

September 27, 2005

Mr. Ernest Cheatham

Re: In the Matter of the Application for Certification of Ernest Cheatham  
Docket No. 0506-116

Dear Mr. Cheatham:

At its meeting of September 22, 2005, the State Board of Examiners reviewed the appeal that you filed to contest your ineligibility for teacher certification. Although you delineated your appeal as a request to apply for certification under the regulations that were in effect prior to January 20, 2004, there is a threshold issue that must be resolved first. You lack the 2.5 grade point average that is required for certification. The State Board of Examiners reviewed the information that you provided in support of your appeal. After careful consideration, the Board voted to deny your appeal because the documentation that you submitted failed to prove that your grades meet the requisite GPA. Further, the State Board of Examiners will not grant your request that you be held to the requirements in effect prior to January 20, 2004.

The intent of the GPA requirement is to enhance teacher quality in New Jersey. The State Board of Education placed the GPA requirement in regulation; all candidates must therefore meet that standard. The State Board of Examiners is unable to issue teaching certificates to individuals who do not have the requisite grade point average. Nor does the Board have the authority to waive the requirement or substitute applicants' life experiences for the grade requirement, regardless of the applicants' circumstances.

You were previously advised by the Office of Licensure and Credentials that the regulation governing the GPA requirement permits prospective teachers to meet the grade point requirement with either a baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate end-of-program GPA. Accordingly, the options permit you to present either the GPA from a graduate degree or the GPA achieved at completion of a State-approved post-baccalaureate certification program that has a minimum of 13 credits. The Office of Licensing is not permitted to

accept for GPA purposes credits that were not taken as part of a matriculated state-approved post-baccalaureate program. Accordingly, it cannot accept your non-matriculated coursework.

In sum, if you matriculate in a state-approved teacher certification program, you may use the GPA achieved in that program in lieu of your undergraduate GPA. You should be aware, however, that the GPA from any degree or post-baccalaureate certification programs completed after September 1, 2004 has to be 2.75 in order for the department to accept it in lieu of your undergraduate GPA.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Higgins, Acting Secretary  
State Board of Examiners

RRH/AGL/cheathamernest-GPA appeal

Date of mailing:

By certified and regular mail

This matter may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education pursuant to *N.J.A.C.*6A-3.