



# 2003 ANNUAL REPORT

OFFICE of the INSPECTOR GENERAL  
CHICAGO BOARD OF EDUCATION

July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003

James M. Sullivan, Inspector General



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003**



**Office of the Inspector General  
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James M. Sullivan, Inspector General

January 1, 2004

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## **A MESSAGE FROM THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

The Office of the Inspector General (“OIG”) for Chicago Board of Education was created pursuant to the Illinois School Code, 105 ILCS 5/34-13.1, and has the authority to conduct investigations into allegations of or incidents of waste, fraud, and financial mismanagement in public education within the jurisdiction of the Board. The School Code mandates that the Inspector General provide to the Board and the Illinois General Assembly, a summary of reports and investigations for the previous fiscal year no later than January 1 of each year. This annual report, a compilation of investigative reports issued by the OIG from July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003, has been prepared and is being distributed to meet that statutory requirement.

On April 2, 2003, Mayor Richard M. Daley appointed me to serve as Inspector General for a four-year term ending June 30, 2006. Prior to that appointment, I served, also pursuant to Mayor Daley’s appointment, as Interim Inspector General for one year.

For the period of time reported herein, the OIG was comprised of three investigative units, a mediation group and support staff. (Prompted by budget and staffing reductions, as well as the needs of the office, a recent reorganization combined investigative units and has resulted in increased efficiency and production.) The Employee Integrity Unit investigates allegations of employee misconduct, including payroll fraud, on and off-duty criminal offenses, residency, misappropriation of funds, and other violations of Board Rules, the Chicago Public School Policy Manual or the Employee Discipline Code. The Employee Integrity Unit also investigates allegations of students attending CPS while residing in the suburbs, a violation of the School Code. During FY03, the OIG received 641 complaints of misconduct. During this same period the unit closed 624 cases. Those cases where the OIG issued an investigative report are summarized herein.

The Contracts Investigations Unit investigates allegations of fraud, waste, criminal conduct, misrepresentations and other violations of Board Rules or CPS policies committed by Board vendors. The Forensic Auditing and Special Projects Units focus on

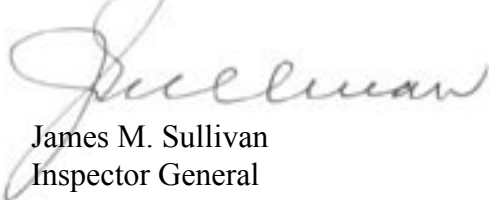
those investigations of vendors that require extensive auditing or analysis of financial documentation or data. As needed, the Forensic Auditing Unit also assists in investigations of employee misconduct that require an auditing expertise. The Special Projects Unit reviews and studies issues that focus on increasing efficiency in the educational and management functions of the system. During FY03, these units initiated a total of 29 investigations.

The OIG's Mediation Group mediates disputes between schools and contractors. School-based personnel raise issues, usually concerning the quality of work performed at the schools by contractors, and the Mediation Group attempts to amicably resolve these disputes. In FY03, the Mediation Group received 50 complaints. During this period the Mediation Group closed 98 cases that were opened during the fiscal year and in prior years, and successfully mediated 51 disputes. Those issues the Mediation Group successfully mediated are summarized in this report.

Also during FY03, two investigations previously conducted by the OIG and reported in previous annual reports, resulted in the successful prosecution of vendors charged with various fraudulent acts. Specifically, a painting contractor, investigated for bribing a Board investigator, plead guilty to the charge of bribery and was sentenced to serve a one-year term in federal prison. A technology contractor investigated by the OIG was charged in 2001 with numerous counts of theft and forgery after cashing \$100,000 of vendor checks to which he was not entitled. In March of 2003, he plead guilty and was sentenced to serve a two-year term of probation. The vendor was also ordered to pay \$100,000 in restitution to the Board

The entire Office of the Inspector General would like to thank the Chicago Board of Education and the entire CPS administration for continued cooperation and support.

Sincerely,



James M. Sullivan  
Inspector General



## **EMPLOYEE INTEGRITY UNIT**

- The OIG responded to an allegation that an associate lunchroom manager was arrested for the offense of possession of a controlled substance and confirmed the arrest and conviction. The associate lunchroom manager was convicted of possession of controlled substance with the intent to deliver and was sentenced to serve a two-year term of probation. The associate lunchroom manager subsequently resigned and his personnel records have been marked “do not hire.”
  
- The OIG was informed that payroll checks and reimbursement checks were missing from CPS central office. After learning that numerous checks were being cashed at local currency exchanges, the OIG contacted the Currency Exchange Association and requested that a notification be sent to its members warning of the stolen checks. A cashier at a local currency exchange alerted the police when a woman attempted to cash two stolen checks. The woman was arrested and found to be in possession of a third stolen check. The OIG investigation, conducted with the assistance of the Chicago Police Department, revealed that the woman was responsible for having cashed stolen checks totaling more than \$23,000. The woman, who was not a CPS employee, was arrested and subsequently convicted of the offenses of theft by deception and forgery. The woman was sentenced to serve a four-year term of probation and was ordered to perform 150 hours of community service and pay \$24,000 in restitution to CPS.
  
- The OIG learned that following the Christmas 2002 school break, a teacher requested a leave of absence to care for her daughter. Further investigation by the OIG revealed that the teacher had in fact taken another job in another school district and, while being paid sick time by CPS, was actually teaching at another school. The OIG investigation revealed that the teacher was paid more than \$8,000 while teaching in another district. The teacher subsequently retired from CPS.

- The OIG conducted an investigation of an allegation that a student residing in Gary, Indiana was attending a non-public special education school with tuition paid for and transportation provided by CPS. The OIG investigation, which included numerous surveillances, confirmed the family's residence in Gary for the years CPS provided services to the child. Based on the OIG investigation, CPS recovered more than \$60,000 in tuition and fees from the parents of the student.
- The OIG investigated an allegation that a teacher was arrested and charged with the felony offenses of aggravated battery to a police officer and aggravated fleeing. The OIG investigation revealed that the teacher was found guilty of the misdemeanor offense of attempting to elude a police officer and sentenced to probation. The teacher was suspended for five days and issued a warning resolution for her misconduct.
- The OIG received an allegation that an elementary school assistant principal negligently supervised students by allowing two female students to engage in a fight that injured one of the students. During the course of the investigation, the OIG conducted numerous interviews of school staff, students, the assistant principal and principal. Based on these interviews, which provided a detailed account of the events prior to, during and after the altercation between the two female students, the OIG obtained sufficient evidence to show that the assistant principal allowed the fight to continue after it had begun and directed others not to stop the fight. As a result of the investigation, the principal was demoted and suspended.
- An OIG investigation revealed that the Chicago Police Department executed a search warrant at the home of a CPS special education support clerk and found the clerk to be in possession of more than four kilograms of cocaine. The OIG investigation revealed that the clerk was charged with the offense of possession of a controlled substance, subsequently plead guilty to the charge and was sentenced to the penitentiary. The clerk resigned from CPS employment.
- After receiving an allegation that a student resided outside of the City of Chicago but attended a Chicago public school, the OIG conducted an investigation that revealed the student actually resided in Calumet Park, Illinois for three years while attending a south side school. The OIG investigation recommended that CPS seek reimbursement for the payment of non-resident tuition of more than \$18,000.
- An OIG audit revealed that a school clerk improperly and without authorization edited his time records. The audit revealed that the school clerk edited his time records to reflect time entries which conflicted with other school records and observations. The clerk subsequently resigned from CPS employment.

