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For Immediate Release

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**HUSBAND AND WIFE SENTENCED FOR DEFRAUDING
NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Defendants Submitted Fake Invoices; Fraud Exceeded \$170,000**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that a married Yonkers couple were sentenced for their roles in a fraudulent scheme that netted them and a co-conspirator more than \$170,000 in illicit proceeds from the New York City Department of Education.

District Attorney Clark said, “The female defendant, a longtime employee with the New York City Department of Education used her position to falsify purchase orders. She engaged her husband and a friend in this crime of greed that stole more than \$170,000, money that should have been used for the education of our schoolchildren. I would like to thank our law enforcement partners at SCI who worked with our Financial Frauds Bureau in this investigation.”

District Attorney Clark said defendant Rusnelly Clase, 42, was today sentenced to six months in prison with five years’ post-release supervision and defendant Justin Echevarria, 38, was today sentenced to five years’ probation before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Steven Horsntein. The pair pleaded guilty to fourth degree Corrupting the Government on April 9, 2026. To date Clase has paid \$50,000 in restitution. She’s been ordered to pay an additional \$36, 654.88. Echevarria was also ordered to pay \$47,448.63.

Special Commissioner Anastasia Coleman said, “The New York City public school system is not a personal piggy bank. Every dollar stolen from our schools is a dollar taken away from New York City’s students. SCI will continue holding accountable anyone who exploits their public position and misuses resources that belong in our classrooms. We like to thank the DA's Financial Frauds Bureau for working closely with our investigators on this important matter.”

According to the investigation, from 2018 through February of 2022, Clase, a community



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coordinator with Middle School 302 in Longwood for over ten years, used her access to the school's procurement and accounting systems to register her husband and another co-conspirator as non-contracted vendors with the New York City Department of Education.

Clase filed a substantial number of fraudulent vendor invoices, along with falsified purchase orders for clothing such as sweatshirts, shorts, t-shirts, and jackets. Clase then used unauthorized access to approve the invoices and trigger over \$90,000 in fraudulent payments to her husband and \$75,000 in fraudulent payments to the other co-conspirator, both of whom "kicked back" some of the illicit proceeds to Clase. No items were ever delivered.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Robert F. Lindston and Zachary Reid of the Financial Frauds Bureau, under the supervision of Eugene Bykov, Supervisor of the Financial Frauds Bureau, Pia Freedman, Supervisor of the Financial Frauds Bureau, Michelle Milanes, Deputy Chief of the Financial Frauds Bureau, and Herman Wun, Chief of the Financial Frauds Bureau, and under the overall supervision of Denise Kodjo, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division, and Wanda Perez-Maldonado, Chief of the Investigations Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked Trial Preparation Assistant April Glenn, BXDA Forensic Accountant Julio Santiago, Detective Investigator Randy Scarpinato, Peter Holness, Deputy Chief of Detective Investigators, former Senior Detective Investigator Brendan Hammond and former Lt. Vincent Cantarella for their work in the investigation.

District Attorney Clark thanked SCI Investigator Daniel Sullivan, SCI Chief Investigator Michael Bisogna, SCI Special Counsel Valerie Batista, Department of Education General Counsel Elizabeth Vladeck, and the New York City Financial Information Services Agency – Office of Payroll Administration for their work on the case.



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