

Top 5 Questions Regarding the Transfer of Atlantic City High School Principal Lina Gil From The Community

Background:

Atlantic City High School Principal Lina Gil has dedicated her entire career as an educator to serving the youth of Atlantic City. Principal Gil has served as a role model, an inspiration, and mentor to countless students over the last 20 years at Atlantic City High School. She now faces an unjust, politically linked, involuntary transfer away from Atlantic City High School. Despite her experience, her qualifications, and her results, she is being forcibly removed to serve the political agendas of those in positions of power.

Principal Lina Gil grew up in Atlantic City. She began her careering education with Atlantic City Schools as a substitute teacher. She worked to get her degree and teaching credentials to become a bilingual biology teacher, she then became an Assistant Principal, and has been the Principal of Atlantic City High School since 2016. Her teaching and administrative career has all been at Atlantic City High School. Principal Gil was the first and is still the only certified bilingual biology teacher in the District. Now, as the only Latina administrator in the District, the Superintendent and the Board of Education want to remove her from her position at Atlantic City High School.

On Tuesday, May 7, 2019, the Superintendent of Atlantic City Schools, Barry Caldwell, notified Atlantic City High School, Lina Gil, that she was being involuntarily transferred from Atlantic City High School to the Pennsylvania Avenue School. He further explained that Dr. La'Quetta Small, the current Principal of Pennsylvania Avenue School (PK-8) would become the new Principal of Atlantic City High School.

Question #1 – What is the official reason for involuntarily transferring Principal Lina Gil from Atlantic City High School?

No official reason has been provided to Principal Gil or the Community at large regarding the involuntary transfer of Principal Lina Gil. There has been zero transparency and a complete disregard for community concerns regarding this transfer. In her first two years at the school, enrollment climbed slightly, bucking the county trend of shrinking school districts. The school's graduation rate has also climbed to over 81 percent from below 75 percent in the 2015-16 school year, according to state data.

It should be noted that Principal Lina Gil has excellent evaluations from the Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Sherri Yahn. Additionally, country renowned educator, Dr. Robert Previti was engaged by the district through Stockton's ETTC program as a mentor for Principal Gil. Dr. Previti has reported that Principal Gil is doing a commendable job and is moving the high school forward. Dr. Previti has been working with Principal Gil since the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. Does this involuntary transfer say that the Board of Education and Superintendent Caldwell do not believe that Assistant Superintendent Sherri Yahn and Dr. Robert Previti are able to recognize and assess effective educational leadership?

Question #2 – How many Board of Education members have an explicit conflict of interest and ethically should NOT vote on this issue?

One thing is clear, Atlantic City Board of Education Vice President, Constance Days Chapman, is also running a campaign for City Council in the 4th ward. Who has been supporting her and helping her out? Is it Atlantic City Council President, Marty Small, Husband of Pennsylvania Avenue School Principal, Dr. La Quetta Small? Does this involuntary transfer having any signs of being political quid pro quo? Constance Days- Chapman did not receive enough votes to run on the Democratic slate as the party nominee for the 4th ward.

How many other Atlantic City Board of Education Members have explicit

conflicts of interests?

Question #3 – Has the Atlantic City Board of Education been trying to find ANY excuse to involuntarily transfer Principal Gil?

Atlantic City High School Principal, Lina Gil, was called to a Special Board of Education Meeting on Wednesday, March 6, 2019. The Board of Education made this request through Superintendent Caldwell. The Board provided items that Principal Gil was to report upon at the Special Board Meeting. Principal Gil provided an extensive presentation that delivered a positive picture of Atlantic City High School's success, progress, and areas needing improvement. Patricia Bailey, president of the Board, interrupted the presentation after about an hour. She indicated that the Board had received the information that was requested.

Teachers, administrators, and parents came to the meeting to support Principal Gil as she presented. Several of these attendees spoke on behalf of Principal Gil and the high school. These teachers, administrators, and parents heard that the meeting was to be an attack on Principal Gil and the High School, so they came to defend their principal and the school. What was the official reason for calling this meeting? To try to find any excuse to condemn Principal Gil? Were any other principals called to a Special Meeting? The answer is NO. This was an unprecedented act in this school district.

Question #4 – Does the Superintendent and Board of Education value REAL diversity?

Principal Lina Gil was the first Latina Principal of Atlantic City High School and is currently the ONLY Latina administrator in the entire District.

All of this in spite of the fact that the largest group of minority students in Atlantic County is Hispanic. The largest group of all students at Atlantic City High School is Hispanic as well, approximately 40%. This involuntary transfer is a slap in the face for Hispanic and all other minority groups attending Atlantic City Public Schools. What does this involuntary transfer say about the Superintendent and the Board's position and respect with regard to the Hispanic students and Hispanic Community in Atlantic City? What about other communities? Since his swearing in, has the Superintendent and Board of

Education been receptive to BOE Member Farook Hossain's proposals to add Halal meats and more diverse programming to our schools?

Question #5 – Has the Superintendent, Board of Education Members, and elected officials been working behind the scenes to pass this involuntary transfer and silence community dissent and concerns?

It should be noted that the Superintendent and Board of Education members have not responded to a letter from a community organization asking for transparency and to have the meeting in a larger community room like a school. Will the Board of Education use the Fire Marshall to say the room is at max capacity, so the community cannot enter? Has the Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education been talking to community members to pack the room before the start of the meeting so that the Hispanic, Southeast Asian, Asian, and Allies cannot enter the room? Has an official agenda been published by the Board of Education and provided to any media outlets? Have any elected officials, such as Council Presidents, been calling members of the community to silence dissent and those that are asking questions?

It should be noted that prior to the District's Reduction in Force that occurred in 2015, Pennsylvania Avenue Principal Dr. La Quetta Small and her Husband, Atlantic City Councilman Marty Small, were both employed by the district. When the RIF occurred, Councilman Smalls position was eliminated by then State Monitor, Dr. Gary McCartney. On the Official City Council website, it states Council President Marty Small's plans include being Atlantic City High School Athletic Director after his political career. It should also be noted that Councilman President Marty Small has made it explicitly clear that Dr. La'

Quetta Small also has her Superintendents certification, so we are all curious on what next manufactured move up will be?