

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
REBECCA E. CODDINGTON : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 2425-226

At its meeting of June 26, 2025, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information from the Department of Education (DOE) – Office of Legal Affairs, Accountability & Compliance (OLAAC) and DOE - Office of Student Protection (OSP) regarding Rebecca E. Coddington, including documentation obtained from the Camden County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO). Coddington currently holds a Substitute credential, expiring February 28, 2027.

On April 10, 2024, Coddington was indicted on two counts of Aggravated Sexual Assault – Victim >13 & < 16 – Defendant and Victim Related (1st degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:14-2A(2)(A)*; two counts of Sexual Assault – Force/Coercion No Severe Personal Injury (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:14-2C(1)*; two counts of Sexual Assault – Victim 13-15 Years Old, Actor 4+ Years Older (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:14-2C(4)*; two counts of Aggravated Criminal Sexual Contact (3rd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:14-3A*; three counts of Endangering the Welfare of a Child – Sexual Conduct with Child by Non-Caretaker (3rd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:24-4A(1)*; one count of Endangering the Welfare of a Minor – Abuse/Neglect of a Child by a Non-Caretaker (3rd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:24-4A(2)*; two counts of Sexual Assault – Victim < 13 and Defendant 4+ Years Older (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:14-2B*; and two counts of Endangering the Welfare of a Child – Sexual Conduct with Child by Non-Caretaker (3rd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:24-4A(1)*.

It was alleged that, on or about December 28, 2023, Coddington touched a 14-year-old victim's bare breasts under the clothes with her hands and mouth, and that the victim touched the inside of Coddington's vagina with her tongue and fingers. It is also alleged that Coddington

touched the victim's breasts and buttocks over the clothes on multiple occasions between September 1, 2019, and December 31, 2021. Further, it is alleged that Coddington admitted the allegations.

On December 6, 2024, Coddington pled guilty to one count of Sexual Assault – Force/Coercion No Severe Personal Injury (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:14-2C(1)*. On March 10, 2025, Coddington was sentenced to seven years in prison, subject to the No Early Release Act, *N.J.S.A. 2C:43-7.2*, and three years of supervised parole upon her release.

On December 9, 2024, OSP notified the Board that as a result of her conviction for Sexual Assault – Force/Coercion No Severe Personal Injury (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:14-2C(1)*, Coddington is permanently disqualified from continued employment with any school or institution under the supervision of the Department of Education.

Upon review of the above information, the Board voted at its meeting of August 8, 2025, to issue Coddington an Order to Show Cause as to why the certificates she holds should not be revoked. On August 12, 2025, the Board sent Coddington the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. The Order provided that Coddington had thirty (30) days to respond pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B- 4.6(b)*. The certified mail copy was marked “Delivered,” and the regular mail copy was not returned. Coddington did not file a response.

On December 9, 2025, the Board sent Coddington a second notice by regular and certified mail, providing her with an additional fifteen (15) days to respond. The certified mail copy was marked “Delivered,” and the regular mail copy was not returned. Again, Coddington did not file a response.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(e)*, the Board sent Coddington a hearing notice by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, on February 5, 2026. The notice explained

that because no answer was filed, there appeared to be no dispute as to material facts in this matter. Thus, Coddington 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. Coddington was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail copy was signed and returned, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Coddington did not file a response or request to appear before the Board.

The Board has the authority to “issue appropriate certificates to teach or to administer,” and “may revoke the same under rules and regulations prescribed by the State board.” *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38; *see also N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-3.2 and -4.4; *Morison v. Willingboro Bd. of Educ.*, 478 N.J. Super. 229 (App. Div. 2024), *cert. denied* 258 N.J. 143 (July 11, 2024). The Board may take action against a 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(a); *see also Morison*, 478 N.J. Super. at 246, 248 (explaining the Board is responsible for protecting schoolchildren from improper teacher conduct and may suspend or revoke an educator’s continued ability to serve as a teacher at any public school based on unbecoming conduct).

Because Coddington 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 June 25, 2026, the Board considered only the allegations in the August 8, 2025 Order to Show Cause and the information received from the OSP, OLAAC, and CCPO. Because the allegations were deemed admitted, the Board concluded that no material facts related to Coddington’s offenses were in dispute. And because no material facts related to Coddington’s conduct were in dispute, the Board

determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(h).

