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Judge orders Bedford to produce more documents in Jackson case

BY SEAN GORMAN • SGORMAN@LOHUD.COM • MAY 17, 2009

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BEDFORD - The Bedford Central School District has until June 16 to produce additional documents in a lawsuit that seeks to uncover what led to a controversial \$650,000 separation agreement with former Superintendent Debra Jackson.

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The documents could be redacted as the district deems necessary, acting state [Supreme Court](#) Justice Barbara G. Zambelli ruled in an April 30 order.

Camillo Santomero, a former Bedford school board member, is suing the district to win release of documents detailing the unspecified dispute over Jackson's job performance that triggered the separation agreement. In addition to the \$650,000 payout, Jackson received free lifetime [health care](#) coverage for her and her family.

"They will redact what they deem to be exempt (from disclosure)," Robert A. Sternbach, Santomero's attorney, said Thursday. "We can challenge the exemptions if we don't believe they are entitled to it."

Each school board member also has to certify no other documents exist.

Under the New York Freedom of Information Law, Santomero last year sought "any and all records" about the dispute. The district interpreted the request as referring to draft disciplinary charges never formally served on Jackson.

The district turned down Santomero's request as well as others from The Journal News and the Record Review, saying disclosure would constitute an "unwarranted invasion of privacy."

Zambelli ruled on March 31 that the district properly denied the release of the draft charges .

But Sternbach said the court should have viewed the charges behind closed doors before denying access to the whole document.

He has filed a motion to reargue the fate of the disciplinary charges as well as a notice of appeal to preserve Santomero's right to having a higher court review Zambelli's ruling.

The March 31 decision also ordered the release of any additional documents unless there's a compelling reason they shouldn't be disclosed.

Edward J. Phillips, the school district's attorney, has informed the court that there are other documents responsive to Santomero's request. The documents include e-mails among school members.

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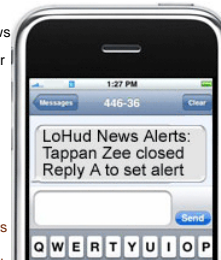
1. "Edward J. Phillips joined Keane & Beane, P.C. in 2000 following a two-year clerkship."
2. "Since Joining Keane & Beane, P.C., Mr. Phillips has continued to focus on federal practice by representing public sector employers and officials in employment discrimination and retaliation... zoning and land use matters."
3. Mr. Phillips' expertise (DISCRIM/RETAL) may be what is being Suppressed.
4. Keane and Beane, also Represents Greenburgh 7 CSD, who ALSO needs HELP
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