

**State Board of Examiners  
Minutes of the Meeting  
held at the Library for the Blind  
2300 Stuyvesant Avenue, Trenton, NJ**

**February 21, 2002**

**Present:** Dr. Donald Farish, Acting Chairperson  
Ms. Joan Brady, Acting Secretary  
Michael Walters, Deputy Attorney General  
Dr. Vito Germinario, Chairperson, Legal Committee  
Dr. Mary Jean Guidette, Chairperson, Credentials Review Committee  
Ms. Ida Bilbow  
Mr. Richard Dorow  
Ms. Joanne Gales  
Mr. James Gay  
Ms. Mary Jane McNally  
Dr. Robert Petix  
Mr. Peter Tirri  
Ms. Gloria Tunstall

**Absent:** Assistant Commissioner Richard C. Ten Eyck, Chairperson  
Mr. Jay Doolan, Acting Secretary  
Dr. Ronald Applbaum  
Dr. Michael Knowlton

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Donald Farish. Dr. Farish announced that notice of the meeting had been provided in accord with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, *N.J.S.A.* 10:4-6 et seq.

The minutes of January 17, 2002 meeting were approved and adopted. Ms. Joanne Gales and Ms. Gloria Tunstall abstained from the vote.

The Board voted to go into executive session at 10:33 a.m. to discuss legal matters. The Board moved out of executive session at 10:55 a.m.

### **Individual Credentials Review - Presentation**

**Carol Risano**, who is applying for a Teacher of Elementary School Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing certificate, attended the meeting, made a brief presentation and answered questions from the Board regarding her experiences.

### **Credentials Review Committee Report**

The Credentials Review Committee reviewed all credentials review cases and presented its recommendations to the Board. The Board took the following actions:

**Quesandra Harris** - School Social Worker – Denied. Partial credit was awarded for study in social casework.

### **Legal Committee Report**

The Legal Committee reviewed all legal cases and presented its recommendations to the Board. The Board took the following actions:

#### **Order to Show Cause**

**Gary Barber** -- Criminal conviction for endangering the welfare of a child. DYFS substantiated allegations of sexual contact with one of his students.

**Wilton Bridgeforth** – Permanent disqualification from public school employment by the Office of Criminal History Review due to a conviction for possession of a controlled dangerous substance on school property.

**Jerome Cochran** – Allegations that he participated in a scheme to defraud the State Health Benefits Program.

**Richard Davis** – Proven tenure charges of unbecoming conduct involving the embezzlement of 1.7 million dollars from the school district in which he was employed. He pled guilty to criminal embezzlement charges.

**Lidia De Los Santos – County Substitute Certificate** - Permanent disqualification from public school employment by the Office of Criminal History Review due to a conviction for felony possession of cocaine.

**Steven Elwell** – Proven tenure charges of unbecoming conduct for engaging in sexual intercourse with a female minor student. Mr. Elwell pled guilty to 2<sup>nd</sup> degree sexual assault arising from his relationship with the student.

**Thomas Gaye** - Pled guilty to disorderly conduct which involved knowingly exposing his genitalia to juvenile females at a public beach.

**Bessie Holman** – Tenure charges of unbecoming conduct and corporal punishment alleging the striking of a student in the head with an umbrella. Ms. Holman entered into a settlement with the school district. The Order to Show Cause was based on the level and nature of her conduct.

**Dean Ilconich** - Permanent disqualification from public school employment by the Office of Criminal History Review due to a conviction for possession of marijuana.\*

\* Ilconich had the offense expunged by way of an Order of Expungement dated June 14, 2002.

**Harry Indar** – Tenure charges alleging chronic and/or excessive absenteeism, unbecoming conduct, insubordination and other just cause. Mr. Indar entered into a settlement agreement with the school district. The Order to Show Cause was based on the level and nature of her conduct.

**Dennyce Nutter Sconier** – Proven tenure charges of incapacity, excessive absenteeism, unbecoming conduct, insubordination and other just cause.

**Andrianna Perez – County Substitute Certificate** - Permanent disqualification from public school employment by the Office of Criminal History Review.\*\*

\*\* The revocation was vacated by the Board on January 22, 2004.

**David Toler** – Entrance into a Pre-Trial Intervention Program was predicated on resignation from his school district for his alleged participation in a scheme to defraud the State Health Benefits Program.

**Roger Wood** – Conviction on three counts of endangering the welfare of a child. DYFS substantiated allegations that he engaged in a sexual relationship with two of his students.

