

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Leslie Fullington Youngblood,)
)
Certificate 244288)

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

(BREACH OF CONTRACT)

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on May 14, 2019. On March 4, 2019, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) served Leslie Fullington Youngblood a notice of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, delivery restricted to addressee. Ms. Youngblood has received the notice, as evidenced by the signed postal receipt, and has not requested a hearing in this matter. She is now in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Youngblood's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on May 14, 2019, and ending on May 12, 2020.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This case concerns a formal complaint by Anderson School District Five (District) recommending the suspension of the educator certificate of Leslie Fullington Youngblood for breach of contract. The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2018) and S.C. Code Ann § 59-25-530 (2018).

Ms. Youngblood holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over seven years of teaching experience. On April 23, 2018, Ms. Youngblood signed a Contractual Agreement with the District to serve as a math teacher at Glenview Middle School for the 2018-2019 school year. Ms. Youngblood submitted a letter of resignation on January 16, 2019, effective January 31, 2019. On January 16, 2019, the District informed Ms. Youngblood that she was expected to fulfill her contract. By letter on January 23, 2019, the District reminded Ms. Youngblood of this expectation and informed her of the possible consequences of breaching her contract if she failed to report to work. Ms. Youngblood did not report to work after January 30, 2019.

On February 19, 2019, the District Board of Trustees found that Ms. Youngblood failed to comply with the provisions of her contract and that her behavior constituted a breach of her employment contract with the District. The District voted to report Ms. Youngblood's breach of

contract to SCDE and the State Board. On February 28, 2019, the District reported this matter to SCDE, requesting that the State Board suspend Ms. Youngblood's educator certificate.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The State Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2018). Just cause includes, *inter alia*, "willful violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education", and "unprofessional conduct" S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (3) and (4) (2018). Pursuant to S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 and (14) (2011), the State Board of Education has the legal authority, *inter alia*, to suspend a certificate for "failure to comply with the provisions of a contract without the written consent of the local school board." The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Youngblood breached her contract and engaged in unprofessional conduct, willfully neglected her duty, and failed to comply with the provisions of her contract without the written consent of the District.

With respect to breach of contract, "any teacher who fails to comply with the provisions of his [of her] contract without written consent of the school board shall be deemed guilty of unprofessional conduct." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-530 (2017). "Upon the formal complaint of the school board, substantiated by conclusive evidence, the state board shall suspend or revoke the teacher's certificate, for a period not to exceed one calendar year." *Id.*

The evidence presented further supports the State Board's determination that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Leslie Fullington Youngblood, certificate 244288, for a period of one year, commencing on May 14, 2019, and ending on May 12, 2020.

If Ms. Youngblood wishes to have her educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services, and shall meet all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement. Ms. Youngblood shall also pay the applicable reinstatement fee. The suspension of Ms. Youngblood's educator certificate 244288 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order, with the reason stated as "unprofessional conduct, breach of contract, and failure to comply with the provisions of a contract without the written consent of the local school board."

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AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 
Del-Gratia Jones, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
May 14, 2019