

P: 773-534-9400
F: 773-534-9401
cpsoig.org
@cpsoig



For Immediate Release: Friday, October 10, 2025

Contact: Inspector General Philip Wagenknecht
(773) 534-9400 or inspectorgeneral@cpsoig.org

CHICAGO—A joint investigation by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Illinois, the FBI, the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Education, the IRS and the Office of Inspector General for the Chicago Board of Education has resulted in charges against four individuals that engaged in kickback schemes and fraudulent contracting with respect to purported services for Evanston/Skokie School District 65.

The 17-count indictment was returned on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Charged in the alleged scheme were Devon Horton, then-District 65 superintendent; Antonio Ross, at the time a Chicago Public Schools principal at Hyde Park Academy High School and owner of Connecting the Dots Leadership Initiative; Samuel Ross, owner of Asset Protection Specialist; and Alfonzo Lewis, the athletic director at Hyde Park Academy and owner of New Flight 35 Sports and Academic Academy.

The indictment includes numerous wire fraud charges against the four defendants arising from more than \$280,000 in professional services contracts that Horton awarded to the companies of Antonio Ross, Samuel Ross and Alfonzo Lewis—and more than \$80,000 in kickbacks related to those contracts.

The indictment also alleged that Antonio Ross, as principal of Hyde Park Academy, hired a company owned by Horton, called Altering the Education Xpectation, to provide Hyde Park Academy with professional services for \$10,000. As part of the alleged scheme, Ross and Horton allowed for the submission of false purchase orders and invoices when they knew that the work had not been performed.

Additional counts in the indictment charge Horton with embezzling funds from District 65 and tax evasion.

Indictments contain only charges and are not evidence of guilt. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The OIG appreciates the work of the other agencies who partnered in this investigative effort to address contracting fraud in our schools.

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Chicago Board of Education • **Office of Inspector General**
567 W. Lake Street, Suite 1120, Chicago, IL 60661
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