

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
AMALIA M. GAWLIKOWSKI : ORDER OF SUSPENSION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1617-165

At its meeting of September 21, 2018, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office (MCPO) and the Criminal History Review Unit (CHRU) had forwarded regarding Amalia M. Gawlikowski. On January 31, 2017, Gawlikowski was charged of Forgery-Altering/Changing Writing without Authorization, Forgery-Uttering Forged Documents, Theft by Unlawful Taking, Receiving Stolen Property, and False Report to Law Enforcement. Gawlikowski allegedly stole the victim's checkbook and deposited several fraudulent checks into her own account and then cashed them. On April 7, 2017, Gawlikowski received an Order of Postponement and was accepted into a Pre-Trial Intervention program for a period of 24 months.

Gawlikowski currently holds a Teacher of Pre-K Through Grade 3 Certificate of Eligibility and a Teacher of Pre-K Through Grade 3 certificate. Upon review of the above information, at its November 1, 2018 meeting, the Board voted to issue Gawlikowski an Order to Show Cause as to why her certificates should not be revoked.

After securing a correct current address for Gawlikowski, the Board sent her the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on December 19, 2018. The Order provided that Gawlikowski had 30 days to respond. The certified mail copy was returned as "Unclaimed" and the regular mail copy was not returned. Gawlikowski did not file a response.

Thereafter, on January 29, 2019, the Board sent Gawlikowski another notice by certified and regular mail providing her 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. Gawlikowski did not file a response.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(e)*, on March 7, 2019, the Board sent Gawlikowski 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 her failure to file an Answer. Thus, Gawlikowski 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 her certificates. It also explained that, upon review of the charges against her and the legal arguments tendered in her defense, the Board would determine if her offense warranted action against her certificates. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Gawlikowski 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, Gawlikowski did not file a response.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Gawlikowski’s conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Since Gawlikowski 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 May 17, 2019, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and the information received from the MCPO and the CHRU. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Gawlikowski’s offense were in dispute since she never denied that she had engaged in the alleged conduct. 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 Gawlikowski had engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether Gawlikowski’s conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provides just cause to act against her certificates 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). Gawlikowski’s actions in stealing someone’s checkbook and then writing checks and cashing them clearly demonstrate conduct that is unacceptable for a role model. The Board therefore concludes that the appropriate response to her breach is a four-year suspension of her certificates.

Accordingly, on May 17, 2019, the Board voted to suspend Amalia M. Gawlikowski’s Teacher of Pre-K Through Grade 3 Certificate of Eligibility and her Teacher of Pre-K Through Grade 3 certificate for a period of four years. On this 28th day of June 2019 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that Gawlikowski’s certificates are hereby suspended for four years, effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Gawlikowski return her certificates 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.

Rani Singh, Acting Secretary
State Board of Examiners

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.