

Halton teacher reprimanded for professional misconduct

by Emma Reilly
Hamilton Spectator

A Halton teacher has been found guilty of professional misconduct for having inappropriate relationships with students, taking photos without permission and misusing a school computer.

Denis Joseph Marcel Levesque received a reprimand from the Ontario College of Teachers in September 2014, according to a decision published in the March edition of the college's professional magazine.

Kate Hughes, Levesque's lawyer, did not respond to requests for comment.

According to his Ontario College of Teachers profile, Levesque is qualified to teach biology, French, drama and reading. He's also been trained in special education.

The reprimand dates back to 2009 and 2010, when Levesque gave a student his personal email address in order to communicate with her father. He later talked to the same student over MSN instant messaging.

He also drove that student home in his car, both in a group and once on her own after her father failed to pick her up.

Levesque was also reprimanded for visiting dating and other inappropriate websites on a school computer. As a result, pornographic images were present on the computer and could have been seen by a student, the disciplinary panel noted.

Finally, Levesque also took pictures of students, including the same girl he chatted with online, for a graduation slide show after they stated they didn't want their photos taken.

Levesque pleaded guilty to these charges.

He faced a formal reprimand and was required to take a course on boundary violations at his own expense.

"The development of electronic media is now firmly entrenched and has revealed many dangers for members of the profession," the panel stated in its decision.

"The ease of communication with students

that this form of contact allows makes it easy to fall into precarious communication practices that could be deemed conduct unbecoming to a member."

Marnie Denton, spokesperson for the Halton District School Board, confirmed that Levesque is still a board employee. She added the board is aware of the disciplinary decision.

Town seeks Community Spirit nominations

The Town of Oakville is once again honouring community champions who positively contribute to the life and spirit of the town.

Nominations are now open for the 14th annual Community Spirit Awards recognizing outstanding individuals, groups and businesses in eight categories.

"The Community Spirit Awards provides us with an opportunity to recognize a few of the many Oakville residents that contribute to Oakville's livability," said Mayor Rob Burton.

"I encourage everyone to nominate and share the stories of those community champions who are truly making a difference in the community."

Nominations will be accepted until Monday, April 13 at 4 p.m. in the following award categories:

- Access Award, sponsored by MEDiChair Halton
- Arts Award, sponsored by the Oakville Beaver

- Environmental Award, sponsored by Tim Hortons
- Group Volunteer Award, sponsored by the Town of Oakville
- Heritage Award, sponsored by Genworth Financial Canada
- Individual Volunteer Award, sponsored by Paradiso Restaurant
- Senior Award, sponsored by Amica
- Youth Award, sponsored by RBC Royal Bank

This year's awards presentation will be held on Wednesday, June 3 at Oakville's Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre (QEPCCC). The 2015 Community Spirit Awards will be designed by local ceramic artist and QEPCCC instructor Thomas J. Suh.

Nomination forms are available at all town recreation facilities, Town Hall and Oakville Public Library branches, or can be completed online. For more information, visit oakville.ca.

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