- The OIG conducted an investigation following the arrest of a school security officer for the felony offense of false personation of a police officer. The OIG investigation revealed that the school security officer was arrested after he represented that he in fact was a police officer. The investigation further revealed that the school security officer was convicted of the offense and sentenced to serve a term of one year of probation. The school security officer resigned from CPS and his personnel records were marked “do not hire.”
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation into an allegation that a substitute teacher was arrested and charged with the offense of deceptive practices. The investigation revealed that the substitute teacher fraudulently took possession of a vehicle. The teacher plead guilty to the charges and was sentenced to supervision and ordered to pay restitution. The substitute teacher was subsequently terminated from CPS employment.
  
- Responding to an allegation that a teacher had submitted fraudulent student loan applications for her child, the OIG conducted an investigation that confirmed the allegation. The investigation revealed that the teacher had submitted applications for financial aid for her daughter that fraudulently misrepresented family income. The United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois filed a civil action against the teacher for the recovery of financial aid. At the conclusion of the investigation, the teacher was in the midst of re-paying the government more than \$10,000 to settle a judgment entered against her. The teacher was issued a warning resolution by CPS.
  
- The OIG discovered that a parent had enrolled her daughter at a Chicago public school while both resided in Hickory Hills, Illinois. The OIG investigation revealed that the parent was responsible for the payment of non-resident tuition in the amount of \$6,184.
  
- The OIG was informed that a porter assigned to an elementary school was arrested and charged with the offense of obstructing a police officer. The OIG conducted an investigation that revealed the porter was convicted of the offense and sentenced to serve a one-year term of conditional discharge. The Law Department recommended that school based discipline be enacted against the porter.
  
- An investigation was conducted by the OIG into an allegation that a school clerk continued to pay herself overtime after having been directed to discontinue the overtime. The investigation revealed that the school clerk submitted fraudulent corrected attendance reports seeking pay for 79 hours of work and was in fact paid. Subsequent to the OIG investigation, the school clerk was discharged from CPS employment.



- The OIG conducted an investigation into an allegation that a night watchman was using a school computer to access pornographic websites. The investigation revealed that on numerous occasions the night watchman accessed websites using a computer in the main office of the school. The night watchman admitted his misconduct to the OIG and subsequently resigned his employment with CPS.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that a husband and wife, both CPS teachers, resided in Arlington Heights, Illinois, in violation of the CPS Residency Policy. The teachers admitted to the OIG that they resided outside of Chicago. Both teachers are no longer employed by CPS.
  
- The OIG received a notification that a substitute teacher was arrested and charged with the offense of possession of a controlled substance. The OIG conducted an investigation that revealed the substitute teacher was arrested, plead guilty to the charge of possession of a controlled substance and was sentenced to serve a two-year term of probation and ordered to perform 30 hours of community service. The substitute teacher was discharged from CPS employment.
  
- The OIG received a complaint that a lunchroom manager routinely stole food from a school for her personal use and to provide to a business. The OIG conducted an investigation that included surveillances, interviews and a review of the school's food purchases. The investigation revealed that the lunchroom manager ordered food items for the school that were not made part of the lunchroom's menu. Surveillance revealed that the lunchroom manager prepared food items in the school's kitchen, then placed the items in her car and removed them from the school. Other employees confirmed that the lunchroom manager routinely prepared food that was not served to the students and then removed the items from the school. Following the OIG investigation, the lunchroom manager was discharged from CPS employment.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation that confirmed that a CPS teacher resided in Skokie, Illinois in violation of the CPS Residency Policy. Discipline is pending.
  
- An OIG investigation revealed that a CPS teacher was arrested and charged with the offense of aggravated financial identity theft. The investigation discovered that the teacher had used another person's credit card to purchase more than \$2,800 worth of goods. The teacher subsequently plead guilty to a reduced charge of theft and was sentenced to serve a term of probation. Following the OIG investigation, the teacher resigned from CPS employment.

- The OIG conducted an investigation of an elementary school lunchroom manager and porter who were accused of preparing food after hours and stealing the food from the school. The OIG investigation corroborated the allegation that found, through surveillances, that the lunchroom manager removed items from the school's freezer and took them from the school. Further, interviews conducted by the OIG provided evidence that the lunchroom manager and porter routinely prepared large quantities of food that were never served to the students. It was also discovered that the lunchroom manager ordered numerous items such as polish sausage, pork chops, bacon and other items that were never prepared and served to the students. The porter admitted to OIG investigators that she and the lunchroom manager have taken food items from the school and cooked these items at home for their families. The porter also admitted that the lunchroom manager gave her permission to take items from the school and cook them at home for a party for another staff member. The lunchroom manager also admitted to the OIG that she has taken food items from the school and prepared them for personal use. The porter subsequently resigned from CPS employment and the lunchroom manager was discharged from CPS employment.
  
- The OIG conducted a forensic review of the propriety of overtime and extended day payments made to some CPS employees. This review focused on employees who received excessive payments for purportedly writing curriculum for various summer school and other programs. The OIG investigation included a review of payroll records and timesheets supporting pay for regular hours and overtime hours purportedly worked by the two head curriculum writers and two other employees over the course of two fiscal years. The OIG also conducted a review and analysis of the materials produced by the curriculum writers. Finally, the investigation examined the relationships between the head curriculum writers and CPS vendors.

The OIG found that timekeeping procedures utilized by the curriculum writers were inconsistent, irregular and did not follow CPS practices and policies. Specifically, paper timesheets submitted by the curriculum writers conflicted with hours worked by the writers in their regular positions and some hours were calculated erroneously. In addition, the OIG learned that the times represented by teacher's as having been worked were not the actual times worked and this may have been at the direction of the head curriculum writers.

The OIG also found that the curriculum-writing program lacked efficient and effective management. The department head responsible for managing the program never reviewed or approved the timesheets that generated the excessive payments to the curriculum writers, that task was left to the head writer. Further, curriculum writers were not paid consistently from monies budgeted for the programs they worked. Therefore, management did not have a valid method to accurately track and evaluate expenditures affiliated with these overtime activities.

The investigation also disclosed violations of the CPS Ethics Policy. One of the head curriculum writers actually supervised and evaluated the performance of her two sisters,

even to the extent that the head writer signed, approved, and, in some instances, actually prepared timesheets for her sisters that generated the excessive overtime payments being investigated. In addition, the OIG discovered that the two head curriculum writers received payments from some of the vendors that the department selected to publish the materials produced by the curriculum writers.

Additionally, the OIG investigation revealed that one of the curriculum writers investigated, who worked a regular position as a teacher and earned overtime as a writer, was not a regular certified teacher. The teacher possessed only a substitute-teaching certificate and had actually failed the teacher's certificate examination at least seven times.

The OIG also reviewed some of the materials produced by the curriculum writers. This analysis included teacher's manuals for the various math programs taught during the summer and after school programs. The teacher's manuals reviewed contained numerous errors, including basic computation errors and word problems where the solution given was the wrong answer. Therefore, it was likely that some of the teacher's manuals hindered rather than helped the teacher in the various programs since teachers would have had to notice and correct the errors in the lesson plans or students were provided the wrong answers and erroneous information and instruction.

