

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the)
)
Disciplinary Action of the)
)
Educator Certificate of)
)
Whitney Brooke Wilkins)
)
Certificate 235756)

**CONSENT ORDER OF
PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on May 14, 2019. On March 26, 2019, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Whitney Brooke Wilkins 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. Wilkins contacted the SCDE and advised that she desired to waive her right to a hearing and wished to 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. Wilkins holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over eight years of teaching experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Ms. Wilkins was employed by the School District of Newberry County (District) as a school psychologist. Ms. Wilkins was placed on administrative leave on October 9, 2018, and subsequently resigned her employment effective December 3, 2018.

On December 10, 2018, the District reported Ms. Wilkins to the SCDE for allegations she failed to comply with Newberry County School District Policy. Ms. Wilkins failed to report two incidents where she was arrested and charged with criminal offenses, including driving under the influence and child endangerment. Ms. Wilkins had notice of the policy but nonetheless did not disclose her arrests.

Whitney
Brooke
Wilkins
235756

Initial

Date

Shortly after the incidents and her resignation, Ms. Wilkins sought and obtained help for alcohol abuse. Ms. Wilkins has provided documentation showing she completed a rehabilitation program on January 12, 2019.

Ms. Wilkins 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 Whitney Brooke Wilkins; however, the evidence that would be presented would support a conclusion that Ms. Wilkins engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of her two arrests for driving under the influence and related charges and her failure to report the arrests to the District, as was required by District policy. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. Wilkins by the State Board.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to Whitney Brooke Wilkins, certificate 235756. 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

Whitney
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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.

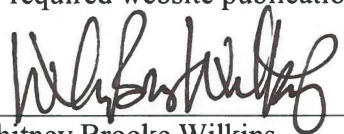
AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education


Del-Gratia Jones, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
May 14, 2019

I, Whitney Brooke Wilkins, S.C. Educator Certificate 235756, 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, May 14, 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.


Whitney Brooke Wilkins

5/2/2019
Date