

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

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

June 7, 2023

Hon. David C. Banks
Chancellor
New York City Public Schools
Department of Education
52 Chambers Street, Room 314
New York, NY 10007

Re: Brendamarie Alexander
SCI Case#: 2022-2272

Dear Chancellor Banks:

An investigation conducted by this office has substantiated that former New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) Absent Teacher Reserve (“ATR”) Teacher Brendamarie Alexander (“Alexander”), engaged in employee misconduct when she provided fraudulent documents during the pre-trial discovery process of Alexander’s lawsuit against DOE, and signed in remotely as a full-time employee with the DOE while simultaneously reporting to work-in-person at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School (“Fieldston”), located in the Bronx.¹

I. Investigation & Findings:

A. Initial Allegation

The investigation began when the office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (“SCI”) received a complaint from [REDACTED] regarding allegations of misconduct against Alexander. [REDACTED] reported that during the discovery process of a lawsuit brought by Alexander against the DOE, [REDACTED] uncovered multiple incidents of fraud and forgery, including forged letters of recommendation purportedly signed by four individuals. Additionally, [REDACTED] reported that Alexander had requested accommodations to work remotely, citing medical concerns related to the COVID-19

¹ As part of a stipulation with DOE, Teacher Brendamarie Alexander irrevocably resigned on September 6, 2022, and has a problem code associated with her personnel file.

pandemic, which were approved, and in a sworn deposition related to the above-mentioned lawsuit, Alexander testified that she clocked in every day as a full-time employee of DOE during the 2020-2021 school year, despite “doing no work.” █████ further reported that while being signed-in to work for the DOE, Alexander simultaneously reported to work in-person at Fieldston.

B. SCI Investigation

Pursuant to this complaint, SCI investigators interviewed █████ who stated that New York City Labor and Employment Law Division of the Law Department represented the DOE in an age discrimination lawsuit filed by Alexander. █████ stated that Alexander provided documents during the discovery process, including multiple letters of recommendation. █████ informed investigations that she contacted each of the four individuals who purportedly wrote and signed the letters of recommendation that Alexander had provided. █████ further informed investigators that three of the four individuals confirmed that they did not prepare letters of recommendation for Alexander, while the fourth individual refused to comment. █████ told investigators that she further reviewed the metadata related to the letters in question, which in all four cases identified Alexander as the last person to access and edit each document.²

█████ further stated that although Alexander was approved by DOE to work remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, Alexander admitted during a sworn deposition that she accepted a full-time position with Fieldston, while still employed by DOE. █████ recalled that Alexander admitted that while she would sign in remotely for her DOE position, she physically reported to work at Fieldston. █████ later sent SCI investigators copies of the deposition transcript and the letters of recommendation in question.

SCI investigators reviewed these documents and then contacted each of the four individuals who purportedly prepared recommendation letters for Alexander. Three individuals confirmed that they did not prepare the recommendation letter provided by Alexander. One individual stated that the letter was authentic.

SCI investigators then contacted █████ who provided investigators with various documentation related to Alexander’s employment at Fieldston. A review of the documents sent by █████ confirmed that Alexander was hired as a “Proctor Substitute” on September 1, 2020, and worked daily from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. in-person until June 16, 2021. Further review confirmed that Alexander was paid by Fieldston at a rate of \$224 per day (\$32.00 per hour).³

SCI investigators conducted a review of DOE payroll records regarding Alexander for the 2020-2021 school year, which indicated that Alexander was paid \$87,836.75. Alexander declined to be interviewed by SCI investigators, as she was no longer a DOE employee.

² Metadata is the collection of data associated with a digital file, including author, file size, date the document was created, and date the document was last modified, etc.

³ Alexander was terminated from her position as a substitute with Fieldston on September 9, 2021, after Alexander chose not to continue her proctorship position in the fall of 2021.

II. Conclusion and Recommendation:

Upon review of the above facts, SCI has substantiated that former DOE Teacher Brendamarie Alexander provided to DOE during pre-trial discovery, at least three letters of recommendation, which were identified as forgeries by both the digital metadata connected to the documents, as well as by the individuals who purportedly prepared the letters.

SCI has further substantiated that Alexander fraudulently signed-in to work remotely for DOE while simultaneously working in-person for Fieldston, resulting in Alexander being improperly paid nearly \$88,000 by DOE for the 2020-2021 school year, in that: Alexander admitted during a sworn deposition to signing in as a full-time employee with DOE, despite doing no work, all while working in-person for Fieldston during the 2020-2021 school year; and SCI investigators were able to review payroll documentation provided by both Fieldston and DOE which indicated that Alexander was paid as a full-time employee by both institutions during the 2020-2021 school year.

As Alexander has already agreed to an irrevocable resignation from DOE, it is the recommendation of this office that DOE seek repayment of the \$87,836.75 that Alexander fraudulently received for the 2020-2021 school year, and that this matter be considered, should Alexander seek future employment with DOE or any of its vendors.

We further note that the conduct described herein may have violated the Conflicts of Interest provisions of the New York City Charter, which is administered by the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board.

Please respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of this letter as to any action taken regarding Brendamarie Alexander, or the recommendations made herein. We are sending a copy of this letter to the DOE Office of Legal Services. We are also sending a copy of this letter to the New York State Education Department and to Bronx County District Attorney Darcel D. Clark, for whatever action she deems appropriate. Should you have any inquiries regarding the above, please contact Stephen Boniberger, the assigned attorney for this matter, at (212) 510-1440 or sboniberger@nycsci.org.

Sincerely,

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

By: /s/ Daniel I. Schlachet
Daniel I. Schlachet
First Deputy Commissioner

AC:DS:SB:lr

cc: Elizabeth Vladeck, Esq.
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Katherine Rodi, Esq.
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