

*Portland Public Schools Confidential Investigation Report*

<b>CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT- Department of Human Resources</b>	
<b>Date the investigation began</b>	June 18, 2015
<b>Date the investigation ended</b>	September 15, 2015
<b>Complainant/s name</b>	Abdi Jamac
<b>Title</b>	Coordinator of School and Family Partnership
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	African
<b>Supervisor</b>	Richard Gilliam-Director of School and Family Partnership
<b>Investigator(s)</b>	Aisha Hollands Director of Workforce Diversity and Development
<b>Allegation/Issue</b>	Workplace Bullying
<b>Policy/AD</b>	Anti-Harassment Administrative Directive (4.30.061-AD)
<b>Name of employee/s subject to investigation</b>	Richard Gilliam
<b>Title</b>	Director of School and Family Partnership
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	African-American
<b>Supervisor</b>	Dr. Harriet Adair
<b>Union Affiliation</b>	NA
<b>Investigation Process</b>	The investigator completed 9 interviews with the following individuals: 1. Abdi Jamac 2. Richard Gilliam 3. Dr. Harriet Adair 4. Teng Vang 5. Veronica Banuelos 6. Vadim Riskin 7. Andrea Wade 8. Mary Krogh 9. Huy Hoang

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### **Background**

The School and Family Partnership Department is under the direction of Assistant Superintendent Dr. Harriet Adair. One of the goals of the department is working in partnership with all families to ensure equitable access and support for the academic and personal success of each and every PPS student. The staff works closely with families of color from multiple racial and linguistic communities and each coordinator is charged with engaging families and community partners with district- wide events and activities that support academic and social enrichment for students.

Richard Gilliam, the new Director of the Department was promoted internally and was the outreach coordinator for the Jefferson cluster focusing on enrollment balancing work, and succeeded Willie Poinsette who served as the interim director within the past year (2013-2014). In Richard role as an outreach coordinator, he established working relationships with multiple communities of color to include the Somali Community. In doing so, he was tasked with meeting with Somali leaders and Somali businesses to identify best practices of supporting Somali students who attended PPS schools.

In 2010-2011 the Portland Public School (PPS) district decided to combine the English as a Second Language (ESL) department and in 2012-2013 the School and Family Partner coordinators were all laid off, then later rehired and supervised by Reiko Williams until she became an administrator at Rosa Parks Elementary. Due to the nature that Reiko Williams became an administrator within the schools, Willie Poinsette a long-term administrator within PPS became the interim Director for the Department until Richard Gilliam became the now, new director of the department.

Abdi Jamac has worked for the school district for approximately eight years in multiple roles; as a Somali specialist, the Somali Equity specialist and currently as the Somali School and Family Partner Coordinator. Abdi identifies as a Somali male and primarily works with the Somali community and Somali students within Portland Public Schools. Somalia's civil war, which began in 1991, forced many families to seek shelter in neighboring countries. In 2001, charity organizations began bringing Somali families to Portland, and the Somali population here grew to approximately 8,000, and so did our schools. Currently Somali is one of the largest speaking languages in our PPS school district along with English, Spanish and Russian.

Abdi Jamac works with the Somali Community on a much larger scale external to the school district as well. He also has created partnerships with organizations to support Somali families and Somali students in general who attend PPS schools. In one of his collaborative efforts, he works with a consultant (Ann Mueller) and they provide an academic course for Somali students over the weekend which allows them to obtain language credits in their native tongue,.

The Minneapolis School district whom also has a large number of Somali families who resettled in the state, learned of this assessment tool that has been successful for PPS students, and asked Abdi and the consultant to administer the same assessment in hopes of having the same success for their Somali students in Minneapolis. As a result, Abdi agreed to provide this service to the Minneapolis school district, and received the approval from Richard Gilliam to travel to Minneapolis to do so. Abdi reported that he was unclear if the time off would count for worktime or if he would need to take personal time off from work

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to travel, he contacted Jodi Benson the short-leave specialist, and spoke to the HR specialist who explained to him the different options of taking time off, and that he would need to get all approval from his immediate supervisor.

Richard Gilliam signed the time off and approved that his travel and work with the Minneapolis school district would count as PPS district work time as well. Richard approved and signed the document near or on April 28, 2015 and the trip was scheduled for May 4<sup>-9</sup> 2015. On the document, Abdi stated the following;

The week of May 4th, I will be visiting Minneapolis School District for the development of Second Language Inventory Protocol (SLIP) assessment for foreign language credit. Also, During my trip, I will be holding meetings with various district family engagement programs/departments such as School-Family Partnerships, ESL, Somali Language Program. As you may know, MSD is the only district in the nation, that offers Somali language literacy courses to it's Somali-speaking students for foreign language. Therefore, this will help facilitate the recent PPS initiative of implementing Somali literacy program. I strongly believe that the experience and knowledge gained from this trip to Minneapolis School District would definitely benefit our school district.

Sincerely  
Abdi

Upon Abdi return from Minneapolis on May 13, 2015 Abdi reported allegations of harassment in the form workplace bullying by Richard Gilliam.

### **Policy Implications of Allegation/s**

Abdi Jamac allegations implicate several provisions of the Portland Public School District Anti-Administrative Directive. The Anti-Harassment Administrative Directive (4.30.061-AD) clearly states in A the following:

- A. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying of staff is conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

### **Summary of Interviews & Statements**

On June 16, 2015 it was reported from Jodi Benson the HR short-leave specialist per email to both Richard Gilliam and Dr. Adair the following, "Abdi came to me prior to his trip and wanted to know what balances he would use for this trip. After obtaining more information regarding the trip I told him that he could use unpaid leave or if approved by Richard he could use work related absence if Richard agreed that it would benefit his work here at PPS. It appears that Richard did sign the leave request (attached) approving him to use the paid leave time, but now Abdi feels he is now being made to feel like he was "trying" to get more than he was entitled to. I personally feel that Abdi did everything that he could do to ensure he was using the appropriate balances and Richard did approve the time as paid. Can you help me understand what the concerns are now since the trip was over a month ago and the time was approved by Richard? Thank you so much. I am just trying to figure out what went wrong here since I was a part of what Abdi's options were and I don't want him to be personally be "in trouble" for information that I gave him."

In an Interview with Abdi Jamac on June 18 2015 he states, "I am working in a hostile

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environment; I have experienced falsely being accused of “errors” not actually made. For example, I was made to feel threatened and intimidated by Richard Gilliam for a trip to Minneapolis that was work related, and approved by him to attend. In an email requesting a meeting upon my return from the trip, he states the following; “Thank you for forwarding an electronic version of the hardcopy leave form You assert I signed for you. Upon inspection of the form you offer that I signed for you, there are a few serious questions. I will be scheduling a meeting with you, and Dr. Adair to discuss this matter further.” This email is accusatory, and is as if, I forged his signature and didn’t communicate to him about the trip to Minneapolis. Additionally, upon my return of the trip, I was questioned in a threatening manner about who I met with, and needed to provide a list of contacts of people I met with on the trip. Furthermore, I was called into a meeting in a very rude and threatening manner, and directed to provide Richard with the original document that he initially signed and approved for me to attend the trip. I am also feeling bullied and intimidated by my supervisor. He demands things from me instead of politely asking, his tone of voice is rude. One time, he came to me in a threatening way, and demanded the original copy of the time sheet that he signed, he was in a raised voice close to yelling, and I felt humiliated. He said, “I need this right now, and he demanded it, I was frightened”

Abdi reported that upon his goal of returning from Minneapolis that he wanted to schedule time to meet with district leaders such as Superintendent Carole Smith and others to discuss what he learned from Minneapolis and how to best provide services to Somali families within the school district. He reports, “The one time I met with Carol Smith was about the Dual Language program for the Somali Community, the meeting was only 30min. My goal was to address the educational needs of the Somali students, and how we can collaborate more efficiently with families, and I referenced my trip to Minneapolis as well. I also invited her to the event I helped to host for the Somali students too, and I discussed my goal of working with the community and communicating with them about the PPS system and how to navigate it and to help them succeed academically.”

On June 18, 2015 Abdi reported that he feels like he has been retaliated against for meeting with leaders within the district such as Superintendent Carole Smith, Amanda Whalen (Chief of Staff) and Melissa Geoff (Past Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning). He states, I believe that I am also being retaliated against for speaking to Superintendent Carol Smith. On Sunday May 31st, I received the email above, but when we met the entire meeting focused on the meeting I had with the Superintendent, and not about my trip to Minneapolis. During the meeting with Richard and Harriet, he said something to the effect of if you meet with my bosses boss, then I’m going to meet with you and my boss. He stated that you never told me why you were scheduling the meeting with Carol and said something like, Abdi don’t you see when you go to Carol, that you got Harriett involved. Harriet stated that Richard should know where you are, where you are going. I felt like I was ganged up on. Again, I feel like I have been retaliated against since my meeting with Carol, I feel like the way he speaks with me is hostile. I don’t know how I can continue in an environment like this.”

On July 14, in an interview with Richard Gilliam (alleged harasser) when asked about their working relationship, he reported, “we are cordial, and before I became the director, I worked with the Somali leaders to recognize their academic needs of their community. I had two Somali leaders bring concerns about Abdi to me. This is his community, and I specifically gave him responsibilities as the District Parent Involvement Committee; he is the staff lead for the Somali community. We work closely with the DLI department with

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Michael Bacon.” Richard also reported that Abdi spoke to him about attending the Minneapolis trip prior to him going but that Abdi didn’t mention he was going to work for the Minneapolis school district but that he was going to visit his sister that lives in Minneapolis. Richard reported the following, “I thought that I was signing the sheet for personal vacation time. In the Dual emersion meetings, not once did he mention to Michael Bacon or Debbie Armendariz that he was going to Minneapolis for work related things.”

On July 14, 2015 in the interview with Richard Gilliam when asked what was your intent of scheduling a meeting with Abdi, you and Dr. Adair and what was your goal for the meeting he reported, “Abdi wanted to have a meeting scheduled with both of us but due to scheduling conflicts, it was difficult to schedule earlier on. In emails, he stated that he wanted to address some of his own concerns and needs. At one point, Abdi was scheduling meetings with everyone including the Superintendent Carol Smith. The goal of our meeting was to address the Minneapolis trip and protocols in general. His demeanor was fine, and he did not become emotional. I heard that he got really emotional at several meetings with Amanda and the superintendent. I asked him what I could do as a supervisor to improve our relationship, but he didn’t answer.”

On July 15, 2015 in an interview with Michael Bacon, the Assistant Director of Academic Programs for Dual Language Programs reports, “ I haven’t heard anything negative or observed anything negative, but I recall when he introduced Abdi he talked about Abdi is the go to person, and spoke very highly of him. In the design team meetings when Abdi is present, he is often quite, doesn’t show up for the meetings, and when he is present he doesn’t take a vocal role, and asks for meeting minutes later. Prior to Abdi going to Minneapolis, he asked to meet with me and Richard about us being divisive (it was on a Wed/Thur) before he went to Minneapolis. He said that we were dividing the community and that needed to back off, but we too got the same information about him from the community. During this meeting, he said that he would handle it and needed 2-3days to figure this out. He didn’t mention Minneapolis at all, and I scheduled a meeting on Sunday night to talk about what occurred for the 2-3days, but Abdi declined because he was in Minneapolis, and this was the first that I learned of him going was through his email about why he couldn’t attend our meeting.”

On July 16, 2015 it was reported from Dr. Harriet Adair (Richard supervisor) when asked were you aware that he (Abdi) was meeting with Superintendent Carole Smith she shared that not until after he met with her. Dr. Adair stated, “I think that it was great he met with her because sometimes Carol doesn’t get to see the processes but the outcome, and it shows that she is open to hearing from all staff about their accomplishments and the direct work that they are providing for our students. Carol mentioned that she had a general conversation and that he invited her to the Somali Leadership event as well.”

