

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE LICENSE OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
JOHN BLANTON : AMENDED ORDER OF REVOCATON
_____ : DOCKET NO. 273 – 01/95-153

John Blanton is the holder of a Teacher of Social Studies license.

At its meeting of January 12, 1995, the State Board of Examiners reviewed information received from the Division of Criminal Justice indicating that John Blanton pled guilty in March, 1994 to one (1) count of Official Misconduct. As reflected in the judgment of conviction and the order amending the judgment of conviction, he was sentenced to five (5) years' probation, forfeiture of public office, ordered to submit to psychological treatment and counseling and was prohibited from holding any teaching or coaching positions during the five-year probationary period. At that meeting the State Board of Examiners voted that the conviction constituted sufficient grounds for issuing an Order to Show Cause. John Blanton was served with the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on or about January 25, 1995. The Order provided that, if John Blanton desired to file an Answer to the Order, such answer must be filed within twenty (20) days. On April 5, 1995 an Answer to the Order to Show Cause was received from Louis W. Childress, Jr., Esq. on behalf of his client John Blanton.

Mr. Childress' Answer avers the Order to Show Cause is inaccurate by inferring that Mr. Blanton is prohibited from holding any teaching or coaching positions forever. It is Mr. Blanton's contention that the terms of probation to which he agreed prevent him from holding a teaching or coaching position only during the five (5) year period of probation, unless probation were revoked. He also submits that the position he previously held as a track coach at Montclair State University did not require a teaching certificate. He claims the State Board of Examiners

seeks to revoke his license to teach because of matters arising out of a position that did not require his license within the meaning of N.J.S.A. 18A:16-38. Mr. Blanton also submits that the State Board of Examiners may only revoke one teaching license if it is revocable. Finally, Mr. Blanton submits that his psychoanalyst, who was hired by the Essex County Probation Department, is recommending that he be given a chance to resume his prior occupation as a track coach. For these reasons, Mr. Blanton claims that the State Board of Examiners should not revoke, suspend or otherwise tamper with his license.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:11-3.6(a)1, on July 21, 1997, a hearing notice was mailed by regular and certified mail to Mr. Childress. The notice advised him that, it appearing that no material facts are in dispute, the issue before the State Board of Examiners is whether his client's conviction as set forth in the Order to Show Cause represent conduct unbecoming a teaching staff member. Mr. Childress was advised that he was provided an opportunity to submit written argument on that issue. Although two extensions were granted to submit a response to the hearing notice, no reply has been forthcoming from either Mr. Childress or Mr. Blanton. Accordingly, the State Board of Examiners decided this matter after review of the Order to Show Cause and Mr. Blanton's response thereto, which was his sole submission.

By virtue of holding a teaching license, the respondent has been entrusted by the State with the care and custody of school children. Tenure Hearing of Sammons, 1972 S.L.D. 302, 321. The respondent has, however, by his conduct, violated that most sacred trust. As reflected in the judgment of conviction and the order amending the judgment of conviction, the respondent pled guilty to Official Misconduct, in which he was charged with committing an act relating to his office but constituting an unauthorized exercise of his official functions, knowing that such act was committed in an unauthorized manner, contrary to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 2C:30-2, and against the peace of this State, the government and dignity of the same (Judgment of

Conviction, dated June 24, 1994; Order Amending Judgment of Conviction, dated August 12, 2009). Such comportment is so foreign to the expectations of the deeds and actions of a professional certificated teacher - or of any person - that it raises doubts as to the continued performance of that person in the classroom. Tenure of Blasco, OAL Dkt. EDU 3842-79 (July 15, 1980), mod. Comm'r of Ed. (August 28, 1980), mod. St. Bd. of Ed. (Feb. 4, 1981). As a condition of John Blanton's Sentencing Order, the Judge determined that he should forfeit his teaching licenses in order to protect the pupils of this State. The State Board of Examiners can do no less. The public must be assured that the respondent will no longer be given access to children as a teacher.

Accordingly, the State Board of Examiners finds respondent's conviction conduct unbecoming a license holder. The appropriate penalty for his unbecoming conduct is the revocation of respondent's teaching license.

It is, therefore, ORDERED that, John Blanton's Teacher of Social Studies license is hereby revoked on this 18th day of June, 1998.

It is further ORDERED that John Blanton return his license to the Secretary of the State Board of Examiners, Office of Licensing, CN 500, Trenton, NJ 08625-0500 within fourteen (14) days of receipt of this letter.

Secretary
State Board of Examiners

Date of Mailing: July 17, 1998

Appeals may be made to the State Board of Education pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:6-28.

IBG:KHK:br:Blantonrv