

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Mia Julia Mabel Champion
Certificate 295362

CONSENT ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 9, 2021. On February 4, 2021, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Mia Julia Mable Champion a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate based on her breach of contract. Ms. Champion received the notice and contacted the SCDE to discuss an alternate resolution. She has agreed to waive her right to a hearing and enter into this Consent Order of Suspension.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Champion's educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing March 9, 2021, and ending March 8, 2022.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This case concerns a formal complaint from York County School District One (District) seeking the suspension of the educator certificate of Ms. Champion for breach of contract. The State Board has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2018) and S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-530 (2018).

On May 5, 2020, Ms. Champion signed a contractual agreement with the District to serve as a teacher for the 2020-21 school year. On September 10, 2020, Ms. Champion spoke to the District's human resources director to discuss the possibility of ending her contract. She was given instructions on the District's policy and procedures. On October 23, 2020, Ms. Champion formally provided her resignation, effective November 6, 2020. On November 10, 2020, the District's Board of Trustees agreed to release Ms. Champion from contract once a suitable replacement was found.

Mia Julia Mabel Champion, Certificate 295362

MC

Initial

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At the time of her resignation, Ms. Champion was pursuing a career opportunity outside of education. Circumstances required that she begin her new job before she was released from her contract with the District. Therefore, Ms. Champion prepared future lesson plans, informed the District she would not be returning, and did not remain past November 11, 2020.

Ms. Champion was notified of the possible consequences and did not return to work. On December 8, 2020, the District's Board of Trustees voted to file a formal complaint to the SCDE. After being notified of the pending action against her educator certificate, Ms. Champion contacted the SCDE to discuss an alternate resolution. Ms. Champion has agreed to the suspension of her educator certificate for a period of one year.

After considering the evidence, the State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Champion breached her contract with the District, and that just cause exists to suspend Ms. Champion's certificate 295362 for a period of one year, commencing on March 9, 2021, and ending on March 8, 2022.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." Just cause includes, inter alia, "unprofessional conduct" and "willful violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (3) and (4) (2018). Pursuant to 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2) and (14) (2018), the State Board of Education had the legal authority to suspend a certificate for "failure to comply with the provision of a contract without the written consent of the local school board." With respect to breach of contract, "any teacher who fails to comply with the provisions of his [or her] contract without written consent of the school board shall be deemed guilty of unprofessional conduct." S. C. Code Ann. § 59-25-530 (2018). "Upon formal complaint of the school board, substantiated by conclusive

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evidence, the State Board shall suspend or revoke the teacher's certificate, for a period not to exceed one calendar year."

The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Champion breached her contract without the consent and/or approval of the District.

Accordingly, the evidence presented supports the State Board's determination that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Mia Julia Mabel Champion for a period of one year, commencing on March 9, 2021, and ending on March 8, 2022. If Ms. Champion 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. Champion shall also pay the applicable reinstatement fee. The suspension of Ms. Champion's educator certificate 295362 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order, with the reason stated as "unprofessional conduct, breach of contract, willful neglect of duty, and failure to comply with the provisions of a contract without the written consent of the local school board."

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/Kristi Woodall
Kristi Woodall, Ed. D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
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I, Mia Julia Mabel Champion, S.C. Educator Certificate 295362, 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, March 9, 2021. 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/Mia Champion

Mia Julia Mabel Champion

2/17/21

Date