

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
AND  
PROVIDENCE PLANTATION

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

RHODE ISLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

VS.

WILLIAM F. SULLIVAN

DECISION

HELD: Good cause was shown for  
revocation of teaching  
certificate.

JUNE 9, 1992

This matter is before us on the petition of the Department of Education to revoke the teaching certificate of respondent William F. Sullivan for misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT

(A) Jane Doe

During the 1988 to 1989 school year, Jane Doe was a student at Woonsocket High School. Mr. Sullivan was a teacher there. During early November of 1988 Mr. Sullivan, while in the computer room at the high school, gave student Doe a pair of purple Calvin Klien panties. At a later date Mr. Sullivan began to try to discuss with this student a "sexual awareness class" he was allegedly attending. He described the size of his genitalia and his ability to "please all women". Sometime later Mr. Sullivan tried to discuss with Jane Doe his sex life. He also asked Jane Doe whether she moaned, groaned and sighed during sexual intercourse.

During the 1988 school year, while in the computer room at the Woonsocket High School, Mr. Sullivan told Jane Doe he wanted to play a game. Jane Doe testified that:

"I was sitting facing Mr. Sullivan about three feet apart, and he said that he had wanted - - he wanted to play a game. I had a skirt on. He wanted to play a game, and I had to put my feet down flat on the floor, and he took one of his fingers and he rubbed the inside of my calves or shins, the lower part of my leg on the inside and on the outside of both legs, and if I moved my legs then I lost the game".

(B) Mary Roe

Mary Roe testified that on the last day before Christmas vacation in 1988 Mr. Sullivan got her out of her Psychology class on the pretext that he needed her help in the computer room. She testified that in the computer room:

We were cleaning up papers, and he was telling me how he wanted me to go to the second floor to do the computers for attendance for the senior year because I was a hot (--) and he could joke around with me, but he had chosen between me and this other girl, and he told her he couldn't have both of us working at the same time because it would cause too much attention, and I didn't say anything one way or the other. It didn't matter to me. As I was cleaning up the papers he shut off the light, and I told him to turn the light on and he did. And I said, "I thought you were afraid of the dark? You told me last year you was afraid of the dark," and he turned on the light, and then he turned the light off again, and I told him to turn the light on again, and then he shut the light off again and I told him to turn the light on again, and he said, "Come here." and I just told him to turn on the light and he turned on the light and we left the computer room.

Mary testified that then she and Mr. Sullivan went outside the building to smoke. Mr. Sullivan began to discuss the life insurance policy he said he had with the school. Mary Roe stated that:

"...he was discussing the amount of his insurance policy at school, and he told me that if anything like if we were to have sex together we were both getting something out of it. We would get the best laid of our lives and we could split the money afterwards."

After they returned the building Mr. Sullivan persisted in trying to discuss sex. Mary Roe testified that:

"We went back inside, picked up some papers from the computer room that does the attendance on the second floor, and we brought them to the office, and on the way back from the office he was talking about sex. I don't remember what it was. And I had said to him at one time he told me that people my age shouldn't be having sex, and he asked me how old I was, and I said 17, and he said that he was getting laid long before I was, and that when I was 18 I was legal and I wouldn't need my parents' permission for anything."

On the same day Mr. Sullivan offered to drive Mary Roe to the business where Mary Roe worked so that she could pickup her check. While in the car Mr. Sullivan "...pointed out a woman's house and he said that they used to screw around and that she wasn't rich but she was good at what she did." Mr. Sullivan followed this remark with an outpouring of scatological language which included a sexual proposition to Mary Roe.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT

We find the testimony of Jane Doe and Mary Roe to be entirely credible and we adopt their testimony as our findings of fact. Their testimony is so clear, direct and convincing that it overcomes the denials made by Mr. Sullivan in his testimony. We find that the Department of Education has proved its case by clear and convincing evidence even though only a preponderance of the evidence is needed to carry the burden of proof.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

In a prior case we have held that conduct and language of the type which has been proved in this case justifies dismissal. We also believe that it constitutes good cause for the revocation of a teaching certificate. Department of Education, et al vs. Goodreau (July 26, 1989). We see no reason to depart from this prior ruling now.

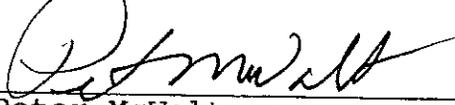
CONCLUSION

The teaching certificate of William F. Sullivan is hereby revoked.



Forrest L. Avila, Esq.  
Hearing Officer

Approved:



Peter McWalters  
Commissioner of Education

Date: 4/9/92