

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Brian Thomas Cox
Certificate 273426

Order of Permanent Revocation

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 9, 2022. On December 1, 2021, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Brian Thomas Cox a notice via regular and certified mail of his right to a hearing regarding the possible permanent revocation of his South Carolina educator certificate. The notice sent via regular mail has not been returned. On December 31, 2021, the SCDE sent Mr. Cox notice that this matter would be presented to the State Board on February 8, 2022, or as soon thereafter as is feasible. Mr. Cox has not contacted the SCDE to request a hearing and is now in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Mr. Cox's educator certificate 273426, effective August 9, 2022.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Cox holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over nineteen years of teaching experience. He received his South Carolina educator certification through reciprocity with Alaska and has no record of working as a certified educator in South Carolina.

On September 27, 2021, the Arizona State Board of Education revoked Mr. Cox's educator certificate in that state. The matters that led to this revocation began in 2009, when Mr. Cox was teaching in North Carolina. At that time, law enforcement received several reports of Mr. Cox engaging in inappropriate conduct and communication with various students.

During the 2009-10 school year, Mr. Cox began teaching in Indiana. During this time, Mr. Cox was instructed to cease communicating with students via social media. Law enforcement again became involved when a female student alleged Mr. Cox repeatedly bumped into her in

the cafeteria in a way that made her uncomfortable. During the related criminal investigation, it was found that Mr. Cox kept communicating with students through his personal cell phone. It was further found via cell phone records that Mr. Cox had arranged to meet with a 16 year old male for sexual intercourse. The 16 year old was not a student of Mr. Cox's school at that time. However, several male students alleged Mr. Cox did attempt to invite them to his home.

In 2011, Mr. Cox left Indiana to teach in Alaska. In 2018, Anchorage law enforcement received a report from a parent of a 10 year old male student that was uncomfortable with Mr. Cox. The student reported Mr. Cox would touch him on his leg, attend his football games, and told him he loved him. Mr. Cox also gave the student his personal phone number and told him not to share it with anyone. During an investigation, it was found that Mr. Cox was again engaging in inappropriate communication with students. However, no criminal acts were disclosed. After these issues came to light, Mr. Cox left Alaska to apply to Temple Elementary School District (TESD) in Arizona in 2019. In the application, Mr. Cox stated he had never received a discipline resulting in suspension, never been asked to resign from a position, and never resigned rather than face a disciplinary action against a certificate.

On September 27, 2021, the Arizona State Board of Education found Mr. Cox engaged in unprofessional conduct by failing to protect pupils, making sexual advances towards a pupil or child, engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a pupil or child, falsifying or misrepresenting facts related to professional qualifications or character, and engaging in conduct which would discredit the teaching profession. As a result, Mr. Cox's educator certification in Arizona was revoked. The revocation was reported to the NASDTEC clearinghouse and caught the attention of SCDE staff.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Mr. Cox's educator certificate 273426, effective August 9, 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 State, 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 Mr. Cox engaged in unprofessional conduct, immorality, and conduct involving moral turpitude, due to his repeated offenses of unprofessional conduct and communication with students.

The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE supports its decision that just cause exists to permanently revoke education certificate 273426, issued in the name of Brian Thomas Cox, effective August 9, 2022. The permanent revocation of Mr. Cox’s educator certificate 273426 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 Board of Education

s/Alan Walters
Alan Walters, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 9, 2022