Finally, the OIG investigation revealed that on numerous dates when records from other entities revealed they were engaged in other activities, three of the teachers were being paid by CPS for their regular hours and/or their purported overtime hours. For instance, the OIG obtained records that reflected that the head math curriculum writer was being paid by a vendor to attend conferences and meetings for those times that the writer submitted timesheets reflecting that she was either working her regular position or working overtime hours writing and reviewing curriculum. The OIG also uncovered documentary evidence which reflected that the head reading curriculum writer submitted timesheets reflecting that she worked the same times, for at least 14 hours, for both a vendor and CPS. Additionally, the OIG obtained documentary evidence which reflected that the third curriculum writer investigated billed CPS for overtime hours when in fact she was actually attending a university on her own behalf or taking training classes offered by CPS.

The head math curriculum writer resigned from CPS during the course of the investigation. The CPS Law Department is reviewing the OIG investigation for other potential disciplinary action.

- Another audit of overtime and extended day pay revealed that a teacher earned more than \$100,000 in one year, with nearly half of his pay coming from overtime positions. The OIG audited the teacher's payroll records and timesheets and discovered that the teacher was paid a substantial amount of money from a position funded with Federal Title 1 funds. The school had been allocated the Title 1 funds as a targeted assistance school

based on the number of students below the poverty level and school administration had proposed to spend the allocation on the in-service training of teachers and staff. The OIG investigation revealed that the teacher was paid these categorical funds to perform duties unrelated to the in-service training of teachers and staff. The OIG investigation further revealed that the teacher was paid his regular hourly rate to be present at the school when non-CPS functions, including a farmer's market and a basketball league, were utilizing school grounds. Each organization confirmed that the teacher's presence was not required during these events. In all, the teacher was paid more than \$35,000 with these specially designated funds. Disciplinary charges are pending.

- A high school teacher was arrested off-duty and charged with the offense of domestic battery. An OIG investigation revealed that the teacher plead guilty to the charge and was sentenced to supervision.
- Responding to a complaint from a parent, the OIG conducted an investigation of an allegation that a substitute teacher asked an eighth grade student to forge a signature on a check. The investigation revealed that the teacher asked the eighth grade student to sign the teacher's daughter's signature to a check. In an interview with the OIG, the substitute teacher admitted her improper conduct. The substitute teacher was discharged from CPS employment.
- The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that a high school teacher was arrested after soliciting for a prostitute. The OIG investigation revealed that the teacher had offered a woman money in exchange for sexual intercourse not knowing the woman was an undercover police officer. The teacher plead guilty to the charge in criminal court and subsequently resigned his position with CPS.
- An OIG investigation revealed that a parent volunteer at an elementary school was arrested and charged with battery after an altercation with the school engineer. The volunteer plead guilty to the charges and was ordered to perform community service. The volunteer is no longer working at the elementary school.
- Responding to an allegation that counterfeit CPS checks were being cashed at a local bank, the OIG conducted an investigation that revealed a school custodian cashed a counterfeit CPS check in the amount of \$1,259. The custodian subsequently admitted his actions to OIG investigators.
- The OIG conducted an investigation that revealed that a teacher resided in Elgin, Illinois in violation of the CPS Residency Policy. Discharge proceedings against the teacher are pending.

- The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that a custodian for a contracted janitorial firm was arrested and charged with the offense of criminal sexual assault. The investigation determined that the offense did not relate to CPS. The custodian plead guilty to the charge and was sentenced to four years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that an elementary school teacher was arrested for the offense of driving under the influence of alcohol. The investigation revealed that the teacher was found guilty of the charges and sentenced to supervision.
  
- After receiving a complaint that a night watchman assigned to an elementary school was leaving the worksite during his shift, the OIG began an investigation that included surveillance and a review of documentary evidence. The OIG investigation revealed that the night watchman routinely left the school for long periods of time during his shift to return to his home. Documentary evidence obtained during the course of the investigation supported these observations. The day the OIG attempted to interview the night watchman concerning the investigative findings, he resigned from CPS employment.
  
- The OIG received a notification that a school assistant was arrested off-duty after leaving a store without paying for more than \$200 worth of items. The OIG investigation revealed that the school assistant subsequently plead guilty to the offense of retail theft and was sentenced to serve 11 months of probation and was ordered to perform community service.
  
- An OIG investigation revealed that a day-to-day child welfare attendant was arrested for the offenses of domestic battery and violation of an order of protection. The child welfare attendant was convicted of the charges and sentenced to serve time in jail. The child welfare attendant was discharged from CPS employment.
  
- A school employee complained to the OIG that an engineer was using a school computer to download pornographic images from the internet. The OIG then conducted an investigation that uncovered sexually explicit images on a computer used by the engineer. The engineer admitted to the OIG that he received pornographic pictures through a private e-mail account and saved the pictures on the school computer. Subsequent to the OIG investigation, the engineer was discharged from CPS employment.

- The OIG received a notification that the Chicago Police arrested a teacher for driving on a suspended license. A search of the teacher following his arrest revealed the teacher to be in possession of crack cocaine. The OIG investigation revealed that the teacher was arrested for and subsequently plead guilty to the charge of possession of a controlled substance. The teacher was sentenced to two years of probation. CPS issued the teacher a warning resolution and the teacher is required to submit to random drug testing.
  
- Responding to an allegation that a principal was using school staff and equipment for her personal use, the OIG conducted an investigation that included interviews of 14 current and former staff members. The investigation revealed that the principal utilized school staff and equipment to prepare documents and materials relative to her daughter's wedding. The principal also utilized school staff to prepare private correspondence. CPS gave the principal a written reprimand.
  
- A teacher was arrested off-duty after police observed her in the lobby of a public housing facility purchasing drugs. The police found the teacher in possession of a controlled substance and charged her with the offense. The OIG investigation revealed that the teacher plead guilty to the charge of possession of a controlled substance and was ordered to serve a two-year term of probation and to perform three days of community service. Discipline is pending against the teacher.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation into an allegation that a teacher provided false information on an application for certification submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The OIG investigation proved that the teacher failed to indicate on the ISBE application that a prior, out-of-state teaching certificate had been revoked. The investigation further revealed that the teacher failed to disclose on a CPS application that she had been convicted of a crime. A discharge hearing has been conducted at the ISBE.
  
- The OIG learned that a teacher was arrested off-duty for the felony offense of theft. The OIG investigation revealed that the teacher engaged in a scam involving the collection of donations for a memorial service. The OIG investigation showed that the teacher plead guilty to the charge of theft and was sentenced to one year of conditional discharge and was ordered to pay more than \$1,100 in restitution.
  
- Responding to an allegation that counterfeit CPS checks had been cashed at a local currency exchange, the OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that a teacher's assistant attempted to cash a bogus CPS check for more than \$1,500 at a currency exchange. The investigation also revealed that a friend of the teacher's assistant, a

CPS substitute teacher, also attempted to cash a similar check. During the course of the investigation, the OIG learned that the teacher's assistant had also recently been arrested for the offense of possession of controlled substance. The teacher's assistant plead guilty to the charges and was ordered to serve a period of probation. The OIG referred its investigative findings concerning the attempts to cash counterfeit checks to the Chicago Police Department. Following the OIG investigation, the teacher's assistant resigned from CPS and the substitute teacher was discharged from CPS employment.

- The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that a CPS elementary magnet school student resided in Dolton, Illinois.
  
