

**SPECIAL COMMISSIONER
ANASTASIA COLEMAN**

**Office of the
Special
Commissioner of
Investigation for
the New York City
School District**

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR
CALENDAR YEAR 2025**



Message from the Special Commissioner

The Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District ("SCI") is pleased to present its Annual Report for Calendar Year 2025. This report highlights the tireless work and dedication of SCI's staff over the past year. In 2025, SCI received 11,775 complaints alleging fraud, sexual abuse, corruption, and other misconduct that threaten the safety of students, misuse taxpayer dollars, and undermine the mission of New York City public schools.

SCI is a small but powerful watchdog, entrusted with the critical responsibility of protecting the children of New York City and safeguarding the integrity of the nation's largest school system. Our investigators, attorneys, and professional staff work every day to uncover wrongdoing, ensure accountability, and strengthen public trust in our schools.

Oversight is essential to a strong and effective public education system. By investigating misconduct and holding individuals accountable, SCI helps protect vulnerable students, preserve resources intended for classrooms, and ensure that public funds are used responsibly.

I am deeply proud of the work SCI accomplished in 2025. The dedication and professionalism of our staff continue to make a meaningful difference, and reinforcing the principle that misconduct in our schools will not go unchecked. I am confident that SCI's efforts this year have strengthened accountability and helped improve the quality of life for students, families, and educators across New York City.

-Anastasia Coleman, Special Commissioner of Investigation

Overview

SCI is entrusted with autonomy in investigating allegations of criminality, corruption, and wrongdoing concerning the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”), the largest school district in the nation, serving nearly one million students and employing more than 100,000 staff. SCI has broad authority and discretion to conduct investigations to root out corruption, prevent waste and fraud, ensure safety, and to identify and eliminate the misuse of taxpayer resources.

The Special Commissioner also serves as the inspector general for the New York City Teachers’ Retirement System (“TRS”) and the Board of Education Retirement System (“BERS”), evaluates and investigates all whistleblower claims involving DOE employees and vendors under the New York City Administrative Code, and serves as the investigative arm of the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board (“COIB”) regarding alleged violations of Chapter 68 of the New York City Charter by DOE employees and others.

Budget

In Calendar Year (“CY”) 2025, SCI operated with a total annual budget of \$7,302,668, of which \$ 6,692,537 was allocated to Personal Service (“PS”) spending, and \$610,131 was designated to Other Than Personal Service (“OTPS”). SCI’s annual budget is a pass-through line of the DOE’s overall annual budget of approximately \$40 billion.

Staffing

SCI ended CY 2025 with a full-time staff of 59. This staff includes administrators, confidential investigators, and support staff. During CY 2025, SCI hired 18 new employees. Thirteen SCI employees separated from the office during CY 2025.

Intake

11,775

Complaints Received

In CY 2025, SCI received 11,775 complaints. They alleged a wide-range of misconduct, waste, fraud, financial mismanagement, and criminal activity within the DOE, TRS, and BERS, by employees, vendors, contracted workers, or volunteers, and alleged violations of administrative and criminal codes, the New York City Charter, and the DOE Chancellor’s Regulations.

Complaints are received through SCI’s website and hotline and may be submitted by any individual with knowledge of potential wrongdoing, including parents, students, administrators, mandatory reporters, school staff, vendors, and whistleblowers.

Investigations & Substantiated Cases

471

Investigations Initiated

In CY 2025, SCI initiated 471 investigations and closed 393 investigations that were initiated in CY 2025 or earlier.

393

Investigations Closed

157

Investigations involving allegations of inappropriate or sexual misconduct by DOE employees or vendors

The most frequent categories of investigations substantiated by SCI in CY 2025 were employee misconduct, theft of service, falsifying official documents, and inappropriate or sexual relationships or communications. SCI conducted **157 investigations** involving allegations of inappropriate conducts or sexual misconduct by DOE employees or vendors, and substantiated allegations against individuals in **62 such cases**.

