

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
MUHAMMAD WILKERSON : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 2425-121

At its meeting of April 11, 2025, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information from the Department of Education (DOE) – Office of Legal Affairs, Accountability & Compliance (OLAAC), and DOE - Office of Student Protection (OSP) regarding Muhammad Wilkerson, including documents received from the Morris County Prosecutor’s Office (MCPO), and the Hanover Township Police Department (HTPD). Wilkerson currently holds a Substitute credential, expiring November 17, 2028.

On or about December 22, 2023, Wilkerson was arrested on charges of Unlawful Possession of a Weapon - Handgun without Permit (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5b(1)*; Illegal Transport of Weapons (4th degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:39-9d*; Possession Prohibited Weapons/Devices (4th degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:39-3f(1)*; Possession of Large Capacity Ammunition Magazine (4th degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:39-3j*. It is alleged that Wilkerson was driving under the influence and had a tactical gun under the driver seat with a large capacity magazine attached, along with eleven hollow point bullets, one in the chamber of the gun and ten in the magazine.

On August 5, 2024, an Order of Postponement was issued and Wilkerson was entered into the Pretrial Intervention program (PTI) for a period of twelve (12) months and he was ordered to complete drug/alcohol testing and/or counseling as directed, forfeit weapons during the period of PTI, and pay fees and penalties.

Upon review of the above information, the Board voted at its meeting of May 22, 2025, to issue Wilkerson an Order to Show Cause as to why the certificates he holds should not be revoked.

On May 23, 2025, the Board sent Wilkerson the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. The Order provided that Wilkerson had thirty (30) days to respond pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B- 4.6(b). The certified mail copy was signed and returned, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Wilkerson did not file a response.

On August 4, 2025, the Board sent Wilkerson a second notice by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, providing him with an additional fifteen (15) days to respond to the Order to Show Cause pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(c). The certified mail copy was signed and returned, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Again, Wilkerson did not file a response.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(e), the Board sent Wilkerson a hearing notice by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, on December 10, 2025. The notice explained that because no answer was filed, there appeared to be no dispute as to material facts in this matter. Thus, Wilkerson 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 certificates. Wilkerson was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail copy was signed and returned, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Wilkerson did file a response or request to appear before the Board.

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).

Because Wilkerson failed to respond to the Order to Show Cause, the allegations are deemed admitted. *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(c). Consequently, at its meeting of April 17, 2026, the Board considered only the allegations in the May 22, 2025 Order to Show Cause and the information received from the OSP, OLAAC, MCPO, and HTPD. Because the allegations were deemed admitted, the Board concluded that no material facts related to Wilkerson’s offenses were in dispute. And because no material facts related to Wilkerson’s conduct were in dispute, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(h).

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Wilkerson’s actions here constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Based on the undisputed facts in this matter, the Board finds that Wilkerson engaged in conduct unbecoming of an educator. Unbecoming conduct is defined as “conduct ‘which adversely affects the morale or efficiency of the [department]’ or ‘has a tendency to destroy public respect for [government] employees and confidence in the operation of [public] services.’” *Bound Brook Bd. of Educ. v. Ciripompa*, 228 N.J. 4, 13 (2017) (quoting *In re Young*, 202 N.J. 50, 66 (2010) (citing *Karins v. Atl. City*, 152 N.J. 532, 554 (1998))). “[A] finding of unbecoming conduct ‘need not be predicated upon the violation of any particular rule or regulation, but may be based merely upon the 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 legal correct.’” *Id.* at 13-14 (quoting *Karins*, 152 N.J. at 555). “It focuses on the morale, efficiency, and public perception of an entity, and how those concerns are harmed by

allowing teachers to behave inappropriately while holding public employment.” *Id.* at 14. “The touchstone of the determination lies in the certificate holder’s ‘fitness to discharge the duties and functions of one’s office or position.’” *Young*, 202 N.J. at 66 (quoting *In re Grossman*, 127 N.J. Super. 13, 29 (App. Div. 1974)).

Here, the Board finds that Wilkerson’s conduct violates the implicit standard of good behavior expected of public school teachers. Possessing and unregistered tactical gun, with a large capacity magazine attached and hollow point bullets while driving under the influence clearly demonstrates unbecoming conduct. Thus, the Board finds that Wilkerson engaged in conduct unbecoming an educator and provides the basis for the Board’s finding.

Having found that Wilkerson engaged in unbecoming conduct, the Board must now determine the appropriate penalty to be applied. In doing so, the Board considers the “nature and gravity of the offenses under all the circumstances involved, any evidence as to provocation, extenuation or aggravation,” and any “harm or injurious effect” on the maintenance of discipline and the proper administration of the school system. *In re Fulcomer*, 93 N.J. Super. 404, 422 (App. Div. 1967). Central to this evaluation is the understanding that “[t]eachers ... 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. Fitness to teach depends on a broad range of factors, including the teacher’s impact and effect upon the students, because a “teacher works in a sensitive area in a schoolroom” and “shapes the attitude of young minds toward the society in which they live.” *Grossman*, 127 N.J. at 30 (quoting *Adler v. Bd. of Educ. of City of New York*, 342 U.S. 485 (1952)). Importantly, unfitness to hold a position in a school system may be shown by one incident if sufficiently flagrant. *Fulcomer*, 93 N.J. Super. at 421; *Redcay v.*

State Bd. of Educ., 130 N.J.L. 369, 371 (1943), *aff'd*, 131 N.J.L. 326 (E & A 1944).

In this instance, the Board concludes that the appropriate response to Wilkerson's breach in conduct of an educator is revocation of his credential. Wilkerson's conduct of illegally possessing an unregistered tactical gun with a large capacity magazine attached and with hollow point bullets while driving under the influence demonstrates he is unfit to discharge the duties and functions as a public-school teacher, and demonstrates strong evidence that revocation is appropriate. Allowing him to maintain certification to teach in a public school would have a negative impact on the proper administration of the school system. Thus, revocation of his certificates is the appropriate response in this matter.

Accordingly, on April 17, 2026, the Board voted to revoke Wilkerson's credential. On this 21st day of May 2026, the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision, and it is therefore ORDERED that Muhammad Wilkerson's Substitute credential is hereby REVOKED, effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Wilkerson return his paper certificates, if issued, 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.



Kimberly Gatti, Acting Secretary
State Board of Examiners

Date of Mailing: May 26, 2026
By 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.