

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATE OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
STANLEY WILLIAMS : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 0910-137

At its meeting of June 10, 2010, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information received from the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office indicating that on June 18, 2009, Stanley Williams pled guilty to Uttering Forged Instrument. On August 31, 2009, Williams was sentenced to 5 years' probation and ordered to relinquish his teaching certificates. Pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 2C:51-2*, Williams was also permanently disqualified from ever holding any office, position of honor, trust or profit in the State of New Jersey or any of its administrative or political subdivisions. Williams currently holds a Teacher of the Handicapped certificate, issued in May 1994. On October 14, 2009, the Board Secretary sent Williams an affidavit for his signature relinquishing his certificate. Neither the affidavit nor the certificate was returned. Upon review of the above information, at its July 22, 2010 meeting, the Board voted to issue Williams an Order to Show Cause.

The Board sent Williams the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on July 27, 2010. The Order provided that Williams' Answer was due within 30 days. Williams filed a response on August 25, 2010. In that response, Williams admitted that he had pled guilty to "uttering a forged document," but challenged the court's authority to order the relinquishment of his teaching certificates. (Answer, ¶ 4). Williams also denied that just cause existed to consider the revocation of his teaching certificates and maintained that he had no other conviction on his record and had a mostly unblemished teaching career. (Answer, ¶ 7). Finally, he stated that the gravity of his offense should not warrant the revocation of his teaching certificate for the rest of

his life “especially when weighed against the totality of his teaching career the bulk of which was devoted to helping innumerable handicapped kids.” (Answer, ¶ 7).

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(e)*, on November 3, 2010, the Board sent Williams a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that it appeared that no material facts were in dispute. Thus, Williams 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 certificate. It also explained that upon review of the charges against him and the legal arguments tendered in his defense, the Board would determine if Williams’ offense warranted action against his certificate. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Williams was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. On December 17, 2010, Williams’ attorney responded agreeing that there were no material facts in dispute and adding that he would not be filing any additional submission beyond Williams’ original Answer. He also asked for the opportunity to appear before the Board and offer testimony on the sanction issue.

At its meeting of January 20, 2011, the Board voted to table the matter after Williams’ attorney withdrew from the case. Williams was not present at that meeting, but requested that the Board hold the matter in abeyance as he was attempting to set aside his conviction. Williams testified at the Board’s meeting of March 31, 2011. In his testimony Williams stated that at the time he agreed to relinquish his certificate he had inadequate counsel, a substance abuse problem and that he was fighting the plea.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Williams' conviction and permanent disqualification from holding any public office in the State of New Jersey or any of its administrative or political subdivisions constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. At its meeting of May 12, 2011, the Board considered the allegations in the Order to Show Cause, Williams' responsive pleadings and his testimony. The Board determined that no material facts related to Williams' offense were in dispute since he admitted that he had been convicted and sentenced accordingly. 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 Williams's conviction and subsequent disqualification pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 2C:51-2*, 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. Moreover, the Commissioner has long held that teachers serve as role models for their students. Williams' act of Uttering a Forged Instrument demonstrates a dishonesty that falls far short of the role model status expected of teachers. Clearly, Williams cannot lay claim to that status.

Unfitness to hold a position in a school system may be shown by one incident, if sufficiently flagrant. *Redcay v. State Bd. of Educ.*, 130 N.J.L. 369, 371 (1943), *aff'd*, 131 N.J.L. 326 (E & A 1944). In this instance, Williams' conviction for Uttering a Forged Instrument resulted in a long probationary term and a permanent disqualification from public office. Williams' offense demonstrates egregious behavior that warrants revocation.

Accordingly, on May 12, 2011, the Board voted to revoke Williams' Teacher of the Handicapped certificate. On this 16th day of June 2011 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Stanley Williams' certificate be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Williams return his certificate 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 the provisions of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38.4.

RRH:MZ:th