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SPECIAL COMMISSIONER

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Report Released Today - Copies Available

Today, Special Commissioner of Investigation Richard J. Condon released a report detailing an investigation which found that Occupational Therapists Jay Sarkar and Poonam Batra, independent contractors placed in New York City public schools by a Department of Education vendor, submitted documents which falsely described the services being provided to students. The investigation also found that Sarkar and Batra committed misconduct by allowing an unidentified male to sit in on therapy sessions with schoolchildren.

At two schools in the Bronx, Poonam Batra serviced both her caseload of students as well as Jay Sarkar's caseload of students. Nevertheless, Sarkar submitted paperwork as if he had seen the children. Batra also met with the students in group sessions, although their Individual Education Plans mandated one-to-one therapy. The paperwork submitted did not reflect the deviation from the prescribed services.

Another significant finding was that an unknown man accompanied Sarkar into the schools without signing in. School officials failed to identify the individual who stayed in the classroom while public school students were present.

Commissioner Condon recommended to Chancellor Klein that Sarkar and Batra be made ineligible to work for the DOE whether directly or through a vendor and that the DOE seek to recover any funds wrongly paid to Sarkar and Batra. The findings also were referred to Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson for whatever action he deems appropriate.

In addition, Commissioner Condon asked that all DOE employees be reminded that unauthorized persons have no place in school buildings where children may be endangered.

The Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation is part of the New York City Department of Investigation and Special Commissioner Condon reports to Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn.