

CITY OF NEW YORK
THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF INVESTIGATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SCI INVESTIGATION FINDS UNVETTED DOE CONTRACTOR ENGAGED IN
INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT WITH SIX-YEAR-OLD FEMALE STUDENT AT PS 108

*Student's Foster Mother Reported Physical Contact and Special Attention from
Fostering Meditation Founder*

*Investigation Finds Contractor Was Neither Vetted nor Fingerprinted Before Being
Permitted to Work at P.S. 108*

March 9, 2026

NEW YORK, NY – An investigation by the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District (SCI) substantiated that Demetrius Napolitano, the founder and owner of *Fostering Meditation*, a community-based organization (CBO) formerly under contract with the New York City Department of Education (DOE), engaged in inappropriate contact with a six-year-old student (Student A) at Public School 108 (P.S. 108) in Manhattan. Napolitano, 29, provided mindfulness and yoga classes at P.S. 108 through *Fostering Meditation* under contract with the DOE. He was subsequently removed from P.S. 108 during the course of the investigation. Special Commissioner Anastasia Coleman also found that the school's former principal, William Gladstone, failed to properly vet Napolitano before allowing him access to students and school facilities.

“Anyone working with children in our school system must be properly vetted. Student A’s foster mother was right to report her concerns, and parents and caregivers should never hesitate to come forward when something does not feel appropriate,” said Special Commissioner Anastasia Coleman. “Vetting is not just a routine step or procedure in a handbook — it is a critical safeguard designed to prevent individuals who should not have access from working with vulnerable students. Demetrius Napolitano’s inappropriate conduct with a student and former Principal William Gladstone’s failure to properly vet him demonstrate why these safeguards must be taken seriously.”

SCI received a complaint on April 30, 2024, forwarded by a P.S. 108 staff member from the student’s foster mother. The complaint described an April 8, 2024 incident in which Student A leapt into Napolitano’s arms, wrapped her legs around his waist, and pressed her body against

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his. Earlier that same day, the foster mother had asked Napolitano to assist her in taking Student A and her two sisters to their foster care agency. While waiting in the agency's waiting room, Napolitano gestured for Student A to give him a hug.

Later that day, the foster mother texted Napolitano expressing concern about the physical contact. In response, Napolitano left a voice message stating, 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."

Teachers later informed the foster mother that Napolitano had been giving Student A special attention, including escorting her around the school, holding her hand in the hallways, escorting her to classes, carrying her up the stairs, waiting with her outside for the bus, giving her food, and allowing her to use his cellphone to watch videos. Napolitano also purchased a gift for Student A after returning from vacation but did not bring gifts for other students. Teachers then reported the conduct to Principal Gladstone, who spoke with Napolitano about inappropriate physical contact. Although the behavior stopped for approximately one week, it later resumed.

Investigators also learned that Napolitano escorted Student A from the school bus to the cafeteria for breakfast on several occasions, contrary to school procedures requiring students arriving by bus to report directly to the auditorium with their class.

SCI investigators determined that Napolitano had been hired as an independent contractor at P.S. 108 but had not been fingerprinted or properly vetted for DOE clearance before being permitted to work with students. SCI substantiated that Napolitano engaged in inappropriate contact with Student A and recommended that the problem code currently associated with him remain in place should he, *Fostering Meditation*, or any affiliated entity seek to work with the DOE in the future.

SCI also found that former Principal William Gladstone failed to ensure Napolitano was properly vetted before granting him access to students and school facilities. As Gladstone has since retired from the DOE, SCI recommended that a problem code be placed in his personnel file should he seek future employment with the DOE or any DOE vendor.

The full report on SCI's substantiated case against Demetrius Napolitano and William Gladstone can be found at: https://nycsci.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Napolitano_Gladstone-Report.pdf

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SCI has forwarded its findings and recommendations to the DOE.

About SCI

Established in 1990, SCI is the independent watchdog that investigates fraud, corruption, misconduct, and other illegal, unethical or improper activities by officials, employees, contractors, and vendors doing business with New York City's School District, the Department of Education, the Teachers' Retirement System, and the Board of Education Retirement System. For more information on SCI, visit: www.nycsci.org.

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