

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

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**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

July 16, 2025

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

Re: Demetrius Napolitano  
William Gladstone  
SCI Case #: 2024-04049

Dear Chancellor Aviles-Ramos:

An investigation conducted by this office has substantiated that 29-year-old Demetrius Napolitano (“Napolitano”), the founder and owner of Fostering Meditation, a community based organization (“CBO”) under contract with the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”), engaged in inappropriate contact with a six-year-old female student (“Student A”).<sup>1</sup> This investigation also substantiated that the former principal of Public School 108 (“P.S. 108”) in Manhattan, William Gladstone (“Gladstone”), failed to have Napolitano properly vetted prior to permitting him to work at P.S. 108.

**I. Investigation & Findings:**

The investigation began when the office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (“SCI”) received a complaint, forwarded to SCI by [REDACTED], regarding allegations of misconduct against Napolitano. The complaint contained allegations made by Student A’s foster mother (“Mother A”), who stated that she observed Student A run and leap into Napolitano’s arms and wrap her legs around Napolitano’s waist.

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<sup>1</sup> Napolitano was removed from P.S. 108 during the course of this investigation, and an active Problem Code has been associated with his personnel file.

In an interview with SCI investigators, Mother A said that on April 8, 2024, she asked Napolitano to assist her in taking Student A and her two sisters to the foster agency. Mother A told investigators that while they were all in the waiting room of the foster agency, she observed Napolitano gesture for Student A to give him a hug. Student A then ran to Napolitano, leapt into his arms, wrapped her legs around his waist, and pressed her entire body against his. Mother A stated that she did not address the conduct at the time, but that she texted Napolitano later in the day and voiced her concern with the nature of the physical contact between Napolitano and Student A. Mother A later received a voice message from Napolitano in which he stated in part: “Some kids come up and ask for a hug, and that’s good and all, and that’s necessary, right? ...and the role that I have in [Student A’s] life, as a big brother, as a friend, and one may even say as a father figure...this is how, I believe, that all three of those girls see me.”<sup>2</sup>

Mother A told investigators that she was informed by Student A’s teachers at P.S. 108, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] that in the days following the incident at the foster agency, they observed Napolitano escorting Student A around the school, waiting together for the bus outside the school, giving Student A food, and allowing Student A to use his cellphone to watch videos. Mother A told investigators that to her knowledge, Napolitano taught yoga and meditation to students and was required to have a licensed DOE teacher with him whenever he was with students.

SCI investigators met with [REDACTED], who stated that she was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] stated that Student A went to “mindfulness class,” run by Napolitano, once a week. [REDACTED] explained that the class taught students to meditate and practice yoga. [REDACTED] told investigators that she observed Napolitano holding hands with Student A multiple times in the hallways of P.S. 108, and on other occasions saw Student A jump into Napolitano’s arms, and Napolitano carry Student A up the stairs. [REDACTED] said that she spoke with Napolitano and told him that such physical contact with a student is inappropriate and that he should stop holding hands and carrying Student A. According to [REDACTED] Napolitano responded: “It’s hard to say no to [Student A]. I’ll try.” [REDACTED] told investigators that Napolitano stopped for one day, and then the physical contact continued again the following day.

[REDACTED] stated that she reported the conduct to Principal Gladstone, who spoke with Napolitano. [REDACTED] told investigators that after the conversation, Napolitano’s behavior stopped for approximately one week but then continued again. [REDACTED] recalled an incident in which Napolitano had returned from a vacation and brought a gift for Student A. While [REDACTED] did not recall what the gift was, she told investigators that Napolitano did not bring gifts for any other students. [REDACTED] told investigators that even after Principal Gladstone spoke with him, she observed Napolitano holding hands with Student A, and on multiple occasions escorting Student A off the bus and into the cafeteria. [REDACTED] stated that the proper procedure at P.S. 108 when students exited the bus was that they go directly to the auditorium to meet with their entire class. [REDACTED] said she confronted Napolitano about this and, thereafter, Napolitano stopped walking Student A to the cafeteria.

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<sup>2</sup> Mother A later provided SCI investigators with both a transcript and a copy of the voice message.

