

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
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FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER
C 2023-068

COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT: State Ethics Commission
ADDRESS: 201 Executive Center Drive
Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29210
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (803) 253-4192

RESPONDENT: Meka Childs
ADDRESS: P.O. Box 632
Blythewood, SC 29016
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (803) 673-7886
TITLE: Former Trustee – Department of
Corrections Palmetto Unified School District 1 and
Board Member – Governor’s School for Science and
Math

Section 8-13-1120, SC Code Ann., 1976, as amended, requires disclosure of the source, type, and amount of income from a governmental entity and a listing of the private source and type of any income received by the filer or a member of the filer's immediate family during the reporting period. Respondent has failed to properly report government and private sources of income on her 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 Statement of Economic Interests.

Respondent was reminded of the 2020 and 2021 Statement of Economic Interests income requirement by letters dated January 13, 2022 and February 10, 2022 as described in the attached. To date, a properly completed 2020, 2021, 2022, or 2023 Statement of Economic Interests have been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1120, SC Code Ann., 1976, as amended.

If there is a finding of probable cause, the following documents become public record: the complaint, the response (if any) by respondent, and the notice of hearing. If a hearing is to be held, the final order and all exhibits become public record. If no hearing is held following a finding of probable cause, the final disposition of the matter becomes public record.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF Richland

Personally appeared before me Meghan Walker Dayson who, first being duly sworn, says that she has read and knows the contents of the above complaint and that the allegations contained therein, are true and correct to the best of her own knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those she believes them to be true.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
28th day of April, 2023

[Redacted Signature]
Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director

[Redacted Signature]
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission expires 01/22/24

SEC-7 (Revised 3/2022)

REPLY TO: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210 (803)253-4192
ELECTRONIC COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
IN THE MATTER OF:)
Complaint C2023-068)
State Ethics Commission)
Complainant.)
Meka Childs)
Respondent.)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

NOTICE OF HEARING

The State Ethics Commission has determined that there is probable cause pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, in the above-captioned complaint. The Commission will convene a formal hearing into the matter in accordance with Section 8-13-320(10)(i) & (j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.) on Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. at the Commission Hearing Room located at: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210.

The following allegation will be heard:

COUNT ONE
FAILURE TO REPORT INCOME ON STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1120 S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Meka Childs, Governor’s School Science/Math Board Member and a Department of Corrections Palmetto Unified School District One Board Member, did in Richland County, fail to report Respondent’s private income on her 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 Statements of Economic Interests, in violation of Section 8-13-1120.

You have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to call and examine witnesses, the right to introduce exhibits, and the right to cross-examine opposing witnesses. This hearing

will be open to the public as required by Section 8-13-320(10)(j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended. The procedures to be followed are set forth in the Administrative Procedures Act, Section 1-23-10, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, the State Ethics Act, Section 8-13-100, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.).

A pre-hearing conference may be scheduled prior to the hearing to allow exchange of witness lists and evidence, marking of exhibits, and disposition of motions or pleadings. In the event you fail to appear, judgment by default will be rendered against you. If there are any questions concerning the above notice or hearing times, please contact the State Ethics Commission.



Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Dated this 27th day,
of July 2023.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the RESPONDENT Meka Childs, P.O. Box 632, Blythewood, SC 29016 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 2nd day of August 2023, by **CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



Rachael O'Bryan, Administrative Assistant
State Ethics Commission (803) 253-4192

Columbia, South Carolina

DocuSign
Envelope ID: 7217CF3F-75F0-4494-9882-EE6C427B1443

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
IN THE MATTER OF:)
COMPLAINT C2023-068)
State Ethics Commission,)
Complainant,)
Meka Childs,)
Respondent.)
_____)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on April 28, 2023. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint against Meka Childs (Respondent) was considered by the Commission and probable cause was found to warrant an evidentiary hearing for Respondent’s failure to report private sources of income on her Statements of Economic Interests (SEI) from 2020-2023. Prior to the call of the case, Respondent agreed to the following:

STATEMENTS OF FACT

1. Respondent has served on the Palmetto Unified School District One¹ Board of Trustees since 2017 and on the Governor’s School of Math and Science Board of Trustees since 2020.
2. In a February 10, 2022 certified letter mailed to Respondent’s address of record, the Commission notified Respondent of her failure to properly report private sources of income on her 2020 and 2021 SEIs. This letter was returned to the Commission on May 16, 2022.
3. On January 24, 2023, a Commission staff member telephoned Respondent and requested that she amend her 2020, 2021, and 2022 SEIs to appropriately reflect her private sources of income.
4. Receiving no response, the Complaint was filed on April 25, 2023 and alleged Respondent failed

¹ Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 24-25-10, the Palmetto Unified School District One is a special statewide unified school district within the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

to properly disclose private sources of income on her SEIs from 2020-2023.

5. Following the filing of the Complaint, Respondent amended her SEIs to properly disclose her private sources of income.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the Statements of Fact, the Commission concludes, as a matter of law:

1. At all times relevant, Respondent was a “public member” pursuant to Section 8-13-100(26). Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. Section 8-13-1120(A)(10) of the Act requires public officials to disclose:

a listing of the private source and type of any income received in the previous year by the filer or a member of his immediate family...
3. Section 8-13-320(10)(I) allows the Commission to require a public official to pay a civil penalty of up to \$2,000 for each violation of the Ethics Act.
4. Section 8-13-130 allows the Commission to “levy an enforcement or administrative fee on a person who is in violation” of the Ethics Act.

DISCUSSION

The Commission found probable cause to charge Respondent with failing to report private sources of income on her SEIs from 2020-2023, in violation of Section 8-13-1120(A)(10). Through this Consent Order, Respondent acknowledges she violated the Ethics Act when she failed to report private income on these SEIs. Respondent states she believed she had concluded her involvement with the Commission when she resolved an un-related non-compliance matter in July of 2023.²

² On January 19, 2023, the Commission notified Respondent of its intention to submit a \$300 debt related to Respondent’s failure to timely file three (3) SEIs to the Department of Revenue (DOR) for collection. DOR subsequently withheld the \$300 debt from Respondent’s State tax return, but Commission staff did not learn of this collection until August 2023. On July 14, 2023, the Commission received a \$300 check from the Respondent as payment for the aforementioned late-filing penalties. Not knowing DOR had already collected the \$300 from Respondent for this debt, Commission staff cashed the check and mailed Respondent a receipt, thereby resulting in an excess payment of \$300 by Respondent.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission finds Respondent in violation of one (1) count of Section 8-13-1120(A)(10).
2. The Commission adopts the Statements of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby issues a written warning to Respondent. Given that Respondent has already paid the Commission \$300, the Commission declines to issue any additional penalties.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 3rd DAY OF November 2023.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


SCOTT E. FRICK, CHAIR


MEKA CHILDS, RESPONDENT