

Cosmo Cirillo

From: Mayor Dina M. Grilo <@*>
Sent: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 1:46 PM
To: Carla Fernandes
Cc: @*mmancini@eastnewa rkschool.org; @*>
IDitchkus@eastnewarkschool.org; mmartes@eastnewarkschool.org; Cifelli, Michael A.; Frederick Confessore; Rose M. Evaristo; Jeanne Zincavage; Christopher Reis; Emidio D'Andrea; Frances Febres; Kenneth J Graham; Jessica H. Diaz
Subject: Re: Conduct unbecoming of a superintendent - East Newark

Hi Carla,

Respectfully and as common courtesy, a response would've been appropriate.

It's refreshing to hear that now you want to work collaboratively for the future. I look forward to it.

Have a good week.

Kind regards,
Dina
Dina M. Grilo
Mayor, Borough of East Newark

From: Carla Fernandes <cfernandes@eastnewarkschool.org>
Sent: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 12:43:54 PM
To: Mayor Dina M. Grilo <DGrilo@boroughofeastnewark.com>
Cc: jperez@eastnewarkschool.org <jperez@eastnewarkschool.org>; mmancini@eastnewarkschool.org <mmancini@eastnewarkschool.org>; hleone@eastnewarkschool.org <hleone@eastnewarkschool.org>; xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx <IDitchkus@eastnewarkschool.org>; mmartes@eastnewarkschool.org <xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>; Cifelli, Michael A. <xxxxxxx@xxxxx.xxx>; Frederick Confessore <xx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>; Rose M. Evaristo <r evaristo@boroughofeastnewark.com>; Jeanne Zincavage <jzincavage@boroughofeastnewark.com>; Christopher Reis <creis@boroughofeastnewark.com>; Emidio D'Andrea <ed'andrea@eastnewarkschool.org>; Frances Febres <ffebres@cgajlaw.com>; Kenneth J Graham <kgraham@boroughofeastnewark.com>; Jessica H. Diaz <jdiaz@boroughofeastnewark.com>
Subject: Re: Conduct unbecoming of a superintendent - East Newark

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Hi Mayor Grilo,

I did not indicate I would update you nor are you entitled to any update. For clarification, you will not receive one. I also encourage you to look to the future, and not to the past, in the spirit of working collaboratively for the benefit of the community.

Thank you,

Carla Fernandes, Board President

East Newark Board of Education

501-511 North Third Street

East Newark, N.J. 07029

On Wed, Nov 29, 2023 at 12:23 PM Mayor Dina M. Grilo <DGrilo@boroughfeastnewark.com> wrote:

Carla,

Responding to your email, it has been six months and I have yet to get a response to the below, how was this addressed?

Kind regards,

Mayor Dina M. Grilo | Borough of East Newark

T: 973.481.2902 ext. 226

From: Carla Fernandes <cfernandes@eastnewarkschool.org>

Sent: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 7:57 PM

To: Mayor Dina M. Grilo <DGrilo@boroughfeastnewark.com>; jpxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx ;
mmancini@eastnewarkschool.org; hleone@eastnewarkschool.org; xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx ;
mmartes@eastnewarkschool.org; xxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

Cc: Cifelli, Michael A. <mcifxxx@xxxxx.xxx>; Frederick Confessore <ba@boroughfeastnewark.com>; Rose M. Evaristo <revaristo@boroughfeastnewark.com>; Jeanne Zincavage <jzincavage@boroughfeastnewark.com>; Christopher Reis <creis@boroughfeastnewark.com>; Emidio D'Andrea <ed'xxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx>; Frances Febres <ffebrxx@xxxxxxx.xxx>

Subject: RE: Conduct unbecoming of a superintendent - East Newark

CAUTION EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good evening Mayor,

I forward this e mail to our attorney.

