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NEWS RELEASE
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Investigation Finds Additional Cheating by Educators at CES 88 in the Bronx

Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District Edward F. Stancik today released a letter to Chancellor Harold O. Levy, which details cheating by three teachers at CES 88 in District 9 in the Bronx during the administration of the Citywide reading test in April 1999. In an earlier report, *Cheating the Children*, released in December 1999, the Commissioner documented misconduct at CES 88 during testing in 1995 and 1998. Once again, investigators have established that – even while the school was under investigation – Teachers Anna Rivera, who was implicated in the cheating in prior years, Lalmatie Ramrup, and Barbara Tannenbaum prompted students to change incorrect answers.

The current case, involving the spring 1999 reading exams, came to light when students inadvertently revealed the misconduct to other teachers during a prep course for the upcoming math test. The students questioned the need to prepare because they expected to be given the answers by Ramrup and Tannenbaum. This expectation was based on the teachers' actions just one week earlier during the administration of the reading test. Acting as co-proctors, both educators prompted their class to change wrong answers. Investigators later confirmed that Rivera also cheated on the reading test by explaining questions and pointing out incorrect choices on student answer sheets.

As the Commissioner's letter details, when the teachers of the prep course attempted to report the information provided by the students, they received unexpected resistance from Principal Jeffrey Fisher. Instead of reporting the matter to this office, Fisher conducted his own "investigation," a process that included the interrogation and harassment of the reporting children and faculty members. Fisher's reaction to the complaint was meant to bury the information. However, following Commissioner Stancik's December 1999 release of *Cheating The Children: Educator Misconduct On Standardized Tests*, the reporting teachers directly contacted his office.

In addition to the information provided by those teachers, many other educators and students cooperated with our inquiry, providing a variety of relevant and corroborating evidence against Rivera, Ramrup, Tannenbaum, and Fisher.

The Commissioner's letter again is critical of the school system's method of reporting wrongdoing. As it details, in April 1999, a teacher at the school went over Fisher's head to report the allegations regarding Ramrup and Tannenbaum directly to the Board of Education's Division of Assessment and Accountability, but nothing was done. Concerned about the seven-month interval that occurred before his office learned about the new complaint, Commissioner Stancik asked the Chancellor to take steps to ensure that allegations of cheating are reported to investigators without delay. In light of Rivera's prior history, he called for her employment to be terminated. As for Ramrup, Tannenbaum, and Fisher, he recommended that appropriate discipline be taken against them, which could include ending their employment. The Commissioner also asked the Chancellor to be vigilant for signs of retaliation against those who cooperated with the investigation.