

City of New York
THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF INVESTIGATION
FOR THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
80 Maiden Lane, 20th Floor
New York, New York 10038

Anastasia Coleman
Special Commissioner

Telephone: (212) 510-1400
Fax: (212) 510-1550
www.nycsci.org

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

June 3, 2021

Hon. Meisha Porter
Chancellor
New York City Public Schools
Department of Education
52 Chambers Street, Room 314
New York, NY 10007

Re: Mario Contino
SCI Case #: 2021-0356

Dear Chancellor Porter:

An investigation conducted by this office has substantiated that 33-year-old New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) Teacher Mario Contino, previously assigned to the Young Women’s Leadership School (“YWLS”) in Queens, engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a ■-year-old female student (“Student A”) and a ■-year-old female student (“Student B”) that included numerous inappropriate email communications.¹

I. Investigation and Findings:

In January 2021, the office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (“SCI”) received a complaint from ■ who reported that Contino engaged in inappropriate email communications with Student A and Student B, from June to November 2019.²

SCI investigators spoke with Student A in the presence of her mother. Student A said that she exchanged emails with Contino, “on an average of two to three times per day in 2019.” Student A recalled that they communicated via email “every day” of the week, “including weekends, summer vacation and at all hours of the day and night.” Student A told investigators that the emails were of a “personal nature,” in that they shared stories of their “life struggles and relationships.”

Student A reported that she and Contino had “somewhat of a relationship,” in that, Contino and Student A had “disagreements, fights and apologized” to each other. Student A also said that Contino

¹ Contino was reassigned at the time of the current complaint due to a prior substantiated SCI investigation that included similar allegations of inappropriate contact with other students. A problem code was attached to Contino’s personnel file at that time.

■

told her, “[I] love you, I miss you and I care about you” during their email exchanges. Student A added that on two occasions, Contino “kissed the top of [her] head,” and that they “hugged” when they saw each other.

████████████████████ provided investigators with a copy of emails exchanged between Contino and Students A and B. Investigators reviewed the emails and found that Contino exchanged approximately 80 emails with Student A, and 62 emails with Student B in 2019.³

Contino, through his attorney and citing his status as a tenured employee, declined to be interviewed by SCI.

II. Conclusion and Recommendations:

Mario Contino engaged in inappropriate relationships with two female students, ages ██████████ at the time. Contino’s wrongful conduct included numerous inappropriate and sexually suggestive email exchanges using his official DOE email. Contino demonstrated unprofessional and unacceptable conduct for a DOE employee, and established that he is unfit to serve in this or any other capacity within the school district. It is the recommendation of this office that the DOE terminate Contino’s employment, and that the problem code associated with his personnel file remain in place as a permanent bar from future employment with the DOE, with any of its vendors, or in its facilities.

We are sending a copy of this letter to the DOE Office of Legal Services. In addition, we are sending a copy of this letter to the New York State Education Department for whatever action they deem appropriate. Should you have any inquiries concerning this matter, please contact Robert Revzin, the attorney assigned to this case, at (212) 510-1440 or rrevzin@nycsci.org.

Please notify SCI in writing within 30 days of receipt of this letter of what, if any, action has been taken or is contemplated with respect to Mario Contino. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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

By: /s/ Daniel I. Schlachet
Daniel I. Schlachet
First Deputy Commissioner

AC:DS:RR:lr

cc: Judy Nathan, Esq.
Karen Antoine, Esq.
Katherine Rodi, Esq.

³ Investigators found that Contino used his official DOE email address when he communicated with the two students.