Regards

Carla Fernandes

Board President

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Mayor Dina M. Grilo](#)

Sent: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 7:43 PM

To: [Carla Fernandes](#); jperez@eastnewarkschool.org; mmancini@eastnewarkschool.org; hleone@eastnewarkschool.org; xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx; mmartes@eastnewarkschool.org; tcosta@eastnewarkschool.org

Cc: [Cifelli, Michael A.](#); [Frederick Confessore](#); [Rose M. Evaristo](#); [Jeanne Zincavage](#); [Christopher Reis](#); [Emidio D'Andrea](#)

Subject: Conduct unbecoming of a superintendent - East Newark

Dr. Bagolie

Last evening myself and a few council members attended Hudson County Sheriff Schillari's annual gala. This annual event is attended by several elected officials, community leaders and members from Sheriff's departments across the nation. Governor Murphy provided kind words for the Sheriff.

You were in attendance as well, and we exchanged cordial hellos, I did acknowledge your presence with a nod and that was all. You did have a brief exchange with Councilwoman Evaristo and I carried about my evening.

A little while later Senator/Mayor Sacco pulled me aside to discuss an awkward conversation you had with him. It seems that you and your husband requested from Issam Dookali, an introduction to the Senator. The Senator advised me that you decided to sit in the chair next to him (he had no idea who you were or why you seated next to him at his table) and proceeded to ask him to speak with me since and I quote you to him "she won't speak with me, I keep trying but Mayor Grilo won't speak with me" – a complete fabrication as you know we have been trying to all meet. You asked him, the Senator/Mayor and a friend of mine, to get involved in an inhouse issue. He was perplexed and felt awkward, and I was completely flabbergasted and embarrassed for your unprofessional behavior.

The Senator then called Issam over, and he and I had a lovely conversation. Once he learned of what transpired, he was disappointed and very apologetic of your behavior. He had no idea the introduction he made would have you sit down and degrade me, the Mayor of East Newark to another Mayor. He is well aware of the East Newark Mayor, who he stated is well respected for her work with the Sheriff, the Hudson County Sheriff's Office and their Community Outreach Department. I'd be more than happy to get them both in front of you and the board to clarify the awkwardness you made us all feel.

The perception you gave is that you attempted to diminish me as a Mayor to another Mayor in the county. In doing so, you not only embarrassed yourself but the East Newark Board of Education as well. I should not have to remind you that when you are in public, you are perceived as the Superintendent of the East Newark School District. Making the Senator/North Bergen Mayor feel awkward by presenting him with an inhouse issue immediately upon being introduced degrades the School District's reputation. The same can be said for the Livingston council on which you sit on.

The audacity that you had to complain to a sitting Senator/Mayor about me is petulant to say the least. The is unacceptable behavior of someone who is supposed to be a leader for the school. Once again, your conduct continues to cause a divide with this administration. I ask that you please stop with the games, stop fabricating stories, and start leading as a professional. Your untruths have broken any trust with myself and council and continue to cause a divide.

Kind regards,

Dina

Dina M. Grilo

Mayor, Borough of East Newark

34 Sherman Avenue

East Newark, NJ 07029

T: 973.481.2902 ext. 226

www.boroughofeastnewark.com

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Carla Fernandes, Board President

East Newark Board of Education

501-511 North Third Street

East Newark, N.J. 07029

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Cosmo Cirillo

From: Mayor Dina M. Grilo <xxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx>
Sent: Monday, December 19, 2022 5:08 PM
To: Rosaura Bagolie; Frederick Confessore
Cc: Emidio D'Andrea; Frances Febres; Tatiana Costa; Carla Fernandes; Michael Cifelli
Subject: RE: East Newark Rec Center fire alarm. sent via email and regular mail
Attachments: BOE Borough Interlocal Services Agreement Recreation dually executed 2022-2023 (2).pdf; Re: Work at rec center today? (4.61 MB); East Newark Rec Center Construction (64.8 KB)

Hi Dr. Bagolie,

You and the board were aware of the renovations to the recreation center, when you asked to get into an interlocal agreement. We were hesitant as we knew we would be going out to bid for the contractor, as a matter of fact you referred the current contractor Murray to us. When we spoke, we advised you that we needed to get the renovations completed. You and the board stated that you needed a signed agreement to show county and state officials that you had a recreational facility for the kids to use for physical fitness and you would work with us, there was pressure from your end to get into the agreement as it would be costly for you to continue to utilize Holy Cross. You advised us that there is a certain number of minutes per week that students must have for physical activity, and it was imperative that you found space.