Dr. Adair also reported that she thought that the goal of the meeting was the following, “about the role of the school and family partners that Abdi had been trying to schedule for several weeks regarding the Somali community and some of it’s tribal and language concerns. I assumed that this meeting was to discuss the details about the Somali language challenges within academia. I explained to Abdi that our meeting was not about the trip, but this is a conversation about how we improve our communication for everyone, and this is important for you and Richard to have a good relationship. And, I told him that I would excuse myself from the meeting if he would like, and he said no that I didn’t need to. My goal in asking him that is because I wanted to preserve their relationship as well, and I didn’t

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want it to look like a power differential but again, he said that I didn't need to leave."

When asked Richard the following question, If bullying, intimidation didn't occur with any of your interactions, why might have Abdi made this report against you? He reports, "I think that he was embarrassed that he didn't get invited to go to the Minneapolis trip to learn more about best practices working with the Somali Community. During one of our staff meetings, I shared that I was going to be going to Minneapolis and why, and during the meeting Veronica asked out loud if Abdi was attending, and I said no and she asked why, and I shared that I was the only one from our department attending."

On July 16, 2015 it was reported from Teng Vang, a Translation and Interpretation Services Coordinator and who sits directly next to Abdi reported over hearing a conversation between Richard and Abdi and shared, "I have never seen or heard Richard yell or raise his voice, and the one time he asked Abdi for some type of paper, nothing sounded like he was harassing him or using his authority. The day that I am referencing, Richard told him that he would like to have the document, he used his everyday voice. Honestly, I haven't heard Richard yell or talk really aggressively or be irritated with anyone."

In an interview with Andrea Wade, School and Family Partnership Coordinator, when asked has Abdi ever addressed any concerns or experiences about Richard to you? She reports, No, but you can sense he has been struggling along with all of each us. One time, I went to get food from a Somali meeting in the building, and I asked him was he going, and he said no that Richard has been excluding him from this process of working with the Somali community.

It was reported on August 14, 2015 by Veronica Banuelos a School and Family Partnership Coordinator, "I have never witnessed anything between Abdi and Vadim, but Abdi has shared some things. Abdi has shared things like, he has been isolated from the work of the Somali community and he feels hurt. Vadim was told that we were going to be dismantled, and he was told this by Mary-Elizabeth. This is threatening and intimidating behavior."

Veronica also described the work environment with Richard as such, "It's very negative; my heart stops when he comes into a room. My experiences with him have been abusive, he displays domestic violence tactics. I am a DV survivor and I can see him powering over people, how he pumps his chest out at people. The way that he talks about people, and the way he instigates, and if you are not in the room, you will receive the short-end of the stick, he often talks negatively about others in other departments. He has said that Kim Fox-Middleton is jealous of him, he has spoken badly about Von Trang in our staff meeting, he has spoken bad about Quay and said that he was going to try and get rid of her, and she is my colleague. He would say there is a member of our team who is making us look bad, and we will know who he is speaking about because they wouldn't be present."

On August 18, 2015 in the interview with Andrea Wade, School and Family Partnership Coordinator, she shares, "When he (Richard) first started, I was optimistic. In the beginning we had a great team discussion about being honest and transparent, and we talked about great ideas for the team, but nothing ever formulated. I went the entire year without a job description. Again, it started out as great, and at first I dismissed it as he was just new, but at some point you have to give direction to your team, and it never occurred. I became quite concerned with the way things were handled and discussed in our staff meetings. If certain people weren't at the meetings, they were blamed and talked about by Richard. At one team

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meeting, we were told that Lorenzo was responsible for getting rid of our positions at the last round of layoffs, and that is not something you say to your staff. At another meeting he said that there was a personality issue with Kaholini and Lorenzo and this is why we were having problems with Beyond Diversity Trainings as a district.

Andrea described her work environment within the department as the following; “Things started out great then turned hostile. There has been no direction, and no guidance and I didn’t feel supported.” When asked how do you describe hostile, she responded, “When you have your supervisor/director who will do and say things that prevent you from doing the best job that you can, or that hinder your work performance, hostile meaning you don’t know what is going to happen day to day. It’s almost like being in an abusive relationship, you question their behaviors day to day and you don’t know what the environment is going to entail day to day. Going into meetings, things are not clear about what is going to happen. Often times being lied on, and when you try to give clarity about what happened you are shut down really quick. Things are done in a way to block you, it is walking on egg shells all the time. Walking into the environment that makes you sick or anxious.”

It was reported from Andrea Wade when asked have you observed bullying, threatening behaviors or actions from Richard toward other staff (when/what)? She reports, “no, I have only experienced it with myself. I have had staff who have come and talk to me about being yelled at. For myself, I experienced harassment on August 10th just recently. As a department, we work 225’s and we have to make up or 5days throughout the summer time. I worked my 5days prior to August 10th, and I received an email on July 20th, stating that we should be back to work on August 3rd and on August 7th, I received a voicemail stating something similar. However, when I am off of work, I don’t check my emails throughout the summer unless it is when I am in the office and working during that 5day time period. At any rate, I called Richard to let him know that I already worked my 5days over the summer, and he begins to yell at me on the phone. I remained calm, I let him finish then I immediately explained what the 225 contract states about the initial email that was sent from Michelle in HR. Upon my return on Monday which is the day that I was required to return based on the contract, Richard placed an orange sticky on my desk saying a mandatory meeting at 4:15. Of course, I didn’t know what it was about, and I didn’t feel comfortable going without someone present, so I asked Kaholini to sit in with me. In this meeting, I was questioned about the email Richard sent to me about the work schedule, I was asked about stolen booklets from young Black and gifted program that I ordered, then during the meeting I was ordered to go and complete a document about my 5days worked. As I went to go get my document, Richard follows me and sits in the walk way and watches me. Prior to him following me, while in the meeting he yells at me for asking for clarifying questions about Kaholini being present, I felt like a hostage in the room. While I was getting my document, I turn around and I asked him was he waiting for me and he turns around and says, “you can say that.” Then Mary-Elizabeth joins me, and now they are both watching and hovering over me. And, again I still didn’t know what the purpose of the meeting was about, especially when HR is involved, that is not a simple conversation between you and your supervisor.

On August 20, 2015 Huy Hoang, a School and Family Partner Coordinator reported, “I have been here for 21years and I love my community and education, and I had passion for this work that I do. But, the last two years haven’t been good, but I feel like I’m losing my passion. My experience with Richard, he began supervising us last year and nothing has moved forward. There has been a number of times when speaking with me where he raises

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his voice, one time, he came to my office and said that I need to see you, and when I walked in the hallway he put his finger on me, and said “I hear that you will lose your job, you didn’t show up at a meeting.” I don’t understand why he didn’t ask me first to understand why I didn’t attend the meeting. He put his finger on me, and no other man has ever done this but my father. Another time, my dog died, and asked to take 1day off to bury my dog and he said okay. Later 1-2weeks in a team meeting, I heard him over say to my peers, “I don’t know why people are depressed over losing their dog.” I was disappointed in him as my manager, and I can’t believe that he said this to my people about my feelings. Another time, my co-worker Veronica said to me that Richard said to her that he needs to get rid of me. I have saw some things and I experienced harassment too. And, in our staff meetings, if a staff member is not present, he talks about us negatively when the person is not present, I am really disappointed in him. Work with my co-workers is great; I have people around me who support what I’m doing but from my supervisor no. Anytime, I meet with Richard about partnering with parents he is avoidant, and when speaking with me he makes me feel very uncomfortable. His voice, it seems like he always loses his temper, like he is always mad, raising his voice. To me, it makes me uncomfortable when he raises his voice, and he says you listen to me, and if you don’t listen to me you will get in trouble. He is a liar, he lied on me about a removal of a video and he said that I knew about it when he has already decided to delete it before me knowing about it.

During the interview on August 20, 2015 Huy reported, “One time, I saw that Vadim our senior manager would say something to him, and he pulled Vadim to the side and pointed his finger in his face, Richard was upset, it was far away but his body language and his facial expressions weren’t good. And, Andrea told me several time she feels dreadful, I told her to be strong. Abdi said one day that he has been through a lot of difficult times with Richard and that he doesn’t support him with his work in the Somali community and that Richard talks bad about me in my community, and my community comes back and shares this with me. Abdi really wants to quit, and I understand this because I do too. But, I keep telling myself, If I walk away from this job, then I walk away from me. My co-workers are talented and have a gift.”

### **Findings of Investigation**

A prompt, thorough internal investigation was conducted by Aisha Hollands, Director of Workforce Diversity. The investigation began on June 18, 2015 and concluded on September 15, 2015.

During the interview with Richard Gilliam, he denied yelling at Abdi during any interaction, and provided a witness (Teng Vang) who reported that she recalled Richard asking for a document but that he spoke to him in a calm voice. During the interview Richard acknowledged asking Abdi for the document in a direct manner, and when asked If bullying, intimidation didn’t occur with any of your interactions, why might have Abdi made this report against you? Richard states, “I think that he was embarrassed that he didn’t get invited to go to the Minneapolis trip to learn more about best practices working with the Somali Community. During one of our staff meetings, I shared that I was going to be going to Minneapolis and why, and during the meeting Veronica asked out loud if Abdi was attending, and I said no and she asked why, and I shared that I was the only one from our department attending.”

Throughout the interviews, it was reported that Abdi shared information with others about feeling excluded from working with the Somali community, and having concerns of Richard



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as a supervisor. In Abdi's written statement he reported experiences of being kept in the dark and being left out of conversations and events related to the Somali Community. Abdi also reported the following I have experienced falsely being accused of "errors" not actually made. I was made to feel threatened and intimidated by Richard Gilliam for a trip to Minneapolis that was work related, and approved by him to attend. In an email requesting a meeting upon my return from the trip, he states the following; "Thank you for forwarding an electronic version of the hardcopy leave form You assert I signed for you. Upon inspection of the form you offer that I signed for you, there are a few serious questions. I will be scheduling a meeting with you, and Dr. Adair to discuss this matter further." This email is accusatory, and is as if, I forged his signature and didn't communicate to him about the trip to Minneapolis. Additionally, upon my return of the trip, I was questioned in a threatening manner about who I met with, and needed to provide a list of contacts of people I met with on the trip. Furthermore, I was called into a meeting in a very rude and threatening manner, and directed to provide Richard with the original document that he initially signed and approved for me to attend the trip. I am also feeling bullied and intimidated by my supervisor. He demands things from me instead of politely asking, his tone of voice is rude. One time, he came to me in a threatening way, and demanded the original copy of the time sheet that he signed, he was in a raised voice close to yelling, and I felt humiliated. He said, "I need this right now, and he demanded it, I was frightened"

Based on the interviews, written statements, and evidence provided, the complaint against Richard Gilliam is inconclusive, there are no corroborating witnesses to the harassment, and Abdi did not report or provide information about being harassed due to any of the following protected classes or any other protected status applicable by the law. The Portland Public School Districts Anti-Harassment Administrative Directive (4.30.061-AD) prohibits harassment, intimidation, or bullying of staff is conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. This administrative directive is based on the legal standard that applies to illegal workplace harassment, which to be unlawful in this case of Abdi would mean that the harassment is because of a staff's protected class such as the following:

- ❖ Race, Religion, Sex, Marital or Familial Status
- ❖ National Origin, Age, Source of Income
- ❖ Mental or Physical Disability (Defined by Americans with Disabilities Act [as amended] and/or State Law)
- ❖ Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity
- ❖ Veteran Status, or any other protected status under applicable law

The investigation is inconclusive because there is not enough evidence to conclude or suggest that Richard has created a workplace bullying environment that is persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour which makes the recipient (Abdi) feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines his self-confidence and which causes him to suffer stress. And, that physical acts, such as slammed doors or raised fists, or verbal abuse often occurs. Abdi provided information and documentation about Richard asking for the short-leave form in a, "threatening tone and extremely angry demeanor." Richard shared that he was direct with Abdi when asking for the document and Teng, who observed the incident stated that Richard asked for the document in "his everyday voice." Furthermore during our Compliance Trainings for the district, it is emphasized that bullying does not constitute:

- ❖ Reasonable counseling, disciplinary, or job performance evaluation actions,

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including constructive and fair criticism of an employee's conduct or work performance.

