BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Disciplinary Action of the Educator Certificate of Austen Taylor Smith Certificate 294918	**ORDER OF REVOCATION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on October 6, 2026. On October 2, 2024, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Austen Taylor Smith 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. Mr. Smith received the notice on February 14, 2025, as evidenced by a US Postal Service Tracking Report, and the letter sent via regular mail has not been returned. Under the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 5(b), Austen Taylor Smith has been given fair notice of constitutional due process. Mr. Smith 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 Mr. Smith's educator certificate 294918, effective October 6, 2026.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr. Smith holds an expired South Carolina educator certificate and has over three (3) years of teaching experience. On December 9, 2022, the SCDE learned that Mr. Smith posted nude photographs of himself on his Twitter account.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to revoke Mr. Smith's educator certificate 294918, effective October 6, 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

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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 294918, issued in the name of Austen Taylor Smith, effective October 6, 2026. Mr. Smith has the right to reapply for certification after three (3) years. Mr. Smith 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 revocation; 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. Mr. Smith shall also pay all applicable fees for certification, if any. The revocation of Austen Taylor Smith's educator certificate 294918 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
October 6, 2026

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