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NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SKILLED TRADES REPAIRMAN
ARRESTED FOR FRAUD, TIME ABUSE

Richard J. Condon, the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (SCI), announced today the arrest of Michael Ewald, a Furniture Repairman assigned to the Central Shops in Long Island City, Queens. Ewald is being charged with Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a felony which is punishable by up to 4-years in State prison, as well as Petit Larceny and Official Misconduct, misdemeanors which carry a maximum penalty of 1-year in jail.

Ewald, 34, of Bethpage, NY, has been a DOE employee for 14 years. The investigation into Ewald's conduct was part of the 6-month inquiry into Skilled Trades Employees that was announced by Special Commissioner Condon one week ago. During surveillance on October 28, 2002, SCI investigators discovered Ewald running errands or simply staying at home when he was supposed to be fixing broken lockers at PS 121 in Queens. Although he never went to work that day, his time records indicated otherwise. The investigation revealed that Ewald manipulated a time clock at another school to fit his needs. He was not reassigned during SCI's investigation, but submitted a letter of resignation following the release of SCI's findings.

"We watched Michael Ewald as he stole his pay from the public school system. Our investigation showed that his conduct illustrated a systemic problem that resulted in significant economic loss to the City," said Special Commissioner Condon.

Upon completion of the Skilled Trades investigation, the Special Commissioner made recommendations to the Chancellor that included systemic changes to the time clock system currently in place.

"The defendant is charged with cheating the City by allegedly manipulating time records and concealing the fact that he was actually at home or doing personal errands when he falsely claimed to be at school performing work repairing furniture. His conduct was fraudulent and abusive and a betrayal of his responsibility," said District Attorney Brown.

The Special Commissioner thanks Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown and his office for their cooperation. A.D.A. Dan O'Leary will be prosecuting this case.

The Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District is a part of the New York City's Department of Investigation.