- After a principal was arrested and charged with the misdemeanor offense of disorderly conduct for filing a false police report, the OIG conducted an investigation into the principal's actions. The principal was charged after it was alleged that she directed a school assistant to call the police to report a fight among students and say that a student had a gun, when in fact the principal knew that a weapon had not been observed. During the course of the investigation, the OIG reviewed relevant police reports and a tape recording of communications between school personnel and the police dispatcher. The OIG also conducted 19 interviews of police officers, school staff and other CPS personnel. The OIG investigation did not find credible evidence to show that the principal acted improperly or in violation of the law. The principal was found not guilty of the misdemeanor offense in criminal court.
  
- The OIG received a complaint that a security guard assigned to an elementary school was not present at the school during his work hours. The OIG began an investigation that included surveillances of the subject. The investigation revealed evidence that the security guard left school during his work hours and went home or ran personal errands. After the OIG scheduled an interview with the security guard to discuss the investigative findings, the security guard resigned his employment with CPS.
  
- The OIG received a complaint of numerous thefts of school and personal property occurring at an elementary school. An OIG investigation, which included surveillance, yielded observations of the school engineer at the school at odd hours and on one occasion the engineer was observed leaving the school with school property. The engineer was also observed rummaging through a teacher's book bag and purse. It was also discovered that the engineer had numerous pieces of school equipment in his garage and residence. The engineer was subsequently arrested by the Chicago Police Department and indicted for the felony offense of theft. The engineer eventually plead guilty to the charge of theft and was sentenced to serve a term of probation. The engineer resigned from CPS employment.

- The OIG conducted five investigations into various allegations of misconduct by an elementary school principal. The OIG substantiated an allegation that the principal allowed a teacher's time to be marked as if the teacher was working, when in fact the teacher was on maternity leave. When the principal learned that the teacher and her husband, also a CPS teacher, began cooperating in the OIG investigation, the principal closed their positions. The OIG investigation disclosed that this was done improperly and in retaliation for the teachers' cooperation with the OIG investigation.

The OIG investigated and substantiated an allegation that the principal caused a staff member to prepare a false payroll document to assist the principal's daughter in purchasing a car. The bogus payroll document was created to show that the principal's daughter purportedly worked for CPS when in fact she did not.

Another investigation of the principal revealed that the principal also retaliated against an assistant principal assigned to the elementary school and closed the assistant principal's position when the principal learned that the assistant principal was attempting to leave the school. This was done after the principal was directed by a superior not to close the position.

Finally, the OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that the principal improperly paid employees for undocumented time as a reward at the end of the school year. The investigation showed that there was no supporting documentation or time records to support the pay.

Following the OIG investigation, the principal was terminated from CPS employment.

- The OIG conducted an investigation that revealed that three siblings attended a Chicago public school while residing with their parents in Cicero, Illinois. The investigation revealed that the parents were responsible for the payment of non-resident tuition in the amount of \$19,000.
- The OIG was notified that a custodian was arrested and charged with the offense of possession of cannabis. An OIG investigation revealed that the arrest occurred while the custodian was on duty, having left the school that he was assigned to purportedly run an errand. During the course of the investigation, the OIG also learned that prior to his employment with CPS the custodian was twice convicted of felonies and sentenced to the penitentiary. Subsequent to the OIG investigation, the custodian resigned from CPS employment.
- An OIG investigation revealed that a substitute teacher was arrested and charged with numerous firearms offenses. The substitute teacher was found guilty of the charges and sentenced to supervision. CPS vacated the substitute teacher from his position.



- The OIG conducted an investigation into an allegation that a cadre substitute teacher, who was also the girls' swim team coach at a high school, misappropriated money raised to support the girls' swim team. The investigation revealed that parents contributed to an account to support the swim team and the team held fundraisers and ran concession stands at swim meets. The investigation further revealed that the teacher withdrew money from the account and did not deposit concession or fundraising profits. When confronted by the principal, the teacher agreed to pay back the money, but only repaid \$50 of the more than \$600 owed. Following the OIG investigation, the teacher was discharged from CPS employment.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation into an allegation that a school security officer was arrested for the offense of driving under the influence of alcohol. The investigation revealed that the security officer was found guilty of the charge and was sentenced to supervision and ordered to undergo alcohol treatment. The security officer resigned from CPS employment.
  
- An OIG investigation revealed that a student attended a CPS magnet high school while residing in Skokie, Illinois. The investigation revealed that the parents of the student were responsible for the payment of non-resident tuition in the amount of \$19,000.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that a high school teacher was arrested off-duty for the offense of telephone harassment. The investigation revealed that the teacher plead guilty to the charge and was sentenced to supervision and ordered to perform community service.
  
- School staff observed a lunchroom manager removing food items from the school and placing them in the trunk of her car. A staff member confronted the lunchroom manager and discovered that the items were the same as those in the school's inventory. The police were called and the lunchroom manager fled the scene. The OIG investigation revealed that the lunchroom manager removed the items from the school without permission. The police subsequently arrested the lunchroom manager and charged her with theft. Disciplinary proceedings are pending.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that a night watchman was arrested off-duty and charged with the offense of possession of a controlled substance. In an interview with the OIG, the night watchman admitted that he had purchased cocaine prior to being arrested by the police. The night watchman died before the disposition of the criminal case and prior to the enactment of appropriate discipline.

- The OIG conducted an investigation that revealed that a substitute teacher placed a stop payment order on a paycheck after purportedly not receiving the check in the mail. After being issued a replacement check, the substitute teacher cashed the replacement check and the original check. Discharge proceedings against the substitute teacher are pending.
- A porter was arrested off-duty and charged with the offense of aggravated criminal sexual abuse after police discovered that he had sexual intercourse with a 15 year-old girl. The OIG investigation revealed that the porter plead guilty to the charge and was sentenced to serve a 30-month term of probation. The conviction precluded his employment by a school district and the porter was terminated from CPS employment.
- The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that a substitute teacher was arrested for and found guilty of the offense of reckless conduct. The teacher was sentenced to supervision.
- Following a complaint received by the OIG, an investigation was conducted which revealed that a student attended a CPS regional gifted center while residing in South Holland, Illinois. After the OIG forwarded the results of the investigation to the Law Department, the parents of the student agreed to pay \$5,000 for non-resident tuition.
- The OIG received an allegation that a newly hired school social service assistant had been recently arrested for a drug offense. The OIG conducted an investigation that revealed that the school assistant was arrested after police officers observed him engage in drug transactions. The police found the school assistant in possession of 22 plastic bags of cocaine. The school assistant plead guilty to the charge of possession of controlled substance and was sentenced to serve a two-year term of probation.
- The CPS Department of Procurement and Contracts became aware that counterfeit CPS purchase orders were being submitted to vendors requesting the purchase of thousands of dollars of musical equipment. The OIG was notified and conducted an investigation. The investigation uncovered three companies that had received bogus purchase orders all requesting delivery to the same residence. With the cooperation of the Chicago Police Department and one of the vendors, a “controlled” delivery of items was conducted which resulted in the arrest of a CPS employee and her son, a CPS student. The mother and son admitted their roles in the scam and admitted to selling many of the items received. The mother was charged with the felony offense of theft, subsequently plead guilty to the charge and was sentenced to serve a one-year term of conditional discharge. She is no longer employed by CPS.

- The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that a substitute teacher placed a stop payment order on a paycheck after purportedly not receiving the check in the mail. After being issued a replacement check, the substitute teacher cashed the replacement check and the original check on the same day. The substitute teacher was discharged from CPS employment.
  
