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NEWS RELEASE

FEDERAL OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE THE FILING OF A CRIMINAL INFORMATION CHARGING A FORMER WILKES-BARRE AREA CAREER AND TECHNICAL SCHOOL EMPLOYEE WITH MAIL FRAUD

Dennis C. Pfannenschmidt, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Pennsylvania; Janice Fedarcyk, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Don Fort, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Division; and Mary Mitchelson, Acting Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Inspector General jointly announced today that an Information was filed today charging Jeffrey Piazza, a former employee of the Wilkes-Barre Area Career and Technical School, with mail fraud. The charge carries a maximum possible penalty of 30 years in prison and a fine of \$1,000,000.

Mr. Piazza, age 33, of Jenkins Township, is alleged to have participated in a scheme to defraud the Wilkes-Barre Area Career and Technical School of thousands of dollars in hidden kickbacks allegedly paid to Mr. Piazza by a vendor while Mr. Piazza was employed at the school.

According to U.S. Attorney Pfannenschmidt, Mr. Piazza is the twenty-first person charged with criminal conduct since late January of this year in an on-going investigation targeting public corruption in northeastern Pennsylvania.

This case is part of an on-going investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service and the United States Department of Education and is being prosecuted by a team of federal prosecutors led by Senior Litigation Counsel Gordon Zubrod and includes Assistant U.S. Attorneys William Houser, Michael Consiglio, Amy Phillips and Criminal Division Chief Christian Fisanick. Pfannenschmidt praised this team of investigators and prosecutors for their tireless efforts on behalf of the people of northeastern Pennsylvania.

Anyone with information is asked to call the public
corruption task force toll free at 1-866-996-4320.

An Indictment or Information is not evidence of guilt but simply a description of the charge made by the Grand Jury and/or United States Attorney against a defendant. A charged Defendant is presumed innocent until a jury returns a unanimous finding that the United States has proven the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt or until the defendant has pled guilty to the charges.