mr. Mullis shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Mr. Mullis' educator certificate shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

Sam T.
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AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: _____

Michael R. Brennan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 9, 2016

I, Sam T. Mullis, S.C. Educator Certificate 903478, understand there has been an investigation concerning alleged violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of educator certificate holders and that I have waived my right to a hearing in this matter. I agree that during the period of suspension, I will not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher, band teacher, or coach, in a public school in the State of South Carolina. I understand that the terms set forth in this Consent Agreement are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I hereby freely and voluntarily agree to the suspension of my educator certificate to the South Carolina State Board of Education. I agree to the proposed Consent Order of Suspension, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented as signed to the South Carolina State Board of Education on August 9, 2016.

Sam T. Mullis

Date

7/18/16