

**BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

In the Matter of the  
Disciplinary Action of the  
Educator Certificate of  
Susanna Caroline Trice  
Certificate 290495

**ORDER OF SUSPENSION**

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered the matter on March 10, 2020. On January 28, 2020, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent a notice letter to Susanna Caroline Trice informing her that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding the possible disciplinary action of her educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, delivery restricted to addressee. Ms. Trice received the notice, as evidenced by postal tracking. She has not requested a hearing and is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Trice's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on March 10, 2020, and ending on March 9, 2021. Ms. Trice will be required to submit a clearance to return to work prior to the reinstatement of her certification.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

Ms. Trice holds a valid South Carolina educator certificate and has over eight years of educator experience. Ms. Trice was employed by the Lancaster County School District (District) as a teacher at the Southside Early Childhood Center (School).

During the 2018-19 school year, Ms. Trice was counseled on her number of absences from work. After March 21, 2019, she began leave without pay after using all of her allowed days. She was advised of the District policies concerning leave but failed to submit any documentation for the continuing absences. Ms. Trice did not return to work and was terminated on May 22, 2019, with an effective termination date of March 21, 2019. During her time with the District, Ms. Trice attempted to discuss her absences using inappropriate language, inappropriate discussions of personal subjects, and subjects that were potentially criminal in nature.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Trice's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on March 10, 2020, and ending on March 9, 2021. Ms. Trice is further instructed to submit a clearance to return to work prior to the reinstatement of her certificate.

#### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2016); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Trice engaged in unprofessional conduct by abandoning her position without notice and engaging in inappropriate communications with District staff. Accordingly, the evidence presented supports the State Board's determination that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Susanna Caroline Trice, Educator Certificate 290495, for a period of one year, commencing on March 10, 2020, and ending on March 9, 2021.

If Ms. Trice 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. Trice shall submit a letter of clearance to return to work from a licensed psychologist. She shall be responsible for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Ms. Trice's Educator Certificate 290495 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

By:   
Michael Brenan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina  
March 10, 2020