Our engineers notified you on 10/25/22 (see attached) that the renovations would begin and then there was a meeting with you and the contractor on 10/28/22 (see attached) to work out a schedule for the students to use the facilities while Murray would work around the school schedule. This was not a surprise to the board as you knew the renovations were coming up. The borough has gone out of its way to be a good partner to the board, as has the contractor. Renovations began in early November; you allowed the students into the center for both day gym classes and the after-school program after the start of renovations. Murray went out of their way to ensure they left the building in a usable condition, there was no complaints. While the students were on holiday for about a week, Murray was able to work full time and get the floor in. Your statement that it couldn't be used by the board for two months is inaccurate. Just the other day, I walked in with county officials, and there was a teacher with students using the gym. I also spoke with board president Carla Fernandes days before this email you sent and advised her that given these challenges of trying to work with the school and get our facility renovated, that it would be recommended that the board not use it for at least a month or so, so that we can finish this without any further misunderstandings and confusion. I also advised her that we would not charge for the time it was not used. She understood and did not push back, perhaps your email was sent before she advised you. Your messaging has also been confusing, you stated you wouldn't use the recreation because your gym teacher is on leave, then you find a substitute and start using the rec without notification that you planned on bringing the students back.

As for the grant, we discussed the board using both the recreation center and the senior center for classes. However, the use isn't carte blanche. You need to work with and notify the borough, yet once again you failed to communicate to the borough the start dates or send us a calendar in advance until we requested it. The board also took quite some time to pick up a key for the senior center, causing my staff wasted time waiting for you to come in. Just to be there and no class showed up. You then had a conversation with Fred that you would no longer use it because you would use your own kitchen. Not sure what your basis is to say this puts the grant in jeopardy, when you do in fact have facilities to use. You used the school for dance class and other physical activity, once again proving that we are not the issue – you do have facilities.

In Section 5, 5.2 *Board's Assumption of Risk* it clearly states the board is responsible for the maintenance of the facility. To claim that the board did not use the facilities and therefore didn't need to conduct drills is inaccurate, you have had students using the facilities since September. Once you raised the alarm situation, it was addressed. However, because of your dancing around who notified you or who you called it delayed the response. Once again, an inappropriate implication and not being truthful has caused more damage than good.

As for your comments regarding response to emails. I am under no obligation to respond to emails on the senders anticipated response timeline. The email to the clerk was literally sent a couple of days before you included it here. Consideration should be given on response time since he has to gather dates from 8 borough officials during the holiday season. Let's be reasonable and not petty, this is counterproductive.

I have been and will always be very supportive of this school – my alma mater. However, as has been proven, there is a common denominator on communication challenges from the board with the administration. It has been asked to the board president that all communication be between Fred and Emidio. All the confusion, back and forth is consuming all our times unnecessarily when our focus, especially during the holidays, should be the children. As you are aware, the borough is preparing for Santa's Workshop, prepared the Santa's letters and helping residents that we are aware of that are in need. All of us here in this administration and the board trustees (minus one) are lifelong residents of East Newark or a neighboring town. Hudson County has a strong sense of community pride, to imply that we are not putting our kids first is wrong, unfounded, and quite frankly disheartening, especially to me. This is my beloved hometown, my alma mater, my community. I have been as amicable a partner as can be, most schools do not have direct access to the town's Mayor, you and the board do, and I feel it has been taken advantage of. These types of accusations do not foster good will with me, this administration, or our community.

