

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Donald O. Clendaniel, III
Certificate 252109

CONSENT ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on December 3, 2024. On August 27, 2024, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent notice via regular and certified mail, to Donald O. Clendaniel, III concerning the pending action against educator certificate 252109. After Mr. Clendaniel, III received the notice, he contacted the SCDE to discuss an alternative resolution. Mr. Clendaniel, III agreed to waive his right to a hearing and enter this Consent Order of Suspension of educator certificate 252109 for a period of three months.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension of Mr. Clendaniel, III's educator certificate for a period of three months, retroactively commencing on September 4, 2024 and ending on December 3, 2024.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Donald O. Clendaniel, III holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. Mr. Clendaniel, III has over eighteen years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Mr. Clendaniel, III was employed by the Abbeville County School District (District) as a principal at Cherokee Trail Elementary School (School).

On or around January 10, 2022, a student reported to Mr. Clendaniel that they had been touched inappropriately by another student on the school bus. On January 20, 2022, the student made another report to Mr. Clendaniel that they were again touched inappropriately by the same student on the school bus. Video footage confirmed that the

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inappropriate touching took place. While Mr. Clendaniel did speak with the bus driver about keeping the students separated while on the bus, and disembarking the bus at separate times, Mr. Clendaniel failed to report the incident to law enforcement or the Department of Social Services under his mandatory reporting obligations, and did not report the incidents to the children’s parents until February 1, 2022.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Consent Order of Suspension of Mr. Clendaniel, III’s educator certificate for a period of three months, retroactively commencing on September 4, 2024 and ending on December 3, 2024.

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 (2020). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2020); 24 S.C. Code Regs. 43-58 (2021). The State Board finds that the evidence presented demonstrates that Donald O. Clendaniel, III engaged in unprofessional conduct by failing to report suspected abuse of a student. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Mr. Clendaniel, III’s educator certificate for a period of three months, retroactively commencing on September 4, 2024 and ending on December 3, 2024.

If Mr. Clendaniel, III wishes to have his certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, he shall make a written request to the SCDE’s Office of Educator Services. Mr. Clendaniel, III shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time he requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Mr. Clendaniel, III’s educator certificate shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days of the date of this order.

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Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Donald O. Clendaniel, III, certificate 252109, is suspended for a period of three months, retroactively commencing on September 4, 2024 and ending on December 3, 2024.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/David C. O'Shields
David C. O'Shields, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
December 3, 2024

I, Donald O. Clendaniel, III, SC Educator Certificate 252109, 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 Suspension are not subject to reconsideration, collateral attack or judicial review. I agree to the terms of this Consent Order of Suspension, consisting of three pages, and understand that this Order will be presented to the State Board for approval on December 3, 2024.

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 give the SCDE permission to use my electronic signature in the style of "s/name" for required website publication.

Donald O. Clendaniel, III
Donald O. Clendaniel, III

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