

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATE OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
ANDREW R. PRON : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 1617-200

At its meeting of March 3, 2017, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) and the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PCPSPC) had forwarded regarding Andrew R. Pron. On June 9, 2016, Pron surrendered his Pennsylvania teaching licenses following charges of Theft by Unlawful Taking and Receiving Stolen Property. Pron allegedly bought three stolen laptop computers, kept one and sold the other two. On June 28, 2016, Pron was admitted into Pennsylvania's Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition (ARD) program.

Pron currently holds a Teacher of Industrial Arts Certificate of Eligibility With Advanced Standing, issued in May 2003. Upon review of the above information, at its April 6, 2017 meeting, the Board voted to issue Pron an Order to Show Cause as to why his certificate should not be revoked.

The Board sent Pron the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on April 10, 2017. The Order provided that Pron had 30 days to respond. The certified mail copy was returned as "Unclaimed" and the regular mail copy was not returned. Pron did not file a response.

Thereafter, on May 24, 2017, the Board sent Pron another notice by certified and regular mail providing him an additional 15 days to respond to the Order to Show Cause. The certified mail copy was returned as "Unclaimed" and the regular copy was not returned. Pron did not respond.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-4.6(e)*, on June 13, 2017, the Board sent Pron 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 his failure to file an Answer. Thus, Pron 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 certificate. 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 certificate. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Pron was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail receipt was signed and returned and the regular mail copy was not returned. Once again, Pron did not respond.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Pron's conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Since Pron 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 September 15, 2017, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and the information received from NASDTEC and the PCPSPC. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Pron's offense were in dispute since he never denied that he engaged in the conduct alleged. 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 Pron had engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether Pron's conduct, as set forth in the Order to Show Cause, provides just cause to act against his certificate 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). Pron's actions in purchasing stolen property and then reselling some it evinces conduct that is inexcusable for a role model. The Board therefore concludes that the appropriate response to his breach is the revocation of his teaching certificate.

Accordingly, on September 15, 2017, the Board voted to revoke Andrew R. Pron's Teacher of Industrial Arts Certificate of Eligibility With Advanced Standing, effective immediately. On this 1st day of November 2017 the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Pron's certificate be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Pron return his certificate 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

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.