SCI investigators spoke with [REDACTED] who was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] confirmed that Napolitano would often hold hands with Student A and would go to the bus stop in the morning to escort Student A from the bus to the cafeteria to get breakfast before walking Student A to her classroom. [REDACTED] said she observed Napolitano walking around the hallways on multiple occasions, holding Student A's hand or sometimes carrying Student A on his hip, and stopping by the classrooms of Student A's sisters, before taking Student A to his "mindfulness class." [REDACTED] told investigators that she and [REDACTED] confronted Napolitano about the need for students to go immediately to the auditorium for attendance upon arriving at the school, and about the physical contact and special attention he showed to Student A.

In an interview with SCI investigators, Napolitano stated that he was the founder of Fostering Meditation and had been assigned to P.S. 108 since 2019. Napolitano recalled the incident at the foster agency, and remembered receiving a text from Mother A expressing concern about the nature of the hug he shared with Student A. Napolitano admitted that he would often meet Student A by the bus in the morning, but he insisted that he did so with Mother A's permission. Napolitano said that he would walk with Student A around the rear of the school building and enter with the other classes, and that at times he would walk Student A to the cafeteria where she would receive milk. Napolitano confirmed that he held Student A's hand on multiple occasions, and that he would remove Student A from class and bring her to "the meditation room" to meet her sisters. While he stated to investigators that he could not recall ever carrying Student A up the stairs at P.S. 108, he did recall several instances when he picked up and carried Student A in the hallways. When asked about giving gifts to Student A, Napolitano admitted that he gave Student A "yoga bells" for her birthday. Napolitano denied that any of his actions were inappropriate.

SCI investigators met with [REDACTED], who stated that she was informed of the allegations against Napolitano by Mother A, and that she personally spoke with Principal Gladstone after having filed a complaint with SCI. [REDACTED] said that she told Principal Gladstone that Napolitano was neither a DOE teacher nor a DOE employee and, therefore, was not permitted to pick up a student from the bus stop regardless of whether he had permission from the student's parents. [REDACTED] further reminded Principal Gladstone that Napolitano was not permitted to be outside with the students during recess, nor was he permitted to remove a student from the classroom. [REDACTED] told investigators that she was later informed by Principal Gladstone that he had spoken with Napolitano regarding this conduct.

In a follow up interview, Mother A told SCI investigators that she had initially given Napolitano permission to escort Student A from the bus to the school entrance, but that she withdrew her consent upon learning that Napolitano was not a DOE teacher and did not have the proper security clearance. Mother A said that she later became even more concerned about Napolitano when she observed an incident during which Napolitano was attempting to interact with Student A, and [REDACTED] had to stand between them.

SCI investigators spoke with former Principal Gladstone who stated that he did not recall who hired Napolitano, nor did he recall if Napolitano was properly vetted. Gladstone told investigators that he had since retired, had no intention of rejoining the DOE, and that he had nothing else to say about the matter.

SCI investigators spoke with [REDACTED], who stated that she had no knowledge of the allegations against Napolitano, but she was able to provide SCI with the paperwork from CBO Bent on Learning, who hired Napolitano's Fostering Meditation to work at P.S. 108.

In an interview with SCI investigators, [REDACTED], stated that Napolitano was not an employee of Bent on Learning, but had been hired for a few years as an independent contractor to conduct yoga classes at P.S. 108. [REDACTED] stated that Bent on Learning did not have Napolitano fingerprinted or vetted for the DOE because Gladstone "vouched" for Napolitano. [REDACTED] told investigators that she was aware that Napolitano was removed from P.S. 108, adding that Napolitano was no longer being used as an independent contractor by Bent on Learning.

## **II. Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Upon review of the above facts, SCI has substantiated that Demetrius Napolitano engaged in inappropriate contact with Student A. As Napolitano has already been removed from P.S. 108, it is the recommendation of this office that the problem code currently associated with Napolitano remains in place, and that this matter be considered should Napolitano, Fostering Meditation, or any other entity associated with Napolitano seek to work for or with the DOE in the future.

SCI has also substantiated that former Principal William Gladstone failed to ensure that Napolitano was properly vetted prior to granting Napolitano access to the students and facility at P.S. 108. As Gladstone has since retired from his DOE position, it is the recommendation of this office that a problem code be issued to his personnel file, and that this matter be considered should Gladstone seek to work for or with the DOE, or any of its vendors or associated organizations, in the future.

Please respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of this letter as to any action taken regarding Demetrius Napolitano, William Gladstone, 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 for any action they deem necessary.

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](mailto: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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