

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
THE CERTIFICATE OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS  
RANDALL O. JOHNSON : ORDER OF REVOCATION  
\_\_\_\_\_ : DOCKET NO: 1415-107

At its meeting of September 19, 2014, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information the staff of the Office of Certification and Induction had forwarded regarding Randall O. Johnson. In June 2014, the Education Practices Commission (EPC) of the State of Florida permanently revoked Johnson's certificate. The EPC adopted the findings in an administrative complaint the Florida Commissioner of Education had filed alleging that Johnson had engaged in an inappropriate personal relationship with a fourteen-year-old female student during the 2011-2012 school year. Specifically, the complaint alleged that Johnson exchanged frequent e-mails texts and Facebook messages with the student; pursued an intimate relationship with the student by telling her that he could "just be a friend" but if she wanted "more...just say so." Johnson also told the student he could wait until she turned 18. He also told the student that he needed a hug from her and was upset when she gave hugs to other teachers but not to him. Johnson also discussed inappropriate topics with the student, including, when and to whom she should lose her virginity; told the student he loved her and compared his love of her for that of his wife; and told the student that he imagined taking her to a movie and kissing her during the movie.

In New Jersey, Johnson currently holds a Teacher of Social Studies Certificate of Eligibility With Advanced Standing, issued in January 2001. Upon review of the above information, at its meeting of October 23, 2014, the Board voted to issue Johnson an Order to Show Cause as to why his certificate should not be revoked.

The Board sent Johnson the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on October 27, 2014. The Order provided that Johnson had 30 days to respond. The certified mail copy was returned as “Unclaimed” and the regular mail copy was not returned. Johnson did not respond. Thereafter, on December 4, 2014, the Board sent Johnson 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 and the regular copy was not returned. Johnson did not respond.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.7(e)*, on December 30, 2014, the Board sent Johnson a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that it appeared that no material facts were in dispute. Thus, Johnson 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 Johnson’s offenses warranted action against his certificate. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Johnson 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. Once again, Johnson did not respond.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter, therefore, is whether Johnson’s conduct and the revocation of his Florida teaching certificate constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. Since Johnson never responded to the Order to Show Cause, at its meeting of March 12, 2015, the Board had only the allegations contained in the Order to Show Cause to

consider. The Board determined that no material facts related to Johnson's offense were in dispute since he did not deny that he had engaged in the alleged conduct or that his Florida teaching certificate had been revoked. Thus, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.7(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 Johnson's conduct as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, represents just cause to act against his certificate pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.5*. 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:9B-4.5*. "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, Johnson's conduct in engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a fourteen-year-old female student leaves no doubt that he is unfit to be a teacher. The licensing authorities in Florida thought so and this Board agrees. The Board therefore concludes that the only appropriate response to Johnson's breach is the revocation of his teaching certificate.

Accordingly, on March 12, 2015, the Board voted to revoke Randall O. Johnson's Teacher of Social Studies Certificate of Eligibility With Advanced Standing. On this 17th day of April 2015 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED

that the revocation of Johnson's certificate be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Johnson 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.

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Robert R. Higgins, Secretary  
State Board of Examiners

Appeals may be made to the Commissioner of Education pursuant to the provisions of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38.4.