

---

**IN THE MATTER OF  
THOMAS KEELEN,**

***KEANSBURG BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MONMOUTH COUNTY***

---

**: BEFORE THE SCHOOL  
: ETHICS COMMISSION  
:  
:  
: Docket No.: C06-01  
:  
: DECISION  
:  
:**

The School Ethics Commission, having reviewed the Initial Decision of the Office of Administrative Law, dated March 27, 2003, determined at its June 24, 2003 public meeting to accept the Initial Decision of the Administrative Law Judge.

The Commission has found that the respondent blatantly disregarded the School Ethics Act, N.J.S.A. 18A:12-21 et seq., by soliciting a contribution to his election campaign for the Keansburg Borough Council, implying that the contribution would affect the possibility of the vendor's future contracts with the Board. The Commission concludes that respondent's conduct constitutes an attempt to use his official position to secure an unwarranted advantage for himself in violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24(b) and the solicitation of a political contribution for the purpose of influencing him directly or indirectly in the discharge of his official duties in violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24(e).

Regarding the penalty, the Commission would have recommended that the Commissioner of Education remove respondent from his position on the Keansburg Board of Education (Board). However, since respondent is no longer a member of the Board, the highest penalty that the Commission can impose is a censure. The Commission therefore recommends that the Commissioner of Education impose a penalty of censure in this matter.

This decision, having been adopted by the Commission, shall now be transmitted to the Commissioner of Education for action on the Commission's recommendation for sanction only, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:12-29. Within thirteen (13) days from the date on which the Commission's decision was mailed to the parties, the respondent may file written comments on the recommended sanction with the Commissioner of Education, c/o Bureau of Controversies and Disputes, P.O. Box 500, Trenton, NJ 08625, marked "Attention: Comments on Ethics Commission Sanction." A copy of any comments filed must be sent to the School Ethics Commission and all other parties.

---

Paul C. Garbarini, Chairman

### **Resolution Adopting Decision – C06-01**

**Whereas**, the School Ethics Commission has considered the pleadings filed by the parties and the documents submitted in support thereof; and

**Whereas**, the Commission found probable cause to credit the allegations that Thomas Keelen violated N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24(b) and (e) of the School Ethics Act; and

**Whereas**, the matter was brought before Administrative Law Judge John R. Tassini and the allegations were proven by the preponderance of the competent and credible evidence; and

**Whereas**, the Commission now finds that respondent violated N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24(b) and (e) of the School Ethics Act and believes that the penalty of removal would have been the appropriate sanction, but may not impose removal since Mr. Keelen is no longer a member of the Board; and

**Whereas**, since the highest penalty that may be imposed in this matter is censure, the Commission finds that censure is the appropriate sanction;

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved** that the Commission hereby adopts the proposed decision referenced as its decision in this matter finding Thomas Keelen in violation of the Act and recommending that the Commissioner of Education impose a penalty of censure.

---

Paul C. Garbarini, Chairman

I hereby certify that the School Ethics Commission adopted this decision at its public meeting on June 24, 2003.

---

Lisa James-Beavers  
Executive Director