

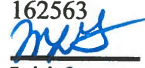
BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)
)
Of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Mary Lance Garrison)
)
Educator Certificate 162563)

**CONSENT ORDER
OF SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 13, 2018. On July 6, 2017, and December 15, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice via regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, to Mary Lance Garrison concerning the pending action against her educator certificate 162563. After Ms. Garrison received the notice, Ms. Garrison's attorney contacted the SCDE to request a hearing. Prior to the scheduling of a hearing in this matter, Ms. Garrison's attorney informed SCDE that Ms. Garrison 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 accept the Consent Order of Suspension of Ms. Garrison's educator certificate for a period of two years commencing on March 13, 2018, and ending on March 12, 2020.

Mary Lance Garrison 162563  Initial <u>3B</u> Date <u>3/13/18</u>
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FINDINGS OF FACT

Mary Lance Garrison holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over twenty-six years of educator experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board.

Ms. Garrison was employed by Lexington County School District Two (District) as an administrator (Principal) at Claude A. Taylor Elementary School (School). On May 12, 2017, Ms. Garrison submitted her letter of resignation from the District for the 2016-2017 school year. Ms. Garrison was not released from her contract and was informed that her resignation would be reported to the SCDE as a breach of contract. On June 28, 2017, the District reported the breach of contract to the SCDE, requesting that the State Board take disciplinary action on Ms. Garrison's educator certificate.

After Ms. Garrison left the District, District staff discovered that Ms. Garrison had falsified SIC/Title I meetings on six occasions during the 2016-2017 school year. The

District had instructed Ms. Garrison to seek more community input for the SIC/Title I meetings. When Ms. Garrison was evaluated, she was asked to submit proof that she had followed the directive requesting more community involvement at the SIC/Title I meetings. Ms. Garrison submitted six SIC/Title I meeting signature sheets. Each sheet recorded the same five to six members attending all six meetings. The District found this documentation to be suspicious since it was typical for members of these committees to have schedule changes or an occasional conflict with attending a meeting. Upon investigation, an assistant principal informed the District that Ms. Garrison did not hold the meetings and that he did not sign any documents. Other community members and parents on the SIC team informed the District that no SIC meetings had been held. The District reported this unprofessional conduct to the SCDE on July 31, 2017.

Ms. Garrison has agreed to waive her right to a hearing and to resolve this disciplinary matter by entering into an alternate resolution to the action against her educator certificate. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension of Ms. Garrison's educator certificate for a period of two years commencing on March 13, 2018, and ending on March 12, 2020.

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 (Rev. 2004); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct and dishonesty. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2016). Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-530 (Rev. 2016), "any teacher who fails to comply with the provisions of his contract without the written consent of the school board shall be deemed guilty of unprofessional conduct." 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2) and (14) (2016), provide that 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. Garrison engaged in dishonesty and unprofessional conduct by breaching her contract, willfully neglecting her duty, failing to comply with the provisions of her contract without the written consent of the District, failing to conduct SIC/Title I meetings, and falsifying signatures on official

Mary Lance Garrison 162563 <i>MLG</i> Initial <i>3/3/18</i> Date

documents. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Ms. Garrison's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on March 13, 2018, and ending on March 12, 2020.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Mary Lance Garrison, certificate 162563, will be suspended for a period of two years, commencing on March 13, 2018, and ending on March 12, 2020.

If Ms. Garrison 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. Garrison 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. Garrison'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.

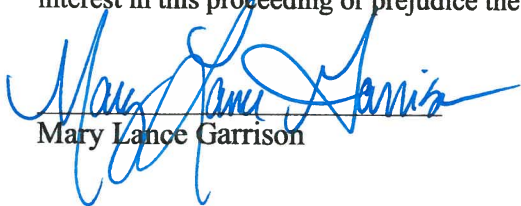
AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 
Sharon Wall, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
March 13, 2018

I, Mary Lance Garrison, SC Educator Certificate 162563, 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 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 March 13, 2018. I understand this Order will not become effective until approved by the State Board and, if not approved, it shall not constitute an admission against interest in this proceeding or prejudice the right of the State Board to adjudicate this matter.


Mary Lance Garrison

3/3/18
Date