STATE OF NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Appeal of D.Z. from proposed action of the BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE TUXEDO UNION FREE DISTRICT

AFFIRMATION IN OPPOSITION TO STAY ORDER

DAVID S. SHAW, ESQ., affirms and states as follows:

- I am an attorney duly admitted to the practice of law in the State of New York and serve as legal counsel to the Board of Education of the Tuxedo Union Free School District, the Respondent herein.
- 2. I make this Affirmation in opposition to the Petitioner's request for a stay of the proceedings commenced by the Respondent against the Petitioner on September 24, 2021 pursuant to Education Law §1709(18), that provides the board of education of a union free school district with the authority to remove one of its members based upon proof of official misconduct.
- 3. Through decisional law, the Commissioner has established the requisite standard to be applied in Education Law §1709(18) board member removal cases as follows:

"To constitute grounds for removal pursuant to Education Law §1709(18), the 'official misconduct' must clearly relate to a board member's official duties, either because of the allegedly unauthorized exercise of the member's powers or the intentional failure to exercise those powers to the detriment of the school district (Appeal of Jones-White, 44 Ed Dept Rep 347, Decision No. 15,194; Appeals of Gill and Burnett, 42 id. 89, Decision No. 14,785, judgment granted dismissing petition to review sub nom., Gill v. Mills, et al., Sup Ct., Albany Co.,

Bradley, J., October 6, 2003, n.o.r.; <u>Appeal of Balen</u>, 40 <u>id</u>. 479, Decision No. 14,532; <u>Appeal of Cox</u>, 27 <u>id</u>. 353, Decision No. 11,973)."

- 4. The Commissioner has also opined regarding the requisite due process that must be afforded under Education Law §1709(18)¹ to include a minimum of ten (10) days prior notice of the hearing and a full and fair hearing process to provide the charged individual with the opportunity to refute the charges. *Appeal of Johnson*, 59 Ed. Dept. Rep. ____, Decision No. 17,263 (2017).
- 5. The Petitioner was served with the Charges underlying the hearing at issue on October 1, 2021. (See ¶8 of Affidavit in Support of Petition of Dorothy Ziegelbauer dated October 13, 2021 and Exhibit B thereto).
- 6. The Board of Education appointed a former New York State Education Department attorney, education lawyer and arbitrator to conduct the hearing for the Respondent Board, which commenced on Friday, October 15, 2021. This individual, alone, made the rulings on objections of counsel, admissibility of evidence and oversaw the transcription of the proceedings by a court stenographer (from a company hired by the state to transcribe Education Law §3020-a proceedings, Steno Kath).

¹ §1709 The said board of education of every union fee school district shall have the power, and it shall be its duty: (18) To remove any member from the board for official misconduct. But a written copy of all charges made of such misconduct shall be served upon him at least ten days before the time appointed for a hearing of the same: and he shall be allowed a full and fair opportunity to refute such charges before removal."

- 7. The Petitioner has been represented by counsel of her own choosing at the hearing and has been provided with the right to cross-examine witnesses, introduce exhibits and present witnesses in her defense.
- 8. The notice of hearing served on the Petitioner, that is annexed to her Affidavit in Support of Petition as Exhibit B (Exhibit A hereto) gives notice that consideration of Board Policy 1301 is also at issue, in addition to the standards for adjudicating a case under Education Law §1709(18).
- 9. That policy states in relevant part: "Confidential Information: An officer or employee shall not disclose confidential information acquired by him/her in the course of his/her official duties or to use such information to further his/her personal interest."
- 10. The first of the two charges against the Petition states:

CHARGE I – OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT

In that on or about August 9, 2021, Dorothy Ziegelbauer revealed, without authorization, by email, confidential information about the District's negotiations position in bargaining with the Tuxedo Teachers' Association ("TTA"), that she learned of in a duly convened Board of Education executive session held on July 28, 2021. Such revelation was made to the TTA's New York State United Teachers bargaining representative Carienn Broderick.

