BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation of the Educator Certificate of Stephen W. Kennette Certificate 095043	)	**ORDER OF REVOCATION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 14, 2012. On September 2, 2011, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent a notice letter to Mr. Kennette regarding the possible suspension or revocation of his South Carolina Educator Certificate. On September 3, 2011, Mr. Kennette received the notice as and sent a letter in response, waiving his right to a hearing. On September 15, 2011, SCDE received the letter from Mr. Kennette.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to revoke Mr. Kennette's educator certificate 095043, effective March 14, 2012.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Kennette holds a suspended professional South Carolina educator certificate and has thirty-seven years of teaching experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Kennette had been employed by the Spartanburg School District Five (District) as the Assistant Varsity Football Coach and the Physical Education teacher at Byrnes Freshman Academy (School). Mr. Kennette retired from his employment with the District, effective February 21, 2011, following an investigation into allegations that Mr. Kennette striped searched a student who was accused of stealing money from another student. Mr. Kennette admitted he attempted to resolve the situation and find the missing money by asking the student to take off his clothes in the coaches' office. Mr. Kennette violated District Policy JCAB, Student Interrogations and Searches, which prohibits any district employee from conducting a strip search.

On September 2, 2011, the SCDE sent a notice letter to Mr. Kennette regarding the possible suspension or revocation of his South Carolina Educator Certificate. On September 3,

2011, Mr. Kennette received the notice as and sent a letter in response, waiving his right to a hearing. On September 15, 2011, SCDE received the letter from Mr. Kennette.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to revoke Mr. Kennette's educator certificate 095043, effective March 14, 2012.

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 evident unfitness for position for which employed." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (Supp. 2011). The State Board finds that Mr. Kennette engaged in unprofessional conduct, and demonstrated evident unfitness for position for which employed, as a result of his strip search of a student in violation of District policy.

The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE supports its decision that just cause exists to revoke the educator certificate of Stephen W. Kennette, certificate 095043. The revocation of Mr. Kennette's educator certificate 095043 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 demonstrated 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