

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Lydia Racquel Woodbury
Certificate 279094

ORDER OF DISMISSAL
(Breach of Contract)

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on July 14, 2020. The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) notified Lydia Racquel Woodbury of potential disciplinary action against her teaching certificate and informed her of her right to a hearing via a certified letter dated February 11, 2019, and February 28, 2019. Ms. Woodbury timely requested a hearing and such was held on August 29, 2019. On March 3, 2020, the SCDE and Ms. Woodbury received the hearing officer's final report and recommendation. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board hereby dismisses this action against Ms. Woodbury's educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This case concerns a formal complaint by the Chester County School District (District) seeking the suspension of Ms. Woodbury's educator certificate for breach of contract. The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004). Ms. Woodbury holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over twelve years of experience. She has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board.

On May 11, 2018, Ms. Woodbury renewed her contract as a teacher for the District for the 2018-19 school year. Ms. Woodbury submitted her resignation from the District on January 6, 2019, effective January 23, 2019. The District informed Ms. Woodbury of the possible consequences of breaching her contract. The District also provided a copy of their resignation policy and notified Ms. Woodbury that she would not be released from her contract unless a suitable replacement could be found. On January 17, 2019, the District hired a teacher to replace Ms. Woodbury. At the request of her principal, Ms. Woodbury spent approximately one week introducing the new teacher to the classroom

and assisting in the transition between the teachers. As of August 23, 2019, Ms. Woodbury's login was removed from the District computer operating systems and the new teacher had been given all necessary access. Ms. Woodbury testified she felt this exchange indicated she had been released from duty. Ms. Woodbury was not advised that the District was taking action against her teacher certificate until she received SCDE's letter on February 28, 2019.

Following the hearing in the matter, the Hearing Officer found there was sufficient evidence that Ms. Woodbury did not breach her contract. In support of this conclusion, the Hearing Officer cited the fact that Ms. Woodbury remained with the District until a suitable replacement was found. Further, the Hearing Officer noted Ms. Woodbury received no notification from the District after her replacement was hired that her resignation had not been accepted. In weighing all of the evidence offered by both parties during the hearing, the hearing officer recommended that the formal complaint filed against Ms. Woodbury by the Chester County School District be dismissed.

After considering the evidence presented and the mitigating circumstances surrounding the breach, the State Board finds that Ms. Woodbury did not breach her contract with the District. Accordingly, the State Board finds that just cause exists to accept the recommendation of the hearing officer and dismiss the action against Ms. Woodbury's 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 (2018); The State Board may, for just cause, issue a public reprimand. S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2018). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. §59-25-160. The State Board finds that the evidence presented supports its conclusion that just cause does not exist to suspend the professional educator certificate of Lydia Racquel Woodbury in this matter. Accordingly, this action against Lydia Racquel Woodbury, educator certificate 279094, is hereby dismissed.

Lydia Racquel Woodbury, Certificate 279094
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AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/Michael Brennan
Michael Brennan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
July 14, 2020