

BEFORE THE TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF OREGON

In the Matter of the)	DEFAULT ORDER OF DENIAL OF
Educator License of)	APPLICATION AND REVOCATION
ERIC J. ZITTEL)	OF RIGHT TO APPLY FOR AN
)	OREGON EDUCATOR LICENSE

On May 7, 2025, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (Commission) issued a Notice of Denial of Reinstatement and Opportunity for Hearing to Eric J. Zittel (Zittel) in which the Commission charged him with Gross Neglect of Duty. The Notice was sent via U.S. First-Class Mail and U.S. Certified Mail Receipt 9589 0710 5270 2307 8986 39 to the address on file with the Commission. The Notice designated the Commission file as the record for purposes of proving a prima facie case. The Notice sent Certified Mail was returned to the Commission on June 9, 2025. The regular First-Class mail was not returned to the Commission, and assumed delivered. The Notice of Opportunity of Hearing, dated May 7, 2025, and signed by Melissa Goff, Interim Executive Director, stated:

“IF A REQUEST FOR HEARING IS NOT RECEIVED WITHIN THIS 60-DAY PERIOD, YOUR RIGHT TO A HEARING SHALL BE CONSIDERED WAIVED UNLESS YOUR FAILURE TO REQUEST A HEARING WAS BEYOND YOUR REASONABLE CONTROL. IF YOU DO NOT REQUEST A HEARING, WITHDRAW YOUR REQUEST FOR HEARING, OR IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR AT A HEARING, OR NOTIFY THE COMMISSION THAT YOU WILL NOT APPEAR AT HEARING, THE COMMISSION WILL ADOPT AN ORDER OF DEFAULT WHICH MAY INCLUDE THE REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF YOUR LICENSE OR OTHER DISCIPLINE.”

Zittel did not request a hearing. The Commission, therefore, finds Zittel to be in default and enters the following findings of fact, conclusions of law, and final order, based on the files and records of the Commission concerning this matter.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On December 31, 2024, Zittel applied to the Commission for reinstatement of his Oregon educator license. Zittel’s request for reinstatement came before the Commission at the April 2025, meeting. The history of Zittel’s past case and facts supported that supported the Commission’s actions, include the following:

- a) The Commission has licensed Zittel since July 17, 2017. Zittel held a Preliminary Teaching License, with an endorsement in Music (PK-12), valid from October 14, 2020, through February 8, 2024. During all relevant times, Zittel was employed by the Lebanon Community School District (LCSD).
- b) On November 29, 2022, Oregon's Department of Human Services reported to the Commission, an allegation that Zittel was in an inappropriate relationship with a student. On December 2, 2022, the Lebanon Community School District reported a similar allegation to the Commission. The Commission opened a preliminary investigation. Investigation found the relationship between Zittel and the female student began with conversations related to school activities and over time became more personal and sexual in nature. During a Commission interview, Zittel admitted to becoming emotionally involved with the student and if the student was interested, they could pursue things after she graduated.
- c) On June 21, 2023, Zittel's investigation came before the Commission. The Commission recommended revoking Zittel's Oregon educator license. On August 23, 2023, a Notice of Opportunity for Hearing was sent to Zittel, and he acknowledged receipt. Zittel did not request a hearing.
- d) On September 27, 2023, the Commission adopted a default order revoking Zittel's Oregon educator license. The default order established that Zittel's conduct constituted gross neglect of duty in violation of ORS 342.175(1)(b); OAR 584-020-0040(4)(n) as it incorporates OAR 584-020-0010(5) (*Use professional judgment*); OAR 584-020-0040(4)(o) as it incorporates, OAR 584-020-0035(1)(c)(A) (*Not demonstrating or expressing professionally inappropriate interest in a student's personal life*), OAR 584-020-0035(1)(c)(D) (*Honoring appropriate adult boundaries with students in conduct and conversations at all times*); and OAR 584-020-0040(4)(f) (*Any sexual conduct with a student*). Additionally, the conduct constitutes gross unfitness in violation of ORS 342.175(1)(c); OAR 584-020-0040(3)(c) and (d) as defined by OAR 584-020-0040 (5) (*Gross unfitness is any conduct which renders an educator unqualified to perform his or her professional responsibilities*).

- e) On April 4, 2025, the Commission considered Zittel's application, investigative report, and his support documents for reinstatement of his licensure. The Commission denied Zittel's application for reinstatement because the information he submitted, along with his reinstatement documents, did not establish that Zittel possessed good moral character, trustworthiness, or physical and mental health to hold an educator's license.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Eric, J. Zittel's conduct as described above is grounds for denial of his application under ORS 342.143(2). The Commission denies Zittel's reinstatement application for the following reasons:

- a) Zittel failed to provide evidence to ensure that similar conduct would not reoccur;
- b) Zittel provided letters from medical providers indicating his participation in therapy and completion of a program. The letters were insufficient because they lacked information the providers had independent background information independent of Zittel's statements, the mental health condition(s) the treatment was improving, if it was successful, and if there was or was not a need for continuing treatment;
- c) The nature of the conduct that led to Zittel's revocation is the basis to deny reinstatement because the conduct is inconsistent with the character and traits the Commission expects of licensed educators;
- d) Zittel's reinstatement application failed to establish to the Commission that he should be reinstated to hold an educator license

The Commission's authority to impose discipline in this matter is based upon ORS 342.175.

FINAL ORDER

The Commission hereby denies Eric J. Zittel's application for reinstatement of his Oregon Educator license. Furthermore, the Commission revokes Zittel's right to apply for an Oregon Educator license.

IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 29 day of July, 2025.

TEACHER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachel Alpert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

By: _____
Rachel Alpert, Executive Director

NOTICE OF APPEAL OR RIGHTS

YOU ARE ENTITLED TO JUDICIAL REVIEW OF THIS ORDER. JUDICIAL REVIEW MAY BE OBTAINED BY FILING A PETITION FOR REVIEW WITHIN 60 DAYS FROM THE SERVICE OF THIS ORDER. JUDICIAL REVIEW IS PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF ORS 183.482 TO THE OREGON COURT OF APPEALS.