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Investigation Uncovers Time Abuse By NYC DOE Assistant Principals

In a report released today, Special Commissioner of Investigation Richard J. Condon announced the findings of an investigation conducted by his office, which uncovered time abuse committed by assistant principals (APs) employed by the New York City Department of Education (DOE).

Five APs who received temporary reassignments to administrative duty following the restructuring of the DOE were directed to report to a satellite office of Region 9. Because their reassignment was not related to misconduct, there was little oversight of these employees. Moreover, consistent with their union contract, the APs were expected to work 7 hours and 40 minutes Monday through Friday with a 40 minute break for lunch. Although each was offered the opportunity to participate in the daily assignments of the office, as was their right under the contract, all of the APs declined to do so. Consequently, their most significant responsibility was to show up on workdays.

Acting on information from a confidential source, investigators conducted surveillance of the 5 APs and found that they frequently were not present at the office, yet drew their full salary. On various days and times the APs were observed conducting personal business during their "work" hours. Investigators followed as they strolled the neighborhood or rode the subway and watched as they entered the Waldorf Astoria, arrived at Lincoln Center to buy ballet tickets, and went shopping at Bloomingdale's, Lord & Taylor, Macy's, Barnes & Noble, Pier One, and K-Mart. Four of the 5 falsified entries on attendance sheets kept by the Region, while the 5th declined to document her time.

Commissioner Condon recommended that strong disciplinary action be taken against the 5 APs, which could include termination of their employment or other appropriate action. In addition, he called for repayment of money to which they were not entitled.

The 5 assistant principals are:

- Susan Brown, who was on temporary assignment from December 2003 until February 2004, when she was placed at the High School for Humanities in Manhattan;
- Doris Collins, who has been on temporary assignment since August 2003;
- Andrea Cottman, who was on temporary assignment from September 2003 until February 2004, when she was placed at Robert Clemente JHS in Manhattan;
- Judith Grebin, who was on temporary assignment from September 2003 until March 2004, when she was placed at the High School for Humanities in Manhattan; and
- Kitty Levantrosser, who was on temporary reassignment from December 2003 until February 2004, when she voluntarily returned to a teacher's position and was placed at the High School for Leadership in Manhattan.

The Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation is part of the New York City Department of Investigation and the Special Commissioner reports to Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn.