- ❖ Differences of opinion and non-aggressive conflicts and problems in working relations.
- ❖ A direct or assertive management style, including high workplace expectations.
- ❖ Legitimate management responses to situations that require immediate action.

Although no one witnessed or observed bullying behaviour from Richard toward Abdi, staff provided their own personal accounts of allegations of bullying, intimidation, yelling, and threatening behaviour exhibited by Richard during district work hours. Due to the nature of the additional complaints throughout the investigation made by Andrea Wade, Vadim Riskin, and Veronica Banuelos, Portland Public Schools has hired an external investigator to investigate these concerns further.

Consequently, Richards' inability to provide a clear vision, direction, communicate efficiently, understand district forms and contracted union agreements for his staff has resulted in poor leadership, a lack of competence, and a lack of integrity. Abdi along with other staff do not believe they can trust Richard and they do not believe that he has their best interest. In order for Richard to lead with integrity and manage staff, he must be successful at the understanding the key elements of being a director; leading, managing and supervising in a respectful, motivating work environment.

### **Recommendation/s**

- Remove supervisory responsibilities (managing staff)
- Attend workshops & trainings about managing and leading a team

### **Appendices:** Witness statements; Investigatory interview notes

#### Additional Supportive documents

Appendix I	Abdi Jamac Interview notes
Appendix II	Abdi Jamac written statement
Appendix III	Short-leave Request Form signed by both Abdi and Richard Gilliam
Appendix IV	E-mail from Richard to Abdi Jamac about meeting
Appendix V	E-mail Exchange from Jodi Benson to Richard Gilliam, Dr. Harriet Adair, interviewer, Abdi Jamac
Appendix VI	E-mail from Michael Bacon re: Minneapolis Contact
Appendix VII	Richard Gilliam Interview notes
Appendix VIII	Michael Bacon Interview notes
Appendix IX	Dr. Harriet Adair Interview notes
Appendix X	Teng Vang Interview notes
Appendix XI	Andrea Wade Interview notes
Appendix XII	Vadim Riskin Interview notes
Appendix XIII	Huy Hoang Interview notes
Appendix XIV	Veronica Banuelos Interview notes
Appendix XV	Mary Krogh Interview notes

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### **Appendix I:**

June 18, 2015

#### **Abdi Jamac-School-Family Partnerships Coordinator Department-Office of School-Family Partnership**

As the investigator, I am here to investigate a complaint of harassment that you have brought forward in the form of bullying. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, witnesses related to the incident(s). Provided Mr. Jamac with the Anti-harassment administrative directive and asked her to review it. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please do not guess, please do not speculate. Please note that the district prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation of harassment is strictly prohibited. This prohibition is independent of whether a complaint is substantiated.

**1. What is your name and position?** Abdi Jamac and I have been with the district for 8 years and I started as a Somali Specialist, then a community agent, next a Somali Specialist, then a Somali Equity Specialist, and I am now a School Family Partnership Coordinator. In 2010-2011, the district decided to combine the ESL department and 2012-2013 we were all laid off then we were all reinstated again. But, through all of the changes, I have always worked with the Somali community, and it is my passion to help students and parents understand how to navigate the educational system.

**2. Are you aware of and have you reviewed the districts policies concerning Harassment?** Yes

**3. Have you attended training about discrimination/harassment? When? Is that training documented or do you have a copy of your on-line certificate?** No

**4. Who is your supervisor?** It is Richard Gilliam but it use to be Willie Poinsetta when she was the interim supervisor. But, Willie and I relationship has never been good. The first two meetings I had with her weren't good, but I was optimistic but she made comments to me like; Where I am from, and I told her that my dad was from Ethiopia and that I was from here and she said there was a few things that I want you to know; if I smile at you or laugh at you, it doesn't mean nothing, And she said that in 1980 when she went to Nigeria, a Nigeria man told her that you are not my sister as he was pointing directly to her. I didn't understand why she was telling me this but I down played it. I feel like she was insinuating that I felt like that neither one of us could be related because she was from the US and she thought that I too was from another country. Another incident in 2014 happened while I was working with families at Caesar Chavez School. In a conversation with Willie, I was telling her that there were quite a few Black families at the school, and sharing the families demographics are largely from Congo and Ethiopia, and she said are you telling me that they are not Black. Again, I was only explaining the demographics of the families that I work with and their specific needs

## *Portland Public Schools Confidential Investigation Report*

because some of them are new to the country, some families do not speak the language, some students and families experience PTSD, and only have a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade education. Additionally, she would call me and say things that they were intimidating and threatening. People told me to have less contact with her, and stay away from her. So, the only time I would have contact with her is when she called me in.

**4. What is your relationship with Richard Gilliam?** Richard Gilliam is my direct supervisor today but I'm worried that Richard has preconceived notions about me. As my direct supervisor, I would communicate to Richard all of what I was doing especially with the Somali Community but I still didn't understand why I wasn't invited to side meetings regarding the Somali Community. I feel like I wasn't valued in the process and I'm cut out of the process with working with the Somali community, and then the last 3 months I have been invited to be a part of the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) committee about the Somali community. From the community, I will hear that PPS is meeting with the Somali Community, and they would expect me to be a part of the conversations but I don't know what the meetings are about. One way that I have learned about what was going on with PPS and the Somali Community is that I would attend the Board meetings, and it would be an agenda item. I can't talk to Richard, I have tried but Richard talks to me in a way that I don't feel comfortable, I would ask a question and he would answer my question in a hostile and intimidating way. And, it's not him being direct but threatening in a way that he can't be wrong, and no one else can be right.

**5. Have you ever had a conversation with Richard about his behaviors or actions towards you?** No, because as mentioned he is threatening and intimidating. He demands things from me instead of politely asking, his tone of voice is rude. One time, he came to me in a threatening way, and demanded the original copy of the time sheet that he signed, he said, "I need this right now, and he demanded it, in a threatening way that he needed it immediately." I was frightened and it was as if, I was in trouble or that I did something wrong. I couldn't find the original form, and I got it from Julie Trapp, so I went to her and I made a copy for him the following day.

**6. Did you speak to Willie or Richard about not being invited to Somali Community events or meetings with PPS?** No, but I would wonder, and all of the staff and Somali community would ask me. He is my supervisor and in the beginning when he first became my supervisor he would make comments about working with the Somali community but he would never invite me or ask me for my opinions or involve me, it was quite strange, and I didn't understand it. On several occasions, Willie would ask did I know that Richard was meeting with the Somali community, and I shared no. She would roll her eyes in disappointment, and she would never communicate clearly to me what my involvement should have been.

**7. What is the extent of your relationship with the Somali Community and do your supervisors know your role?** As part of my community responsibility to the Somali families, I provide tests to African students in their native language, for English students they take two years of World Language but for students whose native language is not English they

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can take what is called a SLIP test in their native language which means they can be tested in their own language and don't have to worry about a taking a test not in their native language. I didn't create the test but I give it, it was created by Ann Mueller who contracts with districts to provide the testing tool, And, Willie and Richard know about this. The district has been very supportive, I teach on the weekends on my own time to students, and Gretchen Hollands from facilities gave us furniture and desks which we used at a grocery store with a space.

**8. Have you reported any of your concerns to Richards supervisor?** No, but there was a meeting with Harriet and Richard but I felt like they had already planned what they wanted to say. I received this email that alluded to me being dishonest or something about my Minneapolis trip, I really didn't understand the email or why I was meeting with both Harriet and Richard. I feel like if there was a problem, as my supervisor Richard could have addressed his concern with me. But during the meeting, I thought that Harriet would be neutral and listen to both sides of this once I learned what the concerns were. But, I was in shock, and surprised about the conversation. I thought it was about the email that Richard sent regarding Minneapolis, but the meeting was centered on my meeting that I had with Superintendent Carol Smith. Because of the aggressive behavior and tone of the meeting, I felt that If I said anything to speak up for myself, that he would continue to threaten and bully me and now I feel retaliated against because I had a meeting with Carol. During the meeting, Richard shared that he had a problem with me sending emails but I wasn't quite clear about what he was speaking about, and how my emails upset him.

**9. What was your goal in meeting with the Superintendent?** The one time I met with Carol Smith was about the Dual Language program for the Somali Community, the meeting was only 30min. My goal was to address the educational needs of the Somali students, and how we can collaborate more efficiently with families, and I referenced my trip to Minneapolis as well. I also invited her to the event I helped to host for the Somali students too, and I discussed my goal of working with the community and communicating with them about the PPS system and how to navigate it and to help them succeed academically. But after that meeting I think Harriet met with her, and I don't think that Harriet felt good about it.

**10. Why did you go to Minneapolis, and what was your role?** Minneapolis has a very large Somali Community, and is considered one of the largest resettlement states for families who are new to the US. And, the Minneapolis public school district contacted us about our assessment tool that we provide for Somali students in the state of Oregon, more specifically at PPS. It is Ann Muelers assessment, but I work closely with her and test the students. Minneapolis school district learned about the tool, and asked for us to provide it for their students, and they said that they would pay for my travel and time that I spent there. They asked me how much I got paid at PPS and they would reimburse my time. This was a great opportunity for me to learn more about the Somali community and students in another state, and share the great work and tool that we provide our students at PPS. I met with Jodi Benson in Benefits because I wasn't sure about how to document this on my timesheet, and she explained that if it is approved that I can go and that if I explain to my supervisor about

## *Portland Public Schools Confidential Investigation Report*

the trip, and he approves then it could be approved as work related but that if he didn't approve then I would need to take personal vacation time.

**11. Was it approved by Richard verbally or in writing?** Yes, in writing, he signed off on the time sheet and it was approved for me to go for 5 workdays. I spoke to him verbally as well prior to going to Minneapolis and I met with Michael Bacon and Richard on Thursday about what I was going to be doing in Minneapolis on approximately 4-22-2015. Additionally, our collaborative advisory team had been discussing this opportunity as well, but nothing never came out of when the district would sponsor staff going, and I thought that this would be great to come back and share what I have learned and answers to some of what we have discussed in the Collaborative advisory team.

**12. Were you surprised to learn of a meeting with Harriet and Richard regarding the emails you just shared?** Yes, and the tone of the emails were confusing and inferred that I didn't get approval to attend the Minneapolis trip.

**13. Did you meet with Richard about your Minneapolis trip?** I was approached by Michael and interrogated about who I met with; he needed a list of contacts, and wanted to verify that I actually met with the people that I said that I met with.

**14. What was said in your meeting with Harriet and Richard?** It was stated to me that anytime you meet with Carol or someone like her, you let me know. I told Harriet that I have two roles here, in my community and in the school district, and I shared with her that when I'm meeting with Carol I'm not talking about you, I'm talking about my community.

