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PRESS RELEASE

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Former District of Columbia Schools Compliance Officer Sentenced on Wire Fraud and Conflict-of-Interest Charges Defendant's Private Transportation Company Collected More Than \$460,000 in Fraudulent Payments

WASHINGTON – Donnie Dukes, a former compliance officer for the District of Columbia Public Schools, was sentenced today to a month in jail, to be followed by six months of home confinement, for carrying out a scheme involving more than \$460,000 in fraudulent payments to a private transportation company that he owned and controlled.

The sentence was announced by U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr.; Andrew G. McCabe, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office; Daniel W. Lucas, District of Columbia Inspector General, and Christopher Cooper, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office.

Dukes, 41, of Hyattsville, Md., pled guilty on Jan. 22, 2014, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, to wire fraud and conflict-of-interest charges. He was sentenced by the Honorable Ketanji Brown Jackson. Following his home detention, Dukes will be placed on three years of probation. He also must pay \$463,621 in restitution to the District of Columbia.

According to the government's evidence, Dukes worked from October 2008 until October 2010 as a compliance officer for the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). His duties included making arrangements for transportation for the special needs students who received education services outside of the District of Columbia.

At the same time, however, Dukes owned and controlled a private company that provided, among other services, transportation to students who needed to travel from the District of Columbia to education centers outside of the District of Columbia for special services.

While working at DCPS, Dukes personally referred, or caused colleagues of his at DCPS to refer, 86 out-of-state student transports to his company, resulting in the firm receiving \$325,000 in payments from the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education. Of this, the government's evidence showed, \$163,621 involved illegitimate expenses.

Dukes was terminated from DCPS in October 2010 as part of an overall reduction in the workforce. He then schemed to obtain non-public lists of students needing transportation services from his former colleagues at DCPS. Dukes later used these lists to create false invoices and supporting documentation for payments to his company in the names of the students. Dukes created 60 false invoices and supporting documentation through this scheme, causing the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education to pay his company \$300,000 for transportation services that never were provided.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen, Assistant Director in Charge McCabe, Inspector General Lucas, and Assistant Special Agent in Charge Cooper commended the work of those who investigated the case from the FBI's Washington Field Office, the District of Columbia Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Inspector General. They also acknowledged the efforts of those who worked on the case from the U.S. Attorney's Office, including former Legal Assistant Nicole Wattlelet and Assistant U.S. Attorney Seth B. Waxman, who prosecuted the case.

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