

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the

Disciplinary Action of the

Educator Certificate of

Thomas Paul Gantt

Certificate 904401

CONSENT ORDER

OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on October 8, 2019. On May 2, 2019, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Thomas Paul Gantt a notice letter by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail, regarding possible action against his educator certificate. After receiving the notice letter, Mr. Gantt contacted the SCDE and advised that he desired to waive his right to a hearing and wished to pursue an alternative resolution in this matter. Mr. Gantt has agreed to this Consent Order of Suspension. Further, he has agreed to complete the NASDTEC Prevention & Correction course.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension of Mr. Gantt's educator certificate for a period of six months, commencing on October 8, 2019, and ending on April 6, 2020.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Gantt holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over sixteen years of educator experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board.

Mr. Gantt was employed by the Greenville County School District (District) as an automotive instructor for the Enoree Career Center. Mr. Gantt was reported to administration for engaging in social media messaging with students. Mr. Gantt admitted to messaging students and engaging with students outside of school, particularly the automotive students that went to the drag strip with him. Some students reported

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feeling uncomfortable with the social communications. However, Mr. Gantt has asserted there was no inappropriate intent.

Mr. Gantt has agreed to waive his right to a hearing and to resolve this disciplinary matter by entering into an alternate resolution to the action against his educator certificate. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Mr. Gantt's educator certificate for a period of six months, commencing on October 8, 2019, and ending on April 6, 2020. Mr. Gantt will complete the NASDTEC Prevention & Correction course prior to his reinstatement.

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 demonstrates that Mr. Gantt engaged in unprofessional conduct by using engaging in inappropriate communications with students. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Mr. Gantt's educator certificate for a period of six months, commencing on October 8, 2019, and ending on April 6, 2020. Mr. Gantt will also be required to complete the NASDTEC Prevention & Correction course prior to requesting reinstatement of his educator certification.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the educator certificate of Thomas Paul Gantt, certificate 904401, is suspended for a period of six months, commencing on October 8, 2019, and ending on April 6, 2020. Mr. Gantt is required to complete the NASDTEC Prevention & Correction course prior to the reinstatement of his educator certification.

If Mr. Gantt wishes to have his certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services and submit proof of completion of the NASDTEC course. Mr. Gantt shall be

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responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Mr. Gantt's educator certificate shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

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

Columbia, South Carolina
October 8, 2019

I, Thomas Paul Gantt, S.C. Educator Certificate 904401, 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 Suspension are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I have read the Consent Order of Suspension, 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, October 8, 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.

s/ Thomas Paul Gantt
Thomas Paul Gantt

9/6/19
Date