

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the  
Disciplinary Action of the  
Educator Certificate of  
Christopher Wayne Stevens  
Certificate 905199

**ORDER OF SUSPENSION**

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on October 12, 2021. On February 26, 2020, and June 18, 2020, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Christopher Wayne Stevens a notice via regular and certified mail of his right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of his South Carolina educator certificate. On September 2, 2021, the SCDE sent Mr. Stevens notice that this matter would be presented to the State Board on October 12, 2021. Mr. Stevens received this notice on September 14, 2021, as evidenced by signed postal receipt. Mr. Stevens 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 Mr. Stevens' educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on October 12, 2021, and ending on October 11, 2022. He will be required to complete the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course and an approved anger management course prior to reinstatement of his educator certification.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

Mr. Stevens holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. He has over seven years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Stevens was employed by the Berkeley County School District (District) as a teacher at Berkeley High School (School).

On October 2, 2019, a female student asked Mr. Stevens to cut medical tape off her hand. He instructed her to do it herself, as he had shown her the day before. The student felt she would accidentally cut herself if she attempted to do so, and asked a student trainer to assist her. Multiple student athletes and trainers were in the same space, and one provided the female student with ice for her injured hand. Finally, Mr. Stevens agree to cut the medical tape for the student. He

attempted to show the student trainer how to cut the tape, and hurt the female student while doing so before attempting with a smaller cutter. After the procedure, the student was still carrying ice in her injured hand when Mr. Stevens attempted to high five her. A football player “caught” the high five, and rather than attempt a second high five Mr. Stevens hit the female student on her forehead. The student alleged this type of physical contact was common play, and she often hit him back. However, her shoulder was sore from earlier activities and she rather than reach his forehead she hit his cheek. Mr. Stevens immediately grabbed the student’s hand, popping two of her fingers and instructing her to never slap him again. In a text to the student’s parent after the incident, Mr. Stevens stated the student “about got her arm taken off” when he grabbed her and “got on to her pretty good.” He admitted to joking around with athletes but stated what the student did was “completely uncalled for.”

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Mr. Stevens, educator certificate 905199, for a period of one year, commencing on October 12, 2021, and ending on October 11, 2022. He will be required to complete the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course and an approved anger management course prior to reinstatement of his educator certification.

#### **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. Stevens engaged in unprofessional conduct by engaging in inappropriate physical contact with a student. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Mr. Stevens’ educator certificate 903199 for a period of one year, commencing on October 12, 2021, and ending on October 11, 2021.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Christopher Wayne Stevens, educator certificate 905199, is suspended for a period of one year, commencing on October 12, 2021, and ending on October 11, 2022. He will be required to complete the NASDTEC

Prevention and Correction course and an approved anger management course prior to reinstatement of his educator certification.

If Mr. Stevens 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. Stevens 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. Stevens' educator certificate 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: s/ Kristi Woodall  
Kristi Woodall, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina  
October 12, 2021