

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Kara M. Powell
Certificate 215434

**ORDER OF
PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 9, 2022. On May 25, 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Kara M. Powell a notice letter by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail, regarding possible action against her educator certificate. Ms. Powell received the notice and contacted the SCDE to pursue an alternative resolution in this matter. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept this Consent Order of Public Reprimand.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Powell holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate and has over two years of experience. At the time of the incident, Ms. Powell was employed by Lexington County School District Two (District) as a teacher at Northside Middle School (School).

On February 23, 2022, the School was following a half-day schedule for students. After students left, the teachers had a lunch hour and were to report back to work for professional development sessions. During the lunch hour, Ms. Powell was part of a small group that attended lunch at a local restaurant. Another staff member witnessed Ms. Powell's group consuming alcohol prior to returning to work and reported the incident. When questioned about the incident, Ms. Powell admitted to drinking a margarita during lunch.

Ms. Powell has agreed to waive her right to a hearing and resolve this disciplinary matter by entering into this Consent Order of Public Reprimand, subject to the following terms: (1) a Public Reprimand shall be issued by the State Board, (2) the Public Reprimand shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty

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s/KP
Initial
7/10/22
Date

days from the date of this order, and (3) the Consent Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's website and shall be maintained as a public record in the OGC. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand with the terms set forth above.

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 (2017); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2017); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2017). The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the District would not support a conclusion that just cause exists to suspend or revoke the educator certificate of Kara M. Powell; however, the evidence would support a conclusion that Ms. Powell engaged in unprofessional conduct as a result of consuming alcohol on her lunch break during work hours. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the issuance of a Public Reprimand to Ms. Powell by the State Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is ordered that the State Board hereby issues a Public Reprimand to Kara M. Powell, certificate 215434. The Public Reprimand shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order with the grounds listed as "unprofessional conduct." This Order of Public Reprimand shall be posted on the SCDE's website and shall be maintained as a public record in the SCDE's Office of General Counsel.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/Alan Walters
Alan Walters, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 9, 2022

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s/KP
Initial
7/10/22
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I, Kara M. Powell, S.C. Educator Certificate 215434, 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 Public Reprimand are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack, or judicial review. I have read the Consent Order of Public Reprimand, 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, August 9, 2022. 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/ Kara M. Powell
Kara M. Powell

7/10/22
Date

Kara M. Powell
215434
s/KP
Initial
7/10/22
Date