

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation or)
Suspension of the Educator Certificate of)
Raquel D. Stevens,)
Educator Certificate 262499)
_____)

**ORDER OF
SUMMARY SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The Chair of the South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on October 22, 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 Raquel D. Stevens, educator certificate 262499, as a result of her arrest for the felony charge of unlawful conduct towards a child, S.C. Code Ann. §63-5-70(A) (2017).

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Stevens 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. Stevens' 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. Stevens of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Stevens holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has over five years of teaching experience. Ms. Stevens is employed by the Aiken County School District (District) as a teacher at North Augusta Middle School (School). Ms. Stevens is currently on administrative leave.

On October 16, 2018, the North Augusta Department of Public Safety charged Ms. Stevens with one felony count of unlawful conduct towards a child, S.C. Code Ann. §63-5-70(A)

(2017). It has been alleged that Ms. Stevens left her child, a toddler, in the back seat of her vehicle during the work day. When Ms. Stevens returned to her car at the end of the day, she noticed the child in the back seat and sought emergency medical help. The child was initially unresponsive but is expected to make a full recovery.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Ms. Stevens 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. Stevens' 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. Stevens 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, crime against the law 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. Stevens's unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State, and evident unfitness for the position for which employed due to her felony arrest for unlawful neglect of a child, there is reason to believe Ms. Stevens may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required. Accordingly, the educator certificate of Raquel D. Stevens educator certificate 262499 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. Stevens 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

Sharon Wall, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
October 22, 2018