

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS  
CALEB J. BETTON : ORDER OF REVOCATION  
\_\_\_\_\_ : DOCKET NO: 2122-186

At its meeting of June 30, 2022, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information received from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Washington Township School District (Washington Township) regarding Caleb J. Betton.

Betton resigned his non-tenured teaching position with Washington Township after the district was notified that Betton engaged in a sexually explicit chat on Reddit. Specifically, a detective with the Camden County Prosecutor's Office and agent from Homeland Security International contacted DCF regarding Betton. They reported that Betton stated in a chat on Reddit with a female in Canada that he masturbates while standing next to his own 18 month old child; he stands next to the children whom he babysits while masturbating; he engaged in sexually explicit acts against other children he babysat; he would rape and molest children on an overseas business trip; he gave a woman \$100 for rice to feed her family in exchange for 1 hour of access to the woman's 2 month old child where he submerged the child's head under water and sat on it while masturbating; he masturbated in his classroom and he Skyped the act.

On April 23, 2020, DCF determined that it was unable to identify any victims and accordingly the investigation determined that no students were exposed to anything of a concerning nature. No criminal charges were filed against Betton.

Betton currently holds a reading specialist and Teacher of Elementary Grades K-6 certificates. Upon review of the above information, the Board voted at its meeting of August 5, 2022 to issue Betton an Order to Show Cause (OSC) as to why his certificates should not be revoked.

The Board sent Betton the OSC by regular and certified mail on January 13, 2023. The Order provided that Betton must file an Answer within 30 days. Betton filed an Answer on February 7, 2023.

In his Answer, Betton admitted that he engaged in the chat that gave rise to his resignation, but that he did not engage in the actual conduct detailed within the chat. (Answer, ¶ 3). He stated that he did not care if he kept his teaching credentials, as he did not intend to use them. *Id.*

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(e), on June 27, 2023, the Board sent Betton a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that it appeared that no material facts were in dispute. Thus, Betton was offered an opportunity to submit written arguments on the issue of whether the conduct addressed in the OSC 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 the offense warranted action against his certificates. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Betton was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. Betton did not respond.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Betton's offense constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. At its meeting of August 4, 2023, the Board considered the allegations in the OSC as well as Betton's Answer. The Board determined that no material facts related to Betton's offense were in dispute since he admitted that he engaged in the chat and confirmed the contents of the chat, albeit indicating he did not engage in the actual conduct described in the chat. Thus, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(h).

The Board must now determine whether Betton's conduct, as set forth in the OSC, represents 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). Betton's conduct in engaging in a sexually explicit chat regarding children on Reddit indicates a serious lapse in judgment. The fact that the acts detailed in the chat did not actually occur does not prohibit the Board from taking action. Betton's knowledge that he made

sexually explicit and inappropriate statements regarding children on Reddit is significant. Accordingly, the Board therefore concludes that the appropriate response to his breach is the revocation of his certificates.

Accordingly, on August 4, 2023, the Board voted to revoke Caleb J. Betton's Reading Specialist and Teacher of Elementary Grades K-6 certificates. On this 21<sup>st</sup> day of September 2023, the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Betton's certificates be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Betton return his 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.

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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.