

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
JEAN SAGREDO (Johnson) : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 2021-115

At its meeting of December 10, 2020, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information the Mahwah Township School District (Mahwah) regarding Jean Sagredo (Sagredo). Sagredo was a teacher in Mahwah who resigned from her position after she used and possessed marijuana and drug paraphernalia during the school day.

On January 29, 2020, Sagredo smoked marijuana in her motor vehicle while it was parked in the driveway of her home at 6:30 am. She then arrived at Mahwah High School around 7:25 am and supervised/taught students. At 9:48 am she “danced” down the school stairway and entered her car. Sagredo did not follow the protocol for leaving the building or signing out of the building.

While driving her vehicle from Mahwah high school that morning, Sagredo was stopped at a construction zone after she approached at a high rate of speed. During the vehicle stop, the officer detected an odor of burnt marijuana and noted Sagredo’s eyes were droopy and her mouth sounded dry. She had a white, dry film on her lips and her speech seemed delayed. Sagredo informed the officer that she has anxiety and she smoked marijuana to treat it but does not have a prescription. Sagredo produced a small wooden box and admitted there was raw marijuana inside. She also had a white pipe with marijuana inside. Sagredo was charged with criminal offenses related to the drug and paraphernalia possession as well as various motor vehicle offenses including careless driving, possession of controlled dangerous substances in a motor vehicle and driving under the influence. As a result of the charges, Sagredo did not return for her assigned responsibilities on that day.

Sagredo currently holds a Teacher of Elementary Grades K-8, Teacher of Speech and Dramatic Arts, and Teacher of English Certificate. Upon review of the above information, at its January 22, 2021 meeting, the Board voted to issue Sagredo an Order to Show Cause as to why her certificates should not be revoked.

The Board sent her the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on January 27, 2021. The Order provided that Sagredo had 30 days to respond. Sagredo submitted an Answer on or about February 27, 2021. Based upon the Answer, it was determined that material facts were in dispute. Accordingly, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for a hearing. However, Sagredo failed to attend a scheduled hearing on September 28, 2021. On October 6, 2021, Sagredo sent an email to the OAL indicating that she wished to retract her statement and no longer wished to contest the case. The OAL then returned the matter to the Board based upon this email.

By letter dated March 1, 2022, the Board provided time to advise if she wished to contest the matter in light of the email to OAL. The correspondence was sent via regular and certified mail. The certified mail was signed for and the regular mail was not returned. Sagredo did not respond and therefore her Answer was stricken, and the matter was treated as if she did not submit an Answer.

Accordingly, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(e)*, on August 3, 2022, the Board sent Sagredo 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 her failure to file an Answer. Thus, Sagredo 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 her certificates. It also explained that, upon review of the

charges against her and the legal arguments tendered in her defense, the Board would determine if Sagredo's offense warranted action against her certificates. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Sagredo was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail was signed for and the regular mail was not returned. Once again, Sagredo did not file a response.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Sagredo's conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Since Sagredo 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 October 28, 2022, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and the information received from Mahwah. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Sagredo's offense were in dispute since she never denied that she 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 Sagredo engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether Sagredo's conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provides just cause to act against her 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). Sagredo's actions of using marijuana during the school day and driving on campus while under the influence and failing to return for her assigned teaching responsibilities clearly demonstrate conduct that is unacceptable for a role model. The Board therefore concludes that the appropriate response to her breach is the revocation of her certificates.

Accordingly, on October 28, 2022, the Board voted to revoke Jean Sagredo's Teacher of Elementary Grades K-8, Teacher of Speech and Dramatic Arts, and Teacher of English Certificates. On this 9th day of December 2022, the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that Sagredo's certificates are hereby revoked, effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Sagredo return her certificates 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.