

Paul R. Baird Middle School

One Rooney Road * Ludlow, MA 01056
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Guidance (413) 583-5687 * Nurse (413) 583-5688

Mrs. Stacy Monette
Principal

Mrs. Mary Dobek
Assistant Principal

Instructional Focus

At Baird, we focus on actively participating in our learning and using our critical thinking skills to help us understand and contribute to the world around us.

April 16, 2021

Bonnie Manchester

BY: Email, First Class and Certified Mail

Dear Ms. Manchester:

Please be advised that, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 42, I intend to terminate your employment with the Ludlow Public Schools due to conduct unbecoming of a teacher. More specifically, you have engaged in the following conduct:

1. You shared sensitive confidential information about a student's expressed gender identity against the wishes of the student, the direction of the Guidance Counselor, and in contradiction to the DESE guidance. This was done without consulting colleagues, the administration, or the student. In fact, you indicated that the only thing you said to the student was that you received the email.

If you believed that it was necessary to inform the parents, the appropriate means to express your belief would have been through the so-called Mariners team and/or Guidance Counselor. Indeed, during the Mariner team's meeting on March 3, the Guidance Counselor discussed the email with the team, and you did not raise any issues or concerns regarding notification to the parents. Instead, you took it upon yourself to inform the parent.

2. You were untruthful numerous times during the investigation of this matter. First, during the investigation meeting on March 25, 2021, you indicated that you had no communication with the parents regarding the content of the email. However, during the follow-up investigation meeting on April 14, 2021, you admitted that you informed the father that the student was changing his name while you were at the father's garage getting an oil change.

Second, you indicated that you read the email, left it on your computer, but did nothing else with the email. Despite being asked numerous times, you insisted that you did not make any type of copy of the email or do anything else with the email. However, your counsel indicated during the meeting that you sent him a copy of the email. A search of your public school email account shows that you did not use

The Ludlow Public Schools strives to provide a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment in which all students can thrive and succeed in its schools. The Ludlow Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, sex, gender identity, national origin, pregnancy or pregnancy related conditions, disability or sexual orientation and ensures that all students have equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges, and courses of study.

said account to email your counsel. Therefore, you clearly made a copy of the email. Further, a search of your public school Google Drive account showed that you took a screenshot of the email. In addition, you cut and pasted the email and created a Google doc of the email wherein you removed the student's name and replaced it with XXXXXX.

Your untruthfulness during the investigation alone is sufficient grounds for termination.

3. You violated state law and regulations regarding student records/privacy as well as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) by releasing student information to individuals who did not have the right to view the information. The email contains extremely private and confidential information regarding the student. If you wanted to provide your counsel with the email itself, that request should have been made through the school system. Then, a determination could have been made regarding whether or not the email could be released and/or if redactions were necessary. Instead, you did so on your own volition without any regard for the student's rights.

Since your school account was immediately shut off when you were placed on paid administrative leave, it is also clear that you removed the email from the workplace prior to being placed on leave. Doing so is also a violation of state law and regulations as well as FERPA, and clearly violates the student's rights. It is also further evidence that you were untruthful during the investigation.

You are hereby ordered to destroy any copy of the student's email that is in your possession. Further, you must immediately notify me if you provided the email to anyone else so that we can attempt to ensure that the email is not disseminated further.

If you wish to appeal my intent to terminate your employment, you have ten (10) school days to do so by requesting a meeting with me. You may present information pertaining to the basis for the decision and to your status. You may be represented by an attorney or other representative at such meeting. In the event you do not request a meeting with me within ten (10) school days, I will send you my decision to terminate your employment.

Sincerely,



Stacy L. Monette,
Principal

cc: Todd H. Gazda, Superintendent

Personnel File

Frank McNamara, Jr., Esq. (McNamara & Associates, 53 Wilder Road,
Bolton, MA 01740)