**15. How has Richards behaviors affected you in the workplace specifically?** I am feeling like, I am in a hostile work environment before meeting with Carol and now after meeting with Carol, I feel like I am being retaliated against. During the meeting with Harriet and Richard, he focused on the conversation with Carol and in my meeting with Harriet, he said something to the effect of if you meet with my bosses boss, then I'm going to meet with you and my boss. He stated that you never told me why you were scheduling the meeting with Carol and said something like, Abdi don't you see when you go to Carol, that you got Harriett involved. I was still very confused about the goal of this urgent meeting, and he didn't share with me what I did wrong or his concerns. Harriet stated that Richard should know where you are, where you are going. I felt like I was ganged up on. Again, I feel like I have been retaliated against since my meeting with Carol, I feel like the way he speaks with me is hostile. I don't know how I can continue in an environment like this. The way he speaks to me, his tone of voice, "what do you need" in a harsh manner. Recently, I have been stressed because of this situation which has caused me not to want to work in this environment, I'm emotional, and this just isn't right. No one should feel humiliated, threatened and isolated when they come to work and made feel as if they did something wrong. If he had a problem with me speaking to Carol, then after he learned about it, he should have had a conversation with me one on one, and not ganged up on me with Harriet. I didn't think it was an issue for me to speak to the Superintendent about the Somali Community that I have been working with in the district since I have been here, I didn't think it was a problem to communicate all the great work and the barriers that families experience

## *Portland Public Schools Confidential Investigation Report*

or how as a district we can improve, she has seemed well receptive of knowing about the cultural communities, and I wanted to share with her directly. This would be different if my supervisor was inviting and welcoming to hear about my work within the Somali community, it would be different if we worked together with Somali concerns and academic achievement needs, it would be different if Richard wasn't hostile and we had a good working relationship, but he doesn't understand or acknowledge or even understand all the work I do within the Somali community. For example, during the month of May, I am the main organizer of the African Youth Organizing Event, and it takes a great deal of effort and collaboration to host this. I get some help from some people, but most of the help falls on my shoulders. I put together a planning committee that work on the weekends. There are so many pieces involved including key note speakers, transportation for families, workshops and families (parents) who don't understand the language, providing the location for the event, food. The event was over on a Wednesday, and I explained to Richard that I had been working hard, and on the weekends working with student leaders etc. and I spoke to him about taking Monday off or flexing the day, and his response to me in a very rude way was, "you don't have personal time off." Now, because of our unique roles, and working with families and hosting events on weekends and evenings, we were told that we could use comp time to submit but I'm very cautious of doing so because of being retaliated against. I feel like they are waiting for me to make a mistake.

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### **Appendix II:**

#### Written Statement By Abdi Jamac -July 6, 2015

I have reasons to believe my supervisor, Richard Gilliam is conducting himself unprofessionally by creating a hostile, retaliatory and harassing work-environment that undermines my contributions and morale as a School-Family Partnership Coordinator and damages District's objectives to uplift struggling Somali Students.

I have been with PPS for 8 years during which I served in various capacities - including Somali Educational Assistant, Somali Parent Liaison, Somali community Agent, Somali Resource Specialist, Somali Community Agent and Somali Equity Coordinator. During this tenure, I have played an active role in District's initiative to better serve our struggling Somali/African students in PPS, supporting the students and their families.

My grievances are as follows

#### **I. Keeping me in the dark**

- In our staff meeting last year, Willie Poinsette, my supervisor at the time, on various occasion asked me if Richard had contacted me about his meetings with the Somali community. After I respond with "No" and asked her what these meetings were about she would not say anything. At the time Richard was Jefferson Cluster Coordinator under another department but Willie would invite him to our staff meetings so that he could share his work us
- On September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 ONLY through DLI presentation to the PPS Board I learned that Richard and DLI had been meeting with a member of the Somali community who was presenting himself to PPS as the sole Community leader. Other Somali community leaders brought to my attention the need to make the process more inclusive thus more transparent by soliciting more input from the greater community in regards to DLI short and long term plans.
- On Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>, I sent an email to Richard and DLI leaders relaying the prevailing community sentiment that they feel left out and the need to include the broader community. Since I was worked with community for long time, I also offered my expertise but the offer went on a deaf ears. Apparently Richard and Michael were not well-versed with dynamics and complexities in the Somali community dealings – and until the present time the community finds the process frustrating and not transparent enough.
- Despite my role as School-Family Partnership Coordinator and many years of support to the community, Richard and DLI kept my involvement in the process/discussion to a very minimum. However, I continued attending PPS meetings with the community.



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### II. Misrepresentation of Records, Intimidation, Insults and Harassment

- In early April, 2015, I informed Richard about my plans to travel to Minneapolis in May to develop Somali language assessment for MPS. Again, on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, in a meeting with Richard and Michael I reiterated my planned trip and its objectives – and also stated that I will also be looking into programs that serve the Somali Students including Somali language literacy programs in MPS. I also did my due diligence by contacting HR about the trip to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest since I will be doing work that benefits two different districts – PPS and MSP. Jody Benson, short-leave specialist, had confirmed that I should be eligible a pay by both school districts since they both benefit from my service. I shared Jody’s input with Richard. On April 28, Richard signed the completed short leave for my trip, which clearly stated I would be on a trip from May 4-9 to develop Somali language proficiency assessment for MPS, and my trip would benefit PPS with respect to district’s initiative to implement Somali language program in PPS. Surprisingly, later on, Richard denies knowing about the trip even though the form has his signature on it.
- Upon my return, on May 13, as promised, I sent an email to Richard Gilliam, Michael Bacon (DLI) and Debbie Armendariz (DLI) stating that I was back from my trip and would like to schedule a meeting with them so I could share my experiences from Minneapolis schools and programs that serve Somali-speaking students, particularly language and family engagement. Michael responded to my email and said he would meet with me after his trip to Minneapolis.
- On the same day, I ran into Debbie in front of the elevator. She asked me if I received Michael’s response to my email regarding my request for debriefing meeting. She also asked if I could meet with Michael in that afternoon. But I told her that I had already told Michael that I would meet with him after his trip to Minneapolis. But she was so adamant that I meet with Michael in that afternoon. But again, I told her I could not meet with him today of prior commitment. In the same Afternoon, I went to superintendent office to check on a meeting I had been trying to schedule with Carol Smith. After coming back to my office, two of my colleagues informed that Debbie and Michael were looking for me. They said they seemed to be nervous and urgent. They left a note on my chair written by Michael saying “it’s very important that you stop by my office before you leave your office”. On my way out of the building, I stopped by Michael’s office. Michael in an angry demeanor said

“Abdi, I need names of people you met in Minneapolis”

I told him that I didn’t have them in hand but would send him as soon as possible.

- On May 21<sup>th</sup>, A group of PPS staff and Somali community members led by Richard and Michael left for a trip to Minneapolis to study Somali language programs, and Somali family engagement in Minneapolis schools. I thought I would be a perfect candidate for this trip since I have been active member in both PPS and community when it comes to the education of Somali student and their families.

On Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, after Richard was back from Minneapolis, he sent me an email requesting a copy of my short leave form for my trip to Minneapolis which was completed and signed on May 28th by him. On the email he stated that there are serious concerns

## *Portland Public Schools Confidential Investigation Report*

surrounding my trip, therefore he is scheduling a meeting between Harriet, him and I. On the same, I sent him the completed short leave form electronically.

About two days later, Richard stopped by my office and said “ I need the original completed short leave form now” in threatening tone. I told him that I did submit it to Judy Trapp, Harriet’s assistant. Again, Richard said “I need it now” in extremely angry demeanor. I told him I would get it from Judy trap for him. On the same day, I did get the original from Judy and gave it to him in person.

On June 15, we (Harriet, Richard and I) had a meeting scheduled by Richard. In the meeting, Richard stated that:

“He did not know I was going to Minneapolis at all” (Like I stated above, I shared info. about my trip with My supervisor on several occasions, including on April 28 when Richard signed the short leave form for my trip to Minneapolis.

He also stated that he did not know I was being paid by Minneapolis public schools even though I fully explained to him that I was contracting with MPS, and MPS was also paying my for my service of developing a language proficiency assessment – an issue that I already cleared with Jody Benson of HR prior to my trip – short-leave specialist.

During the meeting I asked Richard how does he explain his signature on the leave form but silence followed and Harriet has not followed up on it.

I also asked Richard if could have talked to me about his alleged concerns about my trip first without involving Harriet. To my astonishment, Richard replied “don’t you see when you are meeting with Carol, and you are asking me why I involved Harriet in this” This clearly demonstrates the harassing and retaliatory nature of the meeting.

He also kept interrupting me and when I asked him to let me talk he responded, and I quote his exact words “ I don’t have to listen to your nauseating talk” -- this is an acceptable intimidating conduct.

Harriet also said she needs to know when I am meeting with the Superintendent, Carol Smith. I explained to her that my two-fold roles – my role in PPS and that of the community. my meeting with Carol was about my community. And I asked if she needs to know even when I meet with Carol in the other capacity. She emphatically said she needs to know every time I meet with Carol Smith.

- In the same meeting, Richard stated that I was not living up to my community’s expectations. This statement is totally untrue. This community is so dear to my heart. I have been relentlessly striving and advocating for better support for African/Somali students and their families in PPS. I have done so many things/initiative geared towards supporting my community, among them are(Annual African Youth Leadership Conference AYLC, African Student achievement Initiative ASIA, Disaggregated data on African students, Somali Heritage language program for world Language credit (Hundreds of students took advantage of this program to get world Language credit for High school graduation ), to rise awareness of the African/Somali students in our district

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specially African students. These students and their families come to America from refugee camps with little or no formal education prior to coming to Oregon/US. African students are one of the lowest achieving group, if not the lowest (math 17%, Reading 22%) in our PPS.

I believe my supervisor, in collusion with some of the DLI staff, retaliated against me because I wanted to play an active role in district initiative to better support our African/Somali student and their families. The retaliation included:

- I am working in a hostile environment; I have experienced falsely being accused of “errors” not actually made. For example, I was made to feel threatened and intimidated by Richard Gilliam for a trip to Minneapolis that was work related, and approved by him to attend. In an email requesting a meeting upon my return from the trip, he states the following; *“Thank you for forwarding an electronic version of the hardcopy leave form You assert I signed for you. Upon inspection of the form you offer that I signed for you, there are a few serious questions. I will be scheduling a meeting with you, and Dr. Adair to discuss this matter further.”* This email is accusatory, and is as if, I forged his signature and didn’t communicate to him about the trip to Minneapolis. Additionally, upon my return of the trip, I was questioned in a threatening manner about who I met with, and needed to provide a list of contacts of people I met with on the trip. Furthermore, I was called into a meeting in a very rude and threatening manner, and directed to provide Richard with the original document that he initially signed and approved for me to attend the trip.
- I am also feeling bullied and intimidated by my supervisor. He demands things from me instead of politely asking, his tone of voice is rude. One time, he came to me in a threatening way, and demanded the original copy of the time sheet that he signed, he was in a raised voice close to yelling, and I felt humiliated. He said, *“I need this right now, and he demanded it, I was frightened”*
- Richard denied that I shared information about my trip to Minneapolis despite signing the short leave.
- Richard and Michael of DLI kept my involvement in PPS’s initiative to better support Somali community at minimal.
- Richard stated that the reason he involved Harriett without discussing it with me first was that because I talked to superintendent.
- Richard told me that I was not living up to my community expectation in order to falsely taint my record in retaliation.

Abdi A Jamac

# Portland Public Schools Confidential Investigation Report

## Appendix III



Portland Public Schools  
501 N. Dixon Street, Suite 200  
Portland, OR  
97227

Phone: 503.916.3544 Fax: 503.916.3107

### Short Leave Request / Certificate of Absence For Absences of 5 days or less

Employee Name: abdi jamac

Employee ID:

Manager Name: Richard Gilliam

Department / School: OSFP

#### Optional

Substitute Job No.:

Substitute Name:

Leave Type	Start Date	End Date	Days	Hours with Pay	Unpaid Hours
Work Related Absence Hourly (PAID) Example: wr	2015/06/04	2015/05/08	5.00	40.00	
Total			5.00	40.00	

#### Comments:

The week of May 4th, I will be visiting Minneapolis School District for the development of Second Language Inventory Protocol (SLIP) assessment for foreign language credit. Also, During my trip, I will be holding meetings with various district family engagement programs/departments such as School-Family Partnerships, ESL, Somali Language Program. As you may know, MSD is the only district in the nation, that offers Somali language literacy courses to it's Somali-speaking students for foreign language. Therefore, this will help facilitate the recent PPS initiative of implementing Somali literacy program. I strongly believe that the experience and knowledge gained from this trip to Minneapolis School District would definitely benefit our school district.

