

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of	)	
	)	ORDER OF SUSPENSION
Amanda Mable Morrish	)	
	)	(BREACH OF CONTRACT)
Educator Certificate 286987	)	
_____	)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 12, 2019. On January 23, 2019, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) notified Amanda Mable Morrish, via regular and certified mail, of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate regarding her alleged breach of contract with Richland School District One (District). Ms. Morrish received the certified mail. On February 7, 2019, she contacted the SCDE to inform them she would not be requesting a hearing in this matter.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Morrish's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on March 12, 2019, and ending on March 11, 2020.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This case concerns a formal complaint by the District, seeking the suspension of the educator certificate of Amanda Mable Morrish for breach of contract. The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2017) and S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-530 (2017).

On April 26, 2018, Ms. Morrish signed a contract with the District for the 2018-2019 school year, agreeing to serve as a teacher at Watkins-Nance Elementary School (School). Ms. Morrish failed to report to work after September 25, 2018, and submitted a letter of resignation via email on September 28, 2018. She was informed she would not be released from her contract until a suitable replacement could be found. Ms. Morrish failed to return to work. On December 11, 2018, the District voted to submit the breach of contract matter to the SCDE.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Morrish's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on March 12, 2019, and ending on March 11, 2020.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

“The State Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person.” Just cause includes, *inter alia*, “unprofessional conduct” and “willful violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (3) and (4) (2017). Pursuant to 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2) and (14) (Supp. 2017), the State Board of Education has the legal authority, *inter alia*, to suspend a certificate for “willful neglect of duty” and “failure to comply with the provisions of a contract without the written consent of the local school board.” 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 State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Morrish breached her contract and engaged in unprofessional conduct, and failed to comply with the provisions of her contract. The evidence presented further supports the State Board’s determination that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Amanda Mable Morrish, certificate 286987, for a period of one year, commencing on March 12, 2019, and ending on March 11, 2020. If Ms. Morrish 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. Morrish shall also pay all applicable reinstatement fees.

The suspension of Ms. Morrish’s educator certificate 286987 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within 30 days from the date of this order, with the reason stated as “unprofessional conduct, breach of contract, willful neglect of duty, and failure to comply with the provisions of a contract without the written consent of the local school board.”

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 
Del-Gratia Jones, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
March 12, 2019