

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

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**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

June 30, 2026

Hon. Kamar H. Samuels  
Chancellor  
New York City Public Schools  
Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street, Room 314  
New York, NY 10007

Re: Eric Chery  
Germina Thomas  
SCI Case #: 2025-11222

Dear Chancellor Samuels:

An investigation conducted by this office has substantiated that Bus Driver Eric Chery (“Chery”) and Bus Matron Germina Thomas (“Thomas”), both employed by Consolidated Bus Transit, Inc. (“Consolidated”), failed to arrive with six nonverbal New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) special education students between six and eight years old at their assigned school until approximately four hours after their scheduled arrival time.<sup>1</sup>

**I. Investigation & Findings:**

The investigation began in December 2025, 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 on December 16, 2025,

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<sup>1</sup> Neither Chery nor Thomas, both of whom are employed by Consolidated, were reassigned during this investigation, and no problem codes were issued.

the whereabouts of a bus with six nonverbal special education students was unknown for several hours before it arrived at Public School 289 (“P.S. 289”) in Brooklyn at approximately 1:25 p.m.<sup>2</sup>

SCI investigators spoke with [REDACTED], who said that the bus with the six students was due to arrive at P.S. 289 between 8:20 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. on December 16, 2025. At approximately 12:00 p.m. on December 16, 2025, [REDACTED] was notified by [REDACTED] that a mother of two of the six students (“Mother A/B”) was tracking her children – Student A and Student B – with the iTags that were in their backpacks.<sup>3</sup> The location of the iTags indicated that Student A and Student B were moving throughout Brooklyn. After notifying school officials of the situation, [REDACTED] spoke with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] that the GPS tracking system on the bus was inoperable.<sup>4</sup> [REDACTED] reported the situation to the New York City Police Department (“NYPD”) and drove to P.S. 289. At approximately 1:25 p.m., the bus arrived with all six students. [REDACTED] observed Student A lying flat on a seat, “soaking wet with her diaper off.” [REDACTED] spoke with the unnamed bus driver, who said that he went to two wrong addresses before eventually being guided to the right one by dispatchers at Consolidated.

[REDACTED] told investigators that she was informed by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] about the missing bus on the morning of December 16, 2025. After speaking with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] called Consolidated. Employees at Consolidated refused to give [REDACTED] the bus driver’s phone number. When the bus arrived at P.S. 289 at approximately 1:25 p.m., [REDACTED] boarded the bus and observed that Student A had urinated on herself and removed her diaper and leggings, with her dress still on. [REDACTED] said that the unnamed bus driver said that he went to several wrong addresses, while the unnamed bus matron sat in the last row of the bus and “did not say a word.”

[REDACTED] told investigators that after the morning bus arrival window passed with no sign of the bus, she called Consolidated dispatch at approximately 10:00 a.m. When no one answered at Consolidated, she called OPT and reported the situation. [REDACTED] called Consolidated again at 11:45 a.m. The dispatcher answered and said that the bus driver was lost but would be at P.S. 289 within 15 minutes. Twenty minutes later, she called OPT again. OPT advised [REDACTED] to call the NYPD. [REDACTED] relayed this instruction to her supervisor, [REDACTED], who in turn relayed the instruction to [REDACTED]. The bus eventually arrived at P.S. 289 at approximately 1:25 p.m.

[REDACTED] told investigators that the bus arrived at P.S. 289 at approximately 1:25 p.m. She said that the bus matron, who was sitting at the back of the bus, did not make any statements, while the bus driver said that he drove to the wrong school.

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<sup>2</sup> SMA is a District 75 school that oversees special education students at six sites throughout Brooklyn, including P.S. 289.

<sup>3</sup> An iTag is a compact tracking device that pairs with a cellphone application via Bluetooth.

<sup>4</sup> SCI investigators were able to obtain separate GPS tracking data for the bus from the DOE Office of Pupil Transportation (“OPT”).

SCI investigators spoke with [REDACTED], who provided the bus number for the bus in question and identified the assigned bus driver as Chery and the assigned bus matron as Thomas. The bus depot manager on duty on the morning of December 16, 2025, was [REDACTED]

Consolidated Bus Matron Thomas told investigators that she had been a bus matron for nearly 20 years. On December 16, 2025, she received a temporary assignment from dispatch at approximately 7:30 a.m. She was paired with Chery, who was also on a temporary assignment for the day. Thomas said that after all of the students were picked up, Chery drove to two incorrect schools before obtaining the correct school address. Thomas said that the students were non-verbal. Some students were agitated, while others slept through the incident. Thomas said that one female student removed a diaper filled with urine and left it and her undergarments on the floor of the bus. Thomas did not speak to Chery during the incident, nor did she try to contact the school, the bus depot, or anyone else.

Consolidated Bus Driver Chery told investigators that he had been working as a fill-in bus driver for Consolidated for less than three months on December 16, 2025. On that date, he received an assignment at approximately 7:00 a.m. from dispatch. He was paired with Thomas. By 10:00 a.m., all the students were picked up.<sup>5</sup> Chery then drove to two incorrect schools. At approximately 10:40 a.m., Chery received a call from his manager with the correct address for P.S. 289. When asked why it took so long to arrive at P.S. 289 after 10:40 a.m., Chery said he had to keep stopping the bus due to multiple calls from Consolidated employees and concerned parents.<sup>6</sup> Chery said the students were calm when they arrived at the school, but he noticed a diaper filled with urine and female undergarments on the floor of the bus. Chery added that he had only been living in New York City for a “short time” and that he was not fluent in English.

## **II. Conclusion and Recommendation:**

Upon review of the above facts, SCI substantiated that Bus Driver Eric Chery and Bus Matron Germina Thomas failed to arrive with six nonverbal DOE special education students between six and eight years old at their assigned school until approximately four hours after their scheduled arrival time.

As neither Chery nor Thomas are DOE employees, it is the recommendation of this office that a problem code be associated with their names, that the DOE make every effort to ensure that Chery and Thomas no longer serve in positions where they supervise or oversee DOE students, and that this matter be considered should they seek future employment with the DOE or any of its vendors.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the GPS tracking data for the bus received from OPT, the bus was still at the address of one of the student’s residences as late as 10:59 a.m.

<sup>6</sup> Chery allowed investigators to view the call log on Chery’s cell phone. The call log indicated that there were multiple calls to and from the phone between 10:40 a.m. and Chery’s arrival at P.S. 289.

Please respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of this letter as to any action taken regarding Chery and Thomas, or the recommendations made herein. We are sending a copy of this letter to the DOE Office of Legal Services.

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](mailto: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:MC:DC:lr

cc: Elizabeth Vladeck, Esq.  
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