

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CREDENTIAL OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
THOMAS HULL : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1213-167

At its meeting of April 12, 2013, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information the Mercer County Technical Schools (MCTS) had forwarded pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.4* regarding Thomas Hull. MCTS reported that Hull had resigned from his assignment as a substitute teacher following allegations that he had made inappropriate comments to students. Specifically, MCTS alleged, that a complaint against Hull stated that he was discussing his personal sex life with students, was making sexual comments regarding school staff, and discussed the sexual orientation of a student. Interviews with students in Hull's morning and afternoon classes stated that "He mentions inappropriate things about his personal life. For example wine, strippers and sex;" "Girls (getting lucky);" "Talks about partying;" "He asked [student] do he want a cockmeat sandwich;" "He talks about [teacher] saggy titties;" "He told me that only place I will end up at is jail;" "Women that are fat get really wet when you turn off the lights;" and "He would talk about a homosexual kid in the am class..." MCTS' investigation also revealed that "students felt that Mr. Hull was not prepared for class, inefficient in teaching the class, he would ignore or was unable to respond to questions and that he provided very little hands-on training in the shop." Hull currently holds a Substitute Credential which expires in January 2018. Upon review of the above information, at its May 16, 2013 meeting, the Board voted to issue Hull an Order to Show Cause.

The Board sent Hull the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on May 20, 2013. The Order provided that Hull had 30 days to respond. The certified mail copy was returned as "Unclaimed" and the regular mail copy was not returned. Hull did not respond. Thereafter, on June 21, 2013, the Board sent Hull 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 returned as "Unclaimed" and the regular copy was not returned. Hull did not respond.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(e)*, on July 11, 2013, the Board sent Hull a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that it appeared that no material facts were in dispute. Thus, Hull 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 credential. It also explained that upon review of the charges against him and the legal arguments tendered in his defense, the Board would determine if Hull's offenses warranted action against his credential. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Hull 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. Once again, Hull did not respond.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Hull's conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. Since Hull failed to respond to the Order to Show Cause or the hearing notice, at its meeting of September 20, 2013, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause. The Board determined that no material facts related to Hull's offense were in dispute since he never denied that he had engaged in the alleged behavior. 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 Hull's conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provides just cause to act against his credential pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.5*. The Board finds that it does.

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, 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 matter, Hull's comments to students are not merely inappropriate, they are egregious. His conduct demonstrates behavior that falls so far short of a role model that the Board believes that the only appropriate sanction in this case is the revocation of Hull's credential.

Accordingly, on September 20, 2013, the Board voted to revoke Hull's Substitute Credential. On this 1st day of November 2013 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Thomas Hull's credential be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Hull return his credential 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