

## Montclair Assessments May Not Have Been Leaked After All

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The Montclair Board of Education appointed attorney Mark Tabakin to conduct the investigation into possibly leaked assessments. Photo credit: Teresa Akersten

Township manager said permissions glitch on server placed files in public view; whether investigation will continue remains unclear.

Student assessments posted to a public website in October were not “leaked,” according to a memo sent by Montclair’s township manager to the township council last week.

The assessments, the memo dated Dec. 29 stated, were saved with the wrong permissions on a server shared by the Montclair Board of Education and the township.

“This setting allowed anyone to be able to access the files from the Internet,” the township’s Director of Internet Technology Joseph Fagliarone explained in the memo prepared by Township Manager Marc Dashield.

Whether there was a security breach has been the focus of an [investigation launched by the Montclair Board of Education](#) on Nov. 1 after 14 tests [appeared on the public website Gobooke.org](#) just days before they were to be administered to students.

It remained unclear Tuesday if the information in the memo would put an end to the investigation.

“I am happy that we have some judgment, what I’m concerned about though is that we don’t have an independent judgment,” School Board Member David Deutsch said Tuesday.

The BOE was not made privy to the information in the memo and learned about it through the media earlier this week, Deutsch said.

In December, the [town council voted to prohibit the BOE from accessing the joint servers](#) they share as part of the investigation into how the assessments may have ended up online.

“There seems to be an enormous effort to prevent the board from looking at its own information,” Deutsch said. “We haven’t had access to the server to understand what happened.”

The memo answers questions posed by Councilman Sean Spiller regarding the security of the township’s network, including, was there a security breach to the township’s servers?

The answers provided by Fagliarone indicate that there was no security breach.

“It was determined that no hacking or successful intrusion into our network from the point of entry ‘Firewall’ was found,” the memo stated.

When the news broke of the compromised assessments, Fagliarone said he worked with Network Administrator Alan Benezra, who was employed by the township and the BOE, to determine “if there were any attempts to obtain information from internal or external sources.”

“We reviewed the firewall logs and logs of all servers to determine that there was no intrusion,” Fagliarone said.

Meanwhile, Benezra is [no longer working in the capacity of network administrator](#) to the BOE, The Montclair Times reported on Dec. 30.

“I am unwilling to speculate on the facts surrounding Mr. Benezra,” Deutsch said.

“It’s a head scratcher to me that our employee did not provide us with the information that was requested,” Deutsch said.

The board’s investigation cannot be put to an end without a formal meeting of the group.

“We will need to meet as a board to discuss what the next steps will be,” Deutsch said.