

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension of)
)
the Educator Certificate of)
)
James Matthew Vlaardingerbroek)
)
Certificate 268907)
_____)

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on June 13, 2017. On March 13, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent James Matthew Vlaardingerbroek a notice of his right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of his South Carolina educator certificate 268907 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. On March 17, 2017, Mr. Vlaardingerbroek received the notice, as evidenced by the signed postal receipt. Mr. Vlaardingerbroek did not request a hearing and is in default. After the default date, Mr. Vlaardingerbroek informed the SCDE office of General Counsel that he was not requesting a hearing in this matter and that he did not object to the suspension of his educator certificate and to provide the SCDE Office of Educator Services with the results of a SCDE approved psychological evaluation before seeking reinstatement of his educator certificate. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Mr. Vlaardingerbroek's educator certificate for a period of three years commencing on June 13, 2017, and ending on June 12, 2020.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Vlaardingerbroek holds a professional educator certificate and has eight years of teaching experience. The Lancaster County School District (District) employed Mr. Vlaardingerbroek as a fourth grade teacher at Indian Land Elementary School (School) during the 2016-2017 school year. On September 29, 2016, Mr. Vlaardingerbroek was placed on administrative leave due to allegations of inappropriate contact with a female student. He subsequently resigned from the District.

A review of the District's investigation revealed allegations of Mr. Vlaardingerbroek continuing to initiate inappropriate contact with students after receiving a

warning for such behavior in 2015. This inappropriate contact included Mr. Vlaardingerbroek hugging his students and allowing students to sit on his lap during class. Mr. Vlaardingerbroek also took pictures of his students and claimed the pictures were for the class website and for their parents. However, the students were not always aware they were being photographed and Mr. Vlaardingerbroek also admitted to taking a picture of student that was not in his class. The student had a sibling in his class. Mr. Vlaardingerbroek claimed the picture was only to show the sibling in his class and had since been deleted from his phone.

Allegations arose on September 29, 2016, that Mr. Vlaardingerbroek flipped up the skirt of a female student. Mr. Vlaardingerbroek claimed he had grown frustrated with the continued issue of the students changing for swimming lessons. Prior to the incident, two male students had been in trouble for forgetting their bathing suits. Mr. Vlaardingerbroek claimed he was checking to make sure the student had her swimsuit on, though he also claims he did not actually look when he quickly flipped up her skirt. The student was wearing shorts under her skirt. The district found that Mr. Vlaardingerbroek's conduct with the student was unprofessional.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2016); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE demonstrates that Mr. Vlaardingerbroek engaged in unprofessional conduct as result of his continued inappropriate physical contact with students after the District warned him to stop this behavior. The State Board finds that the information presented supports its conclusion that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of James Matthew Vlaardingerbroek on the grounds of unprofessional conduct, for a period of three years commencing on June 13, 2017, and ending on June 12, 2020.

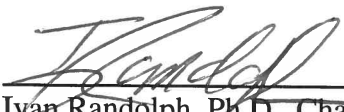
Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of James Matthew Vlaardingerbroek, certificate 268907, is suspended for a period of three years

commencing on June 13, 2017, and ending on June 12, 2020. If Mr. Vlaardingerbroek wishes to have his certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. He shall also be required to submit the results of a SCDE approved psychological evaluation to the SCDE Office of Educator Services prior to his reinstatement. Mr. Vlaardingerbroek shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Mr. Vlaardingerbroek's educator certificate shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By:


Ivan Randolph, Ph.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
June 13, 2017