

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS  
DAVID E. STAGGERS : ORDER OF REVOCATION  
\_\_\_\_\_ : DOCKET NO: 2223-151

David E. Staggers (Staggers) is the holder of a Teacher of Elementary School in Grades K-6 Certificate of Eligibility (CE), issued December 2018; and a Teacher of Middle School with Subject Matter Specialization: Mathematics in Grades 5-8 CE, issued December 2018.

At its meeting of March 3, 2023, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information it received from the Department of Education (DOE) - Office of Student Protection (OSP) and the DOE - Office of Legal Affairs, Accountability & Compliance (OLAAC), including documents obtained from the East Orange Police Department and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) – Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU), regarding Staggers.

On or about February 24, 2022, while employed by the East Orange Board of Education (EOBE), Staggers allegedly pulled his penis out of his pants and showed it to a teacher's aide in the classroom during a third period class. It was also alleged that Staggers was sweating heavily and shook his penis back and forth. At the time of the incident, five special needs students were present in the classroom. The witnessing teacher removed the students from the class and escorted them to the lunchroom and then reported the incident to administration.

On February 25, 2022, the EOBE suspended Staggers from his position. On April 7, 2022, Staggers was charged with one count of Lewdness (disorderly persons offense), *N.J.S.A. 2C:14-4A*. On June 30, 2022, EOBE terminated Staggers' employment.

IAIU conducted an investigation into the allegations and DCF issued a report on July 14, 2022, determining that the allegation of Sexual Abuse/Risk of Sexual Abuse against Staggers was Substantiated.

On November 30, 2022, Staggers was arrested on an unrelated charge of Robbery – Inflicts Bodily Injury or Uses Force (2<sup>nd</sup> degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:15-1A(1)*. It was alleged that Staggers pushed/shoved a victim – a tourist visiting from Germany – while taking her cellphone, handbag, and wallet.

On December 19, 2022, the charge of Lewdness (disorderly persons offense), *N.J.S.A. 2C:14-4A*, was dismissed on motion of the Prosecutor at the request of the victim. On January 19, 2023, the charge of Robbery – Inflicts Bodily Injury or Uses Force (2<sup>nd</sup> degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:15-1A(1)*, was administratively dismissed by the Prosecutor.

After reviewing the above information, at its April 13, 2023 meeting, the Board voted to issue an Order to Show Cause (OSC) to Staggers as to why his certificates should not be revoked. On May 16, 2023, Staggers filed an Answer to the OSC. *See Answer*.

In his Answer, Staggers admitted that he was charged with Lewdness and that EOB terminated him on June 30, 2022. *Id.* at ¶ 4. However, he denied that he engaged in any of the alleged conduct or any wrongdoing. *Id.* at ¶ 3. He claimed the Lewdness charge was dismissed and expunged, and the “mistaken Robbery charge was administratively dismissed.” *Id.* at ¶ 6. Staggers also claimed that the “solely investigative” findings of IAIU were “based solely on the colleague’s false allegations.” *Id.* at ¶ 7. As there were material facts in dispute, the Board transmitted the matter to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for a hearing as a contested case on October 12, 2023.

On March 17, 2026, Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) William Courtney issued an Initial Decision in this case. *In the Matter of the Certificates of David E. Staggers*, OAL Dkt. No. EDE 10910-23 (Initial Decision, March 17, 2026). The ALJ found that summary disposition was appropriate and granted the Board's motion for summary decision. *Id.* at 7. Previously, on April 17, 2025, the ALJ granted the Board's uncontested motion for partial summary decision based on collateral estoppel as Staggers had never appealed the final agency decision by DCF. *Id.* at 1-2, 4. Specifically, the ALJ found that IAIU sent a letter to Staggers on July 14, 2022 notifying him of its findings, and that the findings would become final agency decision of DCF if he failed to request an appeal within twenty calendar days. *Id.* at 3. The ALJ also found that Staggers failed to request an appeal of the IAIU findings, and they became DCF's final agency decision on August 3, 2022, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 3A:5-1.3. *Ibid.* Lastly, the ALJ found that Staggers did not appeal the final agency decision. *Ibid.*

The ALJ found that his April 17, 2025 decision granting partial summary decision precluded Staggers from relitigating whether he engaged in conduct unbecoming a teacher. *Id.* at 4. The ALJ also found that as a result of the IAIU's uncontested finding Staggers was placed on the Human Services Central Registry of Offenders Against Persons with Disabilities. *Ibid.* As a result, the ALJ found that the only issue remaining after the April 17, 2025 partial summary decision was whether the revocation of Staggers certificates was an appropriate penalty. *Ibid.* The ALJ noted that only the Board provided supplemental briefing on this issue. *Ibid.* And after considering the Board's submission, the ALJ concluded that revocation of Staggers' certificates was the appropriate response based on previous Board decisions involving similar facts. *Id.* at 6-7. No exceptions or reply exceptions were filed.

