

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Andrew Benjamin Hooker
Certificate 210419

**CONSENT ORDER
OF SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on January 14, 2020. On November 27, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Andrew Benjamin Hooker a notice letter by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail, regarding possible action against his educator certificate. Dr. Hooker subsequently contacted the SCDE and advised that he desired to waive his right to a hearing and wished to pursue an alternative resolution in this matter. Dr. Hooker has agreed to this Consent Order of Suspension.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension of Dr. Hooker's administrative certificate for a period of one year, commencing on January 14, 2020, and ending on January 12, 2021. Further, Dr. Hooker has agreed to complete the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Prevention and Correction course prior to the reinstatement of his administrative certification.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Dr. Hooker holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over sixteen years of educator experience. He has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Dr. Hooker was employed by the Anderson County School District One (District) as the Principal at Wren Middle School (School)

In May 3, 2019, Dr. Hooker was placed on administrative leave following allegations that he was involved in an inappropriate relationship with a staff member from another school in the District. The inappropriate relationship involved meetings

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s/ABH
Initial
1/1/2020
Date

during school hours at times when Dr. Hooker was supposed to be performing his assigned duties as Principal of the School. Dr. Hooker was forthright with the District about the inappropriate relationship during the investigation and expressed remorse for his lapse in judgment.

Dr. Hooker has agreed to waive his right to a hearing and to resolve this disciplinary matter by entering into an alternate resolution to the action against his educator certificate. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Dr. Hooker's administrative certificate for a one year, commencing on January 14, 2020, and ending on January 12, 2021. Dr. Hooker has further agreed to complete the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course prior to the reinstatement of his certification.

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 demonstrates that Dr. Hooker engaged in unprofessional conduct by engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a staff member at another school in the District. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Dr. Hooker's administrative certificate for a period of one year, commencing on January 14, 2020, and ending on January 12, 2021. Dr. Hooker has further agreed to complete the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course prior to the reinstatement of his certification.

Now, therefore, it is ordered that the administrative certificate of Andrew Benjamin Hooker, certificate 210419, is suspended for a period of one year, commencing on January 14, 2020, and ending on January 12, 2021. Dr. Hooker will complete the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course prior to the reinstatement of his certification.

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s/ABH_____
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If Dr. Hooker wishes to have his certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services and submit proof of completion for the NASDTEC course. Dr. Hooker shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Dr. Hooker's administrative 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

s/Michael Brenan
Michael Brenan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
January 14, 2020

I, Andrew Benjamin Hooker, S.C. Educator Certificate 210419, 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 that the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Suspension are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I have read the Consent Order of Suspension, consisting of three pages, and I freely and voluntarily agree to the terms set forth therein. I understand that this Order will be presented to the South Carolina State Board of Education for approval on Tuesday, January 14, 2020. I understand this Consent 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. If approved by the State Board, I give the SCDE permission to use my electronic signature in the style of "/s/ name" for required website publication.

s/Andrew Benjamin Hooker
Andrew Benjamin Hooker

1/1/2020
Date