

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
THE CERTIFICATE OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS  
LARRY L. LEWIS : ORDER OF REVOCATION  
\_\_\_\_\_ : DOCKET NO: 1819-105

At its meeting of November 1, 2018, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GPSC) forwarded regarding Larry L. Lewis. Lewis was alleged to have touched a female student on her lower back and upper thigh. Other students complained that Lewis called students “low lifes and stupid” and put his hands on their shoulders and moved down towards their chests. In addition, during the school district’s investigation into Lewis’ behavior, it was discovered that he had falsified his employment application by failing to report disciplinary action taken against him by a previous school system. On June 14, 2018, Lewis entered into a consent agreement with the GPSC in which he accepted a retroactive 81-day suspension of his teaching license, beginning October 17, 2016 through December 20, 2016 and continuing from August 2, 2017 through September 21, 2017.

In New Jersey, Lewis currently holds a Teacher of Physical Education certificate. Upon review of the above information, at its December 17, 2018 meeting, the Board voted to issue Lewis an Order to Show Cause as to why his certificate should not be revoked.

The Board sent Lewis the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on December 20, 2018. The Order provided that Lewis had 30 days to respond. The certified mail receipt was returned unclaimed and the regular mail copy was not returned. Lewis filed an Answer that was not entirely responsive. Accordingly, on March 18, 2019, Lewis was advised to provide a more specific Answer. This notification was returned as “unclaimed”, and the regular mail was not returned.

On April 24, 2019, the Board sent Lewis another notice by certified and regular mail providing him an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause. The certified mail receipt was returned as “unclaimed” and the regular mail copy was not returned. Lewis did not file a response.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(e)*, on May 22, 2019, the Board sent Lewis a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that the allegations in the Order to Show Cause were deemed to be admitted as a result of his failure to file an Answer. Thus, Lewis was offered an opportunity to submit written arguments on the issue of whether the conduct addressed in the Order to Show Cause constituted conduct unbecoming a certificate holder, as well as arguments with regard to the appropriate sanction in the event that the Board found just cause to take action against his certificate. It also explained that, upon review of the charges against him and the legal arguments tendered in his defense, the Board would determine if Lewis' offense warranted action against his certificate. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Lewis was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail copy was returned as "Unclaimed" and the regular mail copy was not returned. Once again, Lewis did not file a response.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Lewis's conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Since Lewis failed to respond to the Order to Show Cause, the allegations therein are deemed admitted. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(c)*. Consequently, at its meeting of November 1, 2019, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and the information received from NASDTEC and Georgia. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Lewis' offense were in dispute since he never denied that he engaged in the conduct alleged. Thus, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(h)*. After reviewing the allegations, the Board found that Lewis engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether Lewis' conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provides just cause to act against his certificate pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.4*. The Board finds that it does.

The Board may revoke or suspend the certification of any certificate holder on the basis of demonstrated inefficiency, incapacity, conduct unbecoming a teacher or other just cause. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.4*. "Teachers... are professional employees to whom the people have entrusted the care and custody of ... school children. This heavy duty requires a degree of self-restraint and controlled behavior rarely

requisite to other types of employment.” *Tenure of Sammons*, 1972 *S.L.D.* 302, 321. Moreover, unfitness to hold a position in a school system may be shown by one incident, if sufficiently flagrant. *Redcay v. State Bd. of Educ.*, 130 *N.J.L.* 369, 371 (1943), *aff’d*, 131 *N.J.L.* 326 (E & A 1944). Lewis’ actions in inappropriately touching students, calling students names, and falsifying his employment application is clearly conduct that is unacceptable for a role model. The Board therefore concludes that the appropriate response to his breach is the revocation of his certificate.

Accordingly, on November 1, 2019, the Board voted to revoke Larry L. Lewis’s Teacher of Physical Education certificate. On this 13<sup>th</sup> day of December 2019 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Lewis’ certificate(s) be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Lewis return his certificate to the Secretary of the State Board of Examiners, Office of Certification and Induction, P.O. Box 500, Trenton, NJ 08625-0500 within 30 days of the mailing date of this decision.

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Rani Singh, Secretary  
State Board of Examiners

**Date of Mailing:**  
**Via certified and regular mail**

Appeals may be made to the Commissioner of Education pursuant to the provisions of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38.4.