

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Discipline)
)
of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Michael Fredrick Grimsley)
)
Certificate 236912)

**CONSENT ORDER OF
PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on June 11, 2019. On November 29, 2018, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Michael Fredrick Grimsley notice informing him that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding possible disciplinary action of his educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. After receiving the notice, Mr. Grimsley informed the SCDE that he agreed to waive his right to a hearing and pursue an alternative resolution in this matter. After considering the information presented by the SCDE, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Grimsley holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over 10 years of teach experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Grimsley began teaching in the Lexington County School District One (District) in 2013 as an orchestra teacher and archery team coach at Gilbert Middle School (School).

On March 16, 2018, the SCDE received a letter from the District reporting Mr. Grimsley's resignation, citing "a concern related to his conduct as a teacher" and pursuant to South Carolina State Board Regulation, R. 43-58.1. Mr. Grimsley was placed on administrative leave on January 10, 2018, following allegations that he inappropriately communicated with students through social media, in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004). Mr. Grimsley resigned in lieu of termination on February 6, 2018.

Mr. Grimsley contacted Student A on December 23rd by using a "bitmoji" character, created with an application that allows a user to make an animated cartoon version of themselves. She recognized him in his profile as her former orchestra teacher. Mr. Grimsley continued conversing with Student A about personal events and happenings posted on her account, until Student A's mother intervened and put a stop to it. Mr.

Michael
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Grimsley “friended” Student B on the social media platform Instagram during the winter break. She recognized Mr. Grimsley as her former orchestra teacher. She discussed orchestra auditions with him and he commented on a picture she posted. Student B also told the District about Student C, another female student, who had received messages from Mr. Grimsley. Mr. Grimsley first followed Student C using the School’s archery account. He later used his personal account to message her around Christmas Day. Student C reported Mr. Grimsley’s messages to her father. Mr. Grimsley admitted contacting two other former students, Student D and Student E. Student D did submit screenshots of her conversations with Mr. Grimsley to the District. Both students felt the Snapchat messages were odd but did not feel uncomfortable with Mr. Grimsley.

Mr. Grimsley admitted that, in hindsight, he saw how they were perceived as inappropriate communications, but that was not his intention. He apologized for making any of the students feel uncomfortable.

Mr. Grimsley waives his right to a hearing and understands that the terms set forth are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. Mr. Grimsley consents to the 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 all school districts in South Carolina, (3) shall be reported to NASDTEC, (4) the Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE’s website and will be maintained as a public record in the SCDE’s Office of General Counsel, and (5) Mr. Grimsley shall complete SCDE-approved boundary training within 60\sixty days of the date of the signing of this order by the Board Chair. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

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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 (Rev. 2004); The State Board may, for just cause, issue a public reprimand. 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2011). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-2-160 (Rev. 2004). The State Board finds that the evidence presented supports its conclusion that just cause does

not exist to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of Michael Grimsley and that the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Mr. Grimsley by the State Board is an appropriate sanction in this matter. The State Board finds that the record outlined above demonstrates that Mr. Grimsley engaged in unprofessional conduct by inappropriately communicating with students through social media.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the Consent Order of Public Reprimand is accepted and issued to Michael Fredrick Grimsley, certificate 236912. This public reprimand of Mr. Grimsley'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
June 11, 2019

I, Michael Fredrick Grimsley, S.C. Educator Certificate 236912, 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 the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Public Reprimand are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I agree to the terms of this Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the State Board for approval on June 11, 2019. I understand this 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/M. F. Grimsley

Michael Fredrick Grimsley

5/16/19

Date