

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Barbara Courtney Williamson-Holley,)
)
Certificate 238792)

CONSENT ORDER OF SUSPENSION

(BREACH OF CONTRACT)

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on November 14, 2017. On August 29, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) served Barbara Courtney Williamson-Holley a notice of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, delivery restricted to addressee. On September 14, 2017, Mr. Williamson-Holley wrote a letter to the SCDE requesting a hearing and a discussion of an alternative resolution to this matter. After the hearing was scheduled, Ms. Williamson-Holley agreed to waive her right to a hearing and enter into this Consent Order of Suspension.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Williamson-Holley's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on November 14, 2017, and ending on November 13, 2018.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This case concerns a formal complaint by the Fairfield County School District (District) recommending the suspension of the educator certificate of Barbara Courtney Williamson-Holley for breach of contract. The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (Rev. 2004) and S.C. Code Ann § 59-25-530 (Rev. 2004).

Ms. Williamson-Holley holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over nine years of teaching experience. On April 15, 2016, Ms. Williamson-Holley signed a Contractual Agreement with the District to serve as a Business Education teacher at Fairfield Central High school for the 2016-2017 school year. In a letter to the Superintendent, dated November 2, 2016, Ms. Williamson-Holley submitted her resignation, effective November 11, 2016, citing that "an opportunity has presented itself that I feel would

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be in the best interest of both my family and I". On November 5, 2016, the District responded to Ms. Williamson-Holley in a letter advising Ms. Williamson-Holley that pursuant to Board Policy GCQC/GCQD (Resignation of Instructional Staff/Administrative Staff), all resignations required a 30 day notice, allowing the District time to find a suitable replacement, and that the School Board must approve the release/resignation of the teacher. The District also informed Ms. Williamson-Holley that any staff member who failed to report to work without proper release from his/her contract would be found in breach of contract. On November 30, 2016, Ms. Williamson-Holley turned in all of her district equipment and indicated she would not be returning to work at the School because her first day of employment at South Carolina State University was December 1, 2016. On December 15, 2016, Ms. Williamson-Holley was informed by the District that her resignation had been reported to the District Board of Trustees, who approved the reporting of her breach of contract to SCDE. On August 25, 2017, the District sent a letter to the SCDE informing SCDE that Ms. Williamson-Holley had breached her contract with the District.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Williamson-Holley breached her contract with the District, and that just cause exists to suspend Ms. Williamson-Holley's for a period of one year, commencing on November 14, 2017, and ending on November 13, 2018.

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 (Rev. 2004). Just cause includes, *inter alia*, "unprofessional conduct" and "willful violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (3) and (4) (Rev. 2004). Pursuant to 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2) and (14) (2011), the State Board of Education has the legal authority, *inter alia*, to suspend a certificate for "willful neglect of duty" and "failure to comply with the provisions of a contract without the written consent of the local school board." The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Williamson-Holley breached her contract without the consent and/or approval of the District. The evidence presented further supports the State Board's determination that just cause exists to suspend the

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educator certificate of Ms. Williamson-Holley for a period of one year, commencing on November 14, 2017, and ending on November 13, 2018.

If Ms. Williamson-Holley wishes to have her educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services, and shall meet all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement. Ms. Williamson-Holley shall also pay the applicable reinstatement fee. The suspension of Ms. Williamson-Holley's educator certificate 238792 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

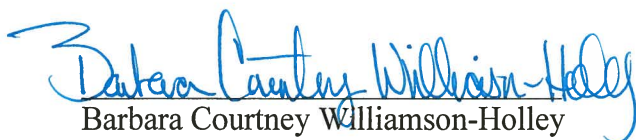
AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 
Ivan Randolph, Ph.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
November 14, 2017

I, Barbara Courtney Williamson-Holley, SC Educator Certificate 238792, understand there has been an investigation concerning alleged violations of the laws and regulations governing the practice of educator certificate holders and that I have waived my right to a hearing in this matter. I agree that during the period of suspension, I will not seek employment or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher, coach or in any other paid position in a public school in the State of South Carolina. I understand the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Suspension are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I agree to the terms of this Consent Order of Suspension, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the State Board for approval on November 14, 2017.


Barbara Courtney Williamson-Holley

10/10/17
Date