BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation Or Suspension of the Educator Certificate of Michael L. Kastner Certificate 211073	)	**ORDER OF REVOCATION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 14, 2012. On January 26, 2012, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Mr. Michael Lewis Kastner of the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. On January 28, 2012, Mr. Kastner received the notice letter as evidenced by a postal receipt bearing his signature. Mr. Kaster did not send a written request for a hearing within the time specified in the notice and is in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to revoke Mr. Kastner's educator certificate 211073, effective March 14, 2012.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Kastner holds a professional educator certificate and has over nine years of teaching experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. The Anderson County School District One (District) employed Mr. Kastner in 2003. Mr. Kastner was employed as a social studies teacher at Wren High School for the 2011-2012 school year. Mr. Kastner resigned from the District, effective December 9, 2011, following a District investigation into allegations that Mr. Kastner had sent inappropriate text messages of a sexual nature to a female student.

On December 9, 2011, the District Associate Superintendent received an investigation report from the principal of Wren High School. The report indicated that the principal had previously told Mr. Kastner that it was not appropriate for a teacher to have casual conversations with students through text messages and that Mr. Kastner had agreed with the principal that this communication was not a good idea. Mr. Kastner

assured the principal that he would stop the communication immediately. However, even after receiving the principal's directive, Mr. Kastner continued to text the student. When confronted by the principal, Mr. Kastner confirmed and admitted there had been sexually inappropriate text messages sent between himself and the student. Mr. Kastner further admitted that numerous messages had been sent and that the communication had gradually changed from casual conversations into sexually explicit messages. According to Mr. Kastner, the student had been to his house a few times, but never came inside his home. Law enforcement investigated this matter and no criminal charges were filed against Mr. Kastner.

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CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

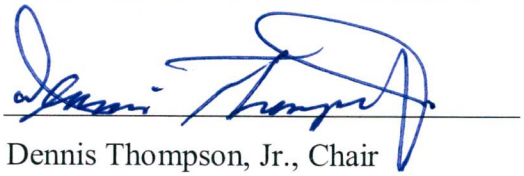
"The State Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004), S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004), 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2011). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct and any conduct which evidences unfitness for teaching, S. C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2011). The State Board finds that the information presented supports its determination that Mr. Kastner engaged in unprofessional conduct and demonstrated evident unfitness for position for which employed as a result of his sending inappropriate text messages of a sexual nature to a female student, and that just cause exists to revoke Mr. Kastner's educator certificate 211073 effective March 14, 2012.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board revokes the educator certificate of Michael Lewis Kastner, certificate 211073. The revocation of Mr. Kastner's educator certificate 211073 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South

Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order with the reasons stated as unprofessional conduct and evident unfitness for position for which employed.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 

Dennis Thompson, Jr., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

March 14, 2012