

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension	)	
	)	
of the Educator Certificate of	)	CONSENT ORDER OF SUSPENSION
	)	
Ashley Nicole Priester	)	(BREACH OF CONTRACT)
	)	
<u>Certificate 262716</u>	)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on February 12, 2019. On October 23, 2018, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Ashley Nicole Priester a notice of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, delivery restricted to addressee. On January 15, 2019, Ms. Priester contacted the SCDE, confirmed that she had received the notice via United States mail, and 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 suspend Ms. Priester's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on February 12, 2019, and ending on February 11, 2020.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This case concerns a formal complaint by Anderson County School District Four (District) recommending the suspension of the educator certificate of Ashley Nicole Priester for breach of contract. The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2017) and S.C. Code Ann § 59-25-530 (2017).

On May 10, 2018, Ms. Priester signed a Contractual Agreement with the District to serve as a teacher for the 2018-19 school year. On September 12, 2018, Ms. Priester submitted a resignation to the District, effective immediately. At the time of her resignation, Ms. Priester was serving as an agricultural educator at Pendleton High School and Riverside Middle School. In her resignation, Ms. Priester alleged she was experiencing anxiety due to insufficient planning time for her assigned course load, which included two school locations and therefore two individual chapters of the Future Farmers of America (FFA).

Ashley
Nicole
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On October 8, 2018, the District Board voted to report Ms. Priester to the SCDE as a breach of contract. Ms. Priester is currently running her own business and has accepted the consent order of suspension.

The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Priester breached her contract with the District, and that just cause exists to suspend Ms. Priester's certificate 262716 for a period of one year, commencing on February 12, 2019, and ending on February 11, 2020.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The State 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, *inter alia*, "unprofessional conduct" and "willful violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (3) and (4) (2017). Pursuant to 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2) and (14) (2011), 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. Priester breached her contract without the consent and/or approval of the District.

The evidence presented supports the State Board's determination that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Ashley Nicole Priester for a period of one year, commencing on February 12, 2019, and ending on February 11, 2020. If Ms. Priester wishes to have her educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services, and shall meet all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement. Ms. Priester shall also pay the applicable reinstatement fee.

The suspension of Ms. Priester's educator certificate 262716 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

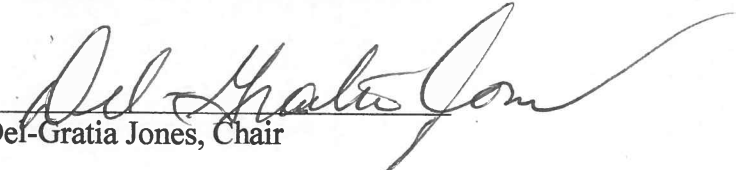
AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

(Signature page attached.)

Ashley
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Priester
262716

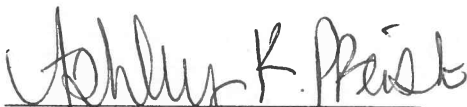
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South Carolina State Board of Education

By: 
Del-Gratia Jones, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
February 12, 2019

I, Ashley Nicole Priester, SC Educator Certificate 262716, 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 February 12, 2019. 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.


Ashley Nicole Priester

1/31/2019
Date