

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
KELLI L. BOND : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1516-104

At its meeting of September 17, 2015, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office had forwarded regarding Kelli L. Bond. On April 12, 2013, Bond was accepted into a Pretrial Intervention program (PTI) for 24 months after being charged with Credit Card Theft, Fraudulent Use of a Credit Card, Attempted Fraudulent Use of a Credit Card and Theft By Unlawful Taking. According to the Criminal Complaint, Bond had taken and used credit cards and stolen cash from fellow employees at the Alexander Batcho Intermediate School in Manville. Bond currently holds a Teacher of English Certificate of Eligibility With Advanced Standing, issued in June 2009 and a Teacher of English certificate, issued in June 2011. Upon review of the above information, at its October 30, 2015 meeting, the Board voted to issue Bond an Order to Show Cause as to why her certificates should not be revoked.

The Board sent Bond the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on November 4, 2015. The Order provided that Bond had 30 days to respond. The certified mail copy was returned as "Unclaimed" and the regular mail copy was not returned. Bond did not file a response.

Thereafter, on December 9, 2015, the Board sent Bond another notice by certified and regular mail providing her an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause. The certified mail receipt was signed and returned and the regular copy was not returned. Bond did not respond.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(e)*, on January 11, 2016, the Board sent Bond 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, Bond was offered an opportunity to submit written arguments on the issue of whether the conduct as set forth in the Order to Show Cause provided just cause to take action against her certificates, as well as arguments with regard to the appropriate sanction in the event that the Board found just cause to take action against her

certificates. Bond was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail copy was returned as “Unclaimed” and the regular mail copy was not returned. Once again, Bond did not respond.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Bond’s conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Since Bond 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 April 14, 2016, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and the information received from the Somerset County Prosecutor’s Office. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Bond’s offense were in dispute since she never denied that she engaged in the conduct alleged and therefore determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.7(h)*. After reviewing the allegations, the Board found that Bond had engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether Bond’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). Bond’s actions in taking and using credit cards and stealing cash from fellow employees is conduct that indicates a serious lapse in judgment. Bond has demonstrated that she is ill fit to be a role model for students and the Board therefore concludes that the appropriate response to her breach is the revocation of her teaching certificates.

Accordingly, on April 14, 2016, the Board voted to revoke Kelli L. Bond's Teacher of English Certificate of Eligibility With Advanced Standing and Teacher of English certificate. On this 20th day of May 2016 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Bond's certificates be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Bond 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.

Robert R. Higgins, Secretary
State Board of Examiners

RRH/MZ/th

Date of Mailing:

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