

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Alfred L. Williams
Certificate 190874

ORDER OF DISMISSAL

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on December 8, 2020. On April 2, 2020, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Alfred L. Williams a notice letter by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail, regarding possible action against his educator certificate. After receiving the notice letter, Dr. Williams contacted the SCDE and timely requested a hearing. A hearing on the matter was held on October 8, 2020, at the SCDE. On November 17, 2020, the SCDE and Dr. Williams' representative received the hearing officer's final report and recommendation. The hearing officer recommended that a public reprimand be issued to Dr. Williams. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to dismiss this matter.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Dr. Williams holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over twenty-four years of educator experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Dr. Williams was employed by the Union County School District One (District) as a principal at Union County High School (School).

The hearing officer found that Dr. Williams inappropriately videotaped a student without permission for personal and non-educational purposes. Dr. Williams did not deny videotaping the student, but did dispute the purpose for the videotape. One witness testified Dr. Williams had previously stated he wished to videotape the student to show

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his friends. A second witness testified that Dr. Williams stated he wished to show a video of the student to his wife. During the hearing, Dr. Williams testified he intended to use the video for a positive human interest story. The hearing officer did not find Dr. Williams' testimony on this issue to be credible.

The hearing officer found Dr. Williams violated District policies by failing to maintain professional and ethical standards in his conduct with students, failing to exercise good judgement and maintain professional boundaries, and failing to maintain a reasonable standard of care for the protection of students. This behavior was particularly egregious due to Dr. Williams' position as principal, a position that sets the tone of conduct and behavior in a school.

The hearing officer concluded Dr. Williams' conduct amounted to unprofessional conduct. In considering a recommendation to the State Board, the hearing officer considered several mitigating factors. The hearing officer considered the fact that Dr. Williams lost his job as a principal and was not working as a teacher. The hearing officer further noted that Dr. Williams was new to the position of principal, and that the District Superintendent supported him for the remainder of the school year. In consideration of these factors, the hearing officer recommended that a public reprimand be issued. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to dismiss this matter.

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); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2017). The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the District would not support a conclusion that just cause exists to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of Alfred L. Williams; additionally, the evidence would not support a conclusion that Dr. Williams engaged in unprofessional conduct as result of videotaping a student without permission for non-educational purposes.

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Now, therefore, it is ordered that the State Board hereby dismisses the action of
Alfred L. Williams, certificate 190874.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

Michael Brennan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
December 8, 2020