

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Katherine Schleifer Pelfrey
Certificate 288177

ORDER OF PERMANENT REVOCATION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 3, 2026. On February 2, 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Katherine Schleifer Pelfrey a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible permanent revocation of her South Carolina educator certificate. Ms. Pelfrey received the notice on February 16, 2022, as evidenced by a signed postal receipt. She contacted the SCDE to request a hearing on January 26, 2022; however, prior to the hearing, on March 5, 2025, she contacted the SCDE to withdraw the hearing request and to default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Katherine Schleifer Pelfrey's educator certificate 288177, effective February 3, 2026.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Pelfrey holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over four (4) years of teaching experience. On January 5, 2022, the SCDE learned that Ms. Pelfrey had been arrested on one felony count of Sexual battery with a student 16 or 17 years of age, no aggravated force or coercion (S.C. Code Ann. § 15-17-755 (B)) and the misdemeanor count of Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor (S.C. Code Ann. § 15-17-490). The charges stemmed from allegations that Ms. Pelfrey engaged in a sexual relationship with a student. Her South Carolina educator certificate 288177 was summarily suspended on January 5, 2022, awaiting disposition of those charges. Ms. Pelfrey ultimately entered a guilty plea to the misdemeanor charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor (S.C. Code Ann. § 16-17-490) on March 29, 2023.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Katherine Schleifer Pelfrey's educator certificate 288177, effective February 3, 2026.

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). Just cause includes "unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United State, evident unfitness for position for which employed, and sale or possession of narcotics." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2025); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2021). The State Board finds that Ms. Pelfrey engaged in unprofessional conduct, immorality, any conduct involving moral turpitude, and crime against the law of this State or the United States due to her arrest on one felony count of Sexual battery with a student 16 or 17 years of age, no aggravated force or coercion and subsequent plea to misdemeanor contributing to the delinquency of a minor on March 29, 2023.

The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE supports its decision that just cause exists to permanently revoke education certificate 288177, issued in the name of Katherine Schleifer Pelfrey, effective February 3, 2026. The permanent revocation of Ms. Pelfrey's educator certificate 288177 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty (30) days from the date of this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina Board of Education

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

Columbia, South Carolina
March 3, 2026