11. Evidence is already in the record of the Education Law §1709(18) hearing, as of October 15, 2021, that the Petitioner revealed executive session content from a duly convened executive session held on July 28, 2021 to the chief negotiator for the teacher's union, Tuxedo Teachers' Association, regarding the District's strategy for negotiating the sole issue holding up a settlement in those negotiations. (See

- Exhibits D-6 and R-F to the Petition that are also annexed hereto as Exhibits B and C).
- 12. Charge I, in its nature, is like the charges in several previous Commissioner's Decisions that have given rise to removal from a board of education either pursuant to Education Law §306 or §1709(18); to wit, disclosing executive session content critical to labor negotiations with the District's teachers' bargaining unit. (See *Appeal of Francis E. Hoeffer*, 45 Ed. Dept. Rep. 66, Decision No. 15,263 [2005], *Application of Nett & Raby*, 45 Ed. Dept. Rep. 259 [2005] and *Application of Board of Education of the City of Buffalo [Paladino]*, 57 Ed. Dept. rep. ____, Decision No. 17,474 [2017])
- 13. A report from an I.T. Company and testimony of the Superintendent of Schools refute the Petitioner's defense that the disclosure was a simple mistake. (See Exhibit D- 7, annexed hereto as Exhibit D). The Superintendent testified at the hearing that he was not an included person in the email addressed to boe@tuxedoufsd.org.
- 14. By Petitioner's stay application of the Respondent's hearing, she seeks to shift the fact-finding process from the local school district level to the Commissioner of Education, in derogation of the statutory scheme of the Education Law, that would functionally negate Education Law §1709(18).

- 15. With regard to Petitioner's objection to Board President Daniel Castricone serving as a decision maker (particularly with respect to Charge II)² the Petitioner makes allegations of personal *animus* and retribution against her by Mr. Castricone, focused on events that occurred in an executive session of the Board of Education at a meeting held on July 8, 2021. (See Affidavit of Petitioner in Support of Petition at ¶32).
- 16. The Petitioner also relies heavily upon the report issued to the Respondent Board of Education by Margaret Muenkel, that focused in large part on matters stated and discussed in executive session on July 8, 2021 by the Board Members, including Mr. Castricone, yet failed to call for its production for review by the Commissioner regarding her allegations against Mr. Castricone and its relevance to the import of the second charge against her.
- 17. As noted in the Affidavit of Gary Heavner in Opposition to Stay Order, dated October 16, 2021, the Petitioner has not presented a full and fair factual account to the Commissioner regarding her demand that Board President Castricone be recused from participating with the other Board members in the Education Law §1709(18) proceedings against the Petitioner.

² CHARGE II - OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT

In that on or about September 15, 2021, Dorothy Ziegelbauer was issued a confidential report prepared by Board appointed investigator, Margaret Muenkel, regarding an alleged breach of confidential personally identifiable student information that was reviewed in executive session and to be collected back from each member of the Board to protect the privacy rights of those individuals identified in the Report. Ms. Ziegelbauer refused to return the report at the meeting and refuses to return the report to date.

- 18. Mr. Castricone's comments in executive session on July 8, 2021 were in response to concerns raised to him by whistle blowers. The Board of Education engaged an independent consultant, Margaret Muenkel, to issue a report regarding allegations of breaches of student confidential information. An *in camera review* of that report would present the full and fair factual account that is missing from the pleadings in the Petition and the Petitioner's supporting affidavit, including the information about the July 8, 2021 executive session.
- 19. The second charge against the Petition addresses her wrongful retention of the Muenkel Report, which has not been adopted by Respondent as a final agency determination within the meaning of the New York State Freedom of Information Law (Public Officers Law §84 et. seq.)
- 20. The protocol agreed to by all of Respondent's Board Members, as testified to at the hearing held on October 15, 2021 by Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey White, was to read and return the Report, not to allow any Board Member to leave the meeting with a copy. The Board's purpose in reviewing the report was to understand whether or not there had been a breach of confidential student information and, if so, how to address it. That purpose was fulfilled by the reading in executive session on September 15, 2021.
- 21. The Petitioner's presentation of prior precedent cases inaccurately cites only to cases decided under the standards applicable to board member removal proceedings under Education Law §306 and not the aforementioned standard for board member removal cases under Education Law §1709(18).

22. For the reasons stated above, it is respectfully requested that the Commissioner not issue a stay of the Board's proceedings in this matter.

Dated: Poughkeepsie, New York

October 18, 2021

DAVID S. SHAW, ESQ.



