

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
LAWRENCE YOUNG : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 0910-224

At its meeting of September 16, 2010, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information received from the Office of Criminal History Review (OCHR) regarding Lawrence Young. Young currently holds a Teacher of Biological Science Certificate of Eligibility, issued in March 2003 and a Teacher of Biological Science certificate, issued in September 2004. OCHR reported that Young was disqualified from public school employment pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1 et seq.*, as a result of his June 2010 conviction for Child Abuse. At that September 16, 2010 meeting, the Board voted to issue an Order to Show Cause to Young as to why his certificates should not be revoked. Young submitted an Answer, in which he claimed that he had not been convicted.

The Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office subsequently provided the Board with information indicating that Young had been accepted into a Pretrial Intervention program (PTI) for one year following his arrest for Abuse of Child-Cruelty, Neglect. As a condition of his acceptance into PTI, Young was required to forfeit his teaching position and was disqualified from holding a teaching position "in this State or any of its administrative or political subdivisions" pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 2C:51-2d*.

At its meeting on January 20, 2011, the Board voted to vacate the Order to Show Cause it had issued to Young in September 2010 and issued a new Order to Show Cause to him based upon his disqualification from holding a teaching position in the State. The Board sent Young the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on January 24, 2011. The Order provided that Young's Answer was due within 30 days. Young responded on February 24, 2011. In that

Answer, Young admitted the allegations contained in the Order to Show Cause. (Answer, p. 1). He stated that he accepted his “agreed to ineligibility to teach within the K-12 school systems and have moved beyond, finding professional acceptance and happiness teaching at the college level.” (Answer, p. 1). Young requested that he be allowed to retain his certificates since his arrest would be expunged after the conclusion of his PTI and, although he could not teach in New Jersey, he might want to teach in other states. (Answer, p. 1). He added that he had earned the certification and had always maintained his innocence in the criminal matter. (Answer, p. 1).

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(e)*, on March 4, 2011, the Board sent Young a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that it appeared that no material facts were in dispute. Thus, Young 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 Young’s offenses warranted action against his certificates. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Young was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail receipt was signed and returned and the regular mail copy was not returned. Young did not respond to the Hearing Notice.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter, therefore, is whether Young’s disqualification from teaching in New Jersey public schools constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. At its meeting of May 12, 2011, the Board considered the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and Young’s Answer. The Board determined that no material facts related

to Young's offense were in dispute since he admitted that he was barred permanently from teaching in the public schools of New Jersey. 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 Young's disqualification, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provides just cause to act against his certificates pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9-17.5. The Board finds that it does.

By permanently barring Young from teaching in the public schools of this State, the court was protecting public school pupils from contact with individuals whom it deemed to be dangerous. Although Young will not have a conviction after his completion of PTI, his bar from teaching demonstrates the court's agreement with the Commissioner's long-standing belief that teachers must serve as role models for their students. "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. Clearly, Young's actions here are not those of a role model.

Moreover, Young's disqualification pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 2C:51-2d also offers guidance to the Board as to the appropriate sanction in this matter. An individual whose offense is so great that he or she is barred from service in public schools should not be permitted to retain the certificate that authorizes such service. Nor should a person who has been disqualified from teaching in a public school be permitted to continue to hold himself out as a teacher. Thus, because the court considers Young's behavior so significant, the Board believes that the only appropriate sanction in this case is the revocation of Young's certificates.

Accordingly, on May 12, 2011, the Board voted to revoke Young's Teacher of Biological Science Certificate of Eligibility, and his Teacher of Biological Science 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 Lawrence Young's certificates be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Young 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 the provisions of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38.4.

RRH:MZ:th