#### CITY OF NEW YORK

### THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF INVESTIGATION FOR THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## **Report Released Today - Copies Available**

Today, Special Commissioner of Investigation Richard J. Condon released a report detailing an investigation which found that Brenna Stewart, a 46-year-old physical education teacher assigned to the Bronx Leadership Academy II, submitted false and altered documents to excuse nine days of absences from work—one of which was used to attend the sentencing of her mother, Lynne F. Stewart, at the United States District Court in Manhattan.

The investigation revealed that Stewart submitted an altered death certificate dated October 2005 to take one day of bereavement leave at that time when, in fact, records confirmed that the deceased, an aunt, actually passed away in November 2002. In April 2006, Stewart submitted a letter purportedly prepared by "Richard Zengotita, M.D." of New York – Presbyterian Hospital to document two days of leave . Further investigation revealed that there was no person by that name employed by the hospital or licensed as a physician in New York State. Lastly, to document six days of leave in October 2006 and January 2007, Stewart submitted two letters by her sister, Zenobia Brown, M.D., a Florida physician who is not licensed to practice medicine in New York. Brown admitted that the return address on the letters is not a medical office, but her mother's residence in Brooklyn, and that she transmitted the letters by e-mail from Florida to her sister. Stewart admitted that she attended her mother's sentencing on October 16, 2006 when, according to Brown's letter, Stewart was under her sister's care and unable to work due to her medical condition.

Commissioner Condon has referred his findings to the Bronx County District Attorney for whatever action he may deem appropriate. The Special Commissioner has also recommended that Brenna Stewart's employment be terminated and that she be made ineligible for any future employment with the DOE.

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