- An OIG investigation found that a CPS teacher attempted to enroll her son in two Chicago public schools by submitting an altered birth certificate for the child. The investigation further revealed that the teacher had submitted bogus information to CPS in an attempt to obtain a salary increase. The teacher subsequently resigned from CPS employment.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation into an allegation that an elementary school lunchroom manager stole money collected at a school from the sale of breakfasts, lunches and a la carte items. The OIG was alerted to the lunchroom manager after the school's food service provider received information that the lunchroom manager was not depositing all the money he collected into the bank. This was corroborated by the fact that lunchroom deposits had declined since the lunchroom manager's arrival at the school. The OIG audited the lunchroom's deposits, comparing them to other records of money collected. This audit revealed that, over a short period of time, the lunchroom manager failed to deposit more than \$250 of money collected. Subsequent to the OIG investigation, the lunchroom manager resigned from CPS employment.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that a lunchroom attendant was arrested off-duty and convicted of the offense of retail theft.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation that revealed that a security guard cashed a paycheck then requested a stop payment order on the check. After being issued a replacement check, the security guard cashed the replacement check as well. The Law Department recommended that school based discipline be implemented against the security guard.
  
- The OIG received a notification of the arrest of a janitor assigned to a CPS high school. The OIG conducted an investigation which revealed that the janitor, employed by a CPS contractor, was arrested after Chicago Police found him to be in possession of heroin. The janitor plead guilty to the charge of possession of a controlled substance and was sentenced to serve a term of probation following four months in Cook County jail. The OIG confirmed that the janitor has been discharged from employment by the contracted janitorial firm.

- The OIG conducted an investigation into an allegation that a student attended a CPS elementary school while residing in the suburbs. The investigation revealed that the student resided with his mother in Dolton, Illinois and the mother was liable for the payment of non-resident tuition in the amount of \$6,470.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation into numerous thefts that were occurring at an elementary school. The OIG, with the cooperation of the CPS Bureau of Safety and Security, discovered that a man had been observed by a covert video camera removing money from an employee's purse. The OIG conducted interviews of school staff who identified the offender as a janitor employed by a contracted janitorial firm. The OIG interviewed the janitor who admitted his misconduct. The janitor was then arrested by the Chicago Police Department and charged with theft. Following his arrest, the contracted janitorial firm terminated the janitor.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation into an allegation that a CPS high school teacher and a student were engaged in a scheme to purchase items using forged checks. The OIG investigation revealed that the student found blank checks from a credit card company and approached the teacher and asked what he could do with them. According to the student, the teacher suggested that they make online purchases and use the checks to pay for the items. The teacher admitted to the OIG that he told the student how to fill out the checks and actually forged a signature on some of the checks. The OIG investigation revealed that the teacher and student purchased items including cell phones, a computer monitor, clothes and other merchandise using the checks. The results of the OIG investigation were forwarded to the Chicago Police Department. The teacher was subsequently discharged from CPS employment.



## **CONTRACTS INVESTIGATION UNIT FORENSIC AUDITING UNIT**

- During the course of an investigation that was reported in the OIG's FY 2002 Annual Report, the OIG learned of additional fraudulent conduct by a CPS contractor. The OIG learned during the earlier investigation that a contractor may have over-billed CPS for snowplowing work purportedly conducted during a snow emergency that struck Chicago in December 2000 and January 2001. Following the earlier investigation, the OIG then investigated the over-billing allegation. During the course of the investigation, the OIG reviewed documents submitted by the company requesting payment of more than \$369,000 for snowplowing work purportedly conducted during the snow emergency. These invoices contained patent irregularities including the fact that the company represented that 140 separate jobs took the same amount of time. In essence, the company represented that despite the size of the school area plowed, each job took the same amount of time. This conflicted with information the OIG received from other snowplowing vendors who stated that they could have done the work in much less time. Further, the invoices did not reflect dates and times of service.

In addition, the OIG learned that the invoices submitted by the company were not reviewed by CPS personnel and instead were forwarded to privatized management companies for payment. The OIG investigation revealed that the management companies failed to adequately review the invoices, since according to the management companies, they did not oversee the work and the invoices were forwarded to them to facilitate payment.

The investigation also uncovered evidence that the company did not have internal timesheets to support all the hours that it billed CPS for time worked by its employees. Further, the president of the company told an employee of the company how many hours to bill CPS for snowplowing work. The employee admitted to the OIG that the company did not have the supporting documentation necessary to accompany the invoices so the information was fabricated to allow the company to bill for the total

hours demanded by the company president. The OIG could only find documentation to support slightly more than 54% of the amount invoiced to CPS. The OIG concluded that the company billed CPS for more than \$200,000 of snowplowing work that was never performed.

The OIG investigation also revealed that CPS expended at least \$869,000 for snow removal services performed by numerous vendors during the snow emergency. Since the federal government declared an actual snow emergency, CPS was entitled to reimbursement for extraordinary expenses related to the snowfall. In fact, CPS had sought and received reimbursement from a snow emergency declared for Chicago in 1999. However, the investigation revealed that CPS failed to seek reimbursement for the 2000 emergency costing CPS perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars.

- Following numerous complaints from a variety of sources that bathroom facilities at Chicago public schools did not serve the basic hygiene needs of students, the OIG conducted a study of the sanitary conditions of bathroom facilities. During this review, the OIG conducted field inspections of 1,300 student and teacher bathrooms in 78 schools and also surveyed more than 300 school-based employees, including school-based health care professionals. The review found that while many schools maintained an adequate storeroom supply of toilet tissue, 20% of the bathrooms in the schools inspected did not have toilet paper. In addition, 30% of the bathrooms inspected did not have hand soap and 75% did not have required disposal containers for hygiene products. The OIG issued a report highlighting these deficiencies, including the specific schools with the greatest number of sanitation issues. One high school, the OIG study found, had only one floor out of four where the bathrooms were open.
  
- Responding to numerous complaints received by the OIG's Mediation Unit from school engineers and other school staff, the OIG initiated an investigation of dangerous exit door malfunctions at numerous recently renovated and newly constructed CPS schools. The exit doors, which utilized internal concealed vertical rod ("CVR") latching mechanisms, were failing to perform safely and reliably in the high traffic environments in which they were installed. These malfunctions resulted in the inability to open, or even force open, school exit doors, creating a threat to the safety of facility occupants who would have to exit a school in an emergency. The OIG investigation, conducted with the assistance of certified engineers and building inspectors, included on-site inspections of over 180 CVR doors at 10 school facilities. The OIG also surveyed building engineers at more than 13 other schools. As a result of this work, the OIG learned that more than half of the fire exit doors with concealed vertical rod latching mechanisms at these schools were prone to malfunctions that would unpredictably render these exit doors closed, latched shut and inoperable. The OIG learned during the course of the investigation that the CPS Department of Operations and a privatized management firm contracted to manage school construction were aware of the door failures and purportedly had begun retrofitting a small number of failing doors with

other latching mechanisms. Despite this fact, the OIG learned at the time of its review that concealed vertical rod doors were still being installed at CPS schools. The OIG also learned during its investigation that numerous schools had been cited for fire code violations due to the potential door failures in an emergency, and that replacement of numerous CVR doors was necessary. The OIG notified the Department of Operations of specific findings as the investigation progressed and the OIG subsequently was informed that Operations had begun a new program of replacing and/or retrofitting all doors that used concealed vertical rod latching mechanisms.

It should be noted that during its investigation, the OIG also researched the propriety of specifying concealed vertical rod doors for use in school construction. The OIG learned from industry experts and school architects that concealed vertical rod doors and latch devices are a poor choice to use in schools as exit doors. Industry experts cited high traffic and abusive environments as one cause for throwing the delicate latching mechanism out of alignment.

