

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the)
)
Permanent Revocation)
)
of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Carole Ann Hendrix Hope,)
)
Certificate 188311)
_____)

**ORDER OF PERMANENT
REVOCATION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 13, 2014. On or about November 2, 2011, Ms. Carole Ann Hope was arrested in Darlington, South Carolina and charged with Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, second degree, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(B) (Supp. 2011), a class A felony and Committing or Attempting Lewd Act Upon a Child Under Sixteen, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-140 (Supp. 2011), a class D felony. On November 4, 2011, Ms. Hope was subsequently charged with violating the same code sections in Horry County, South Carolina. On November 4, 2011, the Chair of the State Board summarily suspended Mr. Hope’s educator certificate. On November 7, 2011, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Ms. Hope of the summary suspension and her right to a hearing by regular and certified mail. On January 30, 2012, SCDE received notice from Ms. Hope’s attorney requesting the SCDE suspend any action against Ms. Hope’s teaching certificate until any criminal charges against Ms. Hope were resolved.

On April 16, 2014, Ms. Hope plead guilty to three charges of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, second degree, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(B)(2) (Supp. 2013). The Court sentenced Ms. Hope to ten years in prison, provided that upon the service of two years, the balance would be suspended with probation for five years. The Court also ordered that Ms. Hope must register as a sex offender.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Ms. Hope’s educator certificate 188311, effective August 13, 2014.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 and S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004).

Ms. Hope holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate that is currently suspended and has over fourteen years of teaching experience. Ms. Hope had been employed by the

Chesterfield County School District (District) as a seventh grade teacher at New Heights Middle School (School). Ms. Hope was arrested November 2, 2011, in Darlington, South Carolina and charged with Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, second degree, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(B) (Supp. 2011), a class A felony, and Committing or Attempting Lewd Act Upon a Child Under Sixteen, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-140 (Supp. 2011), a class D felony. On November 4, 2011, Ms. Hope was subsequently charged with violating the same code sections in Horry County, South Carolina. The charges alleged that Ms. Hope committed these offenses with a minor victim between the dates of March 1, 2011, and October 31, 2011, when she was employed by the District.

In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. §1-23-370(C) (2004) and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the SCDE requested that the Chair of the State Board summarily suspend Ms. Hope's educator certificate as a result of her arrest and her alleged unprofessional conduct of a sexual nature with a minor victim. On November 4, 2011, the Chair of the State Board summarily suspended Ms. Hope's educator certificate. On November 7, 2011, South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Ms. Hope of the summary suspension and her right to a hearing by regular and certified mail. On November 30, 2011, the district terminated Ms. Hope's employment with the District.

On January 30, 2012, the SCDE received notice from Ms. Hope's attorney requesting the SCDE suspend any action against Ms. Hope's teaching certificate until any criminal charges against Ms. Hope were resolved.

On April 16, 2014, Ms. Hope plead guilty to three counts of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, second degree, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(B)(2) (Supp. 2013). Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor is a class A felony and is defined as a violent and most serious crime. S.C. Code Ann. § 16-1-60 (2003 & Supp. 2013). During the plea hearing, Ms. Hope admitted to having a sexual relationship with a fourteen year old male student. The Court sentenced Ms. Hope to ten years in prison, provided that upon the service of two years, the balance would be suspended with probation for five years. The Court also ordered that Ms. Hope must register as a sex offender.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Ms. Hope's educator certificate 188311, effective August 13, 2014.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

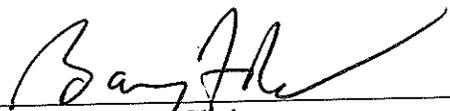
"The State Board may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004). Just cause includes "unprofessional conduct, conduct involving

moral turpitude, crime against the law of this State, immorality, and evident unfitness for position for which employed.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (Rev. 2004); 2 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2011). Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-280 (A)(1) (Supp. 2012), the State Board shall permanently revoke a certificate without a hearing if the holder of the certificate pleads guilty to a violent crime as defined in S.C. Code Ann. § 16-1-60 (Supp. 2012). Ms. Hope plead guilty to three charges of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a minor, second degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(B)(2) (2013) which is classified as a violent and most serious crime. Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §59-25-280 (B) (Supp. 2012), a school district may not employ an educator in any capacity whose South Carolina certificate is revoked pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-280(A) (Supp. 2012). The State Board finds that Ms. Hope engaged in unprofessional conduct, conduct involving moral turpitude, immorality, committed a crime against the law of this state, and demonstrated evident unfitness for position for which employed, as a result of her sexual misconduct with a minor victim and her guilty plea on April 16, 2014, to three charges of Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, second degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655 (B)(2) (2013). Additionally, the State Board finds that Ms. Hope plead guilty to a violent crime and that her educator certificate must be permanently revoked in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. §59-25-280(B) (Supp. 2012).

The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE supports its decision that just cause exists to permanently revoke educator certificate 188311 issued in the name of Carole Ann Hope. The permanent revocation of Ms. Hope’s educator certificate 188311 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: 
Barry F. Bolen, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 13, 2014