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**NEW SCHOOL TRUSTEES CALL FOR STATE INVESTIGATION
OF APPARENT “SUNSHINE LAW” VIOLATION IN HACKENSACK**

Hackensack Board of Education Members Frances Cogelja and Carlos Velez are calling for a state investigation of a clear violation of the Open Public Meetings Act also known as the state “Sunshine Law.”

The two newly elected board members are charging that seven school board members met together secretly on Sunday evening, April 22, for the purpose of discussing official business pertaining to the re-organization meeting – specifically to round up votes to make Lara Rodriguez the new Board President.

On April 27, Cogelja and Velez sent certified letters to the Acting Bergen County Prosecutor and three other state education officials asking for a formal investigation of the matter.

The illegal meeting was called by Lynne Hurwitz, the Hackensack Democratic Party Chairperson. Jason Nunnermacker (an attorney who was then Board President) and School Board Attorney Richard Salkin also attended along with Hurwitz and six other board members.

“It is absolutely shocking that this illegal meeting was attended by Salkin and Nunnermacker -- two attorneys who clearly know the law – and Lara Rodriguez who is also very familiar with the law,” said Frances Cogelja. “This was a deliberate violation of the Open Public Meetings Act. The only way we can stop the Board Majority from meeting in secret again is to bring this matter to the attention of the proper authorities.”

The letters sent by Cogelja and Velez also ask the state to investigate former School Attorney Richard Salkin for apparently overbilling the school district by approximately \$13,000 during the 2016/17 school year, based on records obtained from the Hackensack School Board Secretary's Office in response to formal OPRA (Open Public Records Act) requests. The records, two purchase orders and twelve cancelled checks, show that Salkin was authorized to bill \$118,000 but actually billed more than \$131,000.

The letters were sent to Dr. Lamont Repollet, Commissioner, New Jersey State Department of Education, Dennis Calo, Acting Bergen County Prosecutor, Joseph Zarra, Interim Executive Bergen County Superintendent of Schools and Robert Cicchino, Director, Office of Fiscal Accountability & Compliance (NJ). A copy of the letter is attached.

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