62

Substantiated investigations involving inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct by DOE employees or vendors

For example, one case involved a DOE teacher and librarian who engaged in a pattern of predatory behavior, grooming and communicating with at least 13 current and former DOE students via cell phones, and maintaining longstanding inappropriate relationships with several of them.

SCI investigated **three complaints** concerning the two retirement systems. It also received **44 complaints**, specifically alleging potential violations of Chapter 68 of the New York City Charter as administered by COIB and identified potential conflicts of interest in an additional **24 cases**. One such case involving retirement accounts concerned the fraudulent diversion of \$477,685 in pension funds from a TRS pensioner's account into the bank account of the pensioner's doorman, resulting in criminal prosecution.

In **156 substantiated investigations**, SCI found that **202 individuals or entities** violated criminal statutes, the DOE Chancellor's Regulations, or other administrative codes or regulations. SCI also referred findings in **77 substantiated investigations** to the New York State Education Department, which licenses teachers, principals, and other pedagogues.

SCI received **22 complaints** of potential workplace retaliation for review under the New York City and DOE whistleblower statutes in CY 2025, and completed reviews of whistleblower claims in **16 cases** received in 2025 or earlier.

Under NYC Administrative Code § 12-113, a whistleblower is a City or City-vendor employee who is retaliated against for reporting suspected corruption, criminal activity, conflicts of interest, gross mismanagement, or abuse of authority in City government to designated oversight officials. A report of SCI's annual Whistleblower statistics can be found on [SCI's website](https://www.nycsci.org) at [nycsci.org](https://www.nycsci.org).

Outcomes

In CY 2025, SCI made **206 personnel recommendations**. The subjects investigated included teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and other DOE personnel, volunteers, and contracted service providers. SCI recommended disciplinary action in **76 instances**, a majority of which included recommendations "up to and including termination" of their employment with DOE.

SCI also made recommendations of **116 problem codes** (as possible bars to future employment or contracts), and **36 recommendations** for financial recovery actions.

As a result of SCI's investigations, many employees were also directed to receive special training (or retraining) related to their misconduct. In addition, many DOE employees and vendors who were the subjects of SCI complaints resigned or retired during the pendency of SCI's investigations.

SCI may make multiple personnel recommendations regarding any individual subject, and investigations frequently involve multiple parties.

