

City of New York
**THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF INVESTIGATION
FOR THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**
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Anastasia Coleman
Special Commissioner

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February 11, 2019

Hon. Richard Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Public Schools
Department of Education
52 Chambers Street, Room 314
New York, NY 10007

Re: Omar Rivera
SCI Case #2017-5695

Dear Chancellor Carranza,

An investigation conducted by this office has substantiated that Omar Rivera, a 45-year-old New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) teacher assigned to Inwood Early College for Health and Information (“Inwood”) in Manhattan, engaged in a sexual relationship with a [REDACTED] year-old female student (“Student A”) who had recently emigrated from the [REDACTED].¹ When their sexual relationship began, Rivera was a teacher at the Manhattan Bridges High School (“Bridges”).²

Investigation and Findings

In August 2017, [REDACTED] contacted the office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (“SCI”) concerning Rivera. [REDACTED] stated that Student A reported that, from [REDACTED] when she attended Bridges, she engaged in a sexual relationship with Rivera who was then a teacher at the school. According to Student A, Rivera brought her to motels and hotels in Manhattan and the Bronx where they engaged in sexual intercourse.

¹ Rivera was reassigned during the pendency of this investigation. Rivera has since turned 53-years-old. Student A is currently [REDACTED] years-old.

² Records revealed that in September 2016, Rivera self-initiated the transfer from Bridges to Inwood. This transfer occurred prior to Student A’s filing a complaint about this matter. [REDACTED]

In June 2018, the NYPD closed its investigation and SCI opened the present investigation.³

In an interview with SCI investigators, Student A stated that she began her sexual relationship with Rivera around May of 2011, when she was [REDACTED]-years-old. Student A further stated that their relationship lasted four years.

Student A told investigators that, after she arrived from [REDACTED] she enrolled at Bridges.⁴ During the second semester of her [REDACTED] year at the school, she began speaking with Rivera. Student A explained that she did not have many friends or family members around and often spoke with Rivera about school related issues. Student A described Rivera as a “father figure,” and told investigators that she and Rivera discussed “personal problems” and eventually, Rivera disclosed problems he had with his wife.

Student A recalled an instance when Rivera contacted her from a pay telephone and told her how great he felt around her. Student A said that she did not know how to react to Rivera’s comment. Student A stated that Rivera attended church with her and at some point, he asked her whether she was a virgin. Student A replied “yes.” Student A told investigators that Rivera continued to call her and send text messages and as time progressed, the phone calls “started getting dirty.” Student A continued that at times, Rivera contacted her and instructed her to masturbate while he was on the phone. She added that there were a couple of occasions when she was on the telephone with Rivera and he said to her, “you are going to give me that pussy.”

Student A said that she had a gym class at Bridges on Saturdays, and Rivera often drove her to the class. On one occasion, they “ended up” at a hotel on 34th Street near Macy’s in Manhattan. Student A recalled that Rivera checked in at the hotel and they went to a room.⁵ Student A told investigators that she did not know how to react, but she knew that this was not how she wanted to lose her virginity. At the hotel, she and Rivera had sexual intercourse. Student A stated that this occurred around May of 2011, when she was [REDACTED]-years-old.

According to Student A, she and Rivera engaged in sexual intercourse two to three times a month, over a four-year period. Student A stated that they routinely had sex in Rivera’s car and at a motel in the Bronx near the number two train. Student A told investigators that she engaged in a four-year relationship with Rivera, but when she told her boyfriend about Rivera, he encouraged her to report him.

³ [REDACTED]

⁴ School records revealed that she entered the school in [REDACTED]

⁵ [REDACTED]

Through his attorney, Omar Rivera declined the opportunity to speak with investigators from this office citing his status as a tenured employee.

I. Conclusion and Recommendation

SCI substantiated that Omar Rivera engaged in a sexual relationship with Student A that began when she was a ■-year-old student at Bridges. His egregious misconduct makes it clear that he has no place in New York City public schools. It is the recommendation of this office that Rivera's employment be terminated, that a problem code be associated with Rivera to make him ineligible for work with the DOE, with one of its vendors, or in one of its facilities in the future.

We are forwarding a copy of this letter to the Office of Legal Services. We are also forwarding our findings to the New York State Education Department for whatever action it deems appropriate. Should you have any inquiries regarding the above, please contact Special Counsel Valerie A. Batista, the attorney assigned to the case. She can be reached at (212) 510-1417. Please notify Ms. Batista within 30 days of the receipt of this letter as to what, if any, action has been taken or is contemplated regarding Omar Rivera. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

ANASTASIA COLEMAN
Special Commissioner of Investigation
for the New York City School District

AC:VB:ss

c: Howard Friedman, Esq.
Karen Antoine, Esq.
Katherine Rodi, Esq.