

CITY OF NEW YORK
THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF INVESTIGATION
FOR THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Edward F. Stancik
Special Commissioner

NEWS RELEASE
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BOE Intern Gets Paid for Seven Years Without Working

Investigators from the Office of Special Commissioner of Investigation Edward F. Stancik today arrested James Hardy, a former intern with the Board of Education's ("BOE's") Substitute Vocational Assistant ("SVA") program, for stealing \$193,259 in unearned wages from the BOE. Hardy, who resides at 40 East 17th Street, Brooklyn, is charged with Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a C felony punishable by up to fifteen years in prison, and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a D felony. In a report entitled *Seven Years Pay for Zero Days Work: An Investigation into James Hardy's Fraudulent Employment with the Board of Education*, the Commissioner describes the SVA program's disorganization and failure to communicate with other parts of the BOE as well as the oversights of educators at Harry Van Arsdale High School ("Van Arsdale") in Brooklyn, all of which allowed Hardy to receive BOE paychecks for seven years without working.

Hardy was paid an average salary of \$26,500 for seven years after his SVA internship ended and with it his BOE employment. The SVA program trains participants to become permanent vocational teachers through a combination of classroom service and occupational experience. From September 1984 to August 1990, Hardy worked at various job sites and at Van Arsdale. Upon completing the program, Hardy failed his required final examination and could not obtain a teaching license. Despite his failure to complete all the requirements for a license, the BOE's Division of Human Resources continued to generate paychecks in his name and send them to Van Arsdale. Hardy submitted false time sheets and other forged instruments to convince school personnel that he was still working for the BOE.

In addition to receiving unearned wages from 1990 to 1997, Hardy received satisfactory evaluations in twenty-three categories, including pupil guidance and classroom management, from Van Arsdale administrators, despite the fact that he performed no work for the school during this period. Additionally, Hardy received periodic cost of living raises. By 1997, Hardy's annual wages were over \$27,500.

The Special Commissioner recommends that disciplinary action be taken against Van Arsdale's principal Bruce Billig and BOE payroll secretaries Eleanor Zorfias and Carla Barnet, and that former employees John Woodman, Dwight Threepersons and Gloria Nagle be barred from future employment with the BOE. Furthermore, the Special Commissioner recommends systemic changes be made in SVA policies and in the employee evaluation process to prevent such abuse in the future.

The case will be prosecuted by the office of Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes.