

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
or Revocation of the)
)
Educator Certificate of)
)
Anita T. Gethers)
)
Certificate 250130)
_____)

ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on June 14, 2016. On April 28, 2016, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice to Anita T. Gethers regarding a possible action against her educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. Ms. Gethers received this notice on May 3, 2016 as evidenced by the signed mail receipt. She has not requested a hearing in this matter and is now in default. After considering the information presented by the SCDE, the State Board voted to issue Order of Public Reprimand.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Anita T. Gethers holds a valid South Carolina educator certificate and has over two years of teaching experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Ms. Gethers was employed by the Colleton County School District (District) as an English teacher at Colleton County Middle School (School). She was placed on administrative leave on January 21, 2014 after the District learned of allegations concerning inappropriate conduct with a female student. Ms. Gethers chose to resign on February 7, 2014.

Allegations of inappropriate conduct between a student and Ms. Gethers were first reported to the Summerville Police Department on January 29, 2014, regarding an incident that occurred December 23, 2013. The student's grandfather claimed that Ms. Gethers was locked in a bedroom at his house with the student. In discussions with school officials, Ms. Gethers claims she was waiting for the grandfather to return home because she did not want to leave the student unsupervised in the house. The student supported

this claim and said she was online when Ms. Gethers fell asleep on the bed. According to Ms. Gethers, she was friends with the student's mother and had previously visited the student's home. The incident was investigated by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SELD), but prosecution was declined and the criminal case was closed on January 4, 2016.

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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); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2011). The State Board finds that the evidence presented supports its conclusion that just cause does not exist to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of Anita T. Gethers; however the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Gethers engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of her lapse in judgement of professional and personal boundaries. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. Gethers by the State Board.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to Anita T. Gethers, certificate 250130. The Public Reprimand shall be reported to all school districts in South Carolina with the grounds listed as "unprofessional conduct." This Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's web site and shall be maintained as a public record in the SCDE's Office of General Counsel.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: _____

Michael R. Brennan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

June 14, 2016