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August 14, 2019

Hon. Richard A. Carranza  
Chancellor  
New York City Public Schools  
Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street, Room 314  
New York, NY 10007

Re: Edward Gunning  
SCI Case #2018-8370

Dear Chancellor Carranza:

An investigation conducted by this office has substantiated that Edward Gunning, a 55-year-old Department of Education (“DOE”) full-time substitute teacher assigned to the High School for Health Careers and Sciences (“HSHCS”) in Manhattan, engaged in a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old female student (“Student A”).<sup>1</sup> When their relationship began, Student A was a student at the High School for Law and Public Service (“HSLPS”), a school co-located with HSHCS.<sup>2</sup>

**I. Investigation and Findings**

The investigation began in December 2018 when HSHCS Assistant Principal (“AP”) Michael Bordwell contacted the office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (“SCI”) to lodge a complaint of sexual misconduct against Gunning. Bordwell reported that Gunning’s estranged wife, Christine Kelly, told him that Gunning had a sexual relationship with Student A. Bordwell stated that, although Kelly did not provide specifics as to when the relationship began, she revealed that she noticed a change in Gunning’s behavior between January and February of 2018. According to Bordwell, Kelly had phone records and text exchanges between Gunning and Student A, and she had seen a “video” of Student A at Gunning and Kelly’s apartment complex.

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<sup>1</sup> Gunning was suspended without pay pending the outcome of SCI’s investigation. There is a problem code associated with his file. Student A has since turned 18-years-old.

<sup>2</sup> HSHCS and HSLPS are two of the six schools that share the George Washington Educational Campus.

In January 2019, SCI investigators met with Kelly who stated that she had been married to Gunning for 17 years; however, she recently began divorce proceedings against him due to his infidelity. Kelly continued that around January 2018, she experienced a “change” in his behavior. Kelly stated that she knew that Student A was a participant in the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (“ROTC”), a unit of which Gunning was in charge.<sup>3</sup> Kelly acknowledged that it was not uncommon for Gunning to “reach out to different students,” but felt it was strange that he continually texted Student A. Kelly further stated that Gunning regularly hid his phone and turned his body away from her while texting, thereby preventing her from seeing whom he was texting. Kelly added that she knew Student A and had met her at a few school functions.

Kelly told SCI investigators that, on a daily basis, Gunning became “more and more suspicious in his personal life.” In March of 2018, Gunning told her that he was “no longer attracted to her.” Consequently, he did not sleep in their marital bed and they stopped having a sexual relationship. Kelly believed Gunning was having an affair and was suspicious of Student A. On June 26, 2018, Kelly arrived home from work at 6:00 p.m. and immediately “sensed something was not right.” She went into the bathroom and discovered a hairbrush that was “filled with [REDACTED]” When Kelly approached Gunning and asked him about the hairbrush, he did not respond. The following day, she went to the building’s management office and looked at footage from the surveillance cameras. According to Kelly, the video footage showed Gunning and Student A walk into the apartment lobby at 2:30 p.m. The same camera captured Student A leaving the apartment complex that day at 5:30 p.m.<sup>4</sup>

Kelly continued that in November 2018, there was an occasion when she was using a computer that she and Gunning shared and she discovered “iMessages” between Gunning and Student A. Kelly e-mailed screenshots of these iMessages, which were from late July 2018, to the assigned SCI investigator. The following were some of the exchanges between Gunning and Student A:

Student A: “No babe you’re the best”  
“I really really love you”

Gunning: “I am so happy and excited about our time together”  
“But it at times makes me want it all”  
“I love you sooo much babe”  
“I can’t get enough of you”  
“I want it all”  
“But I know all will not work now”  
“We are real close now”

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<sup>3</sup> Kelly told investigators that Gunning was retired from the United States Navy.

<sup>4</sup> Kelly stated that she did not make a copy of the video and was informed that the video was only available for 30 days before it was erased from the hard drive. The assigned SCI investigator also attempted to obtain the video and was advised that the video from July 2018 was no longer available.

“And I can’t lose sight of how good we have it”  
“I love us”

Student A: “I love us”

Further, there were sexually explicit references by Gunning during several of his other iMessages to Student A which clearly indicated that the two were involved in sexual acts with one another.<sup>5</sup> In one sexually explicit message, Gunning stated the following:

Gunning: “I love the taste of your pussy and I love eating it”

In an interview with SCI investigators, Student A stated that she attended HSLPS for four years and expected to graduate in June 2019.<sup>6</sup> Student A told investigators that she was one of the participants in the ROTC program.

Student A stated that she had known Gunning, whom she described as a Senior Naval Science Instructor, for four years. Student A revealed that there was a mutual attraction between them and disclosed that they had texted one another for an “extended period of time.” Student A further admitted that some of their text exchanges were of a sexual nature. She explained that she sent photographs of herself to Gunning and on occasion, she received photographs from him. Student A maintained that she no longer had any of these photographs or text messages because she deleted them from her cellular phone.

Student A explained that in April of 2018, she and Gunning engaged in a consensual sexual relationship. Student A said she often went to Gunning’s home after school and then left his residence prior to when his wife arrived home from work. Student A told SCI investigators that it was during the school day when she and Gunning made their arrangements to meet one another. According to Student A, in July 2018, their relationship ended. Student A stated that it was a “mutual” decision and she has not had any contact since with Gunning.

The assigned SCI investigator obtained Student A’s and Gunning’s cellular phone records for the time period from January 2018 through the beginning of January 2019. A review of Student A’s phone records revealed that from February 4<sup>th</sup> through December 29<sup>th</sup>, Student A called Gunning approximately 65 times, texted him on about 34 occasions, and sent him pictures on 10 occasions. A review of Gunning’s cell phone records revealed that from February 4<sup>th</sup> through December 28<sup>th</sup>, Gunning called Student A approximately 14 times and sent her one picture.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> When asked why she waited to report Gunning’s sexual misconduct until December 2018, Kelly explained that she was confused and began to “doubt herself” about the affair. After finding the iMessages in November 2018, however, she spoke with several friends who advised her to contact the school where Gunning was employed. She spoke with HSHCS AP Bordwell who reported the matter to SCI.

<sup>6</sup> The assigned investigator confirmed that Student A graduated in June 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Gunning’s cellular records did not reflect any text messages sent to Student A. However, as previously noted in this letter, Gunning sent numerous iMessages to Student A and these messages would not appear as text messages on phone records.

August 14, 2019


Through his attorney, Edward Gunning declined the opportunity to speak with SCI investigators regarding this matter citing his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.

## II. Conclusion and Recommendation

SCI substantiated that Edward Gunning engaged in a sexual relationship with Student A while she still attended HSLPS and was still enrolled in a program under his supervision. His inappropriate behavior makes it clear that he has no place in New York City public schools. It is the recommendation of this office that Gunning's employment be terminated and that a problem code remain associated with Gunning to make him ineligible for work with the DOE, with its vendors, or in any of its facilities in the future.

We are forwarding a copy of this letter to the Office of Legal Services. We are also forwarding our findings to the New York State Education Department for whatever action it deems appropriate. Should you have any inquiries regarding the above, please contact Special Counsel Valerie A. Batista, the attorney assigned to the case. She can be reached at (212) 510-1417. Please notify Ms. Batista within 30 days of the receipt of this letter as to what, if any, action has been taken or is contemplated regarding Edward Gunning. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
ANASTASIA COLEMAN  
Special Commissioner of Investigation  
for the New York City School District

AC:VB:lr

c: Howard Friedman, Esq.  
Karen Antoine, Esq.  
Katherine Rodi, Esq.