

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
LARRY TUORTO : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 0405-253

At its meeting of May 5, 2005, the State Board of Examiners reviewed information received from the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) regarding Larry Tuorto. DYFS had investigated allegations of sexual and emotional abuse against Tuorto. Although DYFS did not substantiate the allegations of abuse it did have concerns about Tuorto's conduct. Tuorto allegedly engaged in verbal interactions with a student that had sexual connotations and transported that student alone in his personal car, contrary to school policy. Tuorto also went to the student's home and was present there alone with the student. Tuorto currently holds a Teacher of the Handicapped certificate, issued in July 1990, a Supervisor certificate, issued in July 1998 and a Principal/Supervisor certificate, issued in October 1998. Upon review of the above information, at its May 5, 2005 meeting, the State Board of Examiners voted to issue Tuorto an Order to Show Cause.

The Board sent Tuorto the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on May 24, 2005. The Order provided that Tuorto's Answer was due within 30 days. Both copies were returned as undeliverable and the Motor Vehicles Commission could not provide a current address for him. Accordingly, the Board published the Order in two New Jersey newspapers on August 14 and 17, 2005. Tuorto did not respond to the published notice.

The threshold issue before the State Board of Examiners in this matter, therefore, is whether Tuorto's conduct as outlined in the Order to Show Cause constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. Since Tuorto 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 Tuorto's 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 his certificates pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(c)*.

The Board 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*. Tuorto’s acts of engaging in sexual conversations with a student, driving her alone in his personal car and being present in her home when she was there alone fall far short of the standard of behavior expected of teachers. In this instance, Tuorto repeatedly engaged in questionable behavior. Consequently, the Board believes that the only possible response to Tuorto’s breach is the revocation of his teaching certificates.

Accordingly, it is therefore ORDERED that Larry Tuorto’s Teacher of the Handicapped, Supervisor and Principal/Supervisor certificates be revoked on this 8th day of December 2005. It is further ORDERED that Tuorto return his 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.

Robert R. Higgins, Acting Secretary
State Board of Examiners

Date of Mailing: DECEMBER 20, 2005

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