

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
THE CERTIFICATE OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS  
MARZET FARRIS : ORDER OF REVOCATION  
\_\_\_\_\_ : DOCKET NO: 1011-240

At its meeting of July 28, 2011, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information received from the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office (MCPO) indicating that on June 25, 2010, Marzet Farris pled guilty to Sexual Assault-Victim Between 13 and 16. On June 9, 2011, Farris was sentenced to five years in prison and parole supervision for life. Farris currently holds a Teacher of Industrial Arts certificate, issued in December 1966. Upon review of the above information, at its September 22, 2011 meeting, the Board voted to issue Farris an Order to Show Cause.

The Board sent Farris the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on January 10, 2012. The certified mail receipt was signed and returned and the regular mail copy was not returned. Farris did not respond. Thereafter, on February 21, 2012, the Board sent Farris another notice by certified and regular mail providing him an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause. Farris responded on February 29, 2012. In that Answer, Farris admitted that he had pled guilty to Sexual Assault and had been sentenced to five years in prison and parole supervision for life. (Answer, ¶¶ 3-4). Farris added that he had been employed as a teacher by the Piscataway Board of Education for 42 ½ years and had no accusations or incidents of misconduct. (Answer, p. 1). Farris claimed that he had performed his duties "efficiently, honestly, and faithfully" and added that the misconduct of which he was accused was unrelated to his public employment. (Answer, p. 1). He noted that his employment record was exemplary and long-standing and that he was the recipient of many awards and commendations. (Answer, p. 2). Farris argued that his certificate should not be revoked because he had given 42 ½ years of

his life “to being the best educator I knew how to be.” (Answer, p. 2). He noted that to strip him of his certificate “would be an injustice in the face of the time, effort and accomplishments of my career.” (Answer, p. 2). Finally, Farris included many letters of support that he had submitted to the court in his criminal proceeding, hoping that “those letters will help the Board decide not to revoke my teaching certificate. I truly feel that the ‘quality’ and length of service weighs heavily in my favor.” (Answer, p. 2).

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9-17.7(e)*, on March 20, 2012, the Board sent Farris a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that it appeared that no material facts were in dispute. Thus, Farris 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 determined to take action against his certificate. It also explained that upon review of the charges against him and the legal arguments tendered in his defense, the Board would determine if Farris’ offenses warranted action against his certificate. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Farris was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail receipt was signed and returned and the regular mail copy was not returned. Farris did not respond.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Farris’ conviction constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. At its meeting of May 17, 2012, the Board considered the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and Farris’ Answer. The Board determined that no material facts related to Farris’ offense were in dispute since he admitted that he had been convicted and sentenced accordingly. Thus, the Board determined that summary

decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9-17.7(h). It is therefore ORDERED that the charges in the Order to Show Cause are deemed admitted for the purpose of this proceeding.

The Board must now determine whether Farris' conviction, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provides just cause to act against his certificate pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9-17.5. 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:9-17.5. "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. Farris' act of Sexual Assault is inexcusable for any individual, teacher or not.

The Commissioner has long held that teachers serve as role models for their students. Clearly, a teacher convicted of Sexual Assault-Victim Between 13 and 16 cannot claim status as a role model to anyone. Indeed, the court agreed, ordering a lengthy prison term and parole supervision for life. Thus, the Board believes that the only appropriate sanction in this case is the revocation of Farris' certificate. *In the Matter of the Certificates of Kevin Jordan*, Dkt. No. A-0155-08T3 (App. Div. October 5, 2009) (Unpublished Opinion).

Accordingly, on May 17, 2012, the Board voted to revoke Farris' Teacher of Industrial Arts certificate. On this 21st day of June 2012 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Marzet Farris' certificate be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Farris return his certificate to the Secretary

of the State Board of Examiners, Office of Licensure, P.O. Box 500, Trenton, NJ 08625-0500  
within 30 days of the mailing date of this decision.

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Robert R. Higgins, Secretary  
State Board of Examiners

Date of Mailing:

Appeals may be made to the Commissioner of Education pursuant to the provisions of *N.J.S.A.*  
18A:6-38.4.

RRH:MZ:th