

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
ROBERT HAWKINS : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1011-192

At its meeting of May 12, 2011, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information regarding Robert Hawkins. Hawkins surrendered his teaching certificates in Pennsylvania in June 2010 in lieu of discipline after he pled guilty in March 2010 to Corruption of Minors and Endangering the Welfare of Children. Hawkins was sentenced to between 11 months fifteen days and 23 months in prison. Hawkins currently holds a Teacher of Mathematics Certificate of Eligibility With Advanced Standing, issued in April 1994 and a Teacher of Mathematics certificate, issued in July 1995. Upon review of the above information, at its June 16, 2011 meeting, the Board voted to issue Hawkins an Order to Show Cause.

The Board sent Hawkins the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on June 20, 2011. The certified mail was returned as unclaimed. The regular mail copy was not returned. The Order provided that Hawkins must file an Answer within 30 days. Hawkins did not file an Answer. Thereafter, on August 3, 2011, the Board sent Hawkins another notice by certified and regular mail providing him an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause. The certified mail copy was signed by Hawkins and returned. The regular mail copy was not returned. Hawkins did not respond to the second notice.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(e)*, on September 1, 2011, the Board sent Hawkins a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that it appeared that no material facts were in dispute. Thus, Hawkins was offered an opportunity to submit written arguments on the issue of whether the conduct addressed in the Order to Show Cause constituted conduct unbecoming a certificate holder as well as arguments with regard to the appropriate sanction in the event that the Board determined to take action against his certificates.

It also explained that upon review of the charges against him and the legal arguments tendered in his defense, the Board would determine if Hawkins' conduct warranted action against his certificates. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Hawkins was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail copy was returned as unclaimed and the regular mail copy was not returned. Hawkins did not file a response.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter, therefore, is whether Hawkins' conviction and the surrender of his Pennsylvania licenses constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. Since Hawkins failed to respond to the Order to Show Cause or the hearing notice, at its meeting of June 16, 2011, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause. The Board determined that no material facts related to Hawkins' offense were in dispute since he never denied that he had been convicted of the offense charged and had been sentenced accordingly. Nor did he deny that he had surrendered his Pennsylvania teaching certificates in lieu of discipline. Thus, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(h)*. It is therefore ORDERED that the charges in the Order to Show Cause are deemed admitted for the purpose of this proceeding.

The Board must now determine whether Hawkins' conviction and the surrender of his Pennsylvania certificates, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provide just cause to act against his certificates pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.5*. The Board finds that they do.

The Board may revoke or suspend the certification of any certificate holder on the basis of demonstrated inefficiency, incapacity, conduct unbecoming a teacher or other just cause. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.5*. "Teachers... are professional employees to whom the people have entrusted the care and custody of ... school children. This heavy duty requires a degree of self-restraint and controlled behavior rarely requisite to other types of employment." *Tenure of Sammons*,

1972 *S.L.D.* 302, 321. Hawkins' acts of Corruption of Minors and Endangering the Welfare of Children are inexcusable for any individual, teacher or not.

The Commissioner has long held that teachers serve as role models for their students. Clearly, a teacher convicted of Corruption of Minors and Endangering the Welfare of Children cannot claim status as a role model to anyone. Hawkins' conviction therefore warrants revocation. *In the Matter of the Certificates of Kevin Jordan*, Dkt. No. A-0155-08T3 (App. Div. October 5, 2009) (Unpublished Opinion).

Accordingly, on November 1, 2011, the Board voted to revoke Robert Hawkins' Teacher of Mathematics Certificate of Eligibility With Advanced Standing and his Teacher of Mathematics certificate. On this 16th day of December 2011 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Hawkins' certificates be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Hawkins return his certificates to the Secretary of the State Board of Examiners, Office of Licensure, P.O. Box 500, Trenton, NJ 08625-0500 within 30 days of the mailing date of this decision.

Robert R. Higgins, Secretary
State Board of Examiners

Date of Mailing:

Appeals may be made to the Commissioner of Education pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38.4.