

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Rhett Tyler Watson
Certificate 260710

ORDER OF REVOCATION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 3, 2026. On October 2, 2024, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Rhett Tyler Watson a notice via regular and certified mail of his right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension or revocation of his South Carolina educator certificate. The SCDE has verified Dr. Watson's address, the certified letter was returned unclaimed, and the letter sent via regular mail has not been returned. On October 31, 2024, the SCDE informed Dr. Watson via regular mail that the State Board would meet on December 3, 2024, or as soon thereafter as is feasible, to consider action against his educator certification. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Rhett Tyler Watson has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. Dr. Watson has not contacted the SCDE to request a hearing and is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to revoke Dr. Watson's educator certificate 260710, effective February 3, 2026.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Dr. Watson holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over nine (9) years of teaching experience. At the time of the incident, Dr. Watson was employed by the Greenville County School District (District) as a teacher at Mauldin High School (School).

On May 13, 2022, the District reported to the SCDE that Dr. Watson had engaged in inappropriate communications with students via text message. The District conducted an investigation and concluded that Dr. Watson exchanged inappropriate messages with students on his personal cell phone and made inappropriate comments about a student's clothing and appearance after the student sent a photograph. On April 19, 2022, Dr. Watson was placed on administrative

leave when law enforcement began their investigation. Ultimately, no criminal charges were filed but Dr. Watson resigned his position with the District on May 5, 2022.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to revoke Dr. Watson's educator certificate 260710, 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 "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 by the SCDE supports its decision that just cause exists to revoke education certificate 260710, issued in the name of Dr. Watson, effective February 3, 2026. Dr. Watson has the right to reapply for certification after three (3) years. Dr. Watson shall, pursuant to State Board Rule BBCDB, be subject to a character and fitness review before the State Board with employment information during the period of certificate surrender; community service records; letters of support from a current or prospective school district employer, if applicable; letters of support from community leaders; and SLED and FBI background checks. Dr. Watson shall also pay all applicable fees for certification, if any. The revocation of Rhett Tyler Watson's educator certificate 260710 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