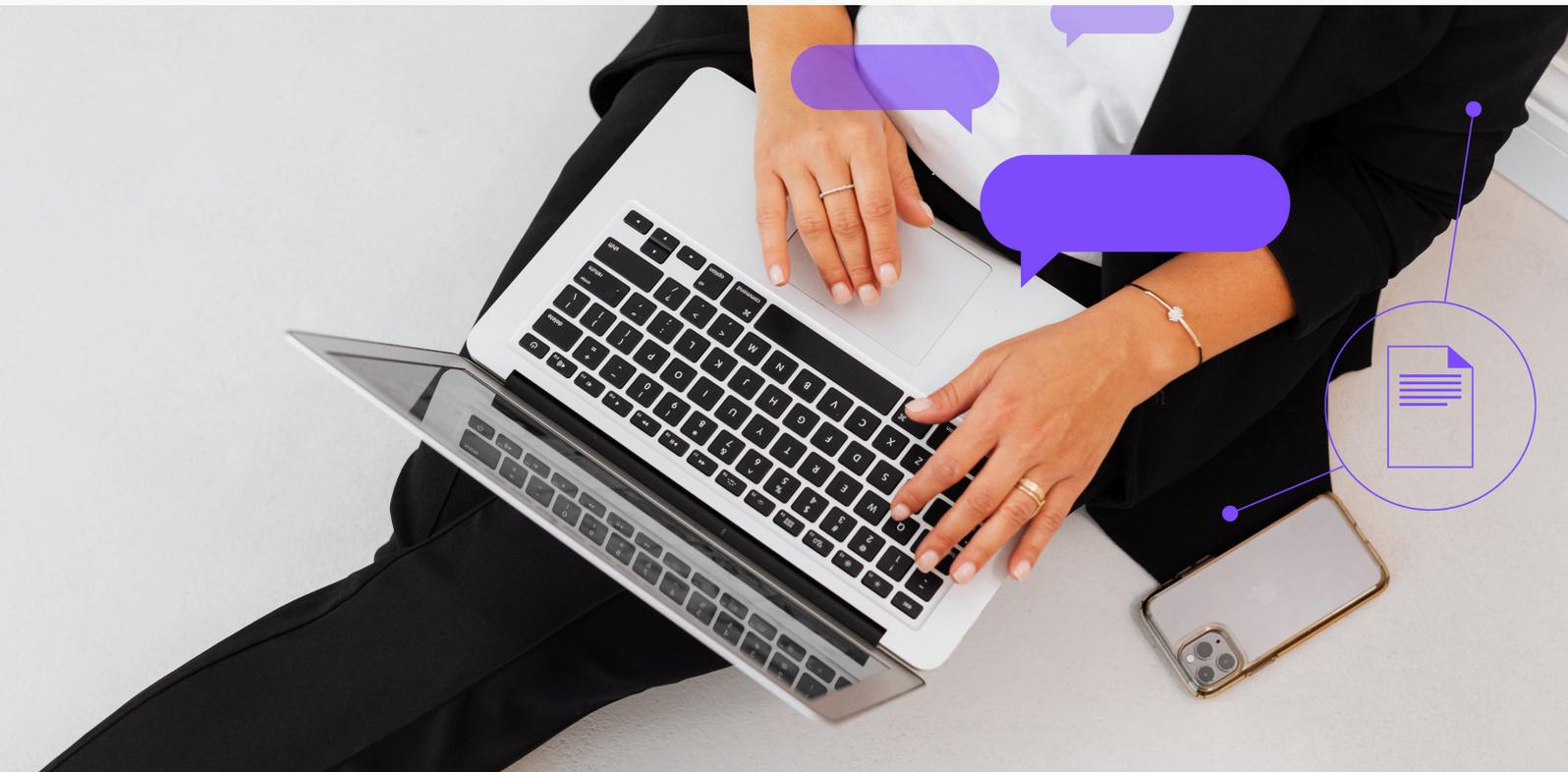
In **62 substantiated cases** by SCI's Team One, the investigatory unit dedicated to investigating allegations of sexual or inappropriate conduct, **23 cases specifically** substantiated that DOE personnel initiated and/or maintained a sexual or inappropriate relationship with a student or students via **personal cellphones or personal social media accounts**. In those cases, SCI made PPRs advising that the DOE amend its current employee guidelines to prohibit DOE personnel, volunteers, or employees of its vendors from contacting students using personal cellphone numbers, personal social media accounts, or other non-DOE associated applications.

62

Substantiated cases of sexual or inappropriate conduct

23

Cases specifically substantiated that DOE personnel were involved in an inappropriate relationship with student(s) using social media or cell phones



*In total, SCI made **47 Policy and Procedure Recommendation (“PPR”)** to the DOE in 2025. All SCI PPRs are available on SCI's website, including the date issued, the exact recommendation, the acceptance status, the implementation status, the implementation date, and the DOE response.*

Arrests & Referrals

Arrests

In CY 2025, SCI joined with our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners on numerous investigations, resulting in substantiated wrongdoing, financial recovery, and four arrests.

Referrals

Throughout the year, SCI also referred **118 substantiated investigations** to the appropriate state or local prosecutor, governmental agency, or the New York State Education Department.

In many cases, after an arrest occurs, SCI continues to monitor the criminal case to determine if the subject should face appropriate administrative action by the DOE at the conclusion of their criminal prosecution. This essential oversight function ensures that unfit or dangerous individuals do not return to employment within the school district at the conclusion of their criminal matter, ultimately putting children and taxpayers at continued risk.

