

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Chelmsford Schools to Face 17 Counts at State Labor Board Hearing**

**Chelmsford, MA** – The Chelmsford Superintendent of Schools and other school department officials repeatedly violated the law, both verbally and in writing, following a November 22, 2017 incident created by school administrators themselves, according to a complaint issued by the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations (DLR).

A significant charge of the 17 to be heard at a March 2018 hearing involves the probable cause finding by the DLR that Chelmsford Superintendent of Schools Jay Lang made false statements to the news media regarding the original incident late last year.

“The state Department of Labor Relations ruling found that the facts support our complaint that the school department chose to call the police rather than set up a meeting to talk to the union about serious issues of workplace safety,” said **AFT Massachusetts President Beth Kontos**. “Then they repeatedly disparaged the union and its president to justify their actions.”

The complaint stems from a school visit by the then local union president and AFT Massachusetts field representative who went to the school prior to the start of class to arrange a meeting with the principal to discuss issues of workplace safety. The principal refused to meet with them or set up a time to meet. Without even first asking them to leave, the school district had the police escort both of them out. The local president was a teacher in that school and was put out on leave rather than allowing her to teach that day.

#### The Counts:

1. It was unlawful when the Superintendent called the police to prevent the Union from scheduling a meeting to address work place issues.
2. It was unlawful to then send President Jennifer Salmon home.
3. Using the police to escort Salmon out of the building violated the law.
4. Placing union president Salmon on administrative leave violated the law.
5. Prohibiting Salmon from speaking to other union members while on leave was in violation of the law.
6. The Superintendent’s meeting with staff on the day of the incident and his characterization of the day’s events violated the law.
7. At that meeting the Superintendent said “there was a right way and a wrong way to get help within the school.” This independently violated the law.
8. The Superintendent released an official statement that violated the law.
9. The Superintendent’s email to employees and parents likewise violated the law.
10. The Superintendent’s false statement to the Lowell Sun violated the law.
11. The Superintendent’s Nov. 28th email to employees and parents also violated the law.
12. The School District sought to prevent the Union representative from speaking to unit members regarding the “incident,” thus violating the law.
13. The School violated the law by trying to prevent the union representative and Union vice president from representing their members who were being interrogated as part of the District’s investigation.

14. The Employer violated the law by interrogating employees about their contact with the Union and if they had requested help from the Union.
15. The written reprimand against Jennifer Salmon violated the law.
16. School Committee Member Moses' Facebook post declaring that he wouldn't work with the Union representative violated the law.
17. The principal called Jennifer Salmon and told her that the working conditions of a fellow teacher were "none of her business" thereby violating the law.

"The Union looks forward to a public hearing on these extensive violations of state labor laws," **Kontos** added. "These attempts to discourage union members from advocating for a safe working environment are against the best interests of everyone – not just teachers, but students, their families, and the community."

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*The AFT Massachusetts, a strong voice for collaborative education reform that is good for students and fair to educators, represents more than 25,000 public school employees, higher education faculty and staff, and public librarians.*