

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS  
REESE LACHNER : ORDER OF REVOCATION  
\_\_\_\_\_ : DOCKET NO: 2223-143

At its meeting of January 26, 2023, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) and the Colorado Department of Education (Colorado) regarding Reese Lachner. Lachner currently holds a Teacher of Mathematics Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing and a standard Teacher of Mathematics certificate.

On or about May 10, 2022, Colorado denied Lachner's application for a renewal of his Initial Teacher License because he failed to disclose and concealed to a new employer a previous incident involving a student's safety. Specifically, on or about April 6, 2020, Lachner allegedly failed to disclose to Jefferson County School District, that he resigned from the Denver Public Schools, on or about September 5, 2019, to avoid termination due to an incident where he caused harm to a student. It is alleged that while he was employed with Denver Public Schools, Lachner kicked a student's legs out from under the student, while the student was leaning against a wall, causing the student to fall and hit his head against the wall. Although Lachner had originally requested to refute the denial by Colorado of his renewal certificate, the Colorado administrative court dismissed the appeal at Lachner's request.

Upon review of the above information, the Board voted, at its meeting of March 3, 2023, to issue Lachner an Order to Show Cause as to why his certificates should not be revoked. The Board sent Lachner the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on August 25, 2023. The Order provided that Lachner had 30 days to respond pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B- 4.6(b)*. The certified mail copy was signed and returned and the regular mail was not returned. On September

18, 2023, Lachner filed an Answer, wherein he admitted to all of the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and stated that he had no intentions or desire to return to teaching.

Thereafter, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(c), on June 18, 2024, the Board sent Lachner a hearing notice by regular and certified mail. The notice explained that there appeared to be no material facts in dispute. Thus, Lachner 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 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 his offense warranted action against his certificates. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Lachner was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail receipt was “Unclaimed” and the regular mail copy was not returned. Lachner did not file a response, nor did he notify the Board that he wished to appear for a hearing.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Lachner’s actions here constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Because Lachner admitted the allegations against him, at its meeting of September 19, 2024, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and the information received from NASDTEC and Colorado. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Lachner’s offense were in dispute because he admitted that he had engaged in the alleged conduct. Thus, since no material facts related to Lachner’s conduct are in dispute, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(h)*. The Board finds that Lachner engaged in conduct unbecoming of an educator. Failing to disclose and concealing a previous resignation

following educator misconduct is clearly unbecoming conduct and provides the basis for the Board's finding.

The Board must now determine whether Lachner's conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, represents just cause to act against his certificates pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.4. A "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 legally correct" may provide the basis for a finding of unbecoming conduct. *Bound Brook Bd. of Educ. v. Ciripompa*, 228 N.J. 4, 14 (2017) (quoting *Karins v. City of Atlantic City*, 152 N.J. 532, 555 (1998)). The "elastic" concept of "conduct unbecoming" includes "conduct which adversely affects the morale or efficiency" of the public entity or "which has a tendency to destroy public respect for . . . [public] employees and confidence in the operation of [public] services." *In re Emmons*, 63 N.J. Super. 136, 140 (App. Div. 1960); accord *Bound Brook Bd. of Educ.*, 228 N.J. at 13. 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).

In this instance, the Board finds that Lachner's conduct in failing to disclose and concealing a previous resignation following educator misconduct provides just cause to take action against his certificates. The record established that Lachner resigned from Denver Public Schools after he kicked a student's legs out from under him while the student was leaning against a wall, resulting in the student hitting his head against the wall. Thereafter, Lachner applied for an educator position at the Jefferson County School District and did not disclose the conduct at Denver Public Schools when specifically asked to disclose prior termination or resignation. Failure to answer employment questions truthfully and failing to report previous misconduct with a student is not behavior of a role model.

As to the appropriate penalty to be applied, 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. In this instance, the Board concludes that the appropriate response to Lachner’s breach in conduct of an educator is revocation of his certificates.

Accordingly, on September 19, 2024, the Board voted to revoke Reese Lachner’s Teacher of Mathematic Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing and standard Teacher of Mathematics certificate. On this 1<sup>st</sup> day of November 2024, the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision, and it is therefore ORDERED that Lachner’s certificates be REVOKED, effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Lachner return his certificates, if paper certificates were 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.




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Rani Singh, 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*.