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Coddington's actions here constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Based on the undisputed facts in this matter, the Board finds that Coddington engaged in conduct unbecoming of an educator. Unbecoming conduct is defined as "conduct 'which adversely affects the morale or efficiency of the [department]' or 'has a tendency to destroy public respect for [government] employees and confidence in the operation of [public] services.'" *Bound Brook Bd. of Educ. v. Ciripompa*, 228 N.J. 4, 13 (2017) (quoting *In re Young*, 202 N.J. 50, 66 (2010) (citing *Karins v. Atl. City*, 152 N.J. 532, 554 (1998))). "[A] finding of unbecoming conduct 'need not be predicated upon the violation of any particular rule or regulation, but may be based merely upon the 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 legal correct.'" *Id.* at 13-14 (quoting *Karins*, 152 N.J. at 555). "It focuses on the morale, efficiency, and public perception of an entity, and how those concerns are harmed by allowing teachers to behave inappropriately while holding public employment." *Id.* at 14. "The touchstone of the determination lies in the certificate holder's 'fitness to discharge the duties and functions of one's office or position.'" *Young*, 202 N.J. at 66 (quoting *In re Grossman*, 127 N.J. Super. 13, 29 (App. Div. 1974)).

Here, the Board finds that engaging in sexual conduct with a minor, specifically touching a 14-year-old victim's bare breasts under the clothes with her hands and mouth, and having the victim touch the inside of Coddington's vagina with her tongue and fingers, violates the implicit standard of good behavior expected of public school teachers. Further, in enacting the Criminal History Review statute, *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-7.1 *et seq.*, the Legislature sought to protect public school pupils from contact with individuals whom it deemed to be a danger. 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. OSP determined that Coddington's conviction for Sexual Assault – Force/Coercion No Severe Personal Injury (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:14-2C(1) disqualifies her from public school employment. *See N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-7.1(c)(2) and (d). Thus, the Board finds that Coddington engaged in conduct unbecoming an educator and provides the basis for the Board's finding.

Having found that Coddington engaged in unbecoming conduct, the Board must now determine the appropriate penalty to be applied. In doing so, the Board considers the “nature and gravity of the offenses under all the circumstances involved, any evidence as to provocation, extenuation or aggravation,” and any “harm or injurious effect” on the maintenance of discipline and the proper administration of the school system. *In re Fulcomer*, 93 N.J. Super. 404, 422 (App. Div. 1967). Central to this evaluation is the understanding that “[t]eachers ... 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.” *IMO Tenure of Sammons*, 1972 *S.L.D.* 302, 321 (Comm'r. Decision, June 12, 1972). Fitness to teach depends on a broad range of factors, including the teacher's impact and effect upon the students, because a “teacher works in a sensitive area in a schoolroom” and “shapes the attitude of young minds toward the society in which they live.” *Grossman*, 127 N.J. at 30 (*quoting Adler v. Bd. of Educ. of City of New York*, 342 U.S. 485 (1952)). Importantly, unfitness to hold a position in a school system may be shown by one incident if sufficiently flagrant. *Fulcomer*, 93 N.J. Super. at 421; *Redcay v. State Bd. of Educ.*, 130 *N.J.L.* 369, 371 (1943), *aff'd*, 131 *N.J.L.* 326 (E & A 1944).

In this instance, the Board concludes that the appropriate response to Coddington's breach

in conduct of an educator is revocation of her certificates. Coddington's conduct of engaging in sexual conduct with a minor, as outlined above, is not conduct of a role model for children. Rather, her conduct demonstrates she is unfit to discharge the duties and functions as a public-school teacher, and demonstrates strong evidence that revocation is appropriate. Allowing her to maintain certification to teach in a public school would have a negative impact on the proper administration of the school system. Further, the record established that, as a result of her conviction for Sexual Assault – Force/Coercion No Severe Personal Injury (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A. 2C:14-2C(1)*, Coddington is disqualified from public school employment. An educator who is not qualified for public school employment should not be able to hold herself out as a public educator. Thus, revocation of her certificates is the appropriate response in this matter.

Accordingly, on June 25, 2026, the Board voted to revoke Coddington's certificates. On this 7th day of August 2026, the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision, and it is therefore ORDERED that Rebecca E. Coddington's Substitute credential is hereby REVOKED, effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Coddington return her paper certificates, if issued, 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.



Kimberly A. Gatti, Acting 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*.