Sincerely  
Abdi

Signature: Abdi A. Jamar

Date/Time Field

Authorized By: Richard Gilliam

Date/Time Field

For Office Use Only

☐ Data Input

Date Received

## *Portland Public Schools Confidential Investigation Report*

### **Appendix IV**

Re: short leave form for week of May 4th  
Delete Reply Reply all Forward  
Continuc editing Discard  
Mark as unread

Abdi Jamac  
Mon 6/1/2015 8:59 AM  
To:  
Richard Gilliam;

...  
Cc:  
Harriet Adair;

...  
Richard,  
I look forward to meeting with you and Dr. Adair for a discussion on this matter and other concerns. I've been in the process of scheduling a meeting with Dr. Adair, but I think she is out of town for this week.  
Thanks  
Abdi

Abdi Jamac  
School-Family Partnerships Coordinator  
Office of School-Family Partnership

---

From: Richard Gilliam  
Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2015 9:40 PM  
To: Abdi Jamac  
Cc: Harriet Adair  
Subject: Re: short leave form for week of May 4th  
Hello Abdi:

Thank you for forwarding an electronic version of the hardcopy leave form You assert I signed for you. Upon inspection of the form you offer that I signed for you, there are a few serious questions.

I will be scheduling a meeting with you, and Dr. Adair to discuss this matter further. Thank you for providing this Abdi.

Richard Gilliam  
Director  
Portland Public Schools  
Office of School and Family Partnerships

## Portland Public Schools Confidential Investigation Report

### Appendix V

#### Aisha Hollands

---

**From:** Jodie Benson  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2015 3:13 PM  
**To:** Aisha Hollands  
**Subject:** FW: Message from "RNP0026736CBF72"  
**Attachments:** 201506161129.pdf

H Aisha,

Here is the email I sent yesterday regarding Abdi.

Let me know if I can assist further.

Have a great day.

Jodie Benson

Jodie Benson | Senior Leave and Benefits Specialist | 501 N Dixon Street | Portland OR 97227 | Phone: 503.916.3301 |  
FAX: 503.916.3107 | [jobenson@pps.net](mailto:jobenson@pps.net)

Beginning Monday June 29 through August 7:

Summer hours for BESC:

Human Resources: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, closed Fridays

Enrollment & Transfer: 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, closed Fridays

Regular hours resume August 10: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

Confidentiality notice: This email message may contain confidential information. If you have received the message by mistake, please notify us immediately by replying to this message or telephoning us, and do not review, disclose, copy or distribute it. Thank you.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Jodie Benson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 16, 2015 11:43 AM  
**To:** Richard Gilliam; Harriet Adair  
**Cc:** Abdi Jamac; Terri Burton  
**Subject:** FW: Message from "RNP0026736CBF72"



Hi Richard and Harriet,

Abdi came to me today because he was upset that he was being questioned regarding his 05/04/15 - 05/08/15 trip to Minneapolis. Abdi came to me prior to his trip and wanted to know what balances he would use for this trip. After obtaining more information regarding the trip I told him that he could use unpaid leave or if approved by Richard he could use work related absence if Richard agreed that it would benefit his work here at PPS.

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It appears that Richard did sign the leave request (attached) approving him to use the paid leave time, but now Abdi feels he is now being made to feel like he was "trying" to get more than he was entitled to.

I personally feel that Abdi did everything that he could do to ensure he was using the appropriate balances and Richard did approve the time as paid.

Can you help me understand what the concerns are now since the trip was over a month ago and the time was approved by Richard?

Thank you so much. I am just trying to figure out what went wrong here since I was a part of what Abdi's options were and I don't want him to be personally be "in trouble" for information that I gave him.

Thank you.

Jodie Benson

Jodie Benson | Senior Leave and Benefits Specialist | 501 N Dixon Street | Portland OR 97227 | Phone: 503.916.3301 | FAX: 503.916.3107 | [jobenson@pps.net](mailto:jobenson@pps.net)

Beginning Monday June 29 through August 7:

Summer hours for BESC:

Human Resources: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, closed Fridays

Enrollment & Transfer: 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, closed Fridays

Regular hours resume August 10: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

Confidentiality notice: This email message may contain confidential information. If you have received the message by mistake, please notify us immediately by replying to this message or telephoning us, and do not review, disclose, copy or distribute it. Thank you.

-----Original Message-----

From: [Human\\_Resources@pps.net](mailto:Human_Resources@pps.net) [[mailto:Human\\_Resources@pps.net](mailto:Human_Resources@pps.net)]

Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2015 11:30 AM

To: Jodie Benson

Subject: Message from "RNP0026736CBF72"

This E-mail was sent from "RNP0026736CBF72" (Aficio MP 6002).

Scan Date: 06.16.2015 11:29:58 (-0700)

Queries to: [Human\\_Resources@pps.net](mailto:Human_Resources@pps.net)

## *Portland Public Schools Confidential Investigation Report*

### **Appendix VI**

8/4

Dear PPS Somali Dual Language Collaborative Design Team,

I realize we are meeting next week, but we have been able to secure funding to possibly send a PPS team to Minneapolis to research and visit programs and schools showing success in with Somali students and specifically offering Somali native language literacy courses. The timeline is short with our visit tentatively planned for May 21-22nd. If we are able to go, we would like to include two possible Somali community members in our team. Please let me know if you are interested and able join us by this Thursday.

Assuming we are able to go and include community members, Debbie and I will be working to select a team that represents the various PPS departments and the Somali community.

Mahadsanid,

Michael

Michael Bacon  
Assistant Director of Dual Language Immersion  
Portland Public Schools  
501 N. Dixon  
Portland, OR 97227  
503-916-2000 ext. 71145



## *Portland Public Schools Confidential Investigation Report*

### **Appendix VII**

**July 14, 2015**

#### **Richard Gilliam-Director of School and Family Partnership Programs**

You have been named as the alleged harasser in a complaint by Abdi Jamar. His allegations are Harassment in the form of bullying intimidation, retaliation and working in a hostile work environment. As the investigator, I am here to investigate the complaint. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, witnesses related to the incident(s). Provided Mr. Gilliam with the Anti-harassment directive and asked him to review it, and if he had any questions to please ask them. He didn't have any questions regarding the directive.

1. **The name of your immediate supervisor?** Dr. Harriet Adair
2. **How long have you been employed by the school district?** 2years
3. **What is your role within the district?** The Director of School and Family Partnerships Program
4. **How many direct reports/individuals do you supervise?** 5
5. **What is the unique role of all of your staff?** They each coordinate family engagement activities within the district. Each staff are from differing cultural communities, and work across cultures with differing communities.
6. **Have you attended training regarding discrimination and harassment? What dates? Is your training documented?** June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 the Compliance Training about Workplace Harassment, Discrimination, Bullying, and Retaliation.
7. **Have you reviewed district policy regarding the type of complaint being investigated?** Yes
8. **Do you have any questions regarding the policy or administrative directive reviewed while in my presence?** Yes, I would like to know about false reporting. As the investigator, I explained the district policy regarding false reporting and the investigation process when things are brought to HR attention.
9. **As a leader in a supervisory capacity, how do you interpret the Anti-harassment administrative directive?** As a guideline to me to assure that my behavior with my staff does not include any bullying, or inappropriate interactions with respect with conditions to their employment or work environment.
10. **How do you define bullying?** Acts perpetuated by individuals in a powerful position and then opposing that power on another individual.
11. **How do you define intimidation?** A person in a position of power imposing unnecessary verbal or non-verbal stress that makes the other person feel uncomfortable or that they are in a hostile environment.

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12. **How do you define retaliation?** Once a person has expressed a concern about their treatment internally or within HR, any sort of acts as a result of their report that would create undue duress that is intentionally inflicted to encourage the individual going through with a complaint or moving forward with a complaint.
13. **Have you reviewed the comp time policy, and if so, what do you understand it to mean?** Yes, just yesterday. Individuals are to complete a specific PPS form, and they need to take the comp time within a certain time frame and it must be pre-approved by a supervisor.
14. **Please describe your relationship with each of your staff**
- **Abdi Jamac;** we are cordial, and before I became the director, I worked with the Somali leaders to recognize their academic needs of their community. I had two Somali leaders bring concerns about Abdi to me. This is his community, and I specifically gave him responsibilities as the District Parent Involvement Committee which means that he is the staff lead for the Somali community. We work closely with the DLI department with Michael Bacon, and he received reports about Abdi being disruptive and negative within the Somali community meetings.
  - I don't have a personal relationship with him
15. **Did you share these concerns with Abdi?** I have addressed these concerns with Abdi, but I told him that he has my confidence and that I want him to be the point person.
16. **Please describe your other relationships with the other staff**
- **Andrea Wade**
    - a. Strictly professional, she is the coordinator of the Jefferson Cluster. We have a decent working relationship. Meaning non-problematic.
    - b. Personal- None
  - **Vadim Riskin**
    - a. We have a decent working relationship. Meaning non-problematic.
    - b. Personal- None
  - **Huy Hoang**
    - a. We have a decent working relationship. Meaning non-problematic.
    - b. Personal- None
  - **Veronica Banuelos**
    - a. We have a decent working relationship. Meaning non-problematic.
    - b. Personal- None
  - **Mary Krogh (with Equity Department)**
    - a. We have a decent working relationship. Meaning non-problematic.
    - b. Personal- None
17. **How do you think you may be perceived by each of them?** It's speculative, I'm knowledgeable and I work hard doing this work. They would say that I have a respectful relationship with each of them.

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18. **How often do you have check-ins or supervision with each of them?** I speak to staff regularly, and I asked if I could have staff meetings on Mondays, then it went to us meeting at Rice every Tuesday, then the staff requested that we meet every 2 weeks instead.
19. **Did Abdi speak to you about the Minneapolis trip?** Yes, he spoke to me about going to Minneapolis about visiting his sister not about doing district work or Minneapolis school district work.
20. **Why did you sign the time sheet and approve him to go on worktime?** I thought that I was signing the sheet for personal vacation time. In the Dual emersion meetings, not once did he mention to Michael Bacon or Debbie Armendariz that he was going to Minneapolis for work related things.
21. **When did you find out about the Minneapolis trip being work related?** People talk, and Michael mentioned it to me. On April 30<sup>th</sup> we had a meeting with Michael Bacon to discuss the Somali program, and we gave Abdi a task about speaking to the Somali Community about the community division. He was going to gather some leaders over the weekend and get back to us on Monday, but several hours later I received the email about him being sick.
22. **What is your involvement with each of your staff's cultural communities?** I attend meetings with all my staff and their cultural communities.
23. **Do you lead certain community functions, meetings or events with some of their cultural communities or do you support the staff leading them, and if you support the staff leading them, please describe in what ways?** Because there are more clusters, than staff, I have to attend community functions with other clusters such as Lincoln and Wilson cluster and host meetings.
24. **How have you worked with Abdi with the Somali community?** Yes, but he has been silent, and I have asked him to provide his own thoughts in meetings. In the meetings, he is quiet and doesn't share his thoughts.
25. **What was your intent of scheduling a meeting with Abdi, you and Dr. Adair?** Abdi wanted to have a meeting scheduled with both of us but due to scheduling conflicts, it was difficult to schedule earlier on. In emails, he stated that he wanted to address some of his own concerns and needs. At one point, Abdi was scheduling meetings with everyone including the Superintendent Carole Smith.
26. **What was your goal for the meeting?** To address the Minneapolis trip, and protocols in general.
27. **If Abdi requested the meeting, did he get an opportunity to address his own concerns and needs?** No, he didn't say much.