- The OIG received a complaint from the Office of the Chief Executive Officer that an alleged confidence artist had made fraudulent misrepresentations to students and administrators at 5 Chicago public high schools. The OIG subsequently conducted an investigation of the person and her company. The investigation revealed that the woman represented to administrators at 5 high schools she was affiliated with a popular music industry star and she wanted to run student talent contests at the schools. The woman represented that the winners of the talent contests would receive trips to New Orleans or Los Angeles and would get to meet the star. The woman further represented that other winners would receive clothing from the star's clothing line and concert tickets. The woman also encouraged the schools to participate in a raffle and to order clothing, purportedly from the star's clothing line. One school, specifically staff and not students, ordered and paid the woman for more than \$1,500 worth of clothing. The investigation further revealed that the representations made by the woman were completely fraudulent and she had no affiliation with the star or the clothing line. The talent shows never took place and the clothing ordered was never delivered. As a result of the investigation, the OIG made specific recommendations to CPS administration that a background check be conducted of all individuals seeking to do business with CPS or individual schools. In this case, none of the administrators involved in bringing the woman into their respective schools investigated the representations she made before doing business with her. Further, neither the woman nor her company had submitted paperwork to be a CPS vendor, a process that may have revealed information that would have put CPS administrators on notice as to the company's affiliations and background.
  
- The OIG conducted an investigation that an owner of a theatre company breached an agreement to pay CPS elementary school students for performing in a musical production and to award prizes to the students based on ticket sales. The OIG

investigation revealed that the owner of the company approached the school and proposed having students perform in the play for which the students would be paid. The owner also stated that prizes would be awarded to the students who sold the most tickets to performances. The theatre company entered into agreements with parents to pay the student performers, however, even though many performances were subsequently cancelled, the investigation revealed that the students were not paid, nor were prizes awarded. The investigation also revealed that the theatre company failed to pay the school for the rental of the school facility where the performances took place. Further, the investigation revealed that the theatre company owner made fraudulent misrepresentations on disclosure forms filed with CPS. As a result of the investigation, the OIG recommended that CPS disclosure forms be modified to ensure that CPS had the ability and the necessary information to evaluate a proposed vendor's legitimacy and potential risks incumbent with doing business with the vendor.

- The OIG conducted an investigation of a Capital Improvement Project conducted at an elementary school, specifically focusing on the involvement of two subcontractors. The OIG investigation revealed that prior to performance on the elementary school project, one of the companies was both debarred and banned from working on CPS projects. The OIG discovered during its investigation that the banned company actually controlled the other subcontractor and engaged in a scheme to enable the other subcontractor to fraudulently perform on the \$90,000 roofing project. Control over the subcontractor was established by evidence that included bank and insurance documents that listed a principal of the banned company as a co-owner of the other subcontractor; funding of the subcontractor by the banned company; the purchasing of materials and rental of equipment from the banned company by the subcontractor; use of employees of the banned company as managers of the subcontractor's workers on various phases of the project; and an admission by the owner of the subcontractor that his company was a front for the banned company. The actions by the banned and debarred company in controlling the other subcontractor, actually performing some work on the project and otherwise benefiting from the subcontractors work violated the provisions of both its debarment and ban from doing work for CPS. The OIG recommended that CPS take action against the banned company and again debar it along with the other subcontractor from doing CPS work and to seek other appropriate civil remedies.
  
- Following a referral from the Office of the Board of Education, the OIG conducted a review of the customer service and pricing practices of a vendor of janitorial supplies. The vendor contended it could provide significant cost savings to CPS if its use were more widespread throughout CPS. During the course of reviewing the company's prices to ensure that CPS was acting efficiently and in a cost effective manner, the OIG discovered that the company offered cheaper prices on only six of nineteen items commonly used by schools. The OIG also surveyed school engineers who had utilized the services offered by the supply company. Many engineers informed the OIG that: shipments from the supplier were sometimes months late, it was hard



to contact company management, and other supply companies offered free items for the schools that made it more advantageous and cost effective for the schools to place orders with the other companies. During the course of the investigation, the OIG also determined that the company's own actions may prohibit CPS from doing business with the complaining company. Despite OIG requests, the company did not provide its City of Chicago business license to the OIG and the company made misrepresentations on a contractor disclosure form it filed with CPS. The OIG issued a report to the Board and CPS management stating that use of the company would not be cost effective for CPS.

- The OIG conducted an investigation of a capital improvement project at a CPS elementary school and allegations of contractual non-performance and failure to manage the \$1.75 million project. With the assistance of engineering consultants and building inspectors, the OIG conducted three physical examinations of the school that included an evaluation of a continuing roof leak, which caused severe damage to the school interior and created serious lead contamination and electrocution hazards inside the school. The investigation revealed that an electrical wiring and lighting system installed on the rooftop of the school was not watertight and allowed rainwater into the conduit and subsequently into the school; rooftop light installation was not completed and lights were non-functional; masonry debris was left on the roof, where it punctured the bituminous roof membrane and caused roof leaks; and window installation was incomplete, allowing air and rainwater to penetrate into the classrooms. The OIG further learned that despite the incomplete work, the architect of record and the privatized construction manager issued a certificate of final completion for the project. In addition, the OIG learned during the course of the investigation that additional roof leak problems were not properly diagnosed by the privatized facility management company following the capital renovation. As such, the school continued to expend additional funds in unsuccessful attempts to fix roof leaks of undetermined origin when proper inspection by facility managers would have discovered plainly visible roof defects. The OIG report highlighted the specific failures of all management and construction firms involved in the project and the subsequent failure to properly diagnose the continuing problems.
  
- The OIG received an allegation that a CPS vendor of privatized janitorial services failed to perform adequate background checks on employees who worked at CPS facilities. This allegation was received after the OIG discovered that an employee of the company was working at a Chicago public school despite having been convicted years earlier, of the offense of murder. The OIG conducted a review of the company's procedures for conducting background checks. This review initially revealed that personnel files of a sample of the company's employees contained all necessary information, including the results of background checks. The OIG also tested the validity of the background checks by conducting its own reviews of the criminal histories of the randomly selected

employees. This review did not reveal any additional criminal history information that should have been discovered during the company's background checks. However, when conducting its own background checks of the company's employees, the OIG discovered that two employees had recently been convicted of offenses that, pursuant to the School Code, prohibit them from working at CPS facilities. These offenses were committed after the initial background check by the vendor. The OIG's investigation revealed that two janitors were each convicted of the offense of attempted possession of a controlled substance. As a result of this finding, the OIG requested that the janitorial company terminate the janitors from working on the CPS contract.

- The OIG previously began an investigation into an allegation that a painting contractor failed to pay its employees the prevailing wage while performing work for CPS. After conducting a preliminary investigation, the OIG referred the matter to the Illinois Department of Labor. The IDOL subsequently informed the OIG that it had determined that the painting contractor violated the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act on a CPS project and owed its employees more than \$8,800 in back wages. The IDOL reported that it had collected the money from the contractor and paid the painters. The IDOL also reported that it had imposed a \$1,700 fine against the company. The OIG reported the results of the IDOL investigation to the CPS Law Department to determine if disciplinary action would be enacted against the company by CPS.
  
