

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
 or Revocation of the Educator)
)
 Certificate of Kory D. Vrieze)
)
Certificate ~~127439~~ ²²²⁶²¹)

CONSENT

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

This matter comes before the South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) on August 12, 2015. On March 2, 2015, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent a notice letter of the possible suspension or revocation of South Carolina educator certificate ~~127439~~ ²²²⁶²¹ to Mr. Kory D. Vrieze by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, based on the grounds of unprofessional conduct. On March 16, 2015, Mr. Vrieze contacted the SCDE and acknowledged receipt of notice. Mr. Vrieze requested an alternative resolution and agreed to waive his right to a hearing and enter into this Consent Order of Suspension of his educator certificate for a period of two years beginning August 12, 2015, and ending August 11, 2017.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension and suspend the Mr. Vrieze's educator certificate for a period of two years commencing on August 12, 2015, and ending August 11, 2017.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Vrieze holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over thirteen years of teaching experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board or with the Greenville County School District (District), where he had been employed as a Band Director and teacher at Riverside High School (School) for eight years.

On May 16, 2014, Mr. Vrieze was placed on administrative leave following allegations that Mr. Vrieze had engaged in inappropriate conduct with a female student (16 years of age) and failed to report that a student claimed to have been sexually assaulted. He subsequently tendered his resignation on May 23, 2015. The student stated that during the summer of 2013 she and Mr. Vrieze began communicating using Facebook and Snapchat. Mr. Vrieze acknowledged that communications, both in person and by phone, became more frequent after school started and that the two became too familiar. In the fall of 2013, the student, after attending a "rave" party, telephoned him and stated that she had been sexually assaulted. Mr. Vrieze allowed her to stay at his house that night since her parents were out of state and she refused to stay home alone or report the sexual assault to the police. Mr. Vrieze allowed the student to sleep on his couch. The statements of both Mr. Vrieze and the student confirm that the student told Mr. Vrieze that she had been sexually assaulted while at the "rave." As a teacher, Mr. Vrieze is a mandated reporter in South Carolina. Mr. Vrieze acknowledges that he did not report the student's account of sexual assault at the "rave" to his administrators or to the police.

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CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The State Board, upon careful review of the evidence presented, makes the following conclusions of law in this matter:

- (1) The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004), which provides "The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, revoke or suspend the certificate of any person."
- (2) Just cause is statutorily defined to include "unprofessional conduct." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004).
- (3) The evidence, which is undisputed by Mr. Vrieze, demonstrates that Mr. Vrieze engaged in unprofessional conduct through his inappropriate conduct with a female student and his failure to report the student's alleged sexual assault.
- (4) The evidence presented supports the State Board's decision to accept the suspension of the educator certificate of Kory D. Vrieze, certificate 127439, for a period of two years beginning August 12, 2015, and ending August 11, 2017.

Kory D. Vrieze
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Now, therefore, it is ordered that the educator certificate of Kory D. Vrieze, certificate ~~127439~~ ²²²⁶²¹, is hereby suspended for a period of two years, beginning August 12, 2015, and ending August 11, 2017. This suspension of certificate 127439 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order. If Mr. Vrieze wishes to have his educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, he must meet all current certification requirements and shall submit a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Mr. Vrieze shall be responsible for the payment of all applicable fees, including any reinstatement fees.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By:

Traci Young Cooper

Traci Young Cooper, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 12, 2015

I, Kory D. Vrieze, S.C. Educator Certificate ~~127439~~ ²²²⁶²¹, hereby waive my right to a hearing in this matter. I have read and understood the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Suspension. I agree that the findings of facts and conclusions of law contained in this Consent Order Suspension are true. I understand that the terms of this Consent Order of Suspension, upon execution, are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I hereby freely, knowingly and of my own accord, agree to the suspension of my educator certificate for a period of two years by the South Carolina State Board of Education. I understand that this Order will be presented to the State Board on August 12, 2015.

Kory D. Vrieze

7/1/15