TUXEDO UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT



Ms. Dorothy Ziegelbauer 39 Maple Brook Rd. Tuxedo, New York 10987

RE: SECTION 1709(18) EDUCATION LAW CHARGES

Board of Education Member Dorothy Ziegelbauer (District Officer No. 092421)

Dear Ms. Ziegelbauer:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a hearing will be held by the Board of Education on October 15, 2021 at 9:00 am at the District's Administrative Offices located at 1 Tornado Drive, Tuxedo New York, pursuant to Tuxedo Union Free School District Policy 1301 and Education Law Section 1709(18), for the adjudication of charges of Official Misconduct regarding your actions as a Board Member, that were voted upon by the Board of Education at a meeting held on September 24, 2021. The hearing will before the Board and conducted by Carol Hoffman, Esq. A transcript of the proceedings will be prepared and you will be furnished with a copy of the same at District expense. You may be represented at the hearing by legal counsel or other representative of your choice and you shall have the right to present witnesses and cross-examine witnesses called by the District.

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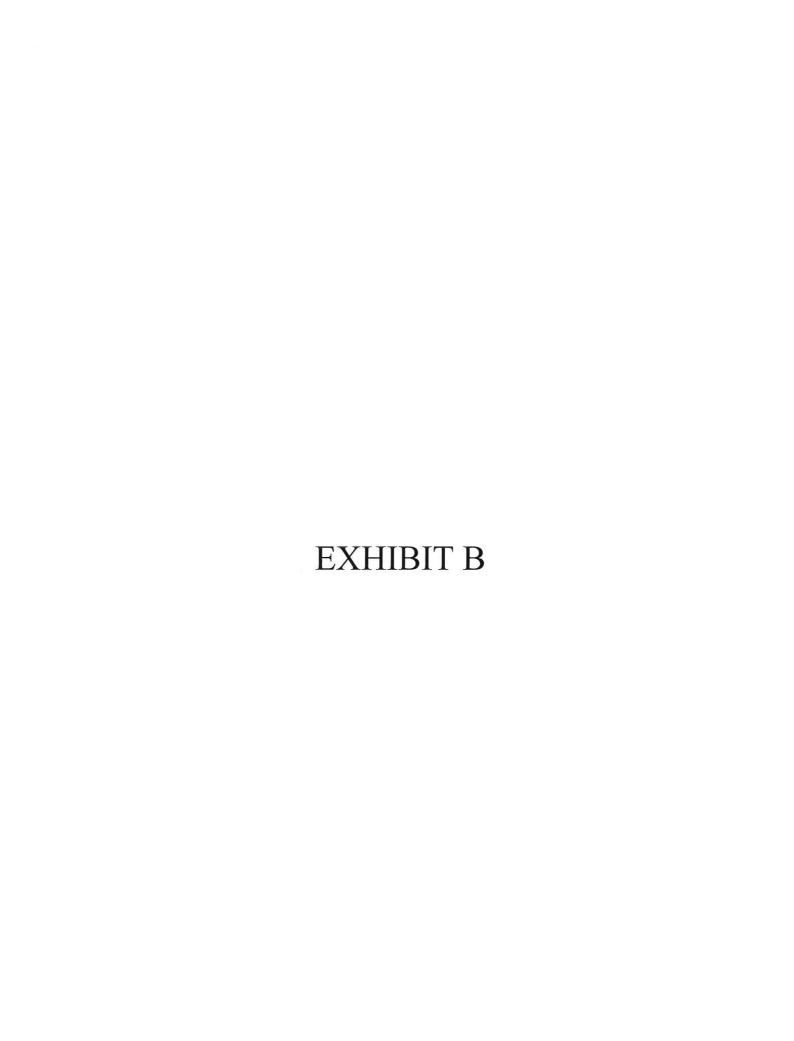
Sincerely

Ms. Kristine DiFrancesco,

District Clerk

cc: Board of Education Members

Carol Hoffman, Esq.



Cairenn Broderick

From: Cairenn Broderick

Sent: Monday, August 9, 2021 6:12 PM

To: Jeffrey White; David Shaw Subject: FW: TTA-TUFSD meeting

Not sure if you received this email

----Original Message-----

From: Dorothy Ziegelbauer <dziegelbauer@tuxedoufsd.org>

Sent: Monday, August 9, 2021 2:44 PM

To: Cairenn Broderick < Cairenn. Broderick@nysut.org>

Cc: 2021 Board of Education <2021boe@tuxedoufsd.org>; Kristine Difrancesco <kdifrancesco@tuxedoufsd.org>

Subject: Re: TTA-TUFSD meeting

WARNING:

This email originated outside of NYSUT. Please DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender exactly and know the content is safe.

