

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATE OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
CURTIS KEY : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1011-210

At its meeting of June 16, 2011, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information regarding Curtis Key. Key surrendered his teaching certificates in Pennsylvania in February 2009 in lieu of discipline. In April 2009, Key pled guilty in Pennsylvania to Corruption of Minors and was sentenced to three years' probation. In New Jersey, Key currently holds a Teacher of French Certificate of Eligibility, issued in June 2003. Upon review of the above information, at its July 28, 2011 meeting, the Board voted to issue Key an Order to Show Cause.

The Board sent Key the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on August 2, 2011. The certified mail receipt was signed and returned. The regular mail copy was not returned. The Order provided that Key must file an Answer within 30 days. Key did not file an Answer. Thereafter, on October 7, 2011, the Board sent Key another notice by certified and regular mail providing him an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause. The certified mail receipt was signed and returned. The regular mail copy was not returned. Key did not respond to the second notice.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(e)*, on November 4, 2011, the Board sent Key a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that it appeared that no material facts were in dispute. Thus, Key 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 Key's conduct warranted action against his certificate. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Key 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. Key did not file a response.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter, therefore, is whether Key's conviction and the surrender of his Pennsylvania licenses constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. Since Key failed to respond to the Order to Show Cause or the hearing notice, at its meeting of January 19, 2012, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause. The Board determined that no material facts related to Key's 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 Key's conviction and the surrender of his Pennsylvania certificates, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provide just cause to act against his certificate 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. Key's act of Corruption of Minors is 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 cannot claim status as a role model to anyone. Key's 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 January 19, 2012, the Board voted to revoke Curtis Key's Teacher of French Certificate of Eligibility. On this 1st day of March 2012 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Key's certificate be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Key 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 *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38.4.