

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation or)
Suspension of the Educator Certificate of)
Christopher C. Clark,)
Educator Certificate 193532)
_____)

ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The Chair of the South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on February 7, 2018. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2016), § 59-5-10 (2016), 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 Christopher C. Clark, educator certificate 193532, as a result of his admission to an inappropriate sexual relationship with a student. The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Mr. Clark 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 Mr. Clark'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 Mr. Clark of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Clark holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has over eighteen years of teaching experience. Mr. Clark was hired by Chesterfield County School District (District) in 1999. He served as a social studies teacher at Chesterfield-Ruby Middle School (School) and coached girls' basketball for Chesterfield High School. On January 22, 2018, the District placed Mr. Clark on administrative leave following an allegation that he had engaged in an inappropriate sexual relationship with a student in the District. He subsequently resigned his position with the District effective February 1, 2018.

The District first received allegations of Mr. Clark's inappropriate conduct with a 17 year old female student on January 21, 2018. The District informed law enforcement of the allegations and interviewed Mr. Clark and the victim. During a second interview with the District on January 23, 2018, Mr. Clark confessed to kissing the student and admitted to digitally penetrating the student while she was unclothed in his classroom. Mr. Clark confessed to the inappropriate physical encounters with the student at the School as well as the local high school. Mr. Clark admitted the relationship began in approximately December of 2016, when the student was 15 years old. He also admitted he had received an inappropriate picture of the female student through electronic messaging.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Mr. Clark may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students who may be under his instruction, and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Mr. Clark'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 Mr. Clark's of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of his 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 (2016). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, immorality, any conduct involving moral turpitude, and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2016). In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2016), "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 (2016) and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the Chair of the State Board finds that as a result of the allegations of Mr. Clark's unprofessional conduct, immorality, conduct involving moral turpitude, evident unfitness for position for which employed, and his admission to engaging in an inappropriate sexual relationship with the student, there is reason to believe Mr. Clark may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action

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is required. Accordingly, the educator certificate of Christopher C. Clark, educator certificate 193532, 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 Mr. Clark of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of his educator certificate.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: Sharon Wall
Sharon Wall, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
February 7, 2018