

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATE OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
VALORIE B. SANDERS : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 2021-151

At its meeting of April 1, 2021, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) and the Pennsylvania Professional Standards and Practices Commission (Pennsylvania) forwarded regarding Valorie B. Sanders. On February 26, 2018, Sanders pled guilty to, and was convicted of, charges of Access Device Fraud, Criminal Conspiracy to Commit Access Device Fraud, Theft by Failure to Make Required Disposition of Funds Received, and Unauthorized Use Motor/Other Vehicle in the Court of Common Pleas of Chester County, Pennsylvania.

On October 16, 2020, the Pennsylvania Commission revoked her educator certificate based on the undisputed convictions for Access Device Fraud, and Theft by Failure to Make Required Disposition of Funds Received.

In New Jersey, Sanders currently holds a Teacher of Preschool-Grade 3 Certificate of Eligibility. Upon review of the above information, at its May 13, 2021 meeting, the Board voted to issue Sanders an Order to Show Cause as to why her certificates should not be revoked.

The Board sent Sanders the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail on May 20, 2021. The Order provided that Sanders had 30 days to respond. The certified mail copy was marked “unclaimed”, and the regular mail copy was returned. The Board attempted to serve the document at another address to ensure service since the regular mail was returned, but that address came back as undeliverable. Sanders did not file a response. On November 17, 2021, the Board sent another notice of the Order via certified and regular mail. Sanders again did not respond. The certified mail copy was signed as being received by Sanders directly and the regular mail copy was not returned. Service was deemed proper given that the certified mail copy was signed by Sanders and the regular mail copy was not returned.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(e), on December 15, 2021, the Board sent Sanders 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, Sanders 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 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 Sanders's offense warranted action against her certificates. Thereupon, the Board would also determine the appropriate sanction, if any. Sanders was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail receipt was marked "unclaimed", and the regular mail copy was not returned. Once again, Sanders did not file a response.

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Sanders's conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Since Sanders 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 March 4, 2022, the Board considered only the allegations in the Order to Show Cause and the information received from NASDTEC and Pennsylvania. The Board concluded that no material facts related to Sanders' offense were in dispute since she never denied that she had 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 Sanders engaged in unbecoming conduct.

The Board must now determine whether Sanders' 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). Sanders’ actions in being convicted of Access Device Fraud, Criminal Conspiracy, and Theft by Failure to Make Disposition of Funds is clearly conduct that is unacceptable for a role model. The Board therefore concludes that the appropriate response to her breach is the revocation of her certificate.

Accordingly, on March 4, 2022, the Board voted to revoke Valorie B. Sanders’ Teacher of Preschool-Grade 3 Certificate of Eligibility. On this 7th day of April 2022, the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision and it is therefore ORDERED that the revocation of Sanders’ certificate be effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Sanders return her 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.

Rani Singh, 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.