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PRESS RELEASE

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District Attorney Donovan and Commissioner Condon Announce Arrest of Home Instruction Teacher for Grand Larceny ****Augustine Onaga, 39, of Staten Island, Arrested on Charges Related to Filing of False Timesheets for Instruction of Island Teen ****

STATEN ISLAND, NY – Richmond County District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan, Jr. and Richard J. Condon, Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District today announced the arrest of Augustine Onaga, a teacher assigned to the Home Instruction Schools, on charges of Grand Larceny in the 4th degree and Offering a false instrument for filing in the 1st degree related to his filing of false documents which resulted in payment to him for services he did not render. Onaga faces a maximum of four years in prison on each of the charges, which are Class E felonies.

The arrest culminated an investigation that began in January 2005 when investigators uncovered that Onaga submitted paperwork indicating that he taught a 16 year old male student on at least 28 occasions in October, November and December 2004, but information from the boy's mother revealed that the teacher visited her son only 7 times. The boy's mother notified that her son, who has been undergoing treatment for cancer, was too ill to be instructed during the period that the defendant claimed to conduct sessions with the boy. The investigation uncovered that Onaga requested pay for 70 hours beyond what he actually provided in service. He was paid \$2,555 to which he was not entitled.

District Attorney Donovan stated, "Falsifying records for payment, such as this defendant is alleged to have done, is a crime against the children who count on our teachers to educate and inspire. I am grateful to Commissioner Condon and his investigators for their tireless work in serving the best interests of our school children."

Commissioner Condon added, "This prosecution by District Attorney Donovan is particularly important because one result of the fraud was that a sick child was deprived of his education."

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The defendant surrendered this morning at the office of the Richmond County District Attorney to Det. Jeffrey Ward of the District Attorney's Detective Squad and is scheduled to be arraigned on the charges today at Stapleton Criminal Court.

Assistant District Attorney Matthew Blum will be prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Mario Mattei, Chief of the Investigations Bureau.

The public is reminded that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation, and that a defendant is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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