

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATE OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
RAYMOND LENEWEAVER : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1011-211

At its meeting of July 28, 2011, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information regarding Raymond Leneweaver. On November 11, 2005, Leneweaver surrendered his teaching certificates in Pennsylvania in lieu of discipline after being accused of sexual abuse while serving as a priest. According to information forwarded by the Pennsylvania department of Education, Leneweaver began abusing boys in 1966 and continued through at least 1975. Leneweaver left active ministry in 1980. Leneweaver admitted seriously abusing seven young boys, starting when the boys were as young as 11. The abuse included fondling, anal rape and attempted oral sex. Leneweaver also admitted molesting other boys in an “incidental fashion,” for example, in a swimming pool. In New Jersey, Leneweaver currently holds a Teacher of Latin certificate, issued in March 1991. Upon review of the above information, at its September 22, 2011 meeting, the Board voted to issue Leneweaver an Order to Show Cause.

The Board sent Leneweaver the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on January 10, 2012. The certified mail copy was returned stating “No Such Number.” After securing a new address for Leneweaver, the Board re-sent the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on April 17, 2012. The certified mail receipt was signed and returned. The regular mail copy was not returned. The Order provided that Leneweaver must file an Answer within 30 days. Leneweaver did not file an Answer. Thereafter, on May 23, 2012, the Board sent Leneweaver 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. The regular mail copy was not returned. Leneweaver filed an Answer on June 4, 2012.

In that Answer, Leneweaver stated that “the initial incidents began in 1966.” (Answer, p. 1). He added that “the youngest incidents were with young men ages 14 thru 16.” (Answer, p. 1). Leneweaver noted that “since the above accusations were only alledged, (*sic*) most incident (*sic*) are suspect.”

(Answer, p. 1). He claimed that the information was obtained through intimidation and then added “perhaps there is justification revocation of New Jersry (*sic*) Certification.” (Answer, p. 1).

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(e)*, on June 14, 2012, the Board sent Leneweaver a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that it appeared that no material facts were in dispute. Thus, Leneweaver 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 Leneweaver’s conduct warranted action against his certificate. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Leneweaver was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. Neither the certified mail nor the regular mail copy was returned. Leneweaver did not file a response.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter, therefore, is whether Leneweaver’s admitted conduct in molesting many boys as well as the surrender of his Pennsylvania teaching certificates in lieu of discipline constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. At its meeting of September 21, 2012, the Board considered the allegations in the Order to Show Cause as well as Leneweaver’s Answer. The Board determined that no material facts related to Leneweaver’s conduct were in dispute since he never denied that he had engaged in the conduct alleged. Nor did he deny that his Pennsylvania teaching certificates had been surrendered in lieu of discipline. Thus, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(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 Leneweaver’s conduct and the surrender in lieu of discipline of his Pennsylvania certificates, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provide just cause to act against his New Jersey certificate pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.5*. The Board finds that they do.

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: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. Leneweaver’s acts of molestation are inexcusable for any individual, teacher or not.

The Commissioner has long held that teachers serve as role models for their students. Clearly, a teacher who has engaged in egregious behavior such as Leneweaver’s and surrendered his teaching certificates in lieu of discipline cannot claim status as a role model to anyone. Leneweaver’s conduct therefore warrants revocation.

Accordingly, on September 21, 2012, the Board voted to revoke Raymond Leneweaver’s Teacher of Latin certificate. On this 30th day of November 2012 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Leneweaver’s certificate be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Leneweaver 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.

Robert R. Higgins, Secretary
State Board of Examiners

Date of Mailing:

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