

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CREDENTIAL OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
THOMAS J. REDDICK : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1718-205

At its meeting of April 13, 2018, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information the Essex County Superior Court-Criminal Division and the Criminal History Review Unit (CHRU) had forwarded regarding Thomas J. Reddick. On December 16, 2013, Reddick pled guilty to Improper Behavior after being charged with Receiving Stolen Property and Weapons Manufacturing. On that same date, he was assessed fines and penalties as a result of the conviction. Reddick had received a handgun knowing it to be stolen or believing it had probably been stolen. On July 17, 2017, Reddick pled guilty to Unsworn Falsification to Authorities after being charged with Theft by Deception, Attempted Theft by Deception and Unsworn Falsification to Authorities. Reddick obtained Hurricane Sandy Disaster Assistance Grant and Loan monies through FEMA by creating the false impression that an address in Newark was his primary residence at the time of Hurricane Sandy, when it was not. On September 8, 2017, he was sentenced to two years' probation, fined and ordered to pay over \$14,000 in restitution.

Reddick currently holds a Substitute Credential, which expires in January 2021. Upon review of the above information, at its May 24, 2018 meeting, the Board voted to issue Reddick an Order to Show Cause as to why his credential should not be revoked.

The Board sent Reddick the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on May 29, 2018. The Order provided that Reddick had 30 days to respond. The certified mail copy was returned as "Unclaimed" and the regular mail copy was not returned. Reddick did not respond. On July 9, 2018 the Board sent Reddick another notice by certified and regular mail providing him an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause. The certified mail copy was returned as "Unclaimed" and the regular mail copy was not returned. Reddick did not file a response.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(e), on July 31, 2018, the Board sent Reddick a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that the allegations in the Order to

Show Cause were deemed to be admitted as a result of his failure to file an Answer. Thus, Reddick 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 found just cause to take action against his credential. It also explained that, upon review of the charges against him and the legal arguments tendered in his defense, the Board would determine if Reddick's offense warranted action against his credential. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Reddick was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail copy was returned as "Unclaimed" and the regular mail copy was not returned. Once again, Reddick did not file a response.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Reddick's conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Since Reddick failed to respond to the Order to Show Cause, the allegations therein are deemed admitted. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(c)*. Consequently, at its meeting of December 17, 2018, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and the information received from the CHRU and the Superior Court. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Reddick's offense were in dispute since he never denied that he had been convicted. Thus, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(h)*. After reviewing the allegations, the Board found that Reddick had engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether Reddick's conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provides just cause to act against his credential pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.4*. The Board finds that it does.

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:9B-4.4*. "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. Moreover,

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 (1943), *aff'd*, 131 N.J.L. 326 (E & A 1944). Reddick's convictions for Improper Behavior and Unsworn Falsification to Authorities clearly demonstrate conduct that is unacceptable for a role model. The Board therefore concludes that the appropriate response to his breach is the revocation of his credential.

Accordingly, on December 17, 2018, the Board voted to revoke Thomas J. Reddick's Substitute Credential. On this 24th day of January 2019 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Reddick's credential be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Reddick return his credential to the Secretary of the State Board of Examiners, Office of Certification and Induction, 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

RRH/MZ/th

Date of Mailing:
Via certified and regular mail

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