

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
GLENN CIRIPOMPA : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1415-146

At its meeting of July 27, 2017, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed a tenure decision regarding Glenn Ciripompa, a tenured teacher in the Bound Brook School District (Bound Brook). Pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-16, the Arbitrator assigned by the Department of Education to hear the case, had referred the tenure matter captioned *In the Matter of the Tenure Hearing of Glenn Ciripompa*, Dkt. No. 177-7/14 (Arbitrator's Decision, June 16, 2017) to the Board.

Bound Brook had certified tenure charges against Ciripompa for unbecoming conduct alleging he had repeatedly engaged in inappropriate use of the district's network, his district-provided computer and his district-provided iPad, and had repeatedly engaged in unprofessional, inappropriate and potentially harassing behavior towards female staff members.

The district alleged that Ciripompa used the district equipment to send and receive emails trying to arrange sexual liaisons with individuals and couples and receive notices about sex parties in which he expressed an interest to attend. Ciripompa also requested and received numerous photos of nude women through the district's network and sent nude photos of himself through the district's network. He also sent and received inappropriate emails during work hours and used the district's technology and network to negotiate for paid services of a sexual nature.

Bound Brook also alleged that Ciripompa had asked female staff members out on dates on two occasions in front of students, thereby making the staff members very uncomfortable. He also repeatedly commented about the physical appearance and dress of female staff members. Ciripompa also sent flowers to a female staff member, using students to deliver the flowers, along with messages that the staff member found to be inappropriate.

In his Decision (which is incorporated herein by reference), the Arbitrator noted that since Ciripompa did not testify at the hearing the evidence and testimony offered by Bound Brook was uncontroverted. *In the Matter of the Tenure Hearing of Glenn Ciripompa*, slip op. at 7. He therefore determined that the issue was whether Ciripompa's proven conduct was conduct unbecoming a teacher and, if so, did it warrant dismissal? *Ibid.* After reviewing the record, the Arbitrator concluded that there was "no real dispute that Respondent's use of the School District computer and iPad and the District's computer network to send and receive emails of a sexual nature, including naked photos, is inappropriate conduct by a teaching professional and constitutes conduct unbecoming." *Ibid.*

Similarly, the Arbitrator also found that Ciripompa's interactions with several female staff members were inappropriate and violated district policies on Staff Conduct and Sexual Harassment. *Id.* at 9-10. Ciripompa's conduct in coming up behind one female staff member and whispering comments about her physical appearance and dress, sending students to give her flowers and suggesting a play date for their children because he had sent his wife away for the day were found to be inappropriate. *Id.* at 10. The Arbitrator also found Ciripompa acted inappropriately when he asked a teacher on a date in front of students. *Ibid.* Additionally, his conduct in making comments about other teachers' attire, sometimes in front of students, was also determined to be inappropriate. *Id.* at 10-11.

Having reviewed the entire record, the Arbitrator found that Ciripompa's behavior was egregious and that Bound Brook had met its burden of proof. *Id.* at 11-13. The Arbitrator therefore sustained the tenure charges against Ciripompa. *Id.* at 13. Ciripompa was dismissed from his tenured employment with Bound Brook as a result of the charges proven in the tenure proceeding and the Arbitrator transmitted the matter to the Board for its review. *Ibid.*

Ciripompa currently holds a Teacher of Mathematics Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing and a Teacher of Mathematics certificate. After reviewing the above information, at its September 15, 2017 meeting, the Board voted to issue an Order to Show Cause to Ciripompa as to why

his certificates should not be revoked.¹ The Order was predicated on the charges of unbecoming conduct that had been proven in the tenure hearing.

The Board sent Ciripompa the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on September 22, 2017. The Order provided that Ciripompa's Answer was due within 30 days. Ciripompa filed his Answer on October 19, 2017.

In that Answer, Ciripompa admitted that Bound Brook had brought tenure charges against him but denied the district's allegations that he had engaged in unbecoming conduct. (Answer, ¶¶ 2, 4, 5). He also noted that the Arbitrator's decision spoke for itself but denied the findings in the decision. (Answer, ¶¶ 6-8). Ciripompa also disagreed with the Arbitrator's finding that the tenure charges were proven and the penalty imposed against him. (Answer, ¶ 9). Ciripompa therefore requested that the Board transfer the matter to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for hearing.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(e)*, on February 2, 2018, the Board sent Ciripompa a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that there appeared to be no material facts in dispute. Thus, Ciripompa was offered an opportunity to submit written arguments on the issue of whether the conduct addressed in the Order to Show Cause provided just cause to take action against his certificates as well as arguments with regard to the appropriate sanction in the event that the Board determined 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 Ciripompa's offense warranted action against his certificates. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Ciripompa was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. Ciripompa filed a written response on March 1, 2018. Ciripompa also asked to appear before the Board.

