BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Disciplinary Action of the Educator Certificate of Walter Ashley Martin, IV Certificate 283051	**CONSENT ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on April 7, 2026. On September 2, 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent a notice via regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, to Walter Ashley Martin, IV, regarding the possible suspension of his South Carolina educator certificate 283051. Mr. Martin timely requested a hearing on the matter. After Mr. Martin received the notice, he contacted the SCDE to request a hearing and to discuss an alternative resolution. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand of Mr. Martin's educator certificate. Mr. Martin has also agreed to complete the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Prevention and Correction within sixty days of this order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Martin holds a South Carolina educator certificate. He has over nine years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. At the time of the incident, Mr. Martin was employed by the Darlington County School District as a teacher at Darlington High School (School).

On August 31, 2021, Mr. Martin was placed on administrative leave for insubordination after he refused to teach students who did not wear a facemask. While on administrative leave, Mr. Martin made inappropriate social media posts that were disparaging in nature. Specifically, Mr. Martin made numerous posts that the School and

District administration construed as retaliatory and concerning. Mr. Martin resigned his employment with the District effective March 31, 2022. In a statement to the SCDE, Mr. Martin noted that the strong reaction to his administrative leave that was reflected in the social media posts was caused in part by stress and anxiety. Mr. Martin submitted evidence to the SCDE concerning his subsequent mental health treatment, and his treatment provider submitted a letter noting that Mr. Martin has been successful in managing his symptoms. Additionally, Mr. Martin submitted positive recommendations from his current employer.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Public Reprimand of Walter Ashley Martin's educator certificate.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The State Board 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 (2025). Just cause includes "incompetence; willful neglect of duty; willful violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education; unprofessional conduct; drunkenness; cruelty; crime against the law of this State or the United States; immorality; any conduct involving moral turpitude; dishonesty; evident unfitness for position for which employed; or sale or possession of narcotics." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2025); S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2021). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Mr. Martin engaged in unprofessional conduct due to insubordination in that he refused to teach students who did not wear a facemask, after being instructed to do so. Further, while on administrative leave, Mr. Martin made inappropriate social media posts that were disparaging in nature about the School and District administration. The State Board further finds that just cause exists to publicly reprimand Mr. Martin's educator certificate. The State Board further finds that just cause exists to accept the requirement of Mr. Martin successfully completing the NASDTEC Prevention and Correction course.

The public reprimand of Mr. Martin's educator certificate 283051 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Walter Ashley Martin, IV, certificate 283051, is publicly reprimanded.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina Board of Education

s/David M. Mathis
David M. Mathis, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
April 7, 2026

I, Walter Ashley Martin, IV, SC Educator Certificate 283051, 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 Public Reprimand are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack, or judicial review. I agree to the terms of this Consent Order of Public Reprimand, consisting of [3] pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the South Carolina State Board of Education for approval on Tuesday, April 7, 2026. 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 have the SCDE permission to use my electronic signature in the style of "s/name" for required website publication.

s/Walter Ashley Martin, IV
Walter Ashley Martin, IV

3/30/26
Date