

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the
Disciplinary Action of the
Educator Certificate of
Zeniyah Mahogany Lawrence
Certificate 322523

ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on July 23, 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 Zeniyah Mahogany Lawrence, educator certificate 322523, as a result of her arrest on February 25, 2026 for the felony charges of trafficking in marijuana > 10 lbs < 100 lbs 1st offense (S.C. Code Ann. § 44-53-0370(e)(1)(a)(1) and four counts of possession of a weapon during violent crime (S.C. Code Ann. § 16-23-0490)).

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of these allegations of misconduct, Ms. Lawrence 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. Lawrence'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. Lawrence of the summary suspension, as well as the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Lawrence holds a South Carolina educator certificate and has over two (2) years of educator experience. At the time of the incident, Ms. Lawrence was a school guidance counselor for Charleston County School District (District). She resigned from the District in lieu of dismissal.

On or about February 25, 2026, Ms. Lawrence was arrested for the felony charges of trafficking in marijuana > 10 lbs < 100 lbs 1st offense (S.C. Code Ann. § 44-53-0370(e)(1)(a)(1) and four counts of possession of a weapon during violent crime (S.C. Code Ann. § 16-23-0490)).

The SCDE has reason to believe that, due to the serious nature of this allegation of misconduct, Ms. Lawrence 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. Lawrence'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. Lawrence 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. Lawrence'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 February 25, 2026 for the felony charges of trafficking in marijuana > 10 lbs < 100 lbs 1st offense (S.C. Code Ann. § 44-53-0370(e)(1)(a)(1) and four counts of possession of a weapon during violent crime (S.C. Code Ann. § 16-23-0490)), there is reason to believe Ms. Lawrence may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of students and emergency action is required.

Accordingly, the educator certificate of Zeniyah Mahogany Lawrence, certificate number 322523, 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. Lawrence 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
July 23, 2026