

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the

Disciplinary Action of the

Educator Certificate of

Rita M. F. Pangalangan

Certificate 173701

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The Chair of the South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 20, 2019. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2017), § 59-5-10 (2017), 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 Rita M. F. Pangalangan, educator certificate 173701, as a result of her arrest on the felony count of murder, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-10 (2017).

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Pangalangan holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over twenty-five years of educator experience. At the time of her arrest, Ms. Pangalangan was employed by the Colleton School District (District) as a teacher at Thunderbolt Career and Technology Center (School).

On or about August 5, 2019, the Colleton County Sheriff's Office arrested Ms. Pangalangan on the felony charge of murder, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-10 (2017). It is alleged

that Ms. Pangalangan knowingly and intentionally left her daughter, a 13 year old with special needs, in a parked car from approximately 11:00 am to 4:15 pm. This incident occurred on August 5, 2019, when the recorded outside temperature in the area was 88 to 91 degrees and may have reached 130 to 135 degrees inside the car. When paramedics arrived at the scene, the child was beyond help and subsequently passed away.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Ms. Pangalangan 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 Ms. Pangalangan'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 Ms. Pangalangan of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her 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 (2017); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017). 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 (2017); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2017). In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2017), "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 (2017) and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the Chair of the State Board finds that as a result of the allegations of Ms. Pangalangan'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 her felony arrest for charge of murder, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-10 (2017), there is reason to believe Ms.

Rita M. F. Pangalangan, Certificate 173701
Order of Suspension
August 20, 2019
Page 3

Pangalangan may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required.

Accordingly, the educator certificate of Rita M. F. Pangalangan, educator certificate 173701, is summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Pangalangan of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/Del-Gratia Jones
Del-Gratia Jones, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 20, 2019