### **Revoke**

**Robert Duffield** – Mr. Duffield submitted a Consent Order in which he agreed to the voluntary surrender of his certificate with the same force as revocation. He also agreed not to reapply for a certificate to teach in New Jersey public schools. Pled guilty to charges of aggravated sexual assault upon one of his students.

In the matter of **Anthony Bermudez**, the Board voted to vacate the Order to Show Cause issued to him on April 5, 2001 as his conviction has been expunged.

In the matter of **Peter Kraus**, the Board voted to block his application for certification as his 1990 conviction for selling marijuana would permanently disqualify him from public school employment under provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A 6-7.1 et seq.

In the matter of **Laura Issac**, the Board voted to reject the proposed settlement. The Board further voted to make a counter – offer to Ms. Issac which includes a three year suspension of her certificate to be effective from the date the settlement agreement is signed.

In the matter of **Joy Northrop-Divencenzi**, the Board voted to make a settlement offer to Ms. Northrop-Divencenzi which includes the suspension of her administrative certificates for one year to be effective from the date the settlement agreement is signed.

In the matter of **Laurie Rosen**, the Board voted to table the matter until the list of tenure charges certified to the Commissioner is obtained.

In the matter of **Wendy Testa**, the Board voted to block her application for certification as she has been permanently disqualified from public school employment by the Office of Criminal History Review due to a conviction for 3<sup>rd</sup> degree conspiracy to commit theft.

The Board voted to take no action to suspend, revoke or block certificates of the following individuals:

|                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Jamie Frederiksen</b> | <b>Oscar Negron</b>       |
| <b>Frank Glonek</b>      | <b>Samuel O. Spann</b>    |
| <b>Lisa Grossman</b>     | <b>James Splond</b>       |
| <b>Barbara Hurst</b>     | <b>Daniel Strubble</b>    |
| <b>Dawn Jones</b>        | <b>Pamela Thomas</b>      |
| <b>Peter Kraus</b>       | <b>Elizabeth Trujillo</b> |
| <b>Dr. Robert Mann</b>   | <b>Ryan Watson</b>        |

The Board voted to go into executive session at 11:20 a.m. to receive legal advice from Deputy Attorney General Walters. The Board moved out of executive session at 11:28 a.m.

Mr. Peter Tirri led a discussion concerning the Board's longstanding concern regarding the current Criminal History Record Statute (N.J.S.A. 18A-6-7.1 et seq.) and how it precludes potentially good teachers from entering the profession because of dated convictions that bar them from public school employment. Dr. Farish, Acting Chairperson, suggested that the Board write a letter to Commissioner Librera regarding their concern. Board members agreed that it should be within their discretion to allow issuance of a certificate to an individual who presents a drug conviction for a small amount of drugs 30 years ago. Deputy Attorney General, Michael Walters and Board members concurred with Dr. Farish's recommendation. Marlene Zuberger, Esq., legal scribe for the Board, was asked to update the letter to legislators previously submitted to the previous department administration and to forward it to Board members for review.

Deputy Attorney General Michael Walters advised the Board that on appeal the Appellate Division of the Superior Court upheld the revocation of M.S.'s certificate.

Dr. Mary Jean Guidette asked for a clarification concerning dissemination of documentation included in the record in those cases where an Order to Show Cause has been issued. Dr. Guidette indicated that Board minutes are disseminated to district administrators and that there are instances where a school district administrator will ask to review the supporting documentation. Dr. Vito Germinario indicated that he has been faced with the same dilemma. Deputy Attorney General Michael Walters indicated that anything discussed in executive session is privileged and that if a Board member recuses himself/herself from a matter they may not

comment on the case. Otherwise, any documents attached to legal summaries reviewed by the Board are public information once there has been a meeting and the Board has taken an action.

Acting Secretary, Joan Brady advised the Board the licensing staff submitted options to Commissioner Librera regarding the 2.75 grade point average requirement for novice teachers.

Ms. Joanne Gales thanked the Board for the sympathy card she received.

The Board had a lengthy discussion regarding the abrupt and recent termination of prior Board Secretary John Knapp, and the Board's lead staff support person, Elizabeth Haywood. Board members indicated that the nature of their jobs as Board members is dependent on exemplary support staff with long historical memories and that their charge would be difficult with changing support staff. Board members agreed that they were going to forward a letter to Commissioner Librera to voice their concerns.

The next meeting of the State Board of Examiners is scheduled to be held on **Thursday, April 11, 2002**, at the **Library for the Blind**, 2300 Stuyvesant Avenue, Trenton, New Jersey.