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**THREE PEOPLE INDICTED FOR STEALING \$173,000 FROM
BRONX MIDDLE SCHOOL
School Employee Allegedly Submitted Invoices for “Vendors”—Her Husband
and Friend--Who Supplied Nothing**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District Anastasia Coleman today announced that a NYC public school employee, her husband and another person have been indicted on corruption, grand larceny and fraud charges for stealing over \$173,000 from a Bronx middle school’s funds.

District Attorney Clark said, “While working at Middle School 302 in Longwood, the defendant allegedly stole much-needed funds from the school in a fraud scheme that lasted four years, enriching herself, her husband, and her friend. It is unconscionable that they would deprive children in this way.”

Special Commissioner Anastasia Coleman said, “As alleged, this fraud, over a period of years, drained MS 302 of tens of thousands of dollars earmarked for City students. There can be no place in our society for those who would brazenly steal the limited resources allocated for our students and their families, and there can be no tolerance for this type of fraud within the New York City school system. I would like to thank our partners at the Bronx DA’s office, especially those from the Financial Frauds Bureau, for their efforts and assistance in this matter.”

District Attorney Clark said the defendants -- Rusnelly Clase, 40, of Main Street, Yonkers, a Community Associate at MS 302, the Luisa Dessus Cruz School, in Longwood; Clase’s husband, Justin Echevarria, 37, and Lisa Michelle Geraldino, 36, of Van Buren Street, Brooklyn, an acquaintance of Clase—were arraigned today on a 296-count indictment by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Brenda Rivera. The defendants were released on supervised release. They are due back in court on January 28, 2025.

The indictment charges Clase with first-degree Corrupting the Government, second-degree



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Grand Larceny, Public Corruption, and multiple counts of first-degree Offering a False Instrument for Filing, first-degree Falsifying Business Records, second-degree Forgery. Echevarria, and Geraldino are each charged with second-degree Corrupting the Government, second-degree Grand Larceny, and multiple counts of first-degree Offering a False Instrument for Filing, first-degree and second-degree Falsifying Business Records.

According to the investigation, from 2018 through February of 2022, Clase, a community coordinator for over ten years who had access to the school's procurement and accounting systems, allegedly used her position to register each of her co-conspirators as a non-contracted vendor for the New York City Department of Education (DOE).

According to the investigation, over the course of approximately four years, Clase allegedly filed a substantial number of fraudulent vendor invoices, along with falsified purchase orders for "swag" clothing such as sweatshirts, shorts, t-shirts, and jackets. Clase then allegedly used unauthorized access to approve the invoices and trigger the payment of over \$90,000 of funds to be directed to Echevarria and over \$75,000 to be directed to Geraldino. The co-conspirators allegedly "kicked back" a portion of the money to Clase. Ultimately, no items were ever delivered.

The case is being 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, 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 BXDA Forensic Accountant Julio Santiago, Trial Preparation Assistant April Glenn, BXDA Senior Detective Investigator Brendan Hammond, Detective Investigator Randy Scarpinato, Lieutenant Vincent Cantarella, Peter Holness, Deputy Chief of Detective Investigators and Frank Chiara, Chief of Detective Investigators for their work on the case.

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.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.