Jeff,

Please correct me if this wrong, but I thought where we left off in the last exec was the following.

The union is unwilling to negotiate on the length of the period. We have an 8 period day as an option via the existing contract, and you were going to hire a consultant to draft an 8 period day schedule.

In the interim, David was going to explore mediation with Carrie.

Has anything changed since the last executive session? Until someone actually schedules out the 8 period day frankly whatever they say can't be proven out, it is just them talking.

Has something changed? Have you hired the consultant we discussed?

Please provide an update.

Thanks!

Dorothy

- > On Aug 9, 2021, at 12:53 PM, Cairenn Broderick <Cairenn.Broderick@nysut.org> wrote:
- > Ladies & Gentlemen,

>

- > As we had discussed previously, the teachers union wanted an
- > opportunity to address the Board and discuss the "9-Period Day" issue
- > to share their perspective and concerns. We had been hoping to do it
- > right away, but it appears that the soonest time that fits with
- > schedules is this Thursday August 12th @ 5:30. Please confirm with me
- > that you can make it

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>
> Thank you
> Jeff
> -----Original Appointment-----
> From: Cairenn Broderick
> < Cairenn. Broderick@nysut.org < mailto: Cairenn. Broderick@nysut.org >>
> Sent: Monday, August 9, 2021 12:05 PM
> To: Cairenn Broderick; Jeffrey White; David Shaw; Kristine
> Difrancesco; Marco Margotta; Christine Oliva; Rene Blume-Meagher;
> Elizabeth Mcgowan
> Subject: TTA-TUFSD meeting
> When: Thursday, August 12, 2021 5:30 PM-7:00 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada).
> Where:
> https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fnysu
> t.zoom.us%2Fj%2F9062244976&data=04%7C01%7CCairenn.Broderick%40nysu
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> ta=%2FZs7U16vxy4jc2kiIEnr7d15zQa0BAWPxtsjwxnmYeQ%3D&reserved=0
>
> Greetings all -
> Below is the link for our meeting on Thursday, August 12th at 5:30. I do not know which Board of Ed members will be
in attendance, so please forward the link to them. There is no passcode, however, there is a waiting room set up.
Please let me know who will be joining us.
> Thanks!
>
> Join Zoom Meeting
> https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fnysu
> t.zoom.us%2Fj%2F9062244976&data=04%7C01%7CCairenn.Broderick%40nysu
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> d249a%7C0%7C0%7C637641314494258732%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4
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> ta=%2FZs7U16vxy4jc2kilEnr7d15zQa0BAWPxtsjwxnmYeQ%3D&reserved=0
>
> Meeting ID: 906 224 4976
> One tap mobile
> +16465588656,,9062244976# US (New York) 13017158592,,9062244976# US
> +(Washington DC)
>
> Dial by your location
     +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
>
>
    +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
    +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
>
>
    +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
    +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
>
    +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
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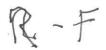
> Meeting ID: 906 224 4976

- > Find your local number:
- > https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fnysu
- > t.zoom.us%2Fu%2FacFLCnvGQo&data=04%7C01%7CCairenn.Broderick%40nysu
- > t.org%7C3a6b95044743429bff1e08d95b65ab47%7C0be15ecdddd64f1caf00865784f
- > d249a%7C0%7C0%7C637641314494258732%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4
- > wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sda
- > ta=ajrPfKfKd%2BxACQYR%2BKKJAnU%2BDxf7QBGQOLdZL0FexLk%3D&reserved=0

>

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From:

Dorothy Ziegelbauer

To:

Daniel Castricone

Cc:

2021 Board of Education; Jeffrey White; dshaw@shawperelson.com; Kristine Difrancesco; Marion Walsh

Subject:

Re: TTA-TUFSD meeting

Date:

Tuesday, August 10, 2021 7:49:46 AM

Attachments:

Outlook-et51xold.png

Dan,

It was 100% not my intention to include Carrie on this email thread. In my defense, I can only tell you that the events over the last 2 months relating to the charges filed against you, David Shaws non-action in that matter literally ignoring multiple verbal and written requests to provide information to the prior board on the status of the charges or the process, your multiple attempts to call illegal meetings to make changes to the board structure and policies, and the current situation involving yet another issue where you blatantly attacked me in executive session and attempted to defame my character and intimidate me, while simultaneously making new board members wonder if the charges against you were warranted have all taken a toll.

