

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation or)
Suspension of the Educator Certificate of)
Artis O. Coulter,)
Educator Certificate 905100)
_____)

**ORDER OF
SUMMARY SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The Chair of the South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on April 8, 2019. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2016), § 59-5-10 (2016), 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 Arits O. Coulter, educator certificate 905100, as a result of his arrest on the felony count of sexual battery with a student 16 or 17 years of age, no aggravated force or coercion S.C. Code Ann. §16-03-755(B) (2017).

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Mr. Coulter may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students, who may be under his instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Mr. Coulter'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 Mr. Coulter of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Coulter holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has over seven years of educator experience. Mr. Coulter is employed by Orangeburg Consolidated School District Five (District). He was the athletic director at Bethune-Bowman High School (School) at the time of the incident. Mr. Coulter was also a teacher at The Technology Center (Center). The District placed Mr. Coulter on administrative leave on March 25, 2019.

On or about April 2, 2019, the Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office arrested Mr. Coulter on the felony count of sexual battery with a student 16 or 17 years of age, no aggravated force or coercion S.C. Code Ann. §16-03-755(B) (2017). It is alleged that Mr. Coulter engaged in an inappropriate sexual relationship, on multiple occasions, with a sixteen year old female student on School grounds.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Mr. Coulter may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students who may be under his instruction, and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Mr. Coulter'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 Mr. Coulter of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of his 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). 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 Ann. 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 Mr. Coulter's unprofessional conduct and evident unfitness for the position for which employed due to his felony arrest for sexual battery with a student 16 or 17 years of age, no aggravated force or coercion S.C. Code Ann. §16-03-755(B) (2017). There is reason to believe Mr. Coulter may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required.

Accordingly, the educator certificate of Artis O. Coulter, educator certificate 905100, 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 Mr. Coulter of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate.

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AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: /S/ Del-Gratia Jones

Del-Gratia Jones, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
April 8, 2019