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28. **What were Abdi reactions and responses to some of your questions (facial expressions, body language, tone of voice etc.)?** His demeanor was fine, and he did not become emotional. I heard that he got really emotional at several meetings with Amanda and the superintendent. I asked him what I could do as a supervisor to improve our relationship. He didn't answer, did he mention that at all in his written question.
29. **Do you recall stating to Abdi in the meeting, "I don't have to listen to your nauseating talk?"** No
30. **What is your response to the allegation/s?** I am disappointed because I have tried hard to uplift this employee, realization that I have a lot of work to do with being a manager.
31. **Please describe why Abdi would report being bullied and harassed by you?** I don't know; in regards to the short-leave form, I did ask him to give it to me as soon as possible, and I was direct.
32. **Where did this interaction occur?** In our office space
33. **Did you bully or harass him during this interaction, or any other interaction with Abdi?** Absolutely not
34. **In any of your interactions, was there anyone else around beside Dr. Adair during your scheduled meeting?** If I yelled at him, Tang may have been present, I am not sure but her office space is near. Tang is the coordinator from TIS, again I am not certain if she was around.
35. **If bullying, intimidation didn't occur with any of your interactions, why might have Abdi made this report against you?** I think that he was embarrassed that he didn't get invited to go to the Minneapolis trip to learn more about best practices working with the Somali Community. During one of our staff meetings, I shared that I was going to be going to Minneapolis and why, and during the meeting Veronica asked out loud if Abdi was attending, and I said no and she asked why, and I shared that I was the only one from our department attending.
36. **Have you ever been disciplined before about this type of complaint?** Never
37. **I have been provided with several emails from Abdi offering additional support to his possible claim of bullying and intimidation; do you have any additional information/documentation to support you?** I would have to look.

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### **Appendix VIII**

**July 15th, 2015**

**Michael Bacon**

I am here to investigate a complaint of possible harassment in the form of workplace bullying. These allegations were brought forward by Abdi Jamac. I will ask you a series of questions related to your observations and interactions, or what you have witnessed from individuals within the department. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please do not guess, please do not speculate. Please note that the district prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation of harassment is strictly prohibited. This prohibition is independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Interviewer asked Mr. Bacon, if he had any additional questions and he stated no.

1. **Your name and position?** Michael Bacon and I am the Assistant Director of the Dual language Immersion Program, and I have been here for 19years.
2. **Who is your immediate supervisor?** Debbie Armendariz and she is the director of the program
3. **Are you aware of and have you reviewed the districts policies concerning the nature of complaints and retaliation?** Yes
4. **In your role, how do you interpret the Anti-harassment Administrative Directive to mean?** It's something that I need to be fully aware of as a manager and I need to take any complaint serious from staff. And, in a position of power I need to be clear about how my role can be interpreted to be as to how my communication and directives are conveyed.
5. **What is your relationship with Abdi Jamac?** He is in the School and Family Partnership department as a Somali coordinator, and the reason why we work together has to do with working with the Somali population and having a significant achievement gap. As a district we have strategized to have an emersion program to decrease that achievement gap. We asked Abdi to join the collaborative design team, and asked him for assistance because of his relationships with the Somali community. I regularly interact with him.

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6. **Was Abdi part of the decision to form a collaborative design team?** No, it was decided at the director level position during the summer time, when all the staff was out of the office with the exception of the directors.
7. **How have you observed Richard interact with Abdi, and if so, what have you observed?** I haven't heard anything negative or observed anything negative, but I recall when he introduced Abdi he talked about Abdi is the go to person, and spoke very highly of him. In the design team meetings when Abdi is present, he is often quite, doesn't show up for the meetings, and when he is present he doesn't take a vocal role, and asks for meeting minutes later. Prior to Abdi going to Minneapolis, he asked to meet with me and Richard about us being divisive (it was on a Wed/Thur) before he went to Minneapolis. He said that we were dividing the community and that needed to back off, but we too got the same information about him from the community. During this meeting, he said that he would handle it and needed 2-3days to figure this out. He didn't mention Minneapolis at all, and I scheduled a meeting on Sunday night to talk about what occurred for the 2-3days, but Abdi declined because he was in Minneapolis.
8. **In a meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, were you aware of Abdi going to Minneapolis?** No, I didn't know until I sent him a meeting request.
9. **On May 13<sup>th</sup>, did you receive an invite to meet with Abdi about his Minneapolis trip?** Yes, but I didn't know that he was going until the date he declined our meeting, and I didn't know what it was about until May 13<sup>th</sup> when he explained in the email about why he was there.
10. **Do you recall leaving him an urgent note requesting a same day meeting on May 13?** Yes, I left him a note because he didn't respond to my email about meeting. Yes, he also stopped by my office, and he was being pretty evasive and we wanted to make sure we weren't crossing wires and every time I asked him who he met with, he wouldn't answer. And, he kept being evasive, and I asked him to send me the information, and he agreed and said that he would send me an email of the contacts.
11. **Did he provide you with a list of contacts for Minneapolis?** Yes, he did.
12. **How long was planning occurring for the design team members to attend the Minneapolis School District?** 2weeks, it was very short notice and it was the end of the year and there was additional funding that we found out about at the last minute.
13. **How many meetings do you think Abdi missed for the collaborative design team?** I'm not certain but my guess is that he attended only ½ of them. He often came late and left early.

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14. **How was the decision made on who would attend the Minneapolis trip?** We wanted a variety of people, and Richard decided that he would attend on behalf of his department.

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### **Appendix IX**

**July 16th, 2015**

**Dr. Harriet Adair**

I am here to investigate a complaint of possible harassment in the form of workplace bullying. These allegations were brought forward by Abdi Jamac. I will ask you a series of questions related to your observations and interactions, or what you have witnessed from Richard in general and amongst his staff. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please do not guess, please do not speculate. Please note that the district prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation of harassment is strictly prohibited. This prohibition is independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Interviewer asked Ms. Vang, if she had any additional questions and she stated no.

1. **Your name and position?** Dr. Harriet Adair and I am the Assistant Superintendent of Students, Family & School Support Portland Public Schools
2. **How long have you worked for the school district and who is your immediate supervisor?** 40plus years and Superintendent Carol Smith
3. **Are you aware of and have you reviewed the districts policies concerning the nature of complaints and retaliation?** Yes
4. **Have you attended training regarding discrimination and harassment? What dates? Is your training documented?** Yes, I think it was in April or May during our leadership meeting.
5. **What is your relationship to Richard Gilliam?** Richard is one of my staff who directs the School and Family Partnership team.
6. **What interactions and communication styles have you observed from Richard?** He has always been professional, he talks a lot and he has a very matter of a fact communication style.
7. **Have you observed or witnessed conversations occurring between Abdi and Richard Gilliam?** Since Richard has become his supervisor only in passing, nothing formal.



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8. **It was reported from Abdi that he has felt excluded from working with the Somali community since Richard has become his supervisor, can you discuss what was the expectation of both of them or between them, understanding that they both have experience working with the Somali community, and in fact, Abdi is Somali?**  
I'm not certain, Willie Poinsette was the interim so I don't know what she communicated between them, but systematically we need to improve upon our communication. Richard was the Jefferson cluster individual and working with the Somali community and Abdi again being Somali and working directly with the Somali community who has a population within the Roosevelt cluster, there was some cross pollination that should have occurred between Richard and Abdi more fluidly.
9. **It was reported that there was a scheduled meeting between you, Abdi, and Richard what was the goal of the meeting with Abdi and Richard?** I thought the meeting was about the role of the school and family partners that Abdi had been trying to schedule for several weeks regarding the Somali community and some of it's tribal and language concerns. I assumed that this meeting was to discuss the details about the Somali language challenges within academia. I explained to Abdi that our meeting was not about the Minneapolis trip, but this is a conversation about how we improve our communication for everyone, and I explained that this is important for you and Richard to have a good relationship. And, I told him that I would excuse myself from the meeting if he would like, and he said no that I didn't need to. My goal in asking him that is because I wanted to preserve their relationship as well, and I didn't want it to be a power differential but again, he said that I didn't need to leave.
10. **Were you aware that he was meeting with Carol?** Not until after he met with her, I think that it was great he met with her because sometimes Carol doesn't get to see the processes but the outcome, and it shows that she is open to hearing from all staff about their accomplishments and the direct work that they are providing for our students. Carol mentioned that she had a general conversation and that he invited her to the Somali Leadership event as well.
11. **Do you recall Richard making a comment to Abdi about Do you recall Richard stating to Abdi in the meeting, "I don't have to listen to your nauseating talk?"**  
Absolutely not.
12. **How was Richards demeanor?** He was very a matter of fact, and shared with Abdi that he was his main guy and that he has put him in the forefront about working with the Somali community.
13. **What did you share with Abdi?** I reiterated clear expectations and the importance of us all communicating well. I was clear and in a very calm voice.

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### **Appendix X**

**July 16th, 2015**

**Teng Vang**

I am here to investigate a complaint of possible harassment in the form of workplace bullying. These allegations were brought forward by Abdi Jamac. I will ask you a series of questions related to your observations and interactions, or what you have witnessed from individuals within the department. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please do not guess, please do not speculate. Please note that the district prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation of harassment is strictly prohibited. This prohibition is independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Interviewer asked Ms. Vang, if she had any additional questions and she stated no.

1. **Your name and position?** Teng Vang and I am the Program Coordinator of the Translation and Interpretation Services Program (TIS).
2. **How long have you worked for the school district and who is your immediate supervisor?** I have worked for the district for 2years and Willie Poinsette is my supervisor.
3. **Are you aware of and have you reviewed the districts policies concerning the nature of complaints and retaliation?** Yes
4. **What is your relationship with Richard Gilliam?**
  - Professional, he is the director of one program and I am a coordinator of a different program.
  - Personal: No relationship outside of work
5. **What is your relationship with the School and Family Partnership staff?** We are all professional and cordial; we don't hang out after work or on weekends at all.
6. **Have you observed or witnessed any interactions or conversations between Abdi and Richard?** Very minimal, my cubicle is right next to Abdi. Richard is very professional, and Abdi is barely there and they are rarely there at the same time. I have never seen or heard Richard yell or raise his voice, and the one time he asked Abdi for some type of paper, nothing sounded like he was harassing him or using his authority. The day that I am referencing, Richard told him that he would like to have the document, he used his everyday voice. Honestly, I haven't heard Richard yell or talk really aggressively or be irritated with anyone.

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7. **Have you witnessed any other interactions amongst Richard and the other coordinators?** No, again they are gone a lot and work in the community so I rarely see them and Richard.
8. **Do you recall other staff present the day that you are referring about a paper?**  
No, I don't think anyone else was present besides Abdi and Richard.
9. **Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you would like to share?** No

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### **Appendix XI**

*August 18, 2015*

*Andrea Wade-School and Family Partnership Coordinator*

I am here to investigate a complaint of possible harassment in the form of workplace bullying. These allegations were brought forward by Abdi Jamac. I will ask you a series of questions related to your observations, interactions, experiences and what you have witnessed between staff in the department including your supervisor Richard Gilliam. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please do not guess, please do not speculate. Please note that the district prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation of harassment is strictly prohibited. This prohibition is independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Interviewer asked Ms. Wade, if she had any additional questions and she stated yes. Ms. Wade wanted to know more about the investigation process and what the processes and procedures are internal to HR. I explained my role more specifically and the Employee Relations role in general, I also provided Ms. Wade with information regarding what clusters and employee groups the Employee Relations Department assists with.

1. **The name of your immediate supervisor?** Richard Gilliam
2. **How long have you been employed by the school district?** I have worked with PPS for 6years in October and in the same role for 6years.
3. **Have you attended training regarding discrimination and harassment?** No
4. **Have you reviewed district Anti-harassment administrative directive?** Yes
5. **Do you have any questions regarding the policy or administrative directive reviewed while in my presence?** No
  - a. **Please describe your relationship with your supervisor:**
    - **Work:** When he first started, I was optimistic and overtime, the same continuous stuff started happening. In the beginning we had a great team discussion about being honest and transparent, and we talked about great ideas for the team, but nothing ever formulated. I went to the entire year without a job description. Again, it started out as great, and at first I dismissed it as he was just new, but at some point you have to give direction to your team, and it never occurred. I became quite concerned with the way things were handled and discussed in staff meetings. For example, if certain people weren't at the meetings, they were blamed and talked about by Richard during our meetings. At one team meeting, we were told that Lorenzo was responsible for getting rid of our positions at the last round of layoffs, and that is not something you say to your staff. At another meeting he said that there was a personality issue between

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Kaholini and Lorenzo and this is why we were having problems with Beyond Diversity Trainings.

