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DOE Custodial Employees steal more than
$60,000 in DOE funds
Report Released Today

Today, Special Commissioner of Investigation Richard J. Condon released a report
detailing an investigation which found that 37-year-old New York City Department of
Education (“DOE”) Custodial Secretary Karen Nowaski stole more than $60,000 in DOE
funds from the custodial payroll of Grover Cleveland High School in Queens over a
period of five years. Nowaski, aided by John Lotito, a 45-year-old custodial worker
formerly assigned to the school, stole approximately $30,000 in funds by forging and
cashing fraudulent payroll checks. Additionally, Nowaski garnered approximately
$30,000 more by increasing her hourly wage without authorization. She then extorted a
$9,000 payment from Lotito in exchange for her silence on his involvement in the forgery
scheme. Despite substantial evidence to the contrary, Nowaski, during an interview at
SCI, denied under oath that she received this payment from Lotito.

Nowaski and Lotito are no longer employed at the Grover Cleveland.
Commissioner Condon has recommended that both be placed on the ineligible list and
barred from future employment with the DOE or its affiliates. The Commissioner has
also referred his findings to Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown and New
York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau for whatever action they may
deer appropriate.

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.