

JOINT COMMISSION OF THE CHANCELLOR AND THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF INVESTIGATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Board of Education
Ramon C. Cortines
Chancellor

The Special Commissioner of Investigation
Edward F. Stancik
Special Commissioner

NEWS RELEASE
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Press Conference:
Special Commissioner's Office
25 Broadway, 8th floor
11 AM

Special Commissioner of Investigation Edward F. Stancik and Chancellor Ramon C. Cortines today will release the Final Report of their Joint Commission for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, which proposes a comprehensive approach to deterring child sexual abuse in the schools. The Joint Commission's Final Report marks the first time that individuals and groups dedicated to the safety and welfare of schoolchildren, from parent representatives to the teachers', principals' and custodians' union, medical experts, child advocacy groups and school officials, have come together to pro-actively attack the problem of child sexual abuse. The first of its kind, the Final Report should serve as a model for school systems throughout the country that strive to create a safe learning environment for their students.

The Joint Commission was established as a result of the over 100 cases of child sexual abuse by New York City school employees which had been substantiated by the Special Commissioner's office since 1991. The Commission's report urges the leaders of the New York City school system to send an unambiguous, cohesive and strong statement to set the proper tone regarding sexual misconduct in the schools.

The Joint Commission's recommendations, if fully implemented, would ensure that when a child discloses sexual abuse to any school employee, that employee would have been trained in the appropriate response. The child's allegation would immediately be in the hands of law enforcement professionals, the best way to ensure a prompt and thorough investigation. Each school would have a "case coordinator" to refer the child for physical and/or psychological treatment. Child Advocacy Centers, by consolidating interviews of the medical, law enforcement and legal authorities speaking with the child, would reduce the child's exposure to these traumatic encounters. In addition, prospective employees will be more vigorously screened and disciplinary proceedings would be handled by an experienced attorney who will counsel parents on the system's intricacies.