

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
JODI MYERS (LISGAR) : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1920-172

At its meeting of February 28, 2020, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information regarding Jodi Myers (Myers) that it received from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), the Florida Education Practices Commission, and the Pennsylvania Professional Standards and Practices Commission. Myers surrendered her Pennsylvania educator license(s). In Florida, she agreed to a non-renewal of her certificate(s) and a permanent bar from reapplication after she was criminally convicted of Identity Theft, Forgery, and Theft by Unlawful Taking in Pennsylvania in April 2010.

In or around 2005 to 2006 and 2008 to 2009, Myers was employed as a bookkeeper for a medical practice in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. While employed, Myers fraudulently endorsed several checks with her employer's initials for deposit to her personal banking account for her use. On April 10, 2010, Myers pled *nolo contendere* in Pennsylvania to charges of Identity Theft, Forged Unauthorized Act in Writing, and Theft by Unlawful Taking Moveable property.

In New Jersey, Myers currently holds a Teacher of Elementary School in Grades K-8 Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing and Teacher of Handicapped certificate. Upon review of the above information, at its May 14, 2020 meeting, the Board voted to issue Myers an Order to Show Cause as to why her certificates should not be revoked.

The Board sent Myers the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on June 3, 2020. The Order provided that Myers had 30 days to respond. Service of the Order to Show Cause was appropriate in that the green card was signed for upon delivery. Myers did not respond. On August 12, 2020, the Board sent Myers another notice by certified and regular mail providing her an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause. Myers did not file a response to that notice and again, the certified green card was returned with signature.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(e)*, on October 6, 2020, the Board sent Myers a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that the allegations in the Order to Show Cause were deemed to be admitted as a result of her failure to file an Answer. Thus, Myers 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 about the appropriate sanction if the Board found just cause to act against her certificates. It also explained that, upon review of the charges against her and the legal arguments tendered in her defense, the Board would determine if Myers's offense warranted action against her certificates. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Myers was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. Myers did not file a response. The regular mail was not returned, and the certified mail was signed as received.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Myers's conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Since Myers failed to respond to the Order to Show Cause, the allegations therein are deemed admitted. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(c)*. Consequently, at its meeting of January 22, 2021, the Board considered the allegations in the Order to Show Cause, the information received from NASDTEC, Pennsylvania, and Florida. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Myers's offense were in dispute. Thus, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(h)*. After reviewing the allegations, the Board found that Myers engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether Myers's conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provides just cause to act against her certificates pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.4*. 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*. "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. 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). Myers’s conviction for Identity Theft, Forgery, and Theft by Unlawful Taking, the surrender of her Pennsylvania educator license, and the non-renewal of Florida licenses clearly demonstrate underlying conduct that is unacceptable for a role model. The Board therefore concludes that the appropriate response to her breach is the revocation of her New Jersey certificate.

Accordingly, on January 22, 2021, the Board voted to revoke Jodi Myers’ (Lisgar) Teacher of Elementary School in Grades K-8 Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing and Teacher of the Handicapped. On this 26th day of February 2021 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Myers’ certificates be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Myers return her 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.

Rani Singh, Secretary
State Board of Examiners

RS/KAG/rg

Date of mailing:
Via 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.