

SCHOOL ETHICS COMMISSION	:	BEFORE THE
	:	SCHOOL ETHICS COMMISSION
	:	
v.	:	DECISION FOR
RUSSELL WHITE	:	FAILURE TO ATTEND TRAINING
Mercer County Special Services	:	
Board of Education	:	
Mercer County	:	DOCKET NO. T20-08
	:	

This matter arises from an Order to Show Cause (OTSC) issued on June 20, 2008 by the School Ethics Commission alleging that Russell White, a member of the Mercer County Special Services Board of Education (Board), violated N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33 for failure to complete, during the first year of the member's first term, a training program offered by the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) regarding the skills and knowledge necessary to serve as a local school board member or charter school trustee.

The respondent was advised by the NJSBA of the training requirement in writing upon election or appointment as well as through notices published in its newsletter *School Board Notes*. The NJSBA mailed correspondence to all new board members who failed to register for, or attend, an orientation training. The NJSBA mailed such correspondence to the respondent on July 30, 2007 and December 27, 2007. The NJSBA conducted seven training sessions between April, 2007 and March, 2008 at varying locations and continuously published the dates and times of the sessions in the *School Board Notes*.

As required pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:28-4.2(c), the NJSBA provided the School Ethics Commission with a report listing those board members and trustees who had not fulfilled the training mandate for the first year of their first term. A report from the NJSBA indicated that the respondent failed to attend the training program within the required time period. The respondent was so notified by letter dated May 1, 2008 from the School Ethics Commission and encouraged to fulfill the training requirement. The respondent responded to the May 1, 2008 letter and requested that the Commission allow him to attend the November 15, 2008 training. At its May 27, 2008 meeting, the Commission considered the respondent's request and denied his request notifying the respondent that it would move forward with the issuance of an OTSC. The NJSBA offered two additional training opportunities in May and June 2008, which the respondent did not attend.

The June 20, 2008 OTSC was sent to the respondent by regular and certified mail. The respondent filed a timely response to the OTSC wherein he requested that the Commission allow him to attend the training session scheduled for November 15, 2008.

DECISION

N.J.A.C. 6A:28-4.2(d) provides that board members and trustees failing to comply with the training mandate shall be considered in violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33. Russell White failed to comply with N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33 and the Commission finds him in violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33. Therefore, the Commission recommends to the Commissioner of Education that the

respondent be suspended until he takes the orientation training and removed if he fails to take such training by the November 15, 2008 training session.

Paul C. Garbarini, Chairperson
School Ethics Commission

I hereby certify that the Decision
was duly adopted by the School
Ethics Commission at its public
meeting on July 22, 2008.

Joanne Boyle, Executive Director