BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of Action Against	)	
	)	
the Educator Certificate	)	**CONSENT ORDER OF**
	)	
of Natalie K. Wilkinson	)	**PUBLIC REPRIMAND**
	)	
Certificate 227763	)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 12, 2015. On May 21, 2015, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Natalie K. Wilkinson regarding possible disciplinary action of her educator certificate by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. After receiving the notice, Ms. Wilkinson informed the SCDE that she agreed to waive her right to a hearing and accept a public reprimand. After considering the information presented by the SCDE, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

Accepted: Natalie K. Wilkinson 227763
Initial Here NKW
Date 7/20/15

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Wilkinson holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Ms. Wilkinson was employed by the Oconee County School District (District) as a Supervisor Study Aid, girls basketball coach and girls softball coach at Walhalla High School (School) from 2013 until her resignation effective June 6, 2014. On May 23, 2014, the parent of a student reported allegations that Ms. Wilkinson had engaged in inappropriate conversations with female students and contacted them outside of school regarding non-school related matters. On May 23, 2014, Ms. Wilkinson was placed on administrative leave until the effective date of her resignation, June 6, 2014.

On May 21, 2015, the SCDE sent notice to Ms. Wilkinson regarding possible disciplinary action of her educator certificate by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. After receiving notice Ms. Wilkinson informed the SCDE that she agreed to waive her right to a hearing and accept a public reprimand. After considering the information presented by the SCDE, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

Ms. Wilkinson acknowledges that she was too friendly with her students and that some of her conversations with her students could be considered unprofessional conduct for a teacher. She waives her right to a hearing and understands that the terms set forth are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. Ms. Wilkinson 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 with

the grounds listed as "unprofessional conduct," 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 SCDE's Office of General Counsel. 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 (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, which is undisputed by Ms. Wilkinson, demonstrates that Ms. Wilkinson engaged in unprofessional conduct, as a result of her poor judgment while communicating with students and that just cause exists to publicly reprimand Ms. Wilkinson. The evidence presented supports the State Board's decision to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the Consent Order of Public Reprimand is accepted and issued to Natalie K. Wilkinson, certificate 227763. The public reprimand of Ms. Wilkinson, certificate 227763 shall be reported to 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

Dr. Traci Young Cooper, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

August 12, 2015

I, Natalie K. Wilkinson, S.C. Educator Certificate 227763, have read the Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of two pages, and I freely and voluntarily agree to the terms set forth therein. I agree to the proposed Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of two pages, and understand that this Order will be presented as signed to the South Carolina State Board of Education on August 12, 2015.

Signature

Date 7/20/15