

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the

Disciplinary Action of the

Educator Certificate of

Michelle Davidson Johnson

Certificate 292212

CONSENT ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 13, 2019. On May 21, 2019, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Michelle Davidson Johnson 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. Johnson contacted the SCDE and advised that she desired to waive her right to a hearing and pursue an alternative resolution in this matter. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept this Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Johnson holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over eighteen years of experience. Ms. Johnson was a teacher with District Five Schools of Spartanburg County (District).

On August 8, 2018, Ms. Johnson submitted an application to the District that stated she obtained a master's degree in mathematics in June of 2010. In the cover letter section of the application, Ms. Johnson stated she had a master's degree in secondary math and was finishing a master's degree in curriculum leadership. A resume that was attached to the application also cited a master's degree in mathematics from North Carolina. During a routine check of all educator certificates, the District learned Ms. Johnson's South Carolina educator certification did not record a master's degree. The District had been paying Ms. Johnson on a higher scale due to their belief she had obtained a master's degree. When asked to provide proof of a master's degree, Ms.

Johnson was unable to provide the required documentation. She resigned from the District, effective June 3, 2019.

Ms. Johnson has agreed to waive her right to a hearing and 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 OGC. 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 Michelle Davidson Johnson; however, the evidence that would be presented would support a conclusion that Ms. Johnson engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of a misrepresentation of her academic credentials. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. Johnson by the State Board.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to Michelle Davidson Johnson, certificate 292212. 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 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.

(signature page attached)

Michelle Davidson Johnson, Certificate 292212
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AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/Del-Gratia Jones

Del-Gratia Jones, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 13, 2019

I, Michelle Davidson Johnson, S.C. Educator Certificate 292212, 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, August 13, 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/Michelle David Johnson

Michelle Davidson Johnson

05/28/2019

Date