

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Gregory Wesley Watchinski
Certificate 238909

CONSENT ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on September 12, 2023. On August 7, 2023, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice via regular and certified mail, to Gregory Wesley Watchinski concerning the pending action against educator certificate 238909. After Mr. Watchinski received the notice, he contacted the SCDE to discuss an alternative resolution. Mr. Watchinski has agreed to waive his right to a hearing and enter into this Consent Order of Suspension of administrative certificate 238909 for a period of one year. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension of Mr. Watchinski's administrative certificate for a period of one year commencing on September 12, 2023 and ending on September 11, 2024.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Gregory Wesley Watchinski holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. Mr. Watchinski has over twenty-four years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Watchinski was employed by the Lexington County School District One (District) as the principal at Rocky Creek Elementary School (School).

Gregory Wesley Watchinski
238909
s/GWW
Initial
8/15/23
Date

Mr. Watchinski was placed on administrative leave on January 27, 2022, following allegations that he had an inappropriate relationship with a subordinate. Specifically, it was alleged that Mr. Watchinski engaged in a relationship with a teacher at the School over whom he had supervisory authority. When confronted by District administration, Mr. Watchinski was forthcoming about the relationship and voluntarily resigned his employment with the District, effective February 1, 2022.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension of Mr. Watchinski's administrative certificate for a period of one year commencing on September 12, 2023 and ending on September 11, 2024.

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 Gregory Wesley Watchinski engaged in unprofessional conduct by conducting an unprofessional relationship with a subordinate. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Mr. Watchinski's administrative certificate for a period of one year, commencing on September 12, 2023 and ending on September 11, 2024.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the administrative certificate of Gregory Wesley Watchinski, certificate 238909, is suspended for a period of one year, commencing on September 12, 2023 and ending on September 11, 2024.

If Mr. Watchinski wishes to have the administrative area of his 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. Watchinski 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. The suspension of Mr. Watchinski's

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administrative 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

s/Crystal F. Stapleton, Ed.D.

Crystal F. Stapleton, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
September 12, 2023

I, Gregory Wesley Watchinski, SC Educator Certificate 238909, 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 the terms set forth in this Consent Order of Suspension are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I agree to the terms of this Consent Order of Suspension, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the State Board for approval on September 12, 2023. I understand this 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/ Gregory Wesley Watchinski
Gregory Wesley Watchinski

8/15/23
Date