BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Disciplinary Action of the Educator Certificate of Amanda Nicole Padgett Certificate 278604	**ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on April 1, 2026. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2020), § 59-5-10 (2020), and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) requested that the Chair of the State Board summarily suspend the educator certificate of Amanda Nicole Padgett, educator certificate 278604, as a result of her arrest on the felony charge of unlawful conduct toward a child (S.C. Code of Laws Ann. § 16-5-70).

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Padgett may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students, who may be under her instruction and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Padgett's educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Padgett of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Padgett holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over nine years of educator experience. At the time of the incident, Ms. Padgett was a teacher for Hampton County School District (District). She was placed on administrative leave by the District on March 23, 2026.

On or about March 27, 2026, Ms. Padgett was arrested on the felony charge of unlawful conduct toward a child (SC Code of Laws Ann. § 16-5-70). The criminal charges stem from

allegations that Ms. Padgett left a student unattended during a field trip to a movie theater. Specifically, it was alleged that a student was moved to the rear of the theater and subsequently fell asleep. Upon conclusion of the movie, Ms. Padgett checked the theater and saw no children remained seated, so she left with the remainder of the students. Upon waking, the child left the theater unattended and attempted to walk back to school; however, the student was spotted walking along a highway by law enforcement. Ms. Padgett was subsequently placed on administrative leave with pay on March 23, 2026.

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Ms. Padgett may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students who may be under her instruction, and that emergency action is required. After considering the evidence presented by the SCDE, the Chair of the State Board finds that Ms. Padgett's educator certificate shall be summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Padgett of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

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 (2025). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State, and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2025); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2021). In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2020), "If the agency finds that the public health, safety or welfare imperatively requires emergency action and incorporates a finding to that effect in its order, summary suspension of a license may be ordered pending proceedings for revocation or other action." Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-5-10 (2020) and State Board Rule of Governance BBABA, the Chair of the State Board finds that as a result of the allegations of Ms. Padgett's unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United States, and evident unfitness for the position for which employed, due to her arrest on the felony charge of unlawful conduct toward a child (SC Code of Laws Ann. § 16-5-70), there is

reason to believe Ms. Padgett may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required.

Accordingly, the educator certificate of Amanda Nicole Padgett, certificate number 278604, is summarily suspended until a due process hearing is held and/or this matter is otherwise resolved. The SCDE is directed to serve notice on Ms. Padgett of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina Board of Education

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

Columbia, South Carolina
April 1, 2026