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FACSIMILE MESSAGE COVER PAGE

DATE: August 20, 2010

TO: Judge Manning, Chairman  
Region One Board of Education

FAX  
NUMBER: 860-824-1271

FROM: Francis D. Burke, Esq.

RE: Goncalves, Diane

NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: 3 5

ORIGINAL TO FOLLOW BY:

Regular Mail

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MESSAGE:

See attached.

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August 20, 2010

Judge Manning, Chairman  
Region One Board of Education  
246 Warren Turnpike Road  
Falls Village, CT 06031

Via facsimile @ 860-824-1271

**Re: Diane Goncalves**

Dear Mr. Manning:

Please be advised that this firm represents Ms. Diane Goncalves. As you are aware, Ms. Goncalves has been concerned for some time that she has been the target of a campaign of harassment directed by a member of the Region One Board of Education (a copy of Ms. Goncalves' correspondence to you dated March 29, 2010 is attached hereto). This campaign has included unnecessary and unwarranted personal attacks having nothing whatsoever to do with Ms. Goncalves' professional responsibilities. Unsubstantiated and unsupported rumors and innuendo are being published in the media and elsewhere as "facts." In addition to impeding her ability to perform the duties she was hired to do, to the detriment of the district's students, these attacks are personally upsetting to Ms. Goncalves who has been forced to work in an increasingly hostile environment.

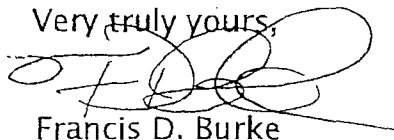
Things have not improved since Ms. Goncalves' letter to you of March 29, 2010. To the contrary, the situation has gone from bad to worse. It now appears that the Board intends to conduct an "investigation" of Ms. Goncalves' activities under the guise of looking into the circumstances surrounding the resignation of two High School administrators. It is our position that the Board lacks the statutory authority to conduct any such investigation. Ms. Goncalves falls under the supervision and direction of the Superintendent of Schools, Patricia Chamberlain. It is entirely inappropriate for the School Board to insinuate itself into personnel matters of this kind. To do so on the basis of unsupported allegations, rumors and innuendo is even more egregious. To appoint as a member of the committee assigned to conduct this "investigation" the very individual that appears to be orchestrating this campaign of

harassment against Ms. Goncalves is beyond the pale. Any such "investigation" if necessary at all, should be conducted by a fair and impartial third party.

As she stated in her letter to you of March 29, 2010, Ms. Goncalves remains "willing to provide answers and explanations for her professional decisions and efforts as Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Region 1." However, Ms. Goncalves does not intend to sit back idly while her reputation is attacked, personally and professionally.

I would suggest to you that it is time to put these issues behind us, for the Board and the Administration to return to their proper roles, and for everyone to move forward together towards the goal of providing a positive and supportive environment in which the students and staff of Region One can thrive.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. D. Burke', written over a horizontal line.

Francis D. Burke

Cc Patricia Chamberlain, Superintendent  
Craig Meuser, Board Attorney

March 29, 2010

Dear Chairman Manning,

I am concerned about the recent correspondence from Ms. Gale Courey Toensing addressed to "Region 1 Board and Administrators" (please note that although I am an administrator in Region 1, I was not included as a recipient of this correspondence).

First, this correspondence can be construed as a meeting of the "Board" in clear violation of the FOI Act.

Second, I am concerned with a Board member attempting to change her votes on several items once the meeting has been adjourned. This puts into question the finality and integrity of the "Boards" voting process. This opens the door for any and all votes and decisions to never become final and acted upon. It continues to allow for public opinion to govern and not the Board.

Third, on a personal note, Ms. Toensing has raised questions about my fitness to continue to serve as Region 1 Assistant Superintendent of Schools. These questions are based on what appears at best to be attributed to mere gossip. In her correspondence she suggests that there have been allegations by some unknown person(s) that I am having an inappropriate relationship with a certified high school employee and that I have engaged in a "loud argument" in front of students and others.

These allegations are unfounded and untrue and quite frankly insulting. Moreover, I am concerned that a Board member would request an investigation based on nothing more than innuendo. While it is true that I have a friendship with many employees, including a close friendship with an employee at the high school, this in no way impacts my professionalism or my ability to do my job. Questioning the nature of my friendship with a teacher who is female could be viewed as questioning the sexual orientation of both me and this teacher. Since Board members, to my knowledge, do not regularly question administrators or teachers about friendships with members of the opposite sex, this could be seen as intolerant and homophobic in nature. While I am not suggesting that this is Ms. Toensing's motive, her conduct in arguing a simple friendship constitutes an improper "personal relationship" sends a message to the community and students that is inconsistent with the non-discriminatory policies otherwise embraced by our Board.

While Ms. Toensing's desire to be informed about administration is creditable, there appears to be a pattern of her seeking to discredit my reputation and professionalism. While I do not intend to speculate on her motives insofar as I believe that would be inappropriate, there appears to be a personal agenda. Furthermore these accusations are totally unrelated to my job performance.

For example, in the fall of 2009, Ms. Toensing requested a meeting with high school department chairs. She requested this meeting under the guise of seeking information on individual department goals for the school year. It was conveyed to me that once in this meeting it became quite clear that Ms. Toensing was only seeking information about me. Her very pointed questions about me lead some to question her motives in calling the meeting.

I certainly have no objection to Ms. Toensing or any other board member seeking information about policies or even suggesting policies that could be adopted to benefit all constituents. However, in my professional opinion, it is not appropriate for a board member to suggest an executive session be held to discuss unfounded rumors based on a personal agenda

which could have negative impact on my reputation and professional standard to which I am dedicated.

I would hope that the tone of Ms. Toensing's correspondence and its reliance on groundless allegations, stereotypes and gossip is an anomaly. Furthermore, Ms. Toensing's correspondence is a distraction for all of us. It has also been personally unpleasant for both myself and the teacher involved.

I would like to request some reassurance from the "Board" that a conversation with Ms. Toensing will take place to address my concerns as stated. I am certain that a sense of reasonable discourse will prevail in all future dealings with Ms. Toensing. As Ms. Toensing chose to address her correspondence to all members of the Board and listed staff, I am further requesting that those individuals be present at such a meeting.

I would hope that the Board can return to their appointed function and can continue to work towards dedicating themselves to the initiatives and directives set forth by the Board of Education.

I remain willing to provide answers and explanations for my professional decisions and efforts as Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Region 1.

Sincerely,

Diane Goncalves  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Region 1 Schools

cc: Patricia Chamberlain, Superintendent of Region 1 Schools

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