Also, going forward all communications with the Chief of Police is to have Fred copied. The department reports to him and he should be aware of all public safety conversations.

I look forward to sitting down and having an honest and open conversation with all parties, it will be beneficial for the board of education members to truly understand what has been happening. The only way to move forward is to acknowledge the opportunities and agree on solutions. Blaming and making inappropriate implications will fracture this partnership to a point of no return. Going forward, all communications will be directly between Emidio and Fred with a copy to the school liaisons for the borough, Councilwoman Rose Evaristo and Councilwoman Jeanne Zincavage.

Wishing all a wonderful holiday, it's a busy week for the East Newark community!

Kind regards,
Dina

Dina M. Grilo
Mayor, Borough of East Newark
34 Sherman Avenue
East Newark, NJ 07029
T: 973.481.2902 ext. 226
www.boroughofeastnewark.com

From: Rosaura Bagolie <rbagolie@eastnewarkschool.org>

Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2022 5:38 PM

To: Borough Administrator <ba@boroughofeastnewark.com>

Cc: Emidio D'Andrea <edandrea@eastnewarkschool.org>; Frances Febres <ffebrxx@xxxxxxx.xxx>; Mayor Dina M. Grilo <DGrilo@boroughofeastnewark.com>; Tatiana Costa <TCosta@boroughofeastnewark.com>; Carla Fernandes <cfernandes@eastnewarkschool.org>; Michael Cifelli <mcifelli@boroughofeastnewark.com>

Subject: Re: East Newark Rec Center fire alarm. sent via email and regular mail

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Good afternoon Mr. Confessore,

I agree; our communications do need improvement. As the recreation building is Borough property, it is the Borough that has the responsibility of keeping myself and the Board of Education informed as to the status of the construction. Yet, the Borough did not communicate the status of the fire alarm system since you implied it did not assess the status of its facilities. It is also the Borough's responsibility, and not the Board's, to provide safe and usable facilities pursuant to the shared services agreement it entered into with the Board of Education. If the Borough had knowledge that the recreation building would not be available due to anticipated substantial renovations, it begs the question why the Borough would agree to offer its facilities and then charge the Board of Education for facilities that our students have not been able to use for two months. The Board of Education, having responsibility over its students (not the recreation building) assessed the status of the recreation building and made the determination to keep its students at the school for physical education because the recreation building was consistently not safe, usable or available to the students. That is another reason why no fire drills were conducted.

Next, I do reject the reasons you provide as to why the fire alarms were disconnected, though I am not interested in a back and forth as that will be unproductive. I am happy to hear that the fire alarms have been reconnected and are in working order. Thank you for that communication. As the certificate of the System Recording of Inspection and Testing provided in your email is dated 10/5/2022 which is prior to the start of construction we respectfully request a new appraisal of the system prior to our students returning to the center.

Lastly, and in taking up your offer of improving communication, the school district is still awaiting the Borough's response to our request for a meeting to discuss the status of school facilities. Emidio D'Andrea sent an email on December 13, 2022, to you and the Clerk but has not received a response. Similarly, I am still awaiting responses from the Mayor to my email on December 9, 2022, with regard to the ESL courses for the residents. As far as the "regular talks," I would be interested in having regular group meetings with you, the Mayor, a council member, Mr. D'Andrea and Ms. Fernandes. This way our communications will be transparent and include members of each team who can provide feedback and relay information to the respective governing bodies.

It has been my sincere desire to maintain a positive collaborative relationship between Borough and Board Education since the start of my tenure, but this lack of communication is putting our in-district instructional and afterschool grant program in jeopardy due to the limited access to facilities and this could lead to the loss of this new grant that has been of great benefit to our students.

I look forward to our future communications.

