

**BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

In the Matter of the Suspension        )  
  )  
or Revocation of the                        )  
  )  
Educator Certificate of                    )  
  )  
Stacy Chantel Rothenberger            )  
  )  
Certificate 253737                         )  
\_\_\_\_\_  )

**ORDER OF  
SUSPENSION**

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on January 21, 2015. On September 29, 2014, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Stacy Chantel Rothenberger a notice of her right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina educator certificate 253737 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Ms. Rothenberger received the notice on October 4, 2014, as evidenced by postal verification. Ms. Rothenberger did not request a hearing and is in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Rothenberger’s educator certificate for a period of two years commencing on January 21, 2015, and ending on January 20, 2017.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

Ms. Rothenberger holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over twenty years of teaching experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board or the Lexington County School District One (District). Ms. Rothenberger had been employed by the District as a speech-language therapist since 2012. Ms. Rothenberger was assigned to both Lexington High School (LHS) and River Bluff High School (RBHS) until the District Board of Trustees terminated her employment in June 2014.

Ms. Rothenberger’s termination followed a District investigation into allegations that Ms. Rothenberger had violated state and federal laws and the District’s expectations with respect to the provision of special education services and the completion of

mandated Medicaid and special education paperwork. The District found that Ms. Rothenberger's record-keeping in accounting for her time and monitoring student performance was haphazard and incomplete; her Medicaid records in relation to reimbursement reflected serious errors and exclusions; she failed to deliver the required number of minutes of instruction to her speech and language students in accordance with federal and state laws, District expectations and IEP requirements; and that Ms. Rothenberger failed to exercise sound judgment in fulfilling her professional responsibilities.

On April 29, 2014, the LHS Principal informed Ms. Rothenberger via certified mail that she was recommending to the District Superintendent that Ms. Rothenberger's employment with the District be terminated effective immediately. On May 31, 2014, the District Superintendent recommended to the District Board of Trustees that Ms. Rothenberger be immediately dismissed from employment. The District Board of Trustees voted unanimously to accept conditionally the recommendation for dismissal. On June 6, 2014, the District Superintendent notified Ms. Rothenberger of this decision.

On June 18, 2014, Ms. Rothenberger initially requested an evidentiary hearing before the District Board of Trustees, but later withdrew her request on June 19, 2014. The District Board of Trustees subsequently issued an Order sustaining Ms. Rothenberger's termination from employment.

The District reported this matter to SCDE on June 25, 2014. On September 29, 2014, the SCDE sent Ms. Rothenberger a notice of her right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina educator certificate 253737 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Ms. Rothenberger received the notice on October 4, 2014, as evidenced by postal verification. Ms. Rothenberger did not request a hearing and is in default.

#### **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); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 2 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2011). The State Board finds that the

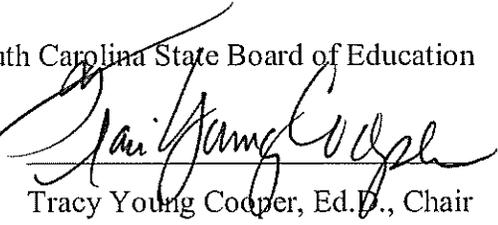
evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Rothenberger engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of her violation of state and federal laws and the District's expectations with respect to the provision of special education services and the completion of mandated Medicaid and special education paperwork. The State Board finds that the information presented supports its conclusion that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Stacy Chantel Rothenberger on the grounds of unprofessional conduct for a period of two years commencing on January 21, 2015, and ending on January 20, 2017.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Stacy Chantel Rothenberger, certificate 253737, is suspended for a period of two years commencing on January 21, 2015, and ending on January 20, 2017. If Ms. Rothenberger wishes to have her 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. Rothenberger shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement of her certificate and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fee.

The suspension of Ms. Rothenberger's educator certificate shall be reported to the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (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

By: 

Tracy Young Cooper, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina  
January 21, 2015