

**MEMORANDUM RE: OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT VIOLATION**

**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**

**Robert Cicchino, Director, Office of Fiscal Accountability & Compliance**

**FROM: Frances Cogelja & Carlos Velez, Members, Hackensack Board of Education**

**DATE: April 26, 2018**

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We are writing to call your attention and seek your assistance regarding an obvious violation of the Open Public Meetings Act that took place this past Sunday, April 22, when six current members of the Hackensack Board of Education met with School Board Attorney Richard Salkin for the sole purpose of discussing official school business regarding a re-organization meeting scheduled for last night. Jason Nunnermacker, who is an attorney who was then the Board President, also attended this meeting.

Our information is that the meeting was called by and also attended by Lynn Hurwitz, who is the local Democratic Party Chairperson.

The purpose of the meeting was to come together and agree on choosing a new President and Vice-President. We have reason to believe that the resignation and temporary replacement of Richard Salkin was also discussed. The board members present (six of the current nine) agreed to vote for Lara Rodriguez to become the next Board President.

We the undersigned won election to the Board of Education in last week's vote. Our team member Lance Powell also was elected to the Board but is out of state and was unable to attend the Monday April 23<sup>rd</sup> re-organization meeting, which was scheduled by the Board Secretary/Business Administrator Adrian Pollio without even consulting us despite the fact that we were being sworn in as new board members.

This is rather typical of the lack of cooperation we have endured by Board Secretary/Business Administrator. Previously, Ms. Pollio failed to provide a copy of Mr. Salkin's contract with the Board, despite our multiple OPRA requests. We believe Ms.

Pollio had a legal obligation to either provide this public record (i.e. Salkin's contract) or to inform us that no such public document exists. She did neither.

Also at issue is the matter of a possible overbilling by Mr. Salkin during the previous school year. Ms. Pollio provided copies of two Purchase Orders authorizing Mr. Salkin to bill up to \$118,000. She also provided copies of cancelled checks made payable to Mr. Salkin that totaled over \$131,000 during this same billing period. This amount does not include expense reimbursements.

It is also apparent that the Hackensack Board of Education consistently awards contracts without any kind of RFP or competitive process, in violation of state regulations.

We are formally asking for you to investigate this illegal meeting, to compel Ms. Pollio, Board President Lara Rodriguez and the afore-mentioned six members of the Hackensack Board of Education to stop holding any more illegal meetings in the future and to investigate Mr. Salkin's over-billing in the 2016/17 school year.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

FRANCES COGELJA & CARLOS VELEZ

Hackensack Board of Education Members