

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation or)
Suspension of the Educator Certificate of)
Samantha Lynne Knopsnyder,)
Educator Certificate 266220)

ORDER OF

SUMMARY SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The Chair of the South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 20, 2018. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2017), § 59-5-10 (2017), 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 Samantha Lynne Knopsnyder, educator certificate 266220, as a result of her arrest for the felony of criminal sexual conduct with a minor, 3rd degree, S.C. Code Ann. §16-3-655(C) (2017).

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Knopsnyder may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students, who 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. Knopsnyder'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. Knopsnyder of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Knopsnyder holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has over five years of teaching experience. Ms. Knopsnyder was employed by Lexington School District Four (District) when she was arrested on August 17, 2018. She served as a teacher at Sandhills Middle School (School). Ms. Knopsnyder is currently on administrative leave.

On August 17, 2018, the Lexington County Sherriff charged Ms. Knopsnyder with the felony count of criminal sexual conduct with a minor, 3rd degree, S.C. Code Ann. §16-3-655(C)

(2017). It is alleged Ms. Knopsnyder engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a student while on School grounds.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Ms. Knopsnyder may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students who 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. Knopsnyder'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. Knopsnyder 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 (2017). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, immorality, any conduct involving moral turpitude, crime against the laws of this State, and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2017). In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2017), "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 (2017) and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the Chair of the State Board finds that as a result of the allegations of Ms. Knopsnyder's unprofessional conduct, crime against the laws of this State, and evident unfitness for the position for which employed due to her felony arrest for criminal sexual conduct with a minor, 3rd degree, there is reason to believe Ms. Knopsnyder may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required. Accordingly, the educator certificate of Samantha Lynne Knopsnyder, educator certificate 266220, 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. Knopsnyder of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

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AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 
Sharon Wall, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 20, 2018