

CITY OF NEW YORK
THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF INVESTIGATION
FOR THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Report Released Today

Today, Special Commissioner of Investigation Richard J. Condon released a report detailing an investigation which found that Teacher James Burke, 27, formerly assigned to PS 69 on Staten Island, anonymously reported false allegations against some of the witnesses involved in a prior substantiated investigation of Burke conducted by the office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation (“SCI”). Burke also made false allegations against family members of witnesses and against other Department of Education (“DOE”) employees. Many of the allegations described conduct which was similar to the conduct Burke committed in the prior substantiated SCI case, including tickling, and other inappropriate touching of students.

SCI received at least a dozen false complaints, made directly to SCI or to SCI through schools, between July and October 2013. Many of the allegations were so serious that SCI referred the matters to the New York City Police Department (“NYPD”) and monitored the outcomes. Upon investigation, the NYPD deemed all the complaints to be unfounded and subsequent investigations by SCI found them to be false complaints. Burke’s involvement came to light when the SCI investigator who handled the original substantiated investigation of Burke realized that one of the complaints had been made from Burke’s telephone number. SCI self-initiated an investigation into Burke’s false allegations and examined each of the cases. SCI confirmed Burke’s involvement through documentary evidence, voice recognition, and telephone records.

The DOE reassigned Burke and brought disciplinary charges against him upon receiving the substantiated findings of the original SCI investigation. To settle the charges, Burke agreed to resign irrevocably effective March 31, 2014. SCI was not a party to the settlement.

In addition to the Chancellor, the Special Commissioner Condon referred the findings to Richmond County District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.