I am unable to sleep most nights due to this nonsense, all brought on by your behavior, and found myself in the ridiculous situation of needing to hire an attorney to represent the rights of my family and my daughter. Via our attorney, we made a request for an investigation to determine how you could have possibly learned about a question we asked in a confidential meeting with school staff regarding our daughter's performance in a class in the 2020-2021 school year, which you turned into "me as Board President colluding with Nicole Scariano to change our child's grade". This could not have been further from the truth, but that's what you led people to believe. But in the end, it got you the intended result, the board voted to drop the charges against you without even understanding what the specific charges were or what behaviors you exhibited that led to the charges.

I also asked for copies of the letters that were signed when the charges were dropped to be provided to the current board members and asked how the information and letters would be disseminated to prior board members. No response on that front either.

To date, our family has not received a response from the board or the district via our attorney, or by any other means in regards to our request for an investigation, regardless of the fact that my attorney Marion Walsh has inquired multiple times with David Shaw's office, and I have asked Jeff White directly to provide an update on what the status of the investigation is.

Meanwhile, the school is pushing us to schedule a meeting to discuss pertinent highly confidential information about our daughter., even though no investigation or staff training has taken place. We have no assurance that any confidential information shared with the

district will remain confidential. What a fantastic way to treat someone who has dedicated 5 years to this board and the district. I frankly don't care what your personal motivations are Dan, but the way I have been treated is wrong no matter how you rationalize it.

So I reiterate, it was not my intention to include the union counsel on the email, but unfortunately, the ongoing situation has me under duress, and I made a mistake. So shoot me, I'm human.

The questions I raised in my email below still stand, given that neither you or Jeff has bothered to respond.

I guess that's just par for the course at this point. I should just expect to be ignored going forward, then I won't be surprised when I don't get a response.

Dorothy

From: Daniel Castricone <dcastricone@tuxedoufsd.org>

Sent: Monday, August 9, 2021 7:54 PM

To: Dorothy Ziegelbauer <dziegelbauer@tuxedoufsd.org>

Cc: 2021 Board of Education <2021boe@tuxedoufsd.org>; Jeffrey White <jwhite@tuxedoufsd.org>;

dshaw@shawperelson.com <dshaw@shawperelson.com>

Subject: Re: TTA-TUFSD meeting

Dear Dorothy, I have no idea why you would email your interpretation of our negotiating position and your impressions of the union position, garnered during our executive session, to Carianne Broderick, the NYSUT rep. I predict your characterizations will further divide the school and complicate our negotiations.

David and Jeff, What do we do with this? Please call me this evening if possible. As we discussed during our executive session, it was our desire to hear the union scheduling position with an unbiased and open mind. Please continue to try to schedule a negotiating session where the union can explain their scheduling position, if they are still willing to do so. If you can schedule it for Thursday night, please do and I will invite the board members to participate as planned.

Thank you,



Daniel G. Castricone, Esq.

President, Tuxedo UFSD Board of Education



TUXEDO Union Free School District

Board of Education 1 Tornado Drive Tuxedo, NY 10987 (845) 659-6419 (cell) DCastricone@TuxedoUFSD.org

From: Dorothy Ziegelbauer <dziegelbauer@tuxedoufsd.org>

Sent: Monday, August 9, 2021 2:44 PM

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Cc: 2021 Board of Education <2021boe@tuxedoufsd.org>; Kristine Difrancesco

