

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Rebecca Emmy Adongo
Certificate 187641

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 13, 2024. On March 28, 2024, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Rebecca Emmy Adongo a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate. The SCDE has verified Ms. Adongo's address, the certified letter was returned unclaimed, and the letter sent via regular mail has not been returned. On June 6, 2024, the SCDE informed Ms. Adongo via regular mail that the State Board would meet on August 13, 2024, or as soon thereafter as is feasible, to consider action against her educator certification. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Ms. Adongo has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. She 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 Ms. Adongo's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on August 13, 2024, and ending on August 12, 2026.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Adongo holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. She has over twenty-nine years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Ms. Adongo was employed by School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties (District) as a fourth grade teacher at Dutch Fork Elementary School (School).

On October 9, 2023, a student in her classroom had a disagreement with Ms. Adongo and left her class. This was reported to the School's office, and the student was returned to Ms. Adongo's classroom. Later the same day, the Ms. Adongo did not see the student in line with her class when returning from outside recess. Assuming the student was still upset, she assumed they had returned to the building with a different class. After learning the student had not returned to the building, she reported the issue to the office and remained inside with the rest of her class as they used the restroom and got water.

As she was supervising the others, the missing student appeared on the other side of the door where Ms. Adongo was standing. Video footage showed the student knocking on the door, making an offensive gesture through the glass, and Ms. Adongo looking at the student before turning away. Although administration was outside looking for the student, Ms. Adongo did not report seeing the student at that time. In a written statement, Ms. Adongo admitted seeing the student, seeing the student make the offensive gesture, and not opening the door for the student. The School later received a phone call from a convenience store whose staff reported the student was with them near a busy roadway. Ms. Adongo resigned on October 10, 2023.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Ms. Adongo's educator certificate 187641 for a period of two years, commencing on August 13, 2024, and ending on August 12, 2026.

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. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2020); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2021). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Ms. Adongo engaged in unprofessional conduct by endangering a student under her supervision. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Ms. Adongo's educator certificate 187641 for a period of two years, commencing on August 13, 2024, and ending on August 12, 2026.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Ms. Adongo educator certificate 187641, is suspended for a period of two years, commencing on August 13, 2024, and ending on August 12, 2026. If Ms. Adongo wishes to have the certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Ms. Adongo shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Rebecca Emmy Adongo's 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

s/David C. O'Shields
David C. O'Shields, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 13, 2024