

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Jennifer Lyn Wilkins
Certificate 285355

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on September 3, 2024. On December 27, 2023, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Jennifer Lyn Wilkins a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate. Ms. Wilkins received the notice on December 29, 2023, as evidenced by signed postal receipt. On March 4, 2024, the SCDE informed Ms. Wilkins via regular mail that the State Board would meet on April 9, 2024, or as soon thereafter as is feasible, to consider action against her educator certificate. 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. Wilkins' educator certificate for a period of one year, commencing on September 3, 2024, and ending on September 2, 2025.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Wilkins holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. Ms. Wilkins has over three years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Ms. Wilkins was employed by the Lancaster County School District (District) as a history teacher at Indian Land High School (School).

On or around May 11, 2022, another staff member heard students discussing the end of course US History exam from Ms. Wilkins' class. The test was administered on computers and the students alleged Ms. Wilkins took photos of the monitors to get copies of the quiz questions. She also had students use scratch paper to write down any questions they had trouble with so that she could review the questions with them later. In her statement, Ms. Wilkins alleged she did tell

the students they could use the scratch paper to write down broad ideas for later review, but she did not believe anyone wrote down the exact question. She further admitted to taking photos of the scratch paper to remember what students needed help reviewing.

During the District's investigation, it was confirmed that Ms. Wilkins attended training for administration of the end of course exam. This included a review of the agreement to maintain test security and confidentiality. The training materials noted that all scratch paper was to be returned at the end of testing and that school personnel were not permitted to read test items or discuss test questions with students.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Ms. Wilkins' educator certificate 285355 for a period of one year, commencing on September 3, 2024, and ending on September 2, 2025.

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 Ms. Wilkins engaged in unprofessional conduct by engaging in test security violations. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Ms. Wilkins' educator certificate 285355 for a period of one year, commencing on September 3, 2024, and ending on September 2, 2025.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Jennifer Wilkins educator certificate 285355, is suspended for a period of one year, commencing on September 3, 2024, and ending on September 2, 2025.

If Ms. Wilkins 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. Wilkins 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

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suspension of Ms. Wilkins' educator certificate shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days of 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
September 3, 2024