

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

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**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

September 5, 2025

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

Re: Kristen Breen  
SCI Case #: 2025-01066

Dear Chancellor Aviles-Ramos:

An investigation conducted by this office has substantiated that New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) Principal Kristen Breen (“Breen”), assigned to EPIC High School North (“EHSN”) in Queens, failed to ensure that a sexual assault allegation that one then 14-year-old female student (“Student B”) inserted her fingers inside the vagina of another then 14-year-old female student (“Student A”), was properly reported to the New York City Police Department (“NYPD”).<sup>1</sup>

**I. Investigation & Findings:**

The investigation began in January 2025, when the office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (“SCI”) received a complaint from NYPD Queens Special Victims Squad Detective Keith Machtel (“Machtel”), who reported that the mother of Student A (“Mother A”) informed Machtel on January 27, 2025, that Mother A told Breen that Student B allegedly inserted her fingers inside Student A’s vagina inside a bathroom at EHSN on December 11, 2024. Mother A claimed that several unidentified female students had been inappropriately touching each other in the girls’ bathroom at EHSN on a regular basis since September 2024. Breen did not tell Mother A to contact the NYPD until January 27, 2025. When Machtel spoke with Breen on January 28, 2025, Breen told Machtel that she reported the incident to SCI on January 24, 2025.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Breen was not reassigned during this investigation, and there is no problem code associated with her personnel file.

<sup>2</sup> SCI never received a report from Breen regarding the incident.

SCI investigators spoke with Detective Machtel, who confirmed the details of his complaint, and added that on January 24, 2025, a school safety agent (“SSA”) called 911 and requested that emergency medical services (“EMS”) bring Student A from EHSN to Queens Hospital Center for an examination for an incident that occurred on December 11, 2024. When Student A and Mother A walked into the 102nd Precinct of the NYPD on January 27, 2025, to request information about the investigation, they learned that a report had never been made to the NYPD, and the case was then assigned to Machtel. Machtel contacted Breen on January 28, 2025, to discuss the case, and said that Breen was “evasive” about whom Breen notified and when. Breen told Machtel that she reported the incident to SCI and NYPD, but there was no record of any report to either agency.<sup>3</sup>

Under DOE Chancellor’s Regulation (“CR”) A-412(IV)(A)(1)(b), whenever a crime has been alleged to have been committed by a DOE student, “The principal/designee must immediately notify the NYPD (unless the NYPD has already been contacted), and the SSA.”<sup>4</sup>

SCI investigators spoke with Mother A, who said that on January 22 or 23, 2025, she contacted ██████████ at EHSN to report that Student A was sexually assaulted by another student in the girls’ bathroom. ██████████ said that she would inform Principal Breen. On January 24, 2025, Mother A and the father of Student A (“Father A”) attended a meeting with ██████████ and Breen at EHSN. Mother A said that Breen told her that Student A needed to be brought to a hospital for evaluation, and that Breen would notify “the authorities.” Mother A said that Breen only notified an SSA. Mother A waited at the hospital with Student A for several hours. During that time, no one from the NYPD met with her. Mother A did not hear from Breen again until Student A brought home a letter from EHSN indicating that the school completed its “internal investigation” and did not substantiate the sexual assault allegation.

Investigators spoke with ██████████ who said that she received a phone call from Mother A on January 22, 2025, alleging that Student A was sexually assaulted at the school. ██████████ informed Principal Breen, and they met with Student A, Mother A, and Father A on January 24, 2025. It was decided during the meeting that Student A should go to a hospital for evaluation, and that the NYPD would meet the family at the hospital. ██████████ said she assumed that the SSA was the one who called EMS, and that ██████████ was not the person tasked with calling the NYPD. Mother A called ██████████ on January 27, 2025, and said that no one from the NYPD ever appeared at the hospital. ██████████ told Mother A to go to the local NYPD precinct with Student A to report the incident.<sup>5</sup>

SCI investigators spoke with Breen in the presence of her union representative. Breen said that the “guardian” of Student A appeared at EHSN on January 23, 2025, to report student-on-student sexual assaults that allegedly occurred at the school in the fall of 2024. Breen said that there was no video of the restroom in which Student A said that the assaults were alleged to have occurred. Breen and ██████████ met

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<sup>3</sup> Detective Machtel told investigators that the NYPD case was closed because no criminality could be proven.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that under CR A-412(IV)(B)(1)(a)(iv), SCI is not required to be notified if criminal conduct or sexual misconduct is alleged to have been committed by a student (as opposed to a DOE staff member or non-DOE staff member working with DOE students, in which case SCI notification would be required).

<sup>5</sup> ██████████ told SCI investigators that an in-house investigation was conducted by EHSN. None of the students interviewed corroborated Student A’s account, so the allegations were not substantiated.

with Student A, Mother A, and Father A on January 24, 2025. Breen claimed that she notified SCI and NYPD “right after the meeting,” but could not provide any documentation of either of these notifications.<sup>6</sup>

## II. Conclusion and Recommendation:

Upon review of the above facts, SCI substantiated that DOE Principal Kristen Breen failed to ensure that a sexual assault allegation that one then 14-year-old female student inserted her fingers inside the vagina of another then 14-year-old female student was properly reported to the NYPD. It is the recommendation of this office that appropriate disciplinary action be taken against Breen.

Please respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of this letter as to any action taken regarding Kristen Breen, or the recommendations made herein. We are sending a copy of this letter to the DOE Office of Legal Services. In addition, we are sending a copy of this letter to the New York State Education Department for whatever action they deem necessary.

Should you have any inquiries regarding the above, please contact David Casanova, the assigned attorney for this matter, at (212) 510-1419 or [dcasanova@nyesci.org](mailto:dcasanova@nyesci.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

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<sup>6</sup> Breen did provide email correspondence between Breen and [REDACTED] in which Breen wrote on January 24, 2025, “We called 911 to report the allegation and SSA called EMS who offered a trip to the Safe Center at Queens Hospital to medically review the condition of the student.” Breen also wrote, “[NYPD] met the grandparents at Queens Hospital, and we are awaiting follow-up.” There is, however, no evidence that the NYPD ever responded to the hospital for this incident.