

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation)
)
and Voluntary Surrender of the)
)
Educator Certificate of)
)
Mason L. Cummings)
)
Certificate 187377)
_____)

**CONSENT ORDER OF
PERMANENT
VOLUNTARY SURRENDER
AND REVOCATION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on April 11, 2012. On March 5, 2012, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Mason L. Cummings of the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. Mr. Cummings received the notice on March 6, 2012, as evidenced by a postal receipt bearing his signature. On December 8, 2011, Mr. Cummings was arrested in Saluda County and charged with Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor. The arrest resulted from an investigation into allegations that Mr. Cummings had an inappropriate relationship with a female student in September 2000.

On March 20, 2012, Mr. Cummings pled guilty to one count of Assault and Battery of a High and Aggravated Nature and Indecent Liberties with One or More Minor Females. Mr. Cummings also agreed to permanently surrender his educator certificate and agreed to waive his right to a hearing. Mr. Cummings has agreed to the terms and conditions of this Consent Order of Permanent Voluntary Surrender and Revocation.

Mason L.
Cummings
187377
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Date

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Cummings holds a professional educator certificate and has fourteen years of teaching experience. Mr. Cummings had been employed by the Aiken County School District (District) as the Principal at Ridge Spring-Monetta High School, until he resigned on November 2, 2011, following an investigation into allegations of an inappropriate relationship with a female student that occurred approximately ten years ago. On

December 8, 2011, Mr. Cummings was arrested in Saluda County and charged with one count of Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor.

On March 5, 2012, the SCDE sent notice to Mr. Cummings of the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate and his right to a hearing by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. Mr. Cummings received the notice on March 6, 2012, as evidenced by a postal receipt bearing his signature. The SCDE received information that on December 8, 2011, Mr. Cummings was arrested in Saluda County and charged with Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor, resulting from an investigation into allegations that Mr. Cummings had an inappropriate relationship with a female student in September 2000. The criminal charges are pending. On March 20, 2012, Mr. Cummings agreed to permanently surrender his educator certificate and agreed to waive his right to a hearing.

Mason L.
Cummings
187377

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Date

Mr. Cummings has agreed to the terms and conditions of this Consent Order of Permanent Voluntary Surrender and Revocation. This permanent voluntary surrender will result in the revocation of his educator certificate 187377 and shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts.

Mr. Cummings voluntarily agrees to the permanent surrender of his educator certificate 187377 and agrees to the following conditions: (1) his educator certificate will become permanently invalid and revoked immediately upon the approval by the State Board of the consent order; (2) he may never apply for a South Carolina educator certificate; (3) he has waived his right to a hearing and understands that the terms set forth herein are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review; and (4) he agrees that his surrender will be reported to all school districts in South Carolina and the NASDTEC Clearinghouse as a permanent voluntary surrender and revocation with the reasons stated as “unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United States, immorality, and evident unfitness for position for which employed.”

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

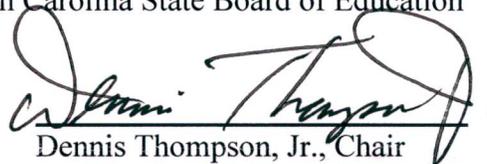
“The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004); 24 S.C.

Code Regs. 43-58 (2011). Just cause includes: "Unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United States, immorality, and evident unfitness for position for which employed." S.C. Code Ann. §59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2011). The State Board finds that the evidence presented, which is undisputed by Mr. Cummings, supports the State Board's decision that just cause exists to accept the permanent voluntary surrender of educator certificate 187377, issued under the name of Mason L. Cummings, and to permanently revoke this educator certificate effective April 11, 2012. As a condition of this consent order, Mr. Cummings agrees that he shall never apply for an educator certificate in the state of South Carolina. Mr. Cummings has waived his right to a hearing and understands that the terms set forth herein are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. The permanent voluntary surrender and permanent revocation of Mr. Cummings' educator certificate 187377 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order with the reasons stated as "unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United States, immorality, and evident unfitness for position for which employed."

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By:


Dennis Thompson, Jr., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

April 11, 2012

I, Mason L. Cummings, S.C. Educator Certificate 187377, understand there has been an investigation concerning alleged violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of education certificate holders and that I have waived my right to a hearing in this matter. I understand that the terms set forth in this Consent Agreement are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review; I hereby freely, knowingly and voluntarily surrender my educator certificate to the South Carolina State Board of Education. I hereby acknowledge that this surrender shall have the same effect as a permanent revocation of my certificate. I knowingly forfeit and relinquish all right, title and privilege of holding myself out as and being able to practice as an educator in the public schools in the State of South Carolina. I agree that I will not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher, band

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teacher, coach, or in any other position in a public school in the State of South Carolina. I agree to the proposed Consent Order of Permanent Voluntary Surrender and Revocation, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented as signed to the South Carolina State Board of Education on April 11, 2012.



Mason L. Cummings



Date