Identified Financial Losses

SCI substantiated **37 cases** that identified to the DOE and the retirement systems precise amounts of loss, theft, or mismanagement of funds, totaling nearly two million dollars, double that of FY 2024. In addition, SCI was responsible for the continued collection and monitoring of restitution or fines in numerous cases.

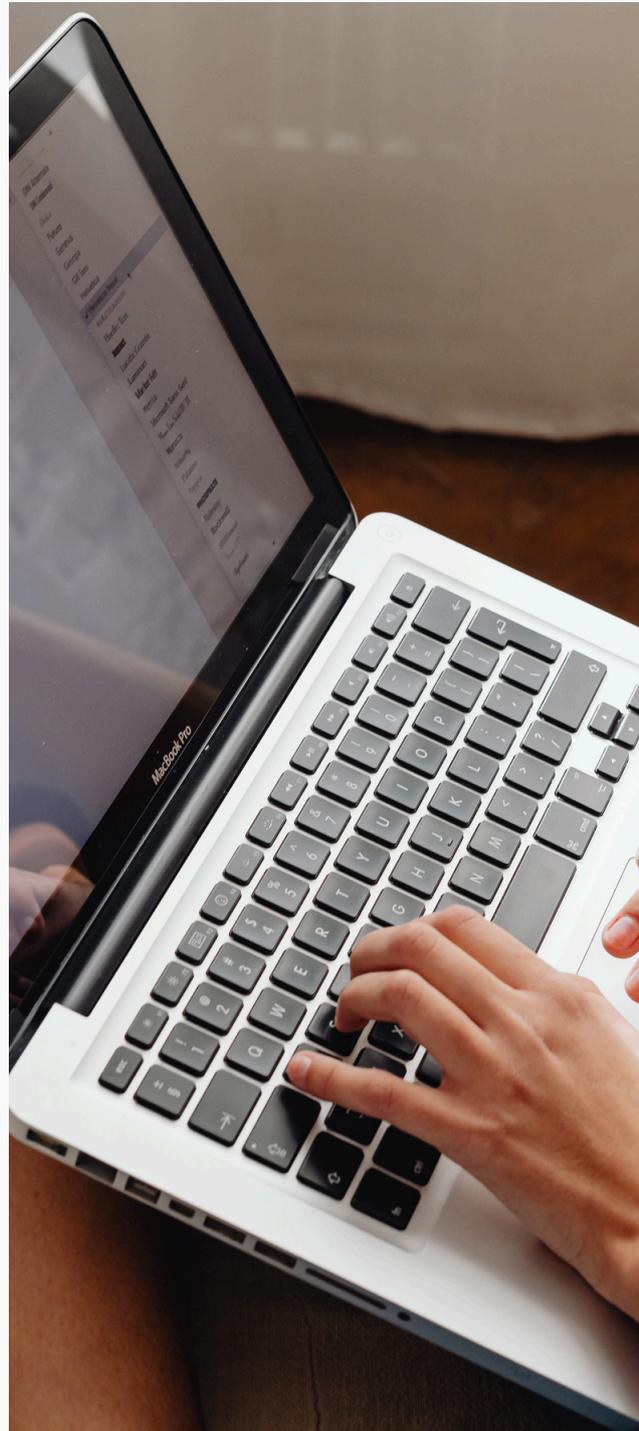
In one case, a DOE community associate allegedly embezzled **\$415,000** in school funds and checks to benefit her personal cheerleading company, using the funds to purchase uniforms and equipment and to subsidize galas and tickets to major sporting events.

Submit a Complaint

Every officer and employee of the DOE is obligated to immediately report to SCI any knowledge of wrongdoing in the school system. We urge parents, students, and other concerned members of the community to get involved and help our children.

If you suspect corruption, crime, or fraud at your child's school, please call 212-510-1500, or file a complaint [online](#).

Send Mail To:
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PRESS INQUIRIES

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