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X@QueensDAKatz

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568

718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

FORMER CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONTRACTOR INDICTED FOR FALSIFYING TIME SHEETS AND STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS

Speech Pathologist Claimed to be on Medical Leave; Submitted Multiple Time Sheets to Employer for Hours She Did Not Work, Collected Over $27,000; Faces 2 1/3 to 7 Years in Prison, if Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz and Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District Anastasia Coleman announced that Salma Patel was indicted and arraigned on charges of grand larceny, criminal possession of stolen property and falsifying business records for claiming she provided speech and language therapy to students at St. Michael's Catholic Academy in Flushing when she did not provide the services reported. Patel allegedly submitted time sheets stating she worked between 40 to 50 hours bi-weekly, collecting $27,018.81 in the 2024-2025 school year that she was not entitled to. She also submitted progress reports for students she had not seen.

District Attorney Katz said: "The defendant allegedly violated the trust of her employer and St. Michael's by falsifying time sheets, claiming to work while she told the school administration she couldn't work because of a worsening medical condition. Salma Patel should have been showing up for the students who needed her help, but she instead pocketed compensation she was not entitled to. I thank our partners at the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District for their work on this case."

Commissioner Coleman said: "Speech therapy is a critical service for children with special needs, and those who exploit these services for personal gain steal more than public funds — they deprive those children of crucial services that they depend on. Patel allegedly engaged in a fraudulent scheme to line her own pockets at the expense of some of our most vulnerable students. We thank the Queens District Attorney's Office for pursuing this prosecution and helping ensure those who defraud our schools are held accountable."

Patel, 32, of Fresh Meadows, was arraigned yesterday on charges of grand larceny in the third degree, criminal possession of stolen property in the third degree and falsifying business records in the first degree. Supreme Court Judge Leigh Cheng ordered her to return to court December 15. If convicted, Patel faces a potential 2 1/3 to seven years in prison.

District Attorney Katz said that, according to the charges and investigation, Salma Patel worked as a speech pathologist for All in 1 SPOT with Theratalk in Whitestone, which contracts with the New York City Department of Education to provide speech and occupational therapy to children in private schools. Patel provided

services to students at St. Michael's Catholic Academy in Flushing but told the school principal in the Fall of 2025 she was taking medical leave.

From September 2024 through November 2025, Patel regularly submitted time sheets to All in 1 SPOT stating that she worked, on average, between 40 and 50 hours every two-week pay period. She also submitted reports from her sessions, which indicated that she consistently met with students, multiple times a week. For every pay period Patel was typically paid between $1,000 and $3,000 depending on the number of sessions she had that week.

On December 16, 2025, All in 1 SPOT received an email from St. Michael's asking to confirm if Patel was on medical leave. While Patel submitted time sheets claiming she had worked a total of 39 dates in the fall 2025 semester, a review of the sign-in logs at the school revealed she had been at St. Michael's on just three of those dates. The principal confirmed that she had only been there on those three dates.

A review of visitor logs for the entire 2024-2025 school year revealed Patel worked on 19 dates, but she submitted time sheets claiming to have worked an additional 71 dates.

Patel was terminated from her job at All in 1 SPOT in December of 2025. Her father has since paid restitution totaling $28,000 which is being held in escrow until it can be given back to the DOE.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Investigator David Haynes with the District Attorney's Financial Frauds Bureau and Investigator Hector Rivera of the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District.

Assistant District Attorney Timothy Snyder of the Financial Frauds Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Talia Vogel, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Joseph T. Conley III.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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