

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS  
LAURENCE DE WEEVER : ORDER OF REVOCATION  
\_\_\_\_\_ : DOCKET NO: 1718-110

At its meeting of September 15, 2017, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information it received from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) and the Florida Education Practices Commission (Florida) regarding Laurence De Weever. NASDTEC provided notice that on May 1, 2017, Florida entered into a settlement agreement with De Weever in which he agreed to accept a one-year suspension of his Florida educator certificate(s). De Weever neither admitted nor denied the alleged conduct. The Final Order was issued after allegations arose that De Weever inappropriately touched students “in that he punched students in the stomach, tickled them, put a student in a headlock and rubbed the student’s head with his knuckles.” De Weever also allegedly slapped students and hit male students in the genitals. The Final Order from Florida is incorporated herein by reference.

De Weever currently holds a Professional Librarian certificate, issued in February 1989, and a Teacher of Elementary School in Grades N-8 Certificate of Eligibility, issued in January 1988. Upon review of the above information, the Board voted at its meeting of November 1, 2017 to issue De Weever an Order to Show Cause as to why his certificates should not be revoked.

The Board sent De Weever the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on September 20, 2017. The Order provided that De Weever must file an Answer within 30 days. De Weever filed an Answer on November 29, 2017.

Since there were material facts in dispute, the Board transmitted the matter to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for hearing as a contested case. On February 11, 2019, the Administrative Law Judge assigned to the case returned it to the Board after De Weever failed to appear for a scheduled hearing. Pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 1:1-3.3*, the ALJ provided De Weever with 13 days to submit an explanation for his nonappearance. De Weever did not submit an explanation or otherwise respond to that notice. At its meeting of April 12, 2019, the Board voted not to retransmit the matter to OAL. On April 16, 2018, the Board sent De Weever a notice by regular and certified mail providing him an additional 15 days to respond before his Answer would be stricken from the record and the allegations in the Order to Show Cause would be deemed admitted. The certified mail return receipt was received and the regular mail copy was not returned. De Weever never responded to the notice.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(e)*, on May 22, 2019, the Board sent De Weever a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. De Weever 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 about the appropriate sanction if the Board found just cause to take action against his certificates. De Weever was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail receipt was received and the regular mail copy was not returned. Once again, De Weever did not respond.

Since De Weever did not appear at his hearing, and his Answer was subsequently stricken from the record, at its meeting of September 19, 2019, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause. Moreover, since De Weever is deemed to have failed to file an Answer, the allegations contained in the Order to Show Cause are deemed admitted.

*N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(c). Thus, since no material facts related to De Weever's offense were in dispute, 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 De Weever engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether De Weever's conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, represents just cause to act against his certificates pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.4. The Board finds that they do.

The Board may revoke or suspend the certification of any certificate holder based on 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). De Weever's actions of punching students in the stomach, slapping them, hitting a male student in the genitals, tickling students, putting a student in a headlock, and rubbing the student's head with his knuckles is unacceptable for a role model. The Board therefore concludes that the appropriate response to his breach is the revocation of his certificates.

Accordingly, on September 19, 2019, the Board voted to revoke Laurence De Weever's Professional Librarian certificate and Teacher of Elementary School in Grades N-8 Certificate. On this 1<sup>st</sup> day of November 2019 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of De Weever's certificates be effective immediately.

It is further ORDERED that De Weever return his 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.

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Rani Singh, 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.