

SCHOOL ETHICS COMMISSION	:	BEFORE THE
	:	SCHOOL ETHICS COMMISSION
v.	:	RESOLUTION
DEBBIE A. PHILLIPS,	:	
Elsinboro Board of Education	:	
Salem County	:	
	:	

WHEREAS, the School Ethics Act, N.J.S.A. 18A:12-21 *et. seq.* was enacted by the New Jersey State Legislature to ensure and preserve public confidence in school board members and school administrators and to provide specific ethical standards to guide their conduct; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33 requires new board members to attend training within one year of election or appointment to the board to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to serve as a school board member; and

WHEREAS, Debbie Phillips was elected to serve a three-year term on the Elsinboro Board of Education on April 15, 1996; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) advises prospective board members of the training requirement in the “candidate kit” before they are elected and mails correspondence to all new board members who have failed to register for or attend an orientation and did mail such correspondence to this board member on February 13, 1997; and

WHEREAS, at the request of the School Ethics Commission, the NJSBA published a notice with the heading “Last Chance to Meet Training Requirements” on the front page of the February 21, 1997 edition of *School Board Notes* advising that the March 15, 1997 session was the last that new board members could attend without penalty; and

WHEREAS, the NJSBA conducted seven training sessions between April 1996 and April 1997 at varying locations and continuously published the dates and times of the sessions; and

WHEREAS, the last training session to fulfill the requirement was held on March 15, 1997; and

WHEREAS, the Commission issued an Order on March 27, 1997, directing Debbie Phillips to Show Cause why she had not attended training up until that time; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Phillips replied that she could not attend the seven scheduled sessions because of her work schedule, but that she promised to schedule herself for a class in the near future; and

WHEREAS, she further replied that she was unable to attend the sessions that the NJSBA offers in June because they are weekend sessions and she is a single parent, so she has signed up for the October class; and

WHEREAS, the Commission notified Ms. Phillips that the Commission would discuss this matter at its May 27, 1997 meeting, that she had the right to attend, and she could be found in violation of the School Ethics Act and receive a penalty up to removal; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Phillips has failed to attend the required training program for the one year allowed; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that her failure to attend board member training from April 1996 to April 1997 constitutes a violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Phillips's response does not provide an adequate explanation of why she failed to attend one of the other one-day training session for the year allowed by law; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that it would be appropriate to have her removed from the board;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the School Ethics Commission finds that Debbie Phillips violated N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33 of the School Ethics Act and recommends that the Commissioner of Education impose a penalty of removal from the board.

Dated: May 27, 1997

Paul C. Garbarini, Chairperson

I certify that the within Resolution was duly adopted by the School Ethics Commission at its Public Meeting on May 27, 1997.

Lisa James-Beavers, Executive Director

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 the parties, any party may file written comments on the recommended sanction with the Commissioner of Education, c/o Bureau of Controversies and Disputes, 100 Riverview Plaza, CN 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 and all other parties.