

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the

Disciplinary Action of the

Educator Certificate of

Teresa B. Driscoll Freeman

Certificate 154523

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered the matter on October 8, 2019. On July 30, 2019, and September 5, 2019, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent a notice letter to Teresa B. Driscoll Freeman informing her that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding the possible disciplinary action of her educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, delivery restricted to addressee. On September 9, 2019, Ms. Freeman sent an electronic notice to the SCDE, stating that she will not request a hearing concerning the matter of her educator certificate.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Freeman's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on October 8, 2019, and ending on October 7, 2021.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

Ms. Freeman holds a valid South Carolina educator certificate and has over thirty years of teaching experience. Ms. Freeman was employed by the Lancaster County School District (District) as a special education teacher at North Elementary School (School) for the 2018-19 school year.

On April 5, 2018, the SCDE learned a parent had placed an audio recording device on her nonverbal child. In the recording, Ms. Freeman used an aggressive tone and manner in her treatment of students. Ms. Freeman and her teacher assistants discussed inappropriate topics in front of the students, including public discussions of some students' personal health issues. Other topics included a local massage parlor, older people being more likely to die from the flu, and

community gossip of a recent divorce. These discussions were held during instructional time. Ms. Freeman also used inappropriate language in the presence of students and encouraged a student to strike another classmate.

Ms. Freeman resigned from the District on April 19, 2019. The SCDE notified Ms. Freeman of the pending action against her certification on July 30, 2019, and on September 5, 2019. On September 9, 2019, Ms. Freeman called the SCDE to discuss her options. She then wrote an electronic message informing the SCDE that she is declining her right to a hearing on the matter of her educator certificate.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Freeman's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on October 8, 2019, and ending on October 7, 2021.

#### **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 (2016); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Freeman engaged in unprofessional conduct by engaging in inappropriate discussions during instructional time, using inappropriate language in front of students, and encouraging violence in her classroom.

Accordingly, the evidence presented supports the State Board's determination that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Teresa B. Driscoll Freeman, Educator Certificate 154523, for a period of two years, commencing on October 8, 2019, and ending on October 7, 2021.

If Ms. Freeman 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. The suspension of Ms. Freeman's Educator Certificate 154523 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

Teresa B. Driscoll Freeman, Certificate 154523  
Order of Suspension  
October 8, 2019  
Page 3

**AND IT IS SO ORDERED.**

South Carolina State Board of Education

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

Columbia, South Carolina  
October 8, 2019