IN THE MATTER OF	:	NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF	:	STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
STEVEN A. GAVRIELATOS	:	ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____	:	DOCKET NO: 2526-114

At its meeting of September 19, 2025, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information from the University Academy Charter High School (UACHS) in Jersey City and the Department of Education – Office of Legal Affairs, Accountability and Compliance (OLAAC) regarding Steven A. Gavrielatos, including documents obtained from the Department of Children and Families - Institutional Abuse Investigations Unit (IAIU). Gavrielatos currently holds a Teacher of English Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing, issued July 2012; and a Standard Teacher of English certificate, issued January 2013.

On November 15, 2023, UACHS notified that Board that Gavrielatos, a former teacher at UACHS, was being investigated by law enforcement and IAIU for an alleged inappropriate sexual relationship with a 16-year-old student, M.C., who at the time attended UACHS. It was alleged that on May 5, 2023, a vice principal at UACHS walked into Gavrielatos' classroom at the end of the day and saw Gavrielatos and the student standing face to face, uncomfortably close to each other. It is also alleged that while Gavrielatos was employed at UACHS, Gavrielatos and M.C. were exchanging emails, meeting for lunch, and making out. Further, it is alleged that Gavrielatos said that he would kill himself if M.C. did not call him. UACHS stated that Gavrielatos resigned on May 10, 2023, with an effective date of June 30, 2023.

On July 19, 2024, IAIU issued its investigation report finding that the allegation of Sexual Abuse/ Sexual Molestation was Substantiated related to the actions of Gavrielatos, and that the allegation of Emotional Abuse/Mental and Emotional Impairment was also Substantiated related

to the actions of Gavrielatos. The IAIU report notes that student M.C. was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from being sexually molested by her teacher, Gavrielatos.

Upon review of the above information, the Board voted at its meeting of October 30, 2025, to issue Gavrielatos an Order to Show Cause as to why the certificates he holds should not be revoked. On November 3, 2025, the Board sent Gavrielatos the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. The Order provided that Gavrielatos had thirty (30) days to respond pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(b). The certified mail copy was marked "Delivered," and the regular mail copy was not returned. Gavrielatos did not file a response.

On February 4, 2026, the Board sent a second notice to Gavrielatos, providing him with an additional fifteen (15) days to respond. The certified mail copy was signed and returned, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Again, Gavrielatos did not file a response.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(e), the Board sent Gavrielatos a hearing notice by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, on March 30, 2026. The notice explained that because no answer was filed, there appeared to be no dispute as to material facts in this matter. Thus, Gavrielatos 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. Gavrielatos was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail copy was marked "Delivered," and the regular mail copy was not returned. Gavrielatos did not 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 Gavrielatos 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 September 18, 2026, the Board considered only the allegations in the October 30, 2025 Order to Show Cause and the information received from the UACHS, OLAAC and IAIU. Because the allegations were deemed admitted, the Board concluded that no material facts related to Gavrielatos' offenses were in dispute. And because no material facts related to Gavrielatos' 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 Gavrielatos' actions here constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Based on the undisputed facts in this matter, the Board finds that Gavrielatos 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 Gavrielatos' inappropriate sexual relationship with a sixteen year old student at the school, which included exchanging emails, meeting for lunch, making out, and telling M.C. that he would kill himself if M.C. did not call him, violates the implicit standard of good behavior expected of public school teachers. Further, the IAIU's finding that the allegations of Sexual Abuse/Sexual Molestation and Emotional Abuse/Mental and Emotional Impairment related to the actions of Gavrielatos were Substantiated has the tendency to destroy public respect for teachers and confidence in the public school system. Thus, the Board finds that Gavrielatos engaged in conduct unbecoming an educator and provides the basis for the Board's finding.

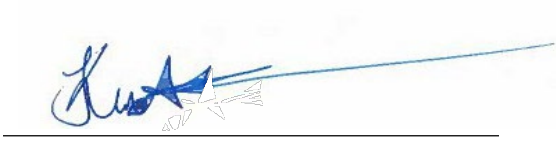
Having found that Gavrielatos engaged in unbecoming conduct, the Board must now determine the appropriate penalty to be applied. In doing so, the Board considers the "nature and gravity of the offenses under all the circumstances involved, any evidence as to provocation, extenuation or aggravation," 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." *IMO Tenure of Sammons*, 1972 *S.L.D.* 302, 321 (Comm'r. Decision, June 12, 1972). 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 Gavrielatos' breach in conduct of an educator is revocation of his certificates. Gavrielatos' undisputed conduct of an inappropriate sexual relationship with a student, wherein they exchanging emails, met for lunch, were making out, and telling the student he would kill himself if the student did not call him, is not conduct of a role model for children. Rather, his conduct demonstrates he is unfit to discharge the duties and functions as a public-school teacher, and demonstrates strong evidence that revocation is appropriate. Further, the IAIU's finding that the allegations of Sexual Abuse/Sexual Molestation and Emotional Abuse/Mental and Emotional Impairment related to the actions of Gavrielatos were Substantiated further demonstrates 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.

Accordingly, on September 18, 2026, the Board voted to revoke Gavrielatos' certificates. On this 29th day of October 2026, the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision, and it is therefore ORDERED that Steven A. Gavrielatos' Teacher of English Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing and Standard Teacher of English certificate are hereby REVOKED, effective

immediately. It is further ORDERED that Gavrielatos 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 A. Gatti, Acting Secretary
State Board of Examiners

Date of Mailing: 10/29/2026
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 and *N.J.A.C.* 6A:4-1.3.