

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension	)	
	)	
of the Educator Certificate of	)	ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND
	)	
Tiffany Elaine Williams,	)	
	)	
<u>Certificate 286045</u>	)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 12, 2019. On February 1, 2019, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Tiffany Elaine Williams regarding possible action against her educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. Ms. Williams received the notice, as evidenced by the signed postal receipt. She has not contacted the SCDE to request a hearing and is now in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Williams holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has less than one year of educator experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Ms. Williams was employed by the Charleston County School District as an English teacher at the Military Magnet School during the 2017-18 school year.

On May 11, 2018, Ms. Williams was involved in a confrontation with a student who was wearing a sweatshirt on his head. A verbal confrontation occurred in the hallway outside of her classroom and, after another student eventually removed the sweatshirt, the students and Ms. Williams entered the classroom. Once inside the classroom, Ms. Williams addressed the student in a disciplinary manner and asked him his last name. The student sat at his desk and did not answer her question. The student then moved to walk out of the classroom; however, Ms. Williams physically blocked the exit. The student leaned into Ms. Williams and she used her fingertips to push the student away from her. The student then pushed Ms. Williams back. Ms. Williams grabbed the student's jacket and placed him in a hold, using her arms to grip the student and prevent him from moving. The altercation eventually spilled into the hallway before reaching a resolution as other staff arrived. Ms.

Williams was placed on administrative leave on May 11, 2018. She was subsequently terminated effective June 25, 2018.

In a conversation between Ms. Williams and an investigator from the SCDE, Ms. Williams advised she would not be contesting the allegations with the SCDE. She has decided to pursue an alternative career and does not intend to return to teaching.

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 (Rev. 2004); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017). 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 Tiffany Elaine Williams. The evidence presented, however, demonstrates that Ms. Williams engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of her physical altercation with a student. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. Williams by the State Board.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to Tiffany Elaine Williams, educator certificate 286045. 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 Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE’s website and shall be maintained as a public record in the SCDE’s Office of General Counsel.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education


Del-Gratia Jones, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
March 12, 2019