

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension of)
)
the Educator Certificate of)
)
Debora G. Rodgers)
)
Certificate 187722)
_____)

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 14, 2018. On May 24, 2018, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Deborah G. Rodgers a notice of her right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina educator certificate 187722 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Ms. Rodgers received the notice on May 29, 2018, as evidenced by the signed postal receipt. Ms. Rodgers did not request a hearing and is in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspended Ms. Rodgers' educator certificate for a period of two years commencing on August 14, 2018, and ending on August 13, 2020.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Rogers holds a professional educator certificate and has over nineteen years of teaching experience. She began employment with Dorchester School District Two (District) in 2000. The District employed Ms. Rodgers as a first grade teacher at William Reeves Elementary School (School).

On March 15, 2018, Ms. Rogers was intoxicated while present at school. The principal of the School noticed Ms. Rodgers smelled of alcohol. District staff met with Ms. Rodgers concerning this matter and she voluntarily submitted to a blood alcohol content (BAC) which indicated positive for an elevated BAC. Previously, on January 29, 2018, the District had concerns when Ms. Rodgers reported to School in the morning under the influence of alcohol and they issued a Letter of Reprimand to Ms. Rodgers for her unprofessional conduct. Ms. Rodgers resigned from the District, effective March 16, 2018.

On May 24, 2018, the SCDE sent Ms. Rodgers a notice of her right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible disciplinary action of her South Carolina educator certificate 187722 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Ms. Rodgers received the notice on May 29, 2018, as evidenced by the signed postal receipt. Ms. Rodgers did not request a hearing and is now in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Rodgers' educator certificate for a period of two years August 14, 2018, and ending on August 13, 2020.

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 (2004); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, dishonesty, and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004). The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE demonstrates that Ms. Rodgers engaged in unprofessional conduct, dishonesty, and demonstrated unfitness for teaching because of her decision to appear at school while intoxicated, and lack of candor with her superiors. The State Board finds that the information presented supports its conclusion that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Deborah G. Rodgers on the grounds of unprofessional conduct, dishonesty, and evident unfitness for teaching, for a period of two years commencing on August 14, 2018, and ending on August 13, 2020.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Deborah G. Rodgers certificate 187722, is suspended for a period of two years commencing on August 14, 2018, and ending on August 13, 2020. If Ms. Rodgers wishes to have her certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Ms. Rodgers shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Ms. Rodgers' educator certificate shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

(Signature page follows)

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 
Sharon Wall, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 14, 2018