

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Stephanie Senia Stokes
Certificate 300299

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on June 3, 2025. On November 4, 2024, February 28, 2025, and April 16, 2025, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Stephanie Senia Stokes a notice via regular and certified mail of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate. The SCDE has verified Ms. Stokes's address, the certified letter was returned unclaimed, and the letter sent via regular mail has not been returned. On April 16, 2025, the SCDE informed Ms. Stokes via regular mail that the State Board would meet on, or as soon thereafter as is feasible, to consider action against her educator certification. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Stephanie Senia Stokes has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. Ms. Stokes contacted the SCDE but has not requested a hearing and is now in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Stephanie Senia Stokes's educator certificate for a period of two years, commencing on June 3, 2025, and ending on June 2, 2027.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Stephanie Senia Stokes holds a valid South Carolina professional educator certificate. Ms. Stokes has over thirteen years of educator experience and has no prior record of disciplinary action with the State Board. Ms. Stokes was employed by Greenville County School District (District) as a teacher, at Plain Elementary School.

On February 23, 2022, District administration was made aware of allegations that Ms. Stokes falsified individualized education plan (IEP) records. Specifically, it was found that Ms. Stokes had copied prior year IEP records and there was no data to support or confirm any progress towards goals reported. Additional instances were discovered where Ms. Stokes erased information from a

student's IEP and failed to update IEPs with necessary information. On February 24, 2022, Ms. Stokes was placed on administrative leave. She subsequently resigned her position, effective May 1, 2022.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to accept the Order of Suspension of Stephanie Senia Stokes's educator certificate 300299 for a period of two years, commencing on June 3, 2025, and ending on June 2, 2027.

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 Stephanie Senia Stokes engaged in unprofessional conduct by entering false and incorrect information into student IEPs. The State Board further finds that just cause exists for the suspension of Stephanie Senia Stokes educator certificate 300299 for a period of two years, commencing on June 3, 2025, and ending on June 2, 2027.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that the educator certificate of Stephanie Senia Stokes educator certificate 300299, is suspended for a period of two years, commencing on June 3, 2025, and ending on June 2, 2027. If Ms. Stokes wishes to have the certificate reinstated at the conclusion of the period of suspension, she shall make a written request to the SCDE's Office of Educator Services. Ms. Stokes shall be responsible for meeting all certification requirements in effect at the time she requests reinstatement and for the payment of any applicable reinstatement fees. The suspension of Stephanie Senia Stokes's educator certificate shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

s/David Mathis
David Mathis, Chair-Elect

Columbia, South Carolina
June 3, 2025