- The OIG received a notification from CPS administration that parents of students at a charter school had complained about inappropriate subject matter being exposed to students of the school. It was also alleged that the initiation of a specific student club violated the charter school's agreement with CPS. The OIG conducted an investigation that included interviews of school staff, students and CPS administrators. The OIG also reviewed materials and subject matter presented to the students and reviewed the manner in which it was presented. The OIG then issued a report of its findings to CPS administration. The OIG found that parent's allegations were not substantiated and students were not subjected to inappropriate subject matter. Further, the OIG found that there were no rule violations committed by school staff or a vendor retained to present the materials. Also, the student club did not violate any rules, or more specifically, the charter school agreement with CPS.



## **MEDIATION UNIT**

- A contractor was hired to refinish the stage floor and 22 classrooms in an elementary school. Several months after the work was completed, the floors lost their gloss and faded. The contractor claimed the problem was the result of improper custodial work so it chose not to make any repairs. Upon intervention of the OIG Mediation Group, the contractor agreed to make the repairs and processed the re-sanding and re-sealing of the floors for half of the normal cost, at the school's convenience.
  
- The OIG received a complaint about a video company which was hired to install televisions and television mounts at an elementary school. The complaint alleged that the video company neglected to use the appropriate wall anchors, therefore one of the televisions fell from the wall, crashing onto the table below. While the video company would not respond to the school engineer's requests for remediation, they did respond to the Mediation Group by inspecting, repairing and replacing wall anchors, wall mounts, and one destroyed television, at no additional cost to CPS.
  
- When a contractor failed to complete the project of installing an iron fence around the grounds of an elementary school, the Mediation Group was called to intervene. The project was purportedly stalled after fence posts were put in but the fencing panels were not, leaving exposed sharp metal brackets. The Department of Operations subsequently put the project up for re-bid and the fencing was installed by a new subcontractor.
  
- An elementary school property advisor failed to respond to repeated requests to repair the school's boilers. As a result, the boilers failed an inspection causing several violation notices to be issued against the school by the City of Chicago. After the Mediation Group contacted the property advisor, the work orders were issued and the boilers were repaired.

- An elementary school engineer notified the janitorial company of their failure to perform services as required by contract, including the floors not being properly cleaned and the custodians not working in their assigned areas. When the engineer did not receive a satisfactory response from the contractor, he turned to the Mediation Group. The janitorial company assigned a new crew to the school, who are doing the job to the engineer's satisfaction.
  
- The general contractor on an elementary school annex project failed to complete the terms of their contract. The OIG Mediation Group convinced the contractor to repair the rooftop exhaust fan that leaked in the rain; the entrance door that could neither be opened nor closed properly; and the restroom doors that could never be locked because of misaligned locking mechanisms, all at no additional cost to CPS.
  
- The contract to install new guard-rails and an ornamental fence on the grounds of an elementary school was only partially completed by the designated contractor. The Mediation Group, upon discussion with the Department of Operations, was informed that the project would be re-bid and completed by a new subcontractor. It was and the guard-rails and fences were installed.
  
- It took the Mediation Group's intervention to end a stalemate between an elementary school and a plumbing contractor. Two years after a hole had been dug and boiler pipes had been installed, the hole remained unfilled and became a serious hazard. The contractor refused to complete the work until they were paid, yet CPS policy expects the work to be completed before payment can be authorized. The Mediation Group spoke with the project manager and the work, totaling \$7,300, has been completed at no additional cost to CPS.
  
- When the CPS Department of Operations was contacted by the OIG Mediation Group regarding a complaint that a fence was not installed at a school as contracted, the project was re-bid. The new iron fence has been installed around the high school's grounds by a new contractor.
  
- A subcontractor installed air conditioning ventilators at an elementary school which immediately failed. The subcontractor completed repairs on the ventilators, but they continued to malfunction. Eventually, the subcontractor began ignoring the school engineer's requests for service until the Mediation Group stepped in. The school's property advisor then agreed to evaluate the subcontractor's work and put the ventilators in proper working order at no additional cost to CPS.

- A contractor installed a trash compactor in an elementary school that soon malfunctioned. Despite the fact that the company changed ownership, the new company honored the warranty and made repairs at no additional cost to CPS upon the Mediation Group's request.
  
- The OIG received a complaint against the project manager on an E-line installation at an elementary school. The subcontractor on the project was not installing wiring by contract specifications; they were using conduit instead of molding. Because the conduits are more expensive, the Mediation Group had the construction contractor arrange a mutually acceptable credit to resolve the problem.
  
- An improper roof installation on a high school came to the attention of the OIG Mediation Group when the subcontractor and the general contractor both were unresponsive to the school engineer's calls. Besides being rejected by a roofing inspector, the new roof leaked, water ponds formed in several places, and the roof bubbled soon after it was installed. The general contractors were replaced and the repairs were then completed.
  
- When vandals damaged a sprinkler system in an elementary school, the engineer contacted the property advisor for a work order to perform the repairs. The property advisor failed to respond to his complaints but issued the work order when the Mediation Group called. The repairs have been made and the school saved \$4,500.
  
- A contractor failed to complete the project of installing an iron fence around the grounds of an elementary school. The Mediation Group intervened and presented the problem to the Department of Operations which subsequently had the project re-bid and the fencing was installed by a new subcontractor.
  
- An elementary school engineer complained to a subcontractor that the wiring installation they were hired to do was not performed properly or completed on time. The Mediation Group went to the project manager to have the \$4,700 worth of repairs expedited at no extra cost to CPS.
  
- The OIG received a complaint that a landscaping service, which was awarded two work orders, failed to comply with the terms. The landscaping service planted a bush when the order called for a magnolia tree. A school engineer contacted the Mediation Group which in turn had the landscaper comply with the work order at no additional cost to CPS.

- The Mediation Group was successful in having a newly installed, but malfunctioning, milk cooler replaced at an elementary school, at a savings to CPS of \$750.
- A new subcontractor was brought in to install an iron fence around the grounds of an elementary school when the original contractor failed to comply with its agreement. The Department of Operations worked to remove the contractor and re-bid the job with a resultant satisfactory completion.
- When a high school property advisor failed to authorize the purchase of a secure storage container for athletic equipment, the Mediation Group pointed out that the wooden shed in which the equipment was currently being stored was dilapidated. After several attempted break-ins, the doors were severely damaged. The purchase was then authorized and the container replaced at no additional cost to CPS, resulting in a savings of \$15,000.
- A high school property advisor repeatedly ignored requests to replace expired fire extinguishers. The situation escalated when the Chicago Fire Department issued the school a fire code violation notice because the extinguishers had not been inspected, serviced, and/or issued new tags. The OIG Mediation Group interceded and the extinguishers have been replaced and passed inspection, and at no additional cost to CPS. The resulting efforts of the Mediation Group saved CPS \$3,500 in violations and fines.
- The OIG received a complaint that a subcontractor failed to initiate a project to examine drainpipes in a timely manner before inclement weather set in causing an even more unreasonable delay. Eight months later, work had still not begun. The Mediation Group stepped in to have the subcontractor's contract terminated and other arrangements made to inspect the pipes at the elementary school.
- Nearly a year went by since the work order went out and a contractor failed to begin to resurface a playground and parking lot at an elementary school in a timely manner. The Mediation Group intervened and the project was given to another company and the asphalt work has been completed at no extra cost to CPS.
- A contractor failed to complete the installation of an iron fence around the grounds of an elementary school. The Mediation Group had the CPS Department of Operations re-bid the project. The work was completed to the ultimate satisfaction of the school.