- Outside of work: None

6. **Describe your work environment?** Things started out great then turned hostile. There has been no direction, and no guidance and I didn't feel supported.
7. **How do you describe hostile?** When you have your supervisor/director who will do and say things that prevent you from doing the best job that you can, or that hinder your work performance, hostile meaning you don't know what is going to happen day to day. It's almost like being in an abusive relationship, you question their behaviors day to day and you don't know what the environment is going to entail day to day. Going into meetings, things are not clear about what is going to happen. Often times being lied on, and when you try to give clarity about what actually happened, you are shut down really quick. Things are done in a way to block you from being successful; it is like walking on egg shells all the time working with him as your supervisor. I walk into the environment that makes me sick and anxious.
8. **When did the work environment turn hostile?** October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014. One of my kids was able to escape from Woodlawn School and walk to Wendy's off of Lombard, and my supervisor directed me to not speak to her and coached me to be careful about what I say to her because it could lead to a lawsuit. I explained to Richard that I met with the mother, Tamberly and he consistently said that I am disappointed in you but yelling, he said it about 4x. I attempted to explain on several occasions that in my role we communicate to families, and we understand how to keep our boundaries as well. The mom had experienced something traumatic, and wanted to assure that her child was safe. At a later date, the mother sent both Richard and I text messages about issues about the principal who name is Andrea as well. He assumed that she was complaining about me and not the principal, and immediately he went off on me, and didn't allow me to speak and explain what the mother had communicated with me in persona about the principal named Andrea. I asked him, why he thought that she sent it to both of us if she was speaking negatively about me, he didn't respond and later realized his mistake.
9. **Whom are you referring to that has created a hostile work environment for you?**  
Richard
10. **Have you observed bullying, threatening behaviors or actions from Richard toward other staff (when/what)?** No, I have only experienced it with myself. I have had staff who have come and talk to me about being yelled at. For myself, I experienced harassment on August 10<sup>th</sup> just recently. As a department, we work 225's and we have to make up or 5days throughout the summer time. I worked my 5days prior to August 10th, and I received an email on July 20th, stating that we should be back to work on August 3rd and on August 7th, I received a voicemail stating something similar. However, when I am off of work, I don't check my emails throughout the summer unless it is when I am in the office and working during that 5day time period. At any rate, I called Richard to let him know that I already worked my 5days over the summer, and he begins to yell at me on the phone. I remained calm, I let him finish then I immediately explained what the 225 contract states about the initial email that was sent from Michelle in HR. Upon my return on Monday

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which is the day that I was required to return based on the contract, Richard placed an orange sticky on my desk saying a mandatory meeting at 4:15. Of course, I didn't know what it was about, and I didn't feel comfortable going without someone present, so I asked Kaholini to sit in with me. In this meeting, I was questioned about the email Richard sent to me about the work schedule, I was asked about stolen booklets from young Black and gifted program that I ordered, then during the meeting I was ordered to go and complete a document about my 5 days worked. As I went to go get my document, Richard follows me and sits in the walk way and watches me. Prior to him following me, while in the meeting he yells at me for asking for clarifying questions about Kaholini being present, I felt like a hostage in the room. While I was getting my document, I turn around and I asked him was he waiting for me, and he turns around and says, "you can say that." Then Mary-Elizabeth joins me, and now they are both watching and hovering over me. And, again I still didn't know what the purpose of the meeting was about, especially when HR is involved, that is not a simple conversation between you and your supervisor.

11. **Earlier you mentioned that staff have spoken to you about being yelled at who were they?** Veronica Banuelos and Huy Hoang
12. **Have you ever addressed any of your concerns with Dr. Adair?** No, and I don't feel like I can. It seems like managers and directors are protected here which doesn't make it safe to share with the leader of the department that you may be experiencing harassment or bullying.
13. **How did you feel after this meeting on August 10?** This was just one example of harassment that I have experienced but the day that this happened, it was so bad, that I couldn't drive; my mother had to pick me up from work. I was threatened in the meeting and told that if I leave the meeting that I would be insubordinate and would be terminated, and even talking about it now, I feel sick. I like my job so to be told that I can't leave despite what I am experiencing is hostile. I have been so sick, I feel anxious and nervous and this is too much. I don't feel safe, and I don't feel like there is going to be any relief. He could have simply had a basic staff meeting and apologized for his own mistake, and to say that this is a meeting with your supervisor but to have HR present means something different.
14. **Has Abdi ever addressed any concerns or experiences about Richard to you?** No, but you can sense he has been struggling along with all of each us. One time, I went to get food from a Somali meeting in the building, and I asked him was he going, and he said no that Richard has been excluding him from this process of working with the Somali community.
15. **Is there additional information, documentation or descriptions of circumstances you would like to add to the investigation?** My experience last week was so bad that Abdi was sitting in his cubicle with a nervous look on his face, and he wasn't even one of the people being interviewed from my understanding. He witnessed the experience from Richard yelling at me last week, because his cubicle is right next to mine, and he was right there. There were others in the department who could hear the yelling. He stood up and jittered over me. It was a situation where I felt like I needed to remain calm. I don't trust HR, I don't feel safe being in a 1:1 meeting with Richard only. If we are in the same space, I'm leaving. It's scary. I'm not eating, I'm jittery.

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It was the worst feeling in the world to feel like you couldn't protect yourself or possibly feed your kids tomorrow because of your job being threatened.

**16. Is there anything else that you would like to share that I haven't asked you? No**

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### **Appendix XII**

**August 19, 2015**

**Vadim Riskin-** Senior Manager of Family School and Partnerships

I am here to investigate a complaint of possible harassment in the form of workplace bullying. I will ask you a series of questions related to your observations, experiences within the department and with the supervisor and your colleagues. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please do not guess, please do not speculate. Please note that the district prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation of harassment is strictly prohibited. This prohibition is independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Interviewer asked Mr. Riskin, if he had any additional questions and he stated no.

1. **The name of your immediate supervisor?** Richard Gilliam
2. **How long have you been employed by the school district, and what is your role?**  
I have been here 22years, and I am in manager within the department.
3. **Have you attended training regarding discrimination and harassment?** No
4. **Have you reviewed the district Anti-harassment administrative directive?** Yes
5. **Do you have any questions regarding the administrative directive reviewed?** No
6. **Describe your work environment?** Richard has been part of the team for a year, and he started out well, and it looked like he wanted the department to be successful and he had great plans for us even though I did not hear about them directly. With any boss, there is ups and downs but around March things began to change for our staff (not me personally). During our staff meetings, Richard started having conversations about other people negatively (leaders, managers, etc.) in other departments, and, I knew that if he began speaking negatively about others, they would do the same about our department. I was concerned about this so I spoke to him directly about my concern.
7. **How did he respond to you addressing your concern?** Positively but he didn't change his behavior, and things stayed the same.
8. **Please describe your relationship with your supervisor; Richard Gilliam:**
9. **Work:** There is no relationship, I really tried to meet with him regularly and I asked him often if he needed some support, he told me that I need to understand that he is the boss, and that everyone reports to him and not to me. To me, he didn't want to have a middle-man, and if I was him I would do it differently. I would have staff report to the manager, he told me not to go behind his back and speak to Harriet about any concerns that I may have. I am very isolated by him. In the beginning of the year, I was invited to many leadership meetings, and later I was told by a colleague that I was no longer invited and that Richard only represents our department. Before my vacation in July 2015, I didn't have a bad relationship with Richard; I just didn't have one at all. But, I have tried up until his recent antics with Mary-Elizabeth last week.



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10. Outside of work: None

**11. What happened last week with Richard?** I came in to find that I had to meet with him and Mary-Elizabeth, I didn't know about what or why. I wasn't given any information. It was terrible; I was accused of all sorts of things. I don't trust this process or HR, I don't understand why we are treated like this from Richard and Mary-Elizabeth, these antics are ridiculous.

**12. Have you experienced or observed bullying, threatening behaviors or actions from Richard toward other staff (when/what)?** Yes, toward me once during training at Marshall, he yelled at me about attending a communication meeting saying that he is the boss and he didn't appreciate me attending the meeting without him. Later, I told him I didn't appreciate him yelling at me, and doing so in front of other people. He didn't apologize and down played what happened, and I wasn't clear about why he was yelling at me in the first place. I have witnessed him raising his voice toward women, and posturing over them as well.

**13. What women do you believe have experienced him raising his voice and posturing behavior?** I have witnessed him raising voice and posturing over Andrea and Veronica at different gatherings or meetings when he wasn't happy with something. And, these are forms of intimidation but I don't think he understands this.

**14. As the manager, has other staff spoken to you about any concerns or behaviors they have experienced by Richard? Did you ever witness anything with Abdi?** Yes, Abdi, he has spoken to me directly about being afraid of Richard and that he felt the Richard is trying to put his community against him but I never witnessed anything personally.

**15. Did Abdi say why he was afraid of Richard?** He told me about his meeting about Richard and Harriet, and Richard was lying throughout the meeting. He expressed that he would no longer meet with either one of them, he was mostly concerned about his relationship with his community.

**16. Did Richard ever confide in you about concerns about staff?** Yes, just a little bit and I tried to have regular meetings but we only had 1xmeeting together all year. He did say that coordinators are so Naïve that coordinators go to HR and that I know 5min later why they went to HR and what they said in HR.

**17. It was reported that you were told that the department was going to be dismantled, is this true and if so who told you this information?** Yes, this was told to me by Mary-Elizabeth in our meeting last week which was again very negative.

**18. Is there additional information, documentation or descriptions of circumstances you would like to add to the investigation?** Upon my return to work, I received an email on July 20<sup>th</sup> stating that I needed to return to work because he needed to produce staff training. I told him okay, even though I wasn't expected to return as a 225 employee until August 10<sup>th</sup>. I had already worked my 5 days, but I came in when he asked on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, which would have been my 6<sup>th</sup> day. On my first day back on August 10<sup>th</sup>, when I returned again after my day on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, I went to speak to him just to check in and say hello and to see how was his summer, he asked me if I received an email about meeting with him and HR (Mary-Elizabeth), I said no and he

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asked me did I check my email and I said yes, I do not have an email, I checked my email while he came into my office and he said that I was going to be disciplined for not coming in on August 3<sup>rd</sup> which I did and he wasn't present. I tried to explain this to him and he said that he couldn't have the conversation with me about this matter, and he left the office. He later came back and confirmed that Mary-Elizabeth didn't send the email, then he sent me an email about meeting later that day. I have never had any HR issue, I have been at the district for 20years, I went to the meeting at 2:30 printed out the email that proved my response to him, and met with them, and they later after their assumptions, accusations, they said never mind at the end of the conversation.

- 19.** In the beginning of the conversation, I was accused of lying and Mary-Elizabeth said, "I hope you know why you are here, and it's because you didn't work your 5days." She said that the department would be dismantled (the decision has been made) and she said we need to start thinking about how to provide these services for our parents. I tried to calm them down and discuss this situation and not the larger departmental concerns and issues. Richard starts telling me that he was very upset that I didn't show up, I told them that I had all of my information and days worked and emails that I sent to Richard and his reply to me, and I showed him the email. Mary-Elizabeth asked him, was it true that he had this email, and while he looked for it; she told me, if can't find it, it's your word against his, and he is your boss and you will be fired. He finally found the email, and then they moved on and asked me to print my calendar. The way they did this to me was unbelievable, I'm from the former Soviet Union, and you don't treat people this way. I left the office, and went to mine and my doors were closed and I continued to hear yelling and screaming, shouting saying get out, get out, get out. It was a bad situation. Andrea and Veronica were meeting with them after me.
- 20. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me, that I haven't asked you?** He needs to lead by example, and he is not a good manager, it is my impression that he thinks that we are not smart or bright enough, and we all have degrees.

