

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Susan Pringels Horton
Certificate 290952

Order of Summary Suspension

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on January 17, 2023. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2020), § 59-5-10 (2020), and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) requested that the Chair of the State Board summarily suspend the educator certificate of Susan Pringels Horton, educator certificate 290952, as a result of her arrest for the felony of carrying weapons on school property, in violation of S.C. Code Ann § 16-23-430.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Horton may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students, who may be under her instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Horton's educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Horton of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Horton holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over six years of educator experience. At the time of the incident, Ms. Horton was employed by Lexington County School District One (District) as a teacher at River Bluff High School (School).

On or about December 2, 2022, law enforcement reported to the School after an anonymous tip alleged that Ms. Horton had a pistol in her vehicle in the School's parking lot. Ms.

Horton stated she did have a pistol in her purse, which was open in the passenger side floorboard of the car. Ms. Horton was arrested for carrying weapons on school property in an unlawful manner and without legal justification.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Ms. Horton may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students who may be under her instruction, and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Horton's educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Horton of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

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 (2020); S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2020). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State, and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2020); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2021). In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2020), "If the agency finds that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action, and incorporates a finding to that effect in its order, summary suspension of a license may be ordered pending proceedings for revocation or other action." Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-5-10 (2020) and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the Chair of the State Board finds that as a result of the allegations of Ms. Horton's unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United States, due to her arrest and unlawful carrying of a firearm there is reason to believe Ms. Horton may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required.

Accordingly, the educator certificate of Susan Pringels Horton, certificate number 290952, is summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise

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resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Horton of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina Board of Education

s/Crystal F. Stapleton

Crystal F. Stapleton, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

January 18, 2023