- A high-lift truck was being used to inspect the terra cotta on an elementary school. Because of the truck's weight, the sidewalk broke in several places and deep ruts were left in newly installed asphalt. Though the damage was inadvertent, the offending company refused to make any repairs until the Mediation Group intervened. Repairs were made at no additional cost to CPS.
  
- Only after the OIG Mediation Group intervened did a plumbing contractor make good on a work order to repair water leaks in several bathrooms at an elementary school. Work was completed to the school's satisfaction and at no extra cost to CPS.
  
- A new heating and air conditioning unit malfunctioned in a CPS high school because of improper installation. The engineer got no response to his complaints from the contractor until he asked the Mediation Group for help. The air conditioning unit was repaired at no additional cost to CPS.
  
- A janitorial supply company failed to deliver trash bags to a school in a timely manner. The OIG Mediation Group intervened and the company responded with prompt delivery.
  
- While a school was under the direction of a property advisor, cabinets were removed to permit installation of heating units but were not replaced afterward. The school subsequently joined the Self-Direct Program so the former property advisor refused to issue a work order to reinstall the cabinets. The project subcontractor also refused to reinstall the cabinets. The OIG Mediation Group brought together the former property advisor and the subcontractor in an agreement to share the \$5,000 tab which an independent carpenter estimated the project would cost to complete.
  
- An air conditioning unit failed to work properly following its installation. Within a year, repairs had to be made for which the school was charged \$1,710. The unit malfunctioned again and the contractor who was called out and wanted to charge the school another \$1,136. The school's engineer, believing the charges were unfair since the air conditioning unit should have been under warranty, called the OIG Mediation Group which resolved the problem at no additional cost to CPS.
  
- The OIG Mediation Group received a complaint regarding a contract to install iron fencing that went half-completed for several months. The standing fence posts, missing gates and exposed iron work all made for a potentially dangerous situation. The Mediation Group, after discussion with the CPS Department of Operations, asked for the job to be re-bid to a new contractor.

- The final phase of a school building renovation was left in limbo by a construction company that failed to complete the finishing work. After repeated calls to both the general manager and the project manager went unanswered, the school's engineer contacted the OIG for mediation help. The problem was solved when the remaining punch list items and change orders were completed. The Mediation Group's actions resulted in saving the school \$4,350.
  
- A contractor failed to complete the final few steps of an electrical upgrade in an elementary school leaving the custodian frustrated and the job ticket open. Through several visits to the school and a summary agreement with the contractor to fulfill the terms of their contract, the Mediation Group was able to see the work to a satisfactory completion. The school saved \$4,200.
  
- The installation of 14 air conditioning units in an elementary school was never concluded, leaving 2" to 4" gaps under each unit. The school's engineer instituted a stop-gap measure by filling the spaces with foam rubber which eventually deteriorated, leaked, and in one classroom, provided an entryway for bees. The OIG Mediation Group contacted the school's property advisor and the contractor who eventually returned to install aluminum panels to seal the leaks. The finishing work, done free-of-charge, would have cost CPS \$2,950.
  
- A subcontractor hired to repair a VCR, removed the unit from the school and billed the general contractor for services despite the fact that the repairs were under warranty. The subcontractor never returned the VCR to the school. The OIG Mediation Group intervened and the equipment was returned promptly and in perfect working order at no cost to CPS.
  
- When the CPS Department of Operations was contacted by the OIG Mediation Group regarding a complaint that a contract to install an iron fence at an elementary school was not fulfilled, the project was re-bid. The new contractor has completed the work and installed the fence around the school grounds.
  
- A mechanical contractor failed to properly replace or repair old connecting condenser coils. The school hired a new contractor to replace the coils and complete the work, while the original contractor was collecting on the invoice. After receiving no response from the contractor regarding the inappropriate billing, the engineer asked the Mediation Group to step in. The original contractor agreed to insulate the new coils and fittings at no cost to CPS, saving \$1,780.

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The Mediation Group investigated a complaint from an elementary school claiming that an iron fence had never been installed as contracted. The Mediation Group called on the Department of Operations to have the contract re-bid and the work was completed by a new subcontractor.

- A school did not have the funds to have a donated drinking fountain installed in its' playground. The Mediation Group found an amicable solution and the fountain is now in use.
- An iron fence was installed around a school's parking lot, but was never completed to surround the trash dumpsters. Besides not having the fence itself up a year after the project was begun, the posts were incorrectly installed and had to be moved. The Mediation Group successfully intervened to have the fence posts moved and the remaining fencing installed to conceal the bins, at a savings to the school of \$3,600.
- With the help of the OIG Mediation Group, an elementary school finally received \$2,500 worth furniture it ordered to outfit modular classroom additions.
- The Mediation Group of the OIG helped an elementary school clean up the last few punch list items that were left uncompleted after the construction and installation of two modular classrooms. Repairs included correcting the installation of exit signs and repairing piping for the water heater resulting in a savings to the school of \$4,300.
- A plumbing repair to fountains and toilets was not completed properly leaving one toilet leaking every time it was used. When the plumbing contractor failed to respond to the engineer's complaints, the Mediation Group was asked to intervene. As a result, repairs were made and the school saved \$600.
- A subcontractor was hired to paint the building of an elementary school. The paint, however, began to peel and bubble after the work was completed. The OIG Mediation Group intervened and the peeling areas were repainted, saving CPS \$1,500.
- A subcontractor was hired to plaster and paint a stairwell of an elementary school. The engineer was unsatisfied with the workmanship and repeatedly requested that the contractor address the complaint. After the Mediation Group intervened the subcontractor repainted the stairwell to the school's satisfaction at no additional cost to CPS.

- The OIG received a complaint regarding a faulty repair of an elementary school roof. The roof continued to leak prompting several calls to the subcontractor. The Mediation Group was able to secure the promise of satisfaction from the subcontractor and the repairs were made, saving the school \$1,750.
  
- When requests for two emergency work orders went unanswered, a school engineer turned to the OIG. One of the orders was to replace an electrical panel that operates gym and auditorium supply and exhaust fans, a potential fire code violation. After being contacted by the OIG Mediation Unit, the contractor repaired the electrical panel.
  
- After work was completed on the installation of twelve modular classrooms, the temporary portable trailer-classrooms were removed. The iron rods used to anchor the trailers were not removed but cut off at ground level. Shortly thereafter the rods began to loosen and push up above ground. A student managed to pull one completely out and began playing with it. It became necessary to rope off the area. As this is an elementary school, the exposed rods posed a significant danger to the children on the playground and during morning marshalling, as well as to the school's snow removal equipment. Once contacted, the Mediation Group convinced the contractor to remove the rods promptly and at no cost to CPS.
  
- A fencing contractor failed to bring a job to completion. The Mediation Group arranged for the job to be re-bid and completed to the satisfaction of this elementary school.
  
- A contractor working on an electrical upgrade was asked to repair the damage and deep ruts left when its trucks delivered equipment and materials to the site. The ruts, made where the students line up in the mornings to enter the building, were deep enough to pose a safety threat. The trenching was backfilled with dirt but, because of weather conditions became a mud hole and because of constant truck ingress and egress, became rutted again. The OIG Mediation Group intervened and once weather conditions permitted, the contractor filled the trenches with gravel and leveled and topped off the area, eliminating the hazard.
  
- The contract to install an ornamental fence on the grounds of an elementary school was never fulfilled until the Mediation Group was informed of the problem. Upon discussion with the Department of Operations, the project was re-bid and completed by a new subcontractor.