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### **Appendix XIII**

August 20, 2015

#### **Huy Hoang-School and Family Coordinator**

I am here to investigate a complaint of possible harassment in the form of workplace bullying. These allegations were brought forward by Abdi Jamac. I will ask you a series of questions related to your observations, interactions, experiences and what you have witnessed between staff in the department including your supervisor Richard Gilliam. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please do not guess, please do not speculate. Please note that the district prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation of harassment is strictly prohibited. This prohibition is independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Interviewer asked Mr. Hoang, if he had any additional questions and he stated no. And began to share the following,

Before you began can I share a little with you about what I have seen and experienced myself. I graduated from the University of Oregon and I have an architect degree. I applied for this job, and I got it. I have been here for 21years and I love my community and education, and I had passion for this work that I do. But, the last two years haven't been good, but I feel like I'm losing my passion. My experience with Richard, he began supervising us last year and nothing has moved forward. There has been a number of times when speaking with me where he raises his voice, one time, he came to my office and said that I need to see you, and when I walked in the hallway he put his finger on me, and said "I hear that you will lose your job, you didn't show up at a meeting." I don't understand why he didn't ask me first to understand why I didn't attend the meeting. He put his finger on me, and no other man has ever done this but my father. Another time, my dog died, and asked to take 1day off to bury my dog and he said okay. Later 1-2weeks in a team meeting, I heard him over say to my peers, "I don't know why people are depressed over losing their dog." I was disappointed in him as my manager, and I can't believe that he said this to my people about my feelings. Another time, my co-worker Veronica said to me that Richard said to her that he needs to get rid of me. I have saw some things and I experienced harassment too. And, in our staff meetings, if a staff member is not present, he talks about us negatively when the person is not present; I am really disappointed in him.

- 1. The name of your immediate supervisor?** Richard Gilliam
- 2. How long have you been employed by the school district?** 21years
- 3. Have you attended training regarding discrimination and harassment?** I don't recall for staff but for staff but I did attend Courageous Conversations.
- 4. Have you reviewed the district Anti-harassment administrative directive?** Yes
- 5. Do you have any questions regarding the policy or administrative directive reviewed while in my presence?** No

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**6. Describe your work environment?** One time, I saw that Vadim our senior manager would say something to him, and he pulled Vadim to the side and pointed his finger in his face, Richard was upset, it was far away but his body language and his facial expressions weren't good. And, Andrea told me several time she feels dreadful, I told her to be strong. Abdi said one day that he has been through a lot of difficult times with Richard and that he doesn't support him with his work in the Somali community and that Richard talks bad about me in my community, and my community comes back and shares this with me. Abdi really wants to quit, and I understand this because I do too. But, I keep telling myself, if I walk away from this job, then I walk away from me. My co-workers are talented and have a gift.

**7. Please describe your relationship with your supervisor; Richard Gilliam:**

- Work: I tried to have a relationship with him when he shared about his proposal to his wife and him taking care of his mother. I understand because I can relate. In the beginning, I think that he is a good person but when he talks about others including me, and puts his finger on me, it's not good for me.
- Outside of work: None

**8. How is Richard Communication with you?** An example was when I planned a conference last year at Franklyn high school with an Asian organization, Richard asked me to submit a budget and I did on several times, and we all waited for a response from him about moving forward. I emailed him on several occasions, and spoke to him on several occasions about the budget, and he waited until the last minute to approve it, but it was too late to figure out other resources that we really needed because certain things were not approved in the budget. He doesn't communicate well, it is poor, but I love the work and the community I work with.

**9. Have you observed bullying, threatening behaviors or actions from Richard toward any staff (when/what)?** One time, I saw that Vadim our senior manager would say something to him, and he pulled Vadim to the side and pointed his finger in his face, Richard was upset, it was far away but his body language and his facial expressions weren't good. And, Andrea told me several times that she feels dreadful, I told her to be strong. Abdi said one day that he has been through a lot of difficult times with Richard and that he doesn't support him with his work in the Somali community and that Richard talks bad about me in my community, and my community comes back and shares this with me. Abdi really wants to quit, because I do to. But, I keep telling myself, if I walk away from this job, then I walk away from me. My co-workers are talented and have a gift.

**10. Did you consider addressing some of your concerns with Richard or Dr. Adair, his supervisor?** No, but prior to him getting the job, we asked a lot of questions about collaborating with families, and he didn't answer the questions. He knows a lot about politics but not about parent involvement.

**11. Is there additional information, documentation or descriptions of circumstances you would like to add to the investigation?** I just have questions

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about why he is our manager, and that I had people who understand what they are doing. I don't understand why he got the job, he doesn't have a plan, and what does leadership see in him. I'm disappointed in our leadership, and Richard doesn't support us.

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### **Appendix XIV**

***August 14, 2015***

***Veronica Banuelos***

I am here to investigate a complaint of possible harassment in the form of workplace bullying. These allegations were brought forward by Abdi Jamac. I will ask you a series of questions related to your observations, interactions, experiences and what you have witnessed between staff in the department including your supervisor Richard Gilliam. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please do not guess, please do not speculate. Please note that the district prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation of harassment is strictly prohibited. This prohibition is independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Interviewer asked Ms. Banuelos, if she had any additional questions and she stated no.

**1. The name of your immediate supervisor?** Richard Gilliam

**2. How long have you been employed by the school district?** 10years and I am the School and Family Partnership Coordinator for the Roosevelt Cluster. In my cluster, I work with mentors and programs that work with parents and share resources, and I work specific with leadership development for parents also who speak Spanish.

**3. Have you attended training regarding discrimination and harassment?** No, I haven't

**4. Have you reviewed district Anti-harassment administrative directive?** Yes

**5. Do you have any questions regarding the policy or administrative directive reviewed while in my presence?** No

**6. Please describe your relationship with your supervisor:**

- Work: It's very negative; my heart stops when he comes into a room. My experiences with him have been abusive, he displays domestic violence tactics. I am a DV survivor and I can see him powering over people, how he pumps his chest out at people. The way that he talks about people, and the way he instigates, and if you are not in the room, you will receive the short-end of the stick, he often talks negatively about others in other departments. He has said that Kim Fox-Middleton is jealous of him, he has spoken badly about Von Trang in our staff meeting, he has spoken bad about Quay and said that he was going to try and get rid of her, and she is my colleague. He would say there is a member of our team who is making us look bad, and we will know who he is speaking about because they wouldn't be present.
- Outside of work: None

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Nobody has a good relationship with Richard. The nature of job is to work laterally across the district and the community, the whole nature of our job is to push for inclusion for our students and our parents. The fact of how we are aligned in the district and our work it is very fluid, and there is nothing to be accountable for because there is no work plan, and we don't have job descriptions either. Staff meetings have been put in place but they don't have any structure, our staff meetings are not productive. I feel like we are not a priority for him, and he is comfortable in his leadership position and will cancel attending the staff meeting and tell us to meet without him because he has a meeting.

**7. Have you observed bullying, threatening behaviors or actions from Richard toward anyone (when/what)?** Yes, on this past Monday with both Mary-Elizabeth and Richard were yelling, Mary-Elizabeth continued to sit-up and say "Let him Speak, Let him Speak." I asked her about my job description, and she got in my face, and said good-bye and opened the door and kicked me out." Kaholani was kicked out in the meeting with Andrea, Veronica Magallanes was kicked out of the meeting with me as well, and I still don't know what kind of meeting it was or what it was about. It was absolutely horrible about what took place on Monday. There was a whole lot of scared people in our office area. Vadim, me, and Andrea, and Abdi is the only one who didn't meet with them individually and Huy wasn't here. Amongst our peer group, we are all fearful. The biggest question is how can somebody get away with this and nothing happens, and for so long. My relationship with him has been hostile since March. On Monday, he said if you are not in my office in 2min, I will take disciplinary actions against you, and he was late and I was waiting for him and I asked Veronica M to meet with us so she could take notes. This past Monday during Andreas meeting, she was asked to get something from her desk/file and she stepped out of the office where they were meeting, and came to her desk. While at her desk, he followed her and was hovering over her while she grabbed what she needed, I felt like this was intimidating and threatening. In regards to other staff, I have never witnessed anything between Abdi and Vadim, but Abdi has shared some things. Abdi has shared things like, he has been isolated from the work of the Somali community and he feels hurt. Vadim was told that we were going to be dismantled, and he was told this by Mary-Elizabeth. This is threatening and intimidating behavior.

**8. Is there additional information that you would like to add that I haven't asked you?** I feel ill and stressed about this, this stress from being the first day back on Monday from break is taking over my life. I personally think that Richard has an old school way of what managing is, and he operates in a very authoritarian way. I think he wants to get rid of us, and hire new staff.

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### **Appendix XV**

**9/15/2015**

**Mary Krogh**

I am here to investigate a complaint of possible harassment in the form of workplace bullying. I will ask you a series of questions related to your observations, experiences within the department and with the supervisor and your colleagues. Please respond with concrete, factual information including dates, times, and/or other witnesses related to the incident(s). Please do not guess, please do not speculate. Please note that the district prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation of harassment is strictly prohibited. This prohibition is independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Interviewer asked Ms. Krogh, if she had any additional questions and she stated no, and began to share the following, “Richard was only my boss for approximately 5 months, I accepted another position within PPS, and I gave my notice to Richard and Harriet during the holidays. I thought it would be important for you to know that I wasn’t in that position long with the other School and Family Partnership Coordinators.”

**1. What was your role when you supervised by Richard?** I was School and Family Coordinator as well but I have worked in the school district for at least 9 years in differing capacities.

**2. What is your role in the district?** I am an attendance coordinator for the district

**3. What was the working environment like when you were supervised by Richard?** Richard did some odd things to me, for example, prior to me leaving, we were planning our team retreat, even though I gave him my notice prior to the retreat, I planned on attending anyway. But, when I arrived, it was clear that I wasn’t welcomed, and he stated that the retreat was only for staff moving forward with the department, it was awkward and odd, he made me I wasn’t part of the team so I shouldn’t participate in the training. He didn’t yell at me or didn’t say anything overtly disrespectful, but he was patronizing.

**4. Did you ever observe witness or experience any other behaviors between Richard and other staff?** There were some positive things that Richard did in the beginning when he first became the director. Once I recall him attending a DPAC meeting at one of my title I schools, and he complimented me in front of the entire family and group. He was very proactive and that will always stand out to me because our roles can be isolating and I had never had a supervisor attend the meeting and stay engaged while being there.

**5. What is your relationship with each of the staff today?** I have partnered with the team in the past, and today I have positive relationships with all of them because of my role of running the ESL welcome centers.

**6. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me that I haven’t asked you?** No









PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Human Resources**

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**Via Email Delivery**

January 14, 2016

Richard Gilliam

Notice: Proposed Pending Re-assignment of Supervisory Duties

Dear Mr. Gilliam,

You have been an employee of Portland Public Schools, Office of School and Family Partnerships (SFP), as a limited term employee since November 1, 2013, when you were hired as a Coordinator – School Outreach. In this position you focused on community outreach and performing community organizing. On September 11, 2014, you were promoted to the position of Director – Family Engagement. In addition to the duties outlined above, a primary function of this position is to provide leadership in the creation of a professional work environment that collectively galvanizes and engages staff in collaboratively developing and building a vision for success.

There is no prior discipline noted in your personnel file.

#### Background

In August 2015, the Human Resources Department retained an external investigator to conduct a thorough investigation of the allegations brought by staff members of SFP that you supervise and staff from the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) regarding your behavior and conduct, along with the behavior and conduct of a HR Sr. Manager who co-conducted the series of meetings and interactions that occurred on August 10, 2015. The staff members involved alleged that you and the HR Sr. Manager had subjected them to abusive and unprofessional treatment in the course of your investigatory meetings. Specifically, they alleged that this occurred during the meetings you scheduled for SFP staff to discuss their alleged unauthorized leave of absence from working the five summer workdays. The meetings were called by you because you were concerned that your staff had not worked the five mandatory days during the summer of 2015 (between July 1-August 10) as required by the terms of their employment.