

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Karon Mack Wilson, Jr.
Certificate 290543

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on October 13, 2020. On July 31, 2019, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice via regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, to Karon Mack Wilson, Jr. concerning the pending action against educator certificate 290543. Mr. Wilson requested a hearing and agreed to a hearing on the documents, which were due on September 4, 2020. This matter is properly before the State Board pursuant to S.C. Code. Ann. §59-25-150 (2017), and referred to a hearing officer pursuant to S.C. Code. Ann. §59-5-70 (2004). After considering the evidence, testimony, and the report and recommendations presented, the State Board voted to suspend the certificate of Karon Mack Wilson, Jr., Certificate 290543, for a period of two years, commencing on October 13, 2020, and ending on October 12, 2022.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This is a disciplinary matter involving unprofessional conduct. Mr. Wilson holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate, with over twelve years of teaching experience, and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Mr. Wilson was employed as a teacher with Richland County School District Two (District) at Ridge View High School (School).

On May 28, 2019, Mr. Wilson engaged in a physical altercation with a student in the School. Specifically, video evidence depicted an altercation between Mr. Wilson and a student where Mr. Wilson grappled with the student and delivered multiple punches to a student's body and head. During the hearing, evidence was presented showing a situation that began as playful but escalated into a physical fight. The Hearing Officer found that substantial evidence

demonstrated that Mr. Wilson's conduct was contrary to District policy and amounted to unprofessional conduct under S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160. At no time during the physical confrontation did Mr. Wilson contact administration for assistance, ask a student to get an administrator, or de-escalate the situation, as was required by District policy. The Hearing Officer noted that Mr. Wilson's conduct endangered not only the student involved, but all students present in the classroom.

The Hearing Officer recommended Mr. Wilson's educator certification be suspended for two years. After considering the evidence, testimony, and the report and recommendations presented, the State Board voted to suspend the certificate of Karon Mack Wilson, Jr., Certificate 290543, for a period of two years, commencing on October 13, 2020, and ending on October 12, 2022.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The State Board may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2016). Just cause includes "unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United States, evident unfitness for position for which employed, and sale or possession of narcotics." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2016). The State Board finds that Karon Mack Wilson, Jr. engaged in unprofessional conduct by engaging in a physical altercation with a student in his classroom.

The State Board finds that the evidence presented supports its decision that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate 290543, issued in the name of Karon Mack Wilson, Jr., commencing on October 13, 2020, and ending on October 12, 2022.

If Mr. Wilson wishes to have the certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, he shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Mr. Wilson 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 Mr. Wilson's educator certificate 290543 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all

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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: s/Michael Brenan
Michael Brenan, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
October 13, 2020