

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
THE CERTIFICATE OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS  
DEBORAH CANTZ : ORDER OF REVOCATION  
\_\_\_\_\_ : DOCKET NO: 0910-113

At its meeting of November 1, 2011, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information it had received from the Hammonton School District (Hammonton) regarding Deborah Cantz. Hammonton reported that Cantz submitted a Teacher of Mathematics Certificate of Eligibility to the district in order to obtain employment. According to the records of the Office of Licensure and Credentials, the only certificate Cantz holds is a Teacher of Elementary School in Grades K-5 Certificate of Eligibility, issued in December 2008. Cantz was never issued a Teacher of Mathematics Certificate of Eligibility. Upon review of the above information, at its December 16, 2011 meeting, the Board voted to issue an Order to Show Cause to Cantz as to why her certificate should not be revoked.

After finally securing a correct address for Cantz, the Board sent her the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on February 28, 2012. The Order provided that Cantz must file an Answer within 30 days. Cantz responded on March 19, 2012. In her Answer, Cantz stated that after she applied for the position in Hammonton, she removed herself from the pool of applicants and told the district when she learned that she would need a Teacher of Mathematics certificate, that she did not have one. (Answer, ¶ 2). She noted that she also formally resigned from the position she held in the district at the time “due to conduct which I found to be unbecoming of educational professionals in the process.” (Answer, ¶2). Cantz questioned why the inquiry into her certification was being raised “at this time” rather than in 2009 when she applied for the position in Hammonton and “question[ed] the chain of custody of any and all evidence be it written or verbal that would show any just cause for the revocation of my certification.” (Answer, ¶ 4). In the remainder of her Answer, Cantz stated that there was no evidence that she ever accepted a job under false pretenses in New Jersey or that “I offered a certification that I did not hold in the State of New Jersey.” (Answer, ¶ 5).

Since there were material facts in dispute, on April 3, 2012, the Board transmitted the matter to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for hearing as a contested case. Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) W. Todd Miller heard the matter on October 16, 2012. The record closed on December 3, 2012, and the ALJ issued an Initial Decision on December 21, 2012. *In the Matter of the Certificates of Deborah Cantz*, Dkt. No. EDE 4520-12 (Initial Decision, December 21, 2012).

After assessing the witnesses' credibility and their direct knowledge of the events, the ALJ found that the Board had proven that Cantz had submitted a fraudulent mathematics certificate to Hammonton. (Initial Decision, slip op. at 6). The ALJ determined that Cantz did not initially hand in a certificate when she applied for the position since she did not hold a Teacher of the Handicapped certificate. *Ibid.* However, ALJ Miller noted that, since Hammonton would temporarily accept a Teacher of Mathematics certificate in lieu of a Teacher of the Handicapped certificate pending completion of special education classes, "Cantz knew she needed to come up with (*sic*) Mathematics Certificate to get the teaching position." *Ibid.* The ALJ also found that Cantz had told the interview committee that she held a Mathematics certificate in either New Jersey and/or Connecticut, which was not true. *Ibid.* Noting that information specific to Cantz and unknown to others, *i.e.*, her first and last name and the last four digits of her Social Security number, were present on both Cantz's authentic and fraudulent certificates, ALJ Miller concluded "that Cantz was the person who used her legitimate certificate to create a fraudulent certificate and submitted it to Hammonton, specifically to become eligible for a job she had already interviewed for." *Ibid.* The ALJ also noted that Cantz had never produced the original Mathematics certificate for Hammonton, the Board or "this tribunal. This is because it does not exist." *Id.* at 7. Having concluded that "Cantz's actions in fabricating an official state certificate for the purposes of gaining public employment makes her unfit to discharge the duties and responsibilities of a teacher," ALJ Miller ordered that Cantz's legitimately-issued certificate be revoked. *Ibid.*

The Board must now determine whether to adopt, modify or reject the Initial Decision in this matter. At its meeting of January 25, 2013, the Board reviewed the Initial Decision. After full and fair consideration of the Decision, the Board voted to adopt the Initial Decision.

As noted above, the ALJ concluded that Cantz had created and submitted a fraudulent certificate in order to obtain public employment and should no longer be allowed to retain her legitimately-issued certificate. (Initial Decision, slip op. at 6-7). The Board agrees. “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. Cantz’s fraud negates her position as a role model and “undermines the notions of trust, truthfulness and veracity,” all “essential qualities necessary to teach children.” (Initial Decision, slip op. at 7). The Board believes that the only appropriate response to Cantz’s breach is the revocation of her certificate. The Board therefore adopts the Initial Decision.

Accordingly, on January 25, 2013, the Board voted to adopt the Initial Decision and ordered to revoke Cantz’s certificate. On this 28th day of February 2013, the Board formally adopted its written decision to adopt the Initial Decision in this matter, and it is therefore ORDERED that Deborah Cantz’s Teacher of Elementary School in Grades K-5 Certificate of Eligibility be hereby revoked effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Cantz return her 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.

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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.