

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
or Revocation of the)
)
Educator Certificate of)
)
Haley T. Smith)
)
Certificate 235897)
_____)

**ORDER OF
SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on September 9, 2015. On April 3, 2015, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Haley Smith a notice of her right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina educator certificate 235897 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Ms. Smith received the notice on April 17, 2015, as evidenced by signed postal receipt. Ms. Smith did not request a hearing in this matter and is in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspended Ms. Smith’s educator certificate for a period of two years commencing on September 9, 2015, and ending on September 8, 2017.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Smith holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over seven years of teaching experience. Ms. Smith had been employed by the Oconee County School District (District) since August 2008 as an English teacher at Walhalla High School (School), until her resignation on September 12, 2014.

Ms. Smith’s resignation followed allegations in early September 2014 that Ms. Smith had referred to sexual content in class and engaged in inappropriate communication with a male student via Facebook. When confronted about the content in her classroom, Ms. Smith admitted to showing an inappropriate commercial of a risqué’ nature to her students. Several students informed the District that Ms. Smith made sexual remarks in class. About a week later, Ms. Smith requested a meeting with administration

concerning a rumor that she was messaging some of the football players. Upon investigation, Facebook messages from Ms. Smith to one of the football players were discovered and determined to be of an inappropriate and sexual nature. Ms. Smith immediately resigned, effective September 12, 2014.

On April 3, 2015, the SCDE served Ms. Smith with a notice of her right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina educator certificate 235897 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Ms. Smith received the notice on April 17, 2015, as evidenced by a signed postal receipt. Ms. Smith did not request a hearing in this matter and is in default.

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); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004); 2 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2011). The State Board finds that the evidence presented, demonstrates that Ms. Smith engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of her poor judgment in making inappropriate comments of a sexual nature in class, showing an inappropriate commercial in her classroom, and her communication of a sexual nature with a male student. The State Board finds that the information presented supports its conclusion that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Haley T. Smith on the grounds of unprofessional conduct for a period of two years commencing on September 9, 2015, and ending on September 8, 2017.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Haley T. Smith, certificate 235897, is suspended for a period of two years commencing on September 9, 2015, and ending on September 8, 2017. If Ms. Smith wishes to have her certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, she shall make a written request to the SCDE’s Office of Educator Services. She shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees.

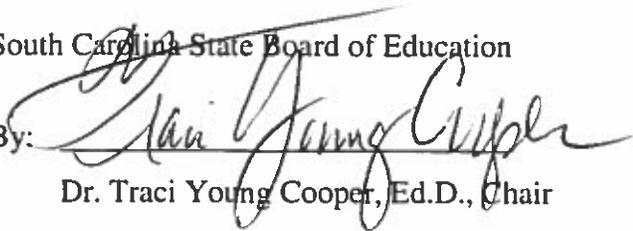
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The suspension of Ms. Smith's educator certificate shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By:


Dr. Traci Young Cooper, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

September 9, 2015