

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Patricia Beth Curley
Certificate 270709

**ORDER OF SUSPENSION
(BREACH OF CONTRACT)**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on December 2, 2025. On September 5, 2025, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Patricia Beth Curley a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate. Ms. Curley received the notice on or about October 2, 2025, as evidenced by a phone call from Ms. Curley and her subsequent email of October 15, 2025, advising she wished for this matter to proceed as a default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Curley's educator certificate for a period of six months, commencing on August 15, 2025, and ending on February 14, 2026.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Curley holds a South Carolina educator certificate. She has over ten years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time, Ms. Curley was employed by the Fort Mill School District as a teacher at Nation Ford High.

On May 10, 2025, Ms. Curley signed a contractual agreement with the District to serve as a teacher for the 2025-26 school year. On July 24, 2025, Ms. Curley submitted her resignation to the District, effective August 15, 2025, citing to accept a non-teaching position with another school district. On July 24, 2025, the District informed Ms. Curley she would not be released from her contract until a certified and suitable replacement

was secured. She did not return to fulfill her contract. The District Board voted to report Ms. Curley's breach of contract to the SCDE on August 19, 2025. The District reported the matter to the SCDE on August 22, 2025.

After considering the evidence, the State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Patricia Beth Curley breached her contract with the District, and that just cause exists to suspend Ms. Curley's certificate 270709 for a period of six months, commencing on August 15, 2025, and ending on February 14, 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. Just cause includes "breach of contract." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (13) (2025). Pursuant to 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2) and (14) (2021), the State Board of Education has the legal authority to suspend a certificate for "failure to comply with the provision of a contract without the written consent of the local school board." With respect to breach of contract, "any educator who fails to comply with the provisions of his contract without the written consent of the school board is considered to be in breach of contract." S. C. Code Ann. § 59-25-530 (2025). "Upon formal complaint of the school board, substantiated by conclusive evidence, the state board shall suspend or revoke the teacher's certificate." *Id.* The period of suspension for breach of contract, "must begin on the date such contract is breached with the district and run for a period of time deemed appropriate by the State Board of Education, not to exceed six months from the date of breach." *Id.* An educator may not be signed to an employment contract by any South Carolina public school during the term of suspension. *Id.*

The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Patricia Beth Curley breached her contract without the consent and/or approval of the District. Accordingly, the evidence presented supports the State Board's determination that just cause exists to suspend the educator certificate of Patricia Beth Curley for a period of six months, commencing on August 15, 2025, and ending on February 14, 2026.

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If Ms. Curley wishes to have her educator certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services and shall meet all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement. Ms. Curley shall also pay the applicable reinstatement fee. The suspension of Patricia Beth Curley's educator certificate 270709 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order, with the reason stated as "failure to comply with the provisions of a contract without the written consent of the local school board."

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/Rita Allison
Rita Allison, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
December 2, 2025