

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CREDENTIAL OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
STEVEN P. LOURENCO : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 2021-139

At its meeting of February 26, 2021, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information the Morris County Prosecutor's Office and the Office of Student Protection (OSP) forwarded regarding Steven P. Lourenco. As a result of an Accusation for Harassment, Cyber Bullying, and Stalking, on or about March 9, 2020, Lourenco entered the Pre-Trial Intervention Probation program for a period of 24 months, along with conditions including submission to mental health evaluations, no contact with the victim, and compliance with a Final Restraining Order.

Specific allegations leading to the Accusation for Harassment, Cyber Bullying, and Stalking include that Lourenco posted vulgar language on the victim's Instagram, texted her phone threatening to hurt himself if she did not talk to him, and stating that he would not stop contacting her. Additionally, it is alleged he drove past the victim's home and workplace at various times at high speeds while revving his engine. Further, Lourenco was banned from the school the victim attends and allegedly refused to stop contacting the victim despite her numerous requests to cease contact.

Lourenco currently holds a substitute credential which expires July 2023. Upon review of the above information, at its April 1, 2021 meeting, the Board voted to issue Lourenco an Order to Show Cause as to why his credential should not be revoked.

The Board sent Lourenco the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on April 6, 2021. The Order provided that Lourenco had 30 days to respond. The certified mail copy was signed for and the regular mail copy was not returned. Lourenco did not respond.

Thereafter, on May 25, 2021, the Board sent another notice providing Lourenco an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause. The certified mail copy was not returned, and the USPS online tracking system indicated the correspondence was in transit for many months. Accordingly, on October 6, 2021, after attempts for service at another address failed, the Board resent the documents via regular and

certified mail to the original address it used on both April 6, 2021 and May 25, 2021. This correspondence was signed for as received and the regular mail copy was not returned. Once again, Lourenco did not respond.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(e), on December 7, 2021, the Board sent Lourenco 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, Lourenco 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 certificates. It also explained that, upon review of the charges against him and the legal arguments tendered in his defense, the Board would determine if Lourenco's offense warranted action against his certificates. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Lourenco was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail copy was marked "unclaimed" and the regular mail copy was returned. Once again, Lourenco did not file a response.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Lourenco's conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Since Lourenco 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 March 4, 2022, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and the information received from the Prosecutor's Office and the OSP. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Lourenco's offense were in dispute since he never denied that he had engaged in the alleged conduct. 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 Lourenco engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether Lourenco's conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provides just cause to act against his certificates 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). Lourenco’s actions of harassing, cyber bullying and stalking 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 credential.

Accordingly, on March 4, 2022, the Board voted to revoke Steven P. Lourenco’s substitute credential. On this 7th day of April 2022, the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that Lourenco’s credential is hereby revoked, effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Lourenco return his credential 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.

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*.