

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
of the Educator Certificate of) **CONSENT ORDER OF SUSPENSION**
)
Luther S. Meetze)
)
Certificate 239932)
_____)

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on December 8, 2011. On June 10, 2010, in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2004), § 59-5-10 (2004), and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the Chair of the State Board summarily suspended the educator certificate of Luther S. Meetze, certificate 239932, as a result of his arrest on criminal charges on June 9, 2010, in Richland County, South Carolina. On June 17, 2010, the SCDE sent notice of the summary suspension to Mr. Meetze, as directed by the State Board Chair by certified and regular mail. On June 28, 2010, Mr. Meetze’s attorney sent SCDE a letter of representation and requested that all disciplinary action related to Mr. Meetze’s certificate be held in abeyance pending the disposition of the criminal case. On September 1, 2011, Mr. Meetze pled guilty to one misdemeanor charge of Assault and Battery, second degree, in the Richland County Court of General Sessions.

Following the resolution of the criminal charges, counsel for Mr. Meetze informed the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) that Mr. Meetze had agreed to waive his right to a hearing and desired to pursue an alternative resolution to this matter. Counsel for Mr. Meetze stated that Mr. Meetze had agreed to the suspension of his educator certificate for a period of one year. After reviewing the evidence presented, the State Board voted to lift the summary suspension and suspend Mr. Meetze’s certificate for a period of one year, commencing on December 8, 2011, and ending on December 7, 2012, subject to the terms specified herein.

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FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Meetze holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has two years of teaching experience. Mr. Meetze had been employed by Lexington Richland School District Five as a physical education teacher at Chapin Middle School. On June 9, 2010, Mr. Meetze was arrested in Richland County, South Carolina, on criminal charges that resulted from a confrontation Mr. Meetze had with his ex-fiancé at her apartment.

On June 10, 2010, in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2004), § 59-5-10 (2004), and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the SCDE requested that the Chair of the State Board summarily suspend Mr. Meetze's educator certificate 239932, as a result of his arrest on June 9, 2010, on criminal charges. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board summarily suspended Mr. Meetze's educator certificate until a due process hearing could be held and/or the matter was otherwise resolved. The Chair of the State Board directed the SCDE to serve notice on Mr. Meetze of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate. Mr. Meetze's educator certificate has been summarily suspended for approximately eighteen months.

On June 17, 2010, the SCDE sent notice of the summary suspension to Mr. Meetze, as directed by the State Board by certified and regular mail. Mr. Meetze received the notice and retained legal counsel. On June 28, 2010, the SCDE received a letter of representation from Mr. Meetze's attorney requesting that all action related to Mr. Meetze's certificate be held in abeyance pending the disposition of the criminal case. On September 1, 2011, in the Richland County Court of General Sessions, Mr. Meetze pled guilty to one count of Assault and Battery, second degree, S. C. Code Ann. § 16-3-600(D)(1)(Supp. 2010). Assault and Battery second degree is a Class A misdemeanor charge. All other criminal charges against Mr. Meetze were dismissed or nol prossed.

After the criminal charges were resolved, counsel for Mr. Meetze contacted the SCDE and stated that Mr. Meetze desired to waive his right to a hearing and wanted to pursue an alternative resolution to this matter. Counsel for Mr. Meetze informed SCDE that Mr. Meetze agreed to the suspension of his educator certificate for a period of one

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year subject to the terms stated herein. After reviewing the evidence presented, the State Board voted to lift the summary suspension and suspend Mr. Meetze's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on December 8, 2011, and ending on December 7, 2012, subject to the terms specified herein

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The State Board may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person. S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-25-150 (2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct and crime against the law of this State. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (Supp. 2010.) The State Board finds that the evidence presented supports its conclusion that Mr. Meetze has engaged in unprofessional conduct and has committed a crime against the law of this State as a result of his guilty plea to Assault and Battery, second degree, a Class A misdemeanor offense. The State Board finds that just cause exists to lift the summary suspension and suspend the educator certificate of Luther S. Meetze, certificate 239932, for a period of one year, beginning on December 8, 2011, and ending on December 7, 2012. During the period of suspension, Mr. Meetze shall not volunteer or be employed, in any capacity, in any South Carolina school district. The suspension of Mr. Meetze's educator certificate will be reported to all school districts in South Carolina and the NASDTEC Clearinghouse as a one year suspension, commencing December 8, 2011, and ending on December 7, 2012, with the reason for suspension stated as "unprofessional conduct and crime against the law of this state."

If Mr. Meetze wishes to have his educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, he must make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Certification, Recruitment, and Preparation. Mr. Meetze agrees that he shall be responsible for providing the SCDE with documentation listed in State Board Rule BBCDB, items one through six, and for meeting all current certification requirements. Mr. Meetze will also be responsible for paying a reinstatement fee.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

Luther S.
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Date

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: *Gerrita Postlewait*
Gerrita Postlewait, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
December 8, 2011

I, Luther S. Meetze, S.C. Educator Certificate 239932, understand that there has been an investigation concerning alleged violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of education certificate holders and that I have waived my right to a hearing in this matter. I hereby freely, knowingly and voluntarily enter into this Consent Order of Suspension. I agree that during the suspension period, I will not serve as a volunteer or be employed in any capacity, as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher, coach, or in any other position in a public school in the State of South Carolina. I agree to the terms of the Consent Order of Suspension, consisting of four pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the State Board of Education on December 8, 2011.

Luther Meetze
Luther S. Meetze

12-1-11
Date