<kdifrancesco@tuxedoufsd.org>
Subject: Re: TTA-TUFSD meeting

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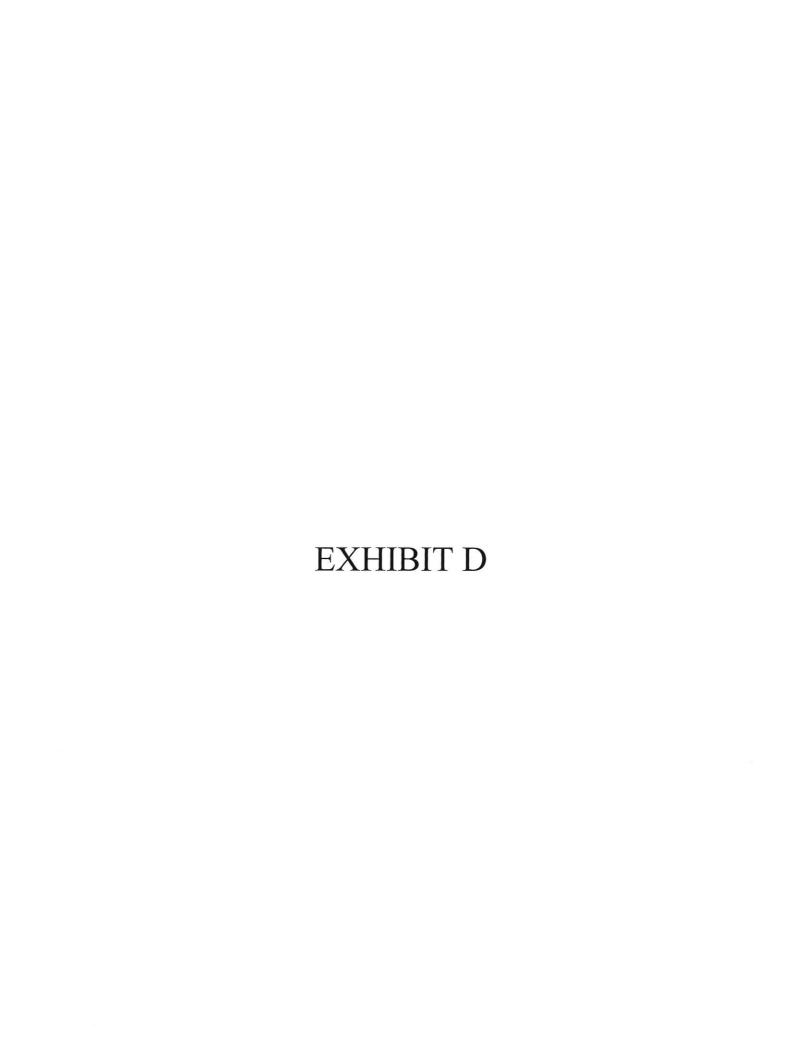
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>
> Thanks!
> Join Zoom Meeting
> https://nysut.zoom.us/j/9062244976
> Meeting ID: 906 224 4976
> One tap mobile
>+16465588656,,9062244976# US (New York)
> +13017158592,,9062244976# US (Washington DC)
> Dial by your location
      +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
      +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
      +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
      +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
      +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
      +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
> Meeting ID: 906 224 4976
> Find your local number: https://nysut.zoom.us/u/acFLCnvGOo
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Corporate Screening & Investigative Group, LLC

Professional. Ethical. Diligent.

Report of Investigation

Client:

Shaw, Perelson et al

Subject:

Tuxedo UFSD

File #: SP-21264

OBJECTIVE and INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY:

The client requested a Forensic Analysis be conducted regarding an email purportedly authored by a school board member.

A comprehensive analysis of the email in question as well as the email headers and metadata revealed the following;

The email sent by Jeff White on August 9, 2021, at 12:53pm "on behalf of" Cairenn Broderick of NYSUT indicates that there is a "Delegation or Federation" between the two emails. Essentially, Cairenn Broderick and NYSUT has given "permission" for emails to be sent on their behalf by Jeff White. In this email, the recipients were the 2021boe@tuxedoufsd.org and kdifrancesco@tuxedoufsd.org. It is unknown if the subject, Dorothy Ziegelbauer is included in this group. It is assumed that Ms. Ziegelbauer is part of this group.

Regarding the email in question, it is indicated in the email authored by Dorothy Ziegelbauer (<u>dziegelbauer@tuxedoufsd.org</u>), on August 9, 2021 at 2:44pm, by hitting "reply" the email was sent to Cairenn Broderick due to the initial email being sent "on behalf of" her. The CC lines were either "auto filled" or physically typed to the recipients. For example, Ms. Ziegelbauer, in the CC line, would have begun typing a recipient whom she has emailed prior, and the address as well as extension would automatically populate in that CC addressee line.

The client has indicated that Jeff White was not a recipient of this email. This would indicate that "reply all" was not utilized and Mr. White may not have been in the BOE grouping.

DISPOSITION

It is suggested that Tuxedo UFSD have a comprehensive analysis conducted of their "Delegations" Federations" and "Server Rules" regarding the exchanges and email affiliations, particularly with emails not school district affiliated i. e. NYSUT.

This investigation is closed pending re-opening at the clients/ request.