Sincerely,

Rosy Bagolie
Superintendent/Principal

On Dec 15, 2022, at 12:54 PM, Borough Administrator <ba@boroughofeastnewark.com> wrote:

Dear Dr Bagolie,

I am in receipt of your email dated December 12, 2022, relative to the ongoing renovations at the Rec Center. Your email asserts several items but seems to be based on the fundamental misconception that the Borough was aware that the contractor working at the Rec Center disengaged the alarm system prior to the Board bringing in students. I assure you that the Borough had no knowledge of this until your email.

In reviewing the matter, the contractor undertook this action without the Borough's knowledge and/or approval.

Specifically, our records show that the Borough's Fire Code Official performed an inspection on May 22, 2022, and issued a New Jersey Uniform Fire Code Certificate of Inspection. The building passed the inspection and the resulting Certificate remains in effect until May 23, 2023. The Board and the Borough then entered into a Shared Services Agreement on July 31, 2022. Therefore, at the time we entered the Agreement, the building's fire prevention systems were in good working order. In addition, as renovations began, Effective Alarm Systems Inc. ("Effective") performed a fire system inspection on October 5, 2022, and again, the building passed the inspection.

Consistent with the work of our professionals, and the records known to us, the Borough's position is that the fire alarm system was approved and in working order prior to the signing of the Shared Services Agreement and prior to the start of the renovations. Before we received your email, the Borough had no knowledge that the fire protection system was not functioning. Therefore, it would have been impossible for the Borough to communicate this to you.

Next, I would like to address the current status of communications between the Board and the Borough. Clearly, there is room for improvement. For example, in your email, you state, "it is disheartening to learn this information second hand." As you can see, because the Borough was not aware that the alarm system was disengaged, we were learning of it, not just second hand, but third hand. The unfortunate implication in your statement is that the Borough was aware but did not advise you of the status of the alarm system, which is not accurate. Communications like these are neither helpful nor productive and certainly do not advance the betterment of our students.

After I saw your email, I replied on December 13th, at 7:32 a.m. I asked who informed you of this so I could follow up with them with the goal of opening the lines of communication so that this situation does not occur again. Your response was to question whether, "is this information accurate?" I replied, "I don't know. I have to know who told you so I can follow up with that person". We are still unaware of who advised you of the situation, foreclosing the possibility of improvement.

Regardless, after being informed of the situation, we immediately addressed it. Specifically, on the morning of the 13th, I was on my way to the Rec Center to investigate when I received a call from Steve Ramos of Murray Construction. He advised me that you called him the night before about the system not working. I met with Steve and found that some of the system wires were disconnected and relocated during the framing process of the new offices. He said he would reconnect the system. At 11:58 a.m. Steve texted me and said that the system would be on test until 3 p.m., Monday to Friday, until January.

It is the school district's responsibility to notify us of any issues with the facility. The Board was aware that renovations to the Rec Center were happening. According to the Shared Services Agreement, the Board assumed the responsibility of securing a safe environment for the students when using the Rec Center. Further, as you know, schools are required to conduct monthly facility inspections and have one fire drill and one security drill each month. Please provide us with a list of when those inspections and drills occurred at the Rec Center and when they may be scheduled to occur in the future. The more information we have, the better able we are to address the situation with the contractor.

Considering the system being in the test mode and there are no bathrooms or running water, I would recommend not using the Rec Center until the project is completed in January. If there is a need to use the Rec Center in the meantime, please communicate directly with me to avoid future misunderstandings so that we can work together to provide the students with what they need.

Finally, I am urging direct communication between the Board and the Borough and not based on statements from unknown or undisclosed third parties. We can start by agreeing that we are all working diligently for the health and safety of our students and that we share as a priority, the best interests of our students. Let's also dedicate ourselves to direct communications without outside interference. Perhaps we can schedule regular talks to facilitate better communication moving forward. From there, we can best serve the interests of our children.

Sincerely,

Frederick G. Confessore

BA, Borough of East Newark

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