The Board must now determine whether to adopt, modify, or reject the Initial Decision in this matter. At its meeting of April 17, 2026, the Board reviewed the Initial Decision. After full and fair consideration of the Initial Decision, the Board voted to adopt the Initial Decision.

The Board has the authority to “issue appropriate certificates to teach or to administer,” and “may revoke the same under rules and regulations prescribed by the State board.” *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38; *see also N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-3.2 and -4.4; *Morison v. Willingboro Bd. of Educ.*, 478 N.J. Super. 229 (App. Div. 2024), *cert. denied* 258 N.J. 143 (July 11, 2024). The Board may take action against a 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(a); *see also Morison*, 478 N.J. Super. at 246, 248 (explaining the Board is responsible for protecting schoolchildren from improper teacher conduct and may suspend or revoke an educator’s continued ability to serve as a teacher at any public school based on unbecoming conduct).

The Board’s long-standing belief is that teachers must serve as role models for their students. “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.” *IMO Tenure of Sammons*, 1972 *S.L.D.* 302, 321 (Comm’r. Decision, June 12, 1972). A “violation of the implicit standard of good behavior which devolves upon one who stands in the public eye as an upholder of that which is morally and legally correct” may provide the basis for a finding of unbecoming conduct. *Bound Brook Bd. of Educ. v. Ciripompa*, 228 N.J. 4, 14 (2017) (quoting *Karins v. City of Atlantic City*, 152 *N.J.* 532, 555 (1998)) (internal quotation marks omitted). The “elastic” concept of “conduct unbecoming” includes “conduct which adversely affects the morale or efficiency” of the public entity, or “which has a tendency to destroy public respect for . . . [public] employees and

confidence in the operation of [public] services.” *In re Emmons*, 63 N.J. Super. 136, 140 (App. Div. 1960) (internal quotations and citations omitted); *see also Bound Brook Bd. of Educ.*, 228 N.J. at 13.

As noted above, the ALJ determined that Stagers was precluded from relitigating a substantiated finding of sexual abuse/risk of sexual abuse and whether he engaged in conduct unbecoming. The ALJ requested supplemental briefing as to the appropriate penalty, and only the Board provided supplemental briefing. The Board agrees with the ALJ that Stagers was precluded from challenging IAIU’s substantiated findings, and that his actions here fall far short of the high standard of conduct expected of an educator. Specifically, Stagers’ actions of exposing his genitals to a colleague while children were present in the classroom is egregious conduct for a school teacher. Further, such conduct violates the public’s trust in public school employees and demonstrates that he is ill-suited to be a role model for students. Other than Stagers’ answer to the Order to Show Cause, Stagers has not put forth any evidence or argument that he did not commit this conduct. He never appealed the IAIU determination or DCF’s final agency decision. He did not file an opposition to the Board’s partial motion for summary decision. Thus, the Board finds that Stagers committed unbecoming conduct.

The Board also agrees with the ALJ that Stagers’ conduct here warrants revocation of his certificates. As noted above, the ALJ found that revocation of his certificates was warranted based on prior cases decided by the Board. Stagers’ behavior here is inexcusable for a teacher and revocation of his certificates is warranted. Thus, the ALJ’s initial decision finding that Stagers committed unbecoming conduct warranting revocation of his certificates was proper. Further, Stagers did not file exceptions to the ALJ’s initial decision.

Accordingly, on April 17, 2026, the Board voted to adopt the Initial Decision. On this 21st day of May 2026, the Board formally adopted its written decision to adopt the Initial Decision in this matter and it is therefore ORDERED that David E. Stagers's Teacher of Elementary School in Grades K-6 Certificate of Eligibility (CE) and Teacher or Middle School with Subject Matter Specialization: Mathematics in Grades 5-8 CE are hereby REVOKED, effective immediately.



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Kimberly A. Gatti, Acting Secretary  
State Board of Examiners

**Date of Mailing: [May 29, 2026](#)  
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.