

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
WANDA WILLIAMS : ORDER OF SUSPENSION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 0405-172

At its meeting of January 23, 2003, the State Board of Examiners reviewed information received from the Division of Youth and Family Services (hereafter DYFS) substantiating allegations that Wanda Williams had neglected and failed to supervise a student. Williams allegedly allowed a child's mother to beat him with a belt in her classroom while the other students were at lunch. Williams did not appeal the DYFS findings. Williams currently holds a Teacher of Elementary School Certificate of Eligibility, issued in December 2000 and a Teacher of Elementary School certificate, issued in July 2002. Upon review of the above information, at its January 23, 2003, meeting, the State Board of Examiners voted to issue Williams an Order to Show Cause.

The Board's repeated attempts to serve Williams with the Order to Show Cause were unsuccessful. Accordingly, the Board published notice of the Order in the Home News Tribune newspaper on August 15 and 16, 2004. Williams did not respond to the Order to Show Cause.

The threshold issue before the State Board of Examiners in this matter, therefore, is whether Williams' neglect and lack of supervision of a student constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. Since Williams did not respond to the Order to Show Cause, the State Board of Examiners had no responsive pleading to consider in the hearing process. It is therefore ORDERED that the charges in the Order to Show Cause are deemed admitted for the purpose of this proceeding. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(c)*. Since Williams' conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, is admitted, the Board of Examiners must now decide whether that constitutes a sufficient basis to act against her certificates pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(c)*. It finds that it does.

The State Board of Examiners 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.

Furthermore, 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 (Sup. Ct. 1943), *aff’d*, 131 *N.J.L.* 326 (E & A 1944). In this case, Williams’ neglect and lack of supervision allowed a parent to administer a beating to her child in school. Although Williams was not an active participant in the beating, as a teacher and role model, she neglected her responsibility to her student. Her behavior demonstrates a lack of judgment that, while not rising to the level of revocation, needs to be addressed. Therefore, the Board has determined that the proper response to Williams’ breach is the suspension of her certificates.

Accordingly, on this 9th day of December 2004, it is therefore ORDERED that Wanda Williams’ Teacher of Elementary School Certificate of Eligibility and Teacher of Elementary School certificate be suspended for a period of one year beginning on January 1, 2005, and ending on December 31, 2005. It is further ORDERED that Williams return her certificates to the Secretary of the State Board of Examiners, Office of Licensure, PO Box 500, Trenton, NJ 08625-0500 within 20 days of the mailing date of this decision.

Michael K. Klavon, Acting Secretary
State Board of Examiners

Date of Mailing: FEBRUARY 7, 2005

Appeals may be made to the State Board of Education pursuant to the provisions of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-28.