

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
CHRISTOPHER G. MILLER : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 2223-150

At its meeting of March 3, 2023, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information from the Office of Student Protection (OSP) and Camden County Prosecutor's Office (Camden) regarding Christopher G. Miller. Miller currently holds a Teacher of Military Science standard certificate, issued November 2014.

On May 20, 2021, Miller was charged with Prohibited Weapons and Devices – Hollow Nose (4th degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:39-3F(1); Prohibited Weapons and Devices – Large Capacity (4th degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:39-3J; Possession of Assault Firearm (4th degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:39-5F; and Contempt – Violation of Domestic Violence Restraining Order (due process offense), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:29-9B(2). It was alleged that, on May 20, 2021, Miller was served with a continuance order for an active temporary restraining order (TRO) and that a search warrant revealed that he was in violation of the TRO by possessing and failing to surrender firearms, ammunitions, and magazines following service of the initial TRO on April 13, 2021.

On November 30, 2022, Miller pled guilty to a charge of Prohibited Weapons and Devices – Hollow Nose, *N.J.S.A.* 2C:39-3F(1). On January 20, 2023, he was sentenced to two years of probation, required to abide by the terms of the TRO and have no contact with the victim, submit to psychological evaluation and cooperate with all recommended treatment, forfeit any weapons and ammunition seized at time of arrest, and surrender firearms as outlined in the TRO, along with fees and costs.

The OSP notified the Board that pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-7.1 *et seq.*, Miller was

disqualified from public school employment as the result of his convictions for Prohibited Weapons and Devices – Hollow Nose, *N.J.S.A. 2C:39-3F(1)*.

Upon review of the above information, the Board voted at its April 13, 2023 meeting to issue Miller an Order to Show Cause as to why his certificates should not be revoked. The Board sent Miller the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, on April 17, 2023. The Order provided that Miller had 30 days to respond pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(b)*. The certified mail copy was signed and returned, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Miller did not file a response.

On June 6, 2023, the Board sent Miller another notice by certified and regular mail providing him an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(c)*. The certified mail copy stalled in delivery, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Miller did not file a response.

On July 13, 2023, the Board sent Miller a third notice by certified and regular mail providing him an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(c)*. The certified mail copy was signed and returned, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Miller did not file a response.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(e)*, on August 31, 2023, the Board sent Miller a hearing notice by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. The notice explained that there appeared to be no material facts in dispute in this matter. Thus, Armstrong 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. Miller was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide

testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail receipt again stalled, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Miller did not file a response or ask to appear before the Board.

On October 25, 2023, the Board sent Miller a second hearing notice by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. The certified mail copy was marked “Delivered”, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Miller did not file a response.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Miller’s actions here constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Because Miller failed to respond to the Order to Show Cause, the allegations are deemed admitted. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(c)*. Consequently, at its meeting of January 16, 2025, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and the information received from the OSP and Camden. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Miller’s offenses were in dispute because he admitted the alleged conduct. Thus, since no material facts related to Miller’s conduct are in dispute, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(h)*.

The Board finds that Miller engaged in conduct unbecoming of an educator. Pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.4*, the Board may take action against a certificate holder on the basis of conduct unbecoming a teacher. The “elastic” concept of “conduct unbecoming” includes “conduct which adversely affects the morale or efficiency” of the public entity or “which has a tendency to destroy public respect for . . . [public] employees and confidence in the operation of [public] services.” *In re Emmons*, 63 N.J. Super. 136, 140 (App. Div. 1960); *accord Bound Brook Bd. of Educ. v. Ciripompa*, 228 N.J. 4, 13 (2017). “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.

A “violation of the implicit standard of good behavior which devolves upon one who stands in the public eye as an upholder of that which is morally and legally correct” may provide the basis for a finding of unbecoming conduct. *Bound Brook Bd. of Educ.*, 228 N.J. at 14 (quoting *Karins v. City of Atlantic City*, 152 N.J. 532, 555 (1998)). 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). A conviction for possession of prohibited weapons and devices clearly demonstrates conduct that is unacceptable for a role model. Further, violating a TRO is certainly not role model behavior. Thus, the Board finds that Miller engaged in conduct unbecoming an educator and provides the basis for the Board’s finding.

Further, in enacting the Criminal History Review statute, *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-7.1 *et seq.*, in 1986, the Legislature sought to protect public school pupils from contact with individuals whom it deemed to be a danger. The OSP determined that a conviction for Prohibited Weapons and Devices – Hollow Nose, *N.J.S.A.* 2C:39-3F(1), permanently disqualified an individual from public school employment. *See N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-7.1(c)(2) and (d). The strong legislative policy statement is also in accord with the Commissioner’s long-standing belief that teachers must serve as role models for their students.

Having found that Miller engaged in unbecoming conduct, the Board must now determine the appropriate penalty to be applied. The Board may revoke or suspend the certification of any certificate holder if the certificate holder engages in conduct unbecoming a teacher. *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.4. In this instance, the Board concludes that the appropriate response to Miller’s breach in conduct of an educator is revocation of his certificate. Miller’s conduct in possessing prohibited weapons, as well as possessing such after he was ordered to surrender all weapons following the issuance of a domestic violence restraining order, warrants revocation of his certificate. Further,

the record established that, as a result of his conviction for Prohibited Weapons and Devices – Hollow Nose, *N.J.S.A.* 2C:39-3F(1), Miller is disqualified from public school employment. An educator who is not qualified for public school employment should not be able to hold himself out as a public educator. Thus, revocation of his certificates is the appropriate response in this matter.

Accordingly, on January 16, 2025, the Board voted to revoke Christopher G. Miller's Teacher of Military Science standard certificate. On this 28th day of February 2025, the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision, and it is therefore ORDERED that Miller's certificates be REVOKED, effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Miller 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.



Rani Singh, Secretary
State Board of
Examiners

Date of Mailing:
By 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.