

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Jennifer Sheaffer,)
)
)
)
Certificate 203135)

ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on June 11, 2019. On August 8, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Jennifer Sheaffer regarding possible action against her educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. Ms. Sheaffer received the notice and requested a hearing. A hearing was held before a State Board appointed hearing officer on April 23, 2019. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Sheaffer holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over thirteen years of educator experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Ms. Sheaffer was employed by Lexington County School District Three as gym teacher at Batesburg-Leesville Middle School during the 2016-17 school year.

On April 20, 2017, Ms. Sheaffer called a student out of the male locker room in order to discipline him after she received a report the student was making fun of her and threatening another student. All of the students in the class began to congregate in the hallway. Ms. Sheaffer proceeded to publically reprimand two students. In the reprimand, Ms. Sheaffer used negative references to one of the students in front of their peers. She then asked the other students in the hallway to join the “roasting” she was giving the student.

During the hearing on April 23, 2019, Ms. Sheaffer introduced what she believed to be mitigating circumstances. However, the hearing officer found Ms. Sheaffer’s conduct rose to the level of unprofessional conduct. The hearing officer’s report and recommendation noted that Ms. Sheaffer had a responsibility to act as a role model. Further, Ms. Sheaffer was on notice of the need for professional conduct after prior

incidents in the District. The hearing officer has recommended a public reprimand of Ms. Sheaffer's educator certification.

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 (Rev. 2004); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017). The State Board finds that the evidence presented supports its conclusion that just cause does not exist to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of Jennifer Sheaffer. The evidence presented, however, demonstrates that Ms. Sheaffer engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of her inappropriate discipline of students. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. Sheaffer by the State Board.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to Jennifer Sheaffer, educator certificate 203135. 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 with the grounds listed as "unprofessional conduct." This 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.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

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

Columbia, South Carolina
June 11, 2019