

June 9, 1998

Re: IN THE MATTER OF
THE APPLICATION FOR
LICENSURE OF
DONALD BLISS

Dear Mr. Bliss:

At its meeting of April 2, 1998 the State Board of Examiners reviewed your application for a County Substitute License. Its review included the information you provided concerning your 1972 conviction on charges of endangering the welfare of a child and your 1975 conviction for petit larceny. The Board also was made aware that, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1 et seq., on February 17, 1998 the Office of Criminal History Review disqualified you from employment in any institution under the supervision of the Department of Education as a result of your criminal history. The State Board of Examiners was informed that you withdrew your motion of appeal of that disqualification.

Upon careful consideration of your record, the State Board of Examiners voted to block issuance of a County Substitute License to you based on your disqualification. The issue before the State Board of Examiners in this matter was to determine whether your disqualification, which was predicated on one charge involving endangering the welfare of child and one involving an offense of dishonesty, represents just cause to act against your application for licensure pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:11-3.6(a)1.

Those who hold teaching licenses are entrusted by the State with the care and custody of school children. Tenure Hearing of Sammons, 1972 S.L.D. 302, 321. Your convictions, taken together, suggest that you are not deserving of that most sacred trust bestowed upon teachers. Indeed, your misdemeanor offense of endangering the welfare of a child, coupled with the petit larceny offense, represent behavior so foreign to the expectations of the deeds and actions of a professional licensed teacher - or of any person - that the

Office of Criminal History Review disqualified you from public service in our schools. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1 et seq., such disqualification represents a policy statement from the Legislature that one with criminal convictions like yours not be given access to children as a teacher.

Because the Legislature considers your offenses conduct inappropriate for one seeking licensure, the State Board of Examiners in this matter believes that the appropriate sanction for your disqualification is to block your application for a County Substitute license. It so finds having determined that your application does not demonstrate rehabilitation pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:168A, the Rehabilitated Convicted Offenders Act. Your submissions do not address the petit larceny offense at all, which you indicated was a reduced conviction from robbery. Further, your explanation of the endangering the welfare of a child offense is devoid of supporting documentation. The letter of support from someone who has known you for thirteen years does not address the events that led to your conviction.

Appeal of this decision is made before the Commissioner of Education pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:24-1 et seq.

Very truly yours,

Ida B. Graham, Secretary
State Board of Examiners