BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation or Suspension of the Educator Certificate of Jessica R. Bollinger, Certificate 220660	)	**ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The Chair of the South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on December 16, 2013. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2004), § 59-5-10 (2004), and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) requested that the Chair of the State Board summarily suspend the educator certificate of Jessica R. Bollinger, certificate 220660, as a result of allegations and her admission that she engaged in an inappropriate relationship of a sexual nature with a male student in Greer, South Carolina.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Bollinger may pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of students that may be under her instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Bollinger's educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Bollinger of the summary suspension, as well as, the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Bollinger holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has nine years of teaching experience. Ms. Bollinger had been employed by the Greenville County School District (District) as a music teacher since May 17, 2004. During the 2013-2014 school year, the District employed Ms. Bollinger as a music teacher at Greer High School (School). Ms. Bollinger taught and directed choir at the School. Ms. Bollinger resigned from the District on November 22, 2013, following an investigation into allegations that Ms. Bollinger had been involved in a sexual relationship with a male student at the School.

On November 18, 2013, School administrators became aware of allegations that Ms. Bollinger may have been involved in a sexual relationship with a male student and immediately

began an investigation. The District placed Ms. Bollinger on administrative leave on November 20, 2013, and then contacted law enforcement. Ms. Bollinger initially denied having a sexual relationship with the male student, but later admitted that she had been involved in a sexual relationship with the student after he graduated. She also violated a District directive not to have any contact with students.

On December 12, 2013, the Greer Police Department arrested Ms. Bollinger and charged her with the felony offense of Sexual Battery with a Student, (sixteen or seventeen years of age, no aggravated force or coercion) pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-755 (B) (Cum. Supp. 2013), as a result of an investigation into allegations that between the dates of October 1, 2012, and June 5, 2013, Ms. Bollinger engaged in sexual battery with a seventeen year old male who was a student at the School where Ms. Bollinger was employed as a teacher.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Bollinger may pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of students that may be under her instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Bollinger's educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Bollinger of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education 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, dishonesty, immorality, any conduct involving moral turpitude, and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2011). In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2004), "If the agency finds that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action, and incorporates a finding to that effect in its order, summary suspension of a license may be ordered pending proceedings for revocation or other action." Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann § 59-5-10 (2004) and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the Chair of the State Board finds that as a result of Ms. Bollinger's inappropriate relationship of a sexual nature with a male student and her untruthfulness with the District, she has engaged in unprofessional conduct, dishonesty, immorality, conduct involving moral turpitude, and demonstrated evident unfitness for position

for which employed. The Chair also finds that there is reason to believe that Ms. Bollinger may pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of students and that emergency action is required. Accordingly, the educator certificate of Jessica R. Bollinger, certificate 220660, is summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Bollinger of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: _____
Barry F. Bolen, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
December 16, 2013