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SCHOOL ETHICS COMMISSION	:	BEFORE THE SCHOOL
	:	ETHICS COMMISSION
V.	:	
	:	Docket No.: D04-04
	:	
RALPH BURKE III	:	RESOLUTION FOR FAILING TO
WOODBINE SCHOOL DISTRICT	:	FILE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
BOARD OF EDUCATION	:	
CAPE MAY COUNTY	:	

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**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 18A:12-25 of the School Ethics Act requires each school official to file a personal/relative disclosure statement and N.J.S.A. 18A:12-26 requires each school official to file a financial disclosure statement with the School Ethics Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, Ralph Burke III is a board member of the Board of Education for the Woodbine school district and thus a "school official" under N.J.S.A. 18A:12-23 of the Act and N.J.A.C. 6A:28-1.2 of the Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the deadline to file these disclosure statements was April 30, 2004 for school officials in office since January 30, 2004 and 30 days from swearing-in or start of employment for newly elected or appointed board members and administrators; and

**WHEREAS**, the School Ethics Commission was advised by the County Superintendent that this school official did not file a disclosure statement with his school district and the County Superintendent's office as required by the Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission sent a reminder letter to him on August 20, 2004, indicating that if the completed statement was not filed by September 10, 2004, the Commission would issue an Order to Show Cause that could result in disciplinary action; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission issued an Order on September 17, 2004, directing this school official to Show Cause why the Commission should not find him in violation of the Act for failing to file the disclosure statements; and

**WHEREAS**, the school official filed the completed disclosure statement, but not until after the Commission issued the Order to Show Cause; and

**WHEREAS**, in its letter enclosing the Order, the Commission notified this school official that he had 20 days to respond to the Order, that the Commission would discuss this matter at its October 26, 2004 meeting, that he had the right to attend the meeting, and he could be found in violation of the School Ethics Act and receive a penalty up to removal; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission finds that the failure to file a disclosure statement within the designated timeline constitutes a clear violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:12-25 and 26; and

**WHEREAS**, this school official provided the Commission an answer to its Order wherein he stated that that he recently had to overcome several critical personal and family crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission finds that this school official was given ample opportunity to provide the complete disclosure statement; and

**WHEREAS**, the appropriate penalty for the violation is reprimand especially in light of the failure to respond to the Commission's reminder letter before the September 10, 2004 deadline.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the School Ethics Commission finds that Ralph Burke III violated N.J.S.A. 18A:12-25 and 26 of the School Ethics Act and recommends that the Commissioner of Education impose a sanction of reprimand.

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Paul C. Garbarini, Chairperson  
School Ethics Commission

Dated: October 26, 2004

This matter shall be transmitted to the Commissioner of Education for action on the Commission's recommendation for sanction pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:12-29. Within thirteen (13) days from the date on which the Commission's decision was mailed to you, you may file written comments on the recommended sanction with the Commissioner of Education, c/o Bureau of Controversies and Disputes, 100 Riverview Plaza, P.O. Box 500, Trenton, NJ 08625, marked "Attention: Comments on Ethics Commission Sanction." A copy of any comments filed must be sent to the School Ethics Commission.