

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

In the Matter of the  
Disciplinary Action of the  
Educator Certificate of  
Catherine S. Sullivan  
Certificate 258538

**CONSENT ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on September 10, 2019. On February 27, 2019, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Catherine S. Sullivan a notice letter by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail, regarding possible action against her educator certificate. After receiving the notice letter, Ms. Sullivan contacted the SCDE and advised that she desired to waive her right to a hearing and pursue an alternative resolution in this matter. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

Ms. Sullivan holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over six years of teaching experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Ms. Sullivan was employed by the Berkeley County School District (District) as a teacher at Hanahan Middle School (School). Ms. Sullivan resigned her position due to health/family issues, effective December 3, 2018.

On December 12, 2018, the District reported Ms. Sullivan to the SCDE for allegations she failed to comply with Berkeley County School District Policy. Ms. Sullivan possessed and consumed alcohol on school grounds, which was witnessed by students.

Shortly after the incidents and her resignation, Ms. Sullivan sought and obtained help for alcohol abuse. In statements to the SCDE, Ms. Sullivan communicated her remorse on the matter and her hope that she would have the opportunity to teach again and asserted that her alcohol abuse was the result of exceptional circumstances in her

Catherine S. Sullivan  
258538

8/24/19

Date

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personal life. Ms. Sullivan has provided documentation showing she completed a rehabilitation program on December 19, 2018.

Ms. Sullivan has agreed to waive her right to a hearing and to resolve this disciplinary matter by entering into this Consent Order of Public Reprimand, subject to the following terms: (1) a Public Reprimand shall be issued by the State Board, (2) the Public Reprimand shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order, 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 (2017); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2017). The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the District would not support a conclusion that just cause exists to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of Catherine S. Sullivan; however, the evidence that would be presented would support a conclusion that Ms. Sullivan engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of her drinking alcohol during working hours. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. Sullivan by the State Board.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to Catherine S. Sullivan, certificate 258538. The Public Reprimand shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within

Catherine S. Sullivan  
258538

8/24/19

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Initial

thirty days from the date of this order with the grounds listed as “unprofessional conduct.” This Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE’s web site and shall be maintained as a public record in the SCDE’s Office of General Counsel.

**AND IT IS SO ORDERED.**

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/Michael Brennan  
Michael Brennan, Chair-Elect

Columbia, South Carolina  
September 10, 2019

I, Catherine S. Sullivan, S.C. Educator Certificate 258538, 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 understand that the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Public Reprimand are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I have read the Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of three pages, and I freely and voluntarily agree to the terms set forth therein. I understand that this Order will be presented to the South Carolina State Board of Education for approval on Tuesday, September 10, 2019. I understand this Consent Order will not become effective until approved by the State Board and, if not approved, it shall not constitute an admission against interest in this proceeding or prejudice the right of the State Board to adjudicate this matter. If approved by the State Board, I give the SCDE permission to use my electronic signature in the style of “/S/ name” for required website publication.

s/ Catherine S. Sullivan  
Catherine S. Sullivan

8/1/19  
Date