¹ The Board had issued an Order to Show Cause to Ciripompa on January 23, 2015, based upon an earlier tenure proceeding in which the Arbitrator ordered that Ciripompa be suspended from his position for 120 days without pay. After multiple appeals, the New Jersey Supreme Court remanded the tenure matter to a new Arbitrator in February 2017. The Board vacated its original Order to Show Cause and issued the instant one based on the new tenure decision.

In his Hearing Response, Ciripompa argued that his conduct did not warrant the suspension or revocation of his certificates and cited prior case law where less severe penalties had been imposed. (Hearing Response, pp. 3-10). He claimed that the district did not show that his computer activities were illegal in any way or that they took place when he was supposed to be interacting with students. (Hearing Response, p. 2). Ciripompa also noted that the Arbitrator did not find that he had engaged in inappropriate behavior with other staff members after being told that it was unwelcome or that he did so despite being directed to stop. (Hearing Response, pp. 2-3). Ciripompa also argued that there was no evidence that he attempted to discuss sex with any colleague, propositioned any colleague for sex or made inappropriate comments about any co-worker's body. (Hearing Response, p. 3). Accordingly, Ciripompa argued that revocation, or even a lengthy suspension "would be a disproportionate and excessive penalty" and requested that the Board take no action against his certificates. (Hearing Response, p. 11).

In testimony before the Board, Ciripompa's attorney, Edward Cridge, stated that Ciripompa exchanged emails with consenting adults in the privacy of his own home. He added that Ciripompa's mistake in this regard was to use the district's computer and iPad. Cridge added that Ciripompa understood that using the district's equipment was unacceptable and inappropriate but added that the penalty should be based on his misuse of equipment and not on the content of his exchanges and that misuse did not justify revocation or even a lengthy suspension of his certificates. He added that there was no evidence that Ciripompa did this during school time with the exception of four emails that were sent during lunch or his prep time. Cridge also noted that although Ciripompa engaged in inappropriate exchanges with some co-workers, he did not grope, kiss or proposition anyone. Instead, according to Cridge, Ciripompa asked colleagues to socialize, sent flowers to one and said "you look nice." Cridge stated that Ciripompa's behavior was not the kind of conduct that should result in revocation and asked the Board to look carefully at his conduct before imposing a measured and proportionate penalty.

In his comments before the Board, Ciripompa apologized to his district and co-workers for his behavior. He added that he started teaching in 1995 and that he would like to continue to be a successful teacher and coach. He noted that he had been subject to ridicule, embarrassment and the incident had cost

him his job and his family. Ciripompa stated that he had developed a self-awareness and better understanding of what being a teacher meant and added that he knows what a privilege it is to be a teacher. He asked the Board to allow him to resume the career he loves.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter, therefore, is whether Ciripompa's conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder. At its meeting of June 29, 2018, the Board considered the allegations in the Order to Show Cause as well as Ciripompa's Answer, Hearing Response and testimony. The Board determined that it was constrained by collateral estoppel to accept the facts as found in the tenure hearing and therefore no material facts related to Ciripompa's offense were in dispute. *See In the Matter of the Certificates of Richard Barnes-Bey*, Dkt. No. 1314-194 (Bd. Of Examiners September 17, 2015) (Collateral estoppel applies to facts established in a prior tenure hearing for Board revocation proceedings). 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 Ciripompa's conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause and proven in the tenure hearing, represents just cause to act against his certificates pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.5*. 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*. In this case the record established that Ciripompa used district-issued equipment and its network to send and receive a voluminous number of sexually explicit emails and photos. While neither the district nor the Board has ever alleged that these activities were illegal, they were, beyond a doubt, inappropriate. Moreover, Ciripompa's proven conduct vis-à-vis other staff members, some of which occurred in front of or involved students, was unfitting of a role model. Given the extensive and repetitive nature of Ciripompa's conduct, the Board therefore is convinced that the appropriate response in this matter is the revocation of his certificates.

Accordingly, on June 29, 2018, the Board voted to revoke Glenn Ciripompa's Teacher of Mathematics Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing and his Teacher of Mathematics

certificate. On this 21st day of September, 2018 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that Ciripompa's certificates are hereby revoked, effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Ciripompa 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.

Robert R. Higgins, Secretary
State Board of Examiners

RRH/MZ/th

Date of Mailing:
via certified and regular mail

Appeals may be made to the Commissioner of Education pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38.4.