BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation Or Suspension of the Educator Certificate of Randy Steven Gilstrap Certificate 125005	)	**ORDER OF SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on September 12, 2012. On July 3, 2012, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Mr. Randy Steven Gilstrap of the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. Mr. Gilstrap received the notice letter as evidenced by a postal receipt bearing his signature. Mr. Gilstrap did not request a hearing within the time specified in the notice and is in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Mr. Gilstrap's educator certificate for a period of three years, commencing on September 12, 2012, and ending on September 11, 2015.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Gilstrap holds a professional educator certificate and has over twenty-nine years of teaching experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Gilstrap was employed by the Pickens County School District (District) as the Principal of Liberty High School (School). On February 22, 2011, the District placed Mr. Gilstrap on administrative leave and subsequently suspended Mr. Gilstrap while an investigation was underway related to allegations of wrongdoing on his part involving the School's financial affairs. After being recommended for termination by the District, Mr. Gilstrap retired from the District, effective April 14, 2011, following his arrest on April 6, 2011, in Pickens County, South Carolina, and being charged with Embezzlement of Public Funds, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-13-210(A) (Supp. 2011), Breach of Trust with Fraudulent Intent, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-13-230(A) (Supp. 2011), and Financial

Transaction Card Fraud, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-14-60 (2003). According to South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) arrest warrants, Mr. Gilstrap allegedly stole more than $10,000 from the School and District between the dates of November 2008 and February 2011. Mr. Gilstrap was also accused of committing financial transaction card fraud of more than $500 with respect to his misuse of the District purchasing card.

On March 13, 2012, the Grand Jury of County of Pickens, State of South Carolina, issued three True Bill indictments against Mr. Gilstrap for Financial Transaction Card Fraud, Embezzlement, and Breach of Trust.

On July 3, 2012, the SCDE sent notice to Mr. Gilstrap of the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. Mr. Gilstrap received the notice letter as evidenced by a postal receipt bearing his signature. Mr. Gilstrap did not request a hearing within the time specified in the notice and is in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Mr. Gilstrap's educator certificate for a period of three years, commencing on September 12, 2012, and ending on September 11, 2015.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

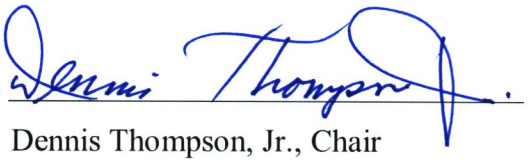
"The State Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004), S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004), 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (Supp 2011). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, dishonesty, immorality, crime against the law of this state or the United States, and any conduct which evidences unfitness for teaching, S. C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (Supp. 2011). The State Board finds that the information presented supports its determination that Mr. Gilstrap engaged in unprofessional conduct, dishonest, immorality, crime against the law of this state and demonstrated evident unfitness for position for which employed as a result of his arrest and subsequent indictments for Financial Transaction Card Fraud, Embezzlement, and Breach of Trust. The State Board finds that just cause exists to suspend Mr. Gilstrap's educator certificate 125005 for a period of three years, beginning September 12, 2012, and ending on September 11, 2015.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board suspend the educator certificate of Randy Steven Gilstrap, certificate 125005. The suspension of Mr. Gilstrap's educator certificate 125005 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.

If Mr. Gilstrap wishes to have his educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Certification, Recruitment and Preparation. Mr. Gilstrap shall meet all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement and shall be responsible for the payment of the applicable reinstatement fee.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 

Dennis Thompson, Jr., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
September 12, 2012