

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

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

January 17, 2025

Hon. Melissa Aviles-Ramos
Chancellor
New York City Public Schools
Department of Education
52 Chambers Street, Room 314
New York, NY 10007

Re: Omar Boyce
SCI Case #: 2024-06671

Dear Chancellor Aviles-Ramos:

An investigation conducted by this office has substantiated that New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) Paraprofessional Omar Boyce (“Boyce”), assigned to John Jay High School for Law (“John Jay”) in Brooklyn, gave a then 17-year-old male student (“Student A”) a fraudulent check allegedly from the United States Treasury Department (“U.S. Treasury”), made out to Student A, in the amount of \$11,073.00 to deposit into Student A’s account.¹

I. Investigation & Findings:

The investigation began in May 2024, when the office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (“SCI”) received a complaint from [REDACTED], who reported that she was informed by the mother of Student A (“Mother A”) that Mother A, who shared a bank account with Student A, discovered that a deposit of a fraudulent U.S. Treasury check had been made to the account. When confronted, Student A told Mother A that an unknown male John Jay staff member asked Student A to deposit the check into Student A’s account, then

¹ Boyce was suspended without pay after not returning to work at the DOE when the 2024-2025 school year began, and there is a problem code attached to his name.

to withdraw the money when the check cleared and give it to the unknown staff member in exchange for a percentage of the money received.

SCI investigators spoke with [REDACTED], who said that she learned of the details of her complaint when she met with Student A and Mother A on May 28, 2024.² [REDACTED] added that Student A said that the male was a paraprofessional at John Jay known as “Coffee.” [REDACTED] identified “Coffee” as Boyce to investigators. Mother A told [REDACTED] that she discovered the deposit before the check cleared, so there was no financial loss.

Investigators received a copy of the fraudulent U.S. Treasury check from Mother A. Investigators also spoke with Student A with Mother A’s permission. Student A said that “Coffee” gave him a U.S. Treasury check made out to Student A in the amount of \$11,073.00 and told Student A to deposit the check into Student A’s bank account. The male instructed Student A to withdraw the funds when they became available in exchange for an unspecified amount of the proceeds. Student A said that he deposited the check into a checking account that he shared with Mother A. When Mother A discovered the deposit, she contacted the bank to cancel the transaction.

Despite numerous attempts to contact Boyce at his home, via phone, and via mail, investigators never received a response.

II. Conclusion and Recommendation:

Upon review of the above facts, SCI substantiated that DOE Paraprofessional Omar Boyce gave a then 17-year-old male student a fraudulent check allegedly from the U.S. Treasury made out to the student in the amount of \$11,073.00 to deposit into the student’s account. It is the recommendation of this office that Boyce’s employment with the DOE be terminated, and that the problem code currently attached to his personnel file remain in place to serve as a reminder should Boyce seek future employment with the DOE or any of its vendors.

Please respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of this letter as to any action taken regarding Omar Boyce 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.

In addition, we are sending a copy of this letter to Kings County District Attorney Eric Gonzalez for whatever action he deems appropriate.

² New York City Police Department Officer Edwin Valdez (“Valdez”) responded to John Jay on that date. Valdez told SCI investigators that he did not take a police report on that date because he needed more information from Mother A. Valdez said that Mother A never contacted him after that date.

Should you have any inquiries regarding the above, please contact David Casanova, the assigned attorney for this matter, at (212) 510-1419 or dcasanova@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:DC:lr

cc: Elizabeth Vladeck, Esq.
Karen Antoine, Esq.
Katherine Rodi, Esq.
Monica Davis-Thorne - Director