

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
KEITH T. HAMPTON : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1819-225

At its meeting of August 1, 2019, 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 Illinois State Board of Education (Illinois) regarding Hampton. On February 5, 2019, Hampton's Illinois teaching certificate(s) were revoked as a result of Hampton's voluntary relinquishment. On or about May 17, 2018, Illinois issued a Statement of Charges seeking the revocation of Hampton's Professional Educator License.

Documents provided by Illinois indicate that Hampton is alleged to have made sexual advances towards four female students while teaching music at Lincoln Park High School in Chicago, Illinois. It is also alleged that Hampton began approaching girls soon after he was hired, and that one student's parents complained to school leaders. In lieu of contesting the allegations, Hampton withdrew his request for a hearing and elected to voluntarily surrender his professional educator license.

Hampton currently holds a Teacher of Music certificate issued by the State of New Jersey. Upon review of the above information, the Board voted at its meeting of September 19, 2019 to issue Hampton an Order to Show Cause as to why his certificates should not be revoked.

The Board sent Hampton the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on September 24, 2019. The Order provided that Hampton must file an Answer within 30 days. Hampton filed an Answer.

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 April 7, 2020, the Administrative Law Judge assigned to the case returned it to the Board after Hampton failed to appear for a scheduled hearing.

Pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 1:1-3.3, the ALJ provided Hampton with 13 days to submit an explanation for his nonappearance. Hampton did not submit an explanation or otherwise respond to that notice.

On June 3, 2020, the Board sent Hampton 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. Hampton did not respond to that notice.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(e), on July 22, 2020, the Board sent Hampton a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. Hampton 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. Hampton 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. Hampton did not respond.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Hampton's alleged sexual abuse constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Since Hampton did not appear at his hearing, and his Answer was subsequently stricken from the record, at its meeting of October 29, 2020, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause. Moreover, since Hampton 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 Hampton's conduct is 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 Hampton engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether Hampton'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 Commissioner'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." *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). In this instance, Hampton's inappropriate conduct falls far short of a role model. Accordingly, the Board believes that the only appropriate sanction in this case is the revocation of his certificates.

Accordingly, on October 29, 2020, the Board voted to revoke Keith T. Hampton's Teacher of Music Certificate. On this 10th day of December 2020 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Hampton's certificates be revoked effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Hampton 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.

Rani Singh, Secretary
State Board of Examiners

RS/KAG/rg

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.