

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Steven Chase Garner
Certificate 266724

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on October 12, 2021. On July 27, 2021, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Steven Chase Garner a notice via regular and certified mail of his right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of his South Carolina educator certificate. The SCDE has verified Mr. Reyes' address and the letters have not been returned. On August 17, 2021, the SCDE sent Mr. Garner notice that this matter would be presented to the State Board on October 12, 2021. Mr. Garner has not contacted the SCDE to request a hearing and is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Steven Chase Garner's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on October 12, 2021, and ending on October 11, 2023. He will be required to complete the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course prior to a reinstatement of his educator certification.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Garner holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. He has over six years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Garner was employed by Anderson School District One (District) as a teacher at Powdersville High School (School).

On August 3, 2020, District staff met with Mr. Garner to discuss several reports of inappropriate communications with female students on social media. During the meeting, Mr. Garner admitted to using several forms of social media to communicate with students. He alleged he did so to promote interest in sports games for the school. However, Mr. Garner admitted he post at least one inappropriate comment that referred to one of the students as 'sexy.' Many of the female students reported Mr. Garner would 'add' them on social media immediately after graduation. Mr. Garner admitted that he believed at least one of the females was still a student

at the School. When confronted with nude photos of himself that had been seen by students, Mr. Garner stated that he did not remember them but may have sent them when drunk.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Steven Chase Garner, educator certificate 266724, for a period of two years, commencing on October 12, 2021, and ending on October 11, 2023.

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 (Rev. 2004); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2016); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2016). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Mr. Garner engaged in unprofessional conduct by engaging in inappropriate communications with students over social media. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Mr. Garner’s educator certificate 266724 for a period of two years, commencing on October 12, 2021, and ending on October 11, 2023.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Steven Chase Garner, educator certificate 266724, is suspended for a period of two years, commencing on October 12, 2021, and ending on October 11, 2023. He will be required to complete the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course prior to a reinstatement of his educator certification.

If Mr. Garner 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. Garner 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. He shall also be responsible for submitting a certificate of completion of the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course prior to a reinstatement. The suspension of Mr. Garner’s educator certificate shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

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AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

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

Columbia, South Carolina
October 12, 2021