

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102



Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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Assistant U.S. Attorney:
RUDOLPH A. FILKO
973-645-2829

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Lakewood Private Children's School Agrees to Pay Government
More Than \$1.29 Million for Overcharges to School Lunch Program

(More)

Public Affairs Office
Michael Drewniak, PAO

973-645-2888

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NEWARK – Lakewood Cheder School, a New Jersey non-profit corporation that operates a children’s school in Lakewood, has agreed to pay the federal government more than \$1,295,500 to settle allegations that it submitted false certifications for payment under the National School Lunch Program, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

The settlement resolves allegations against Lakewood Cheder for violations of the False Claims Act, which permits recovery of triple the amount of damages to the government plus penalties, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Rudolph A. Filko, Deputy Chief of the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

“This is an abuse of government funds that takes money away from other children who are truly in need and deserving of these resources,” said Christie. “It is wrong, and we will continue to look for such misappropriations and recoup that money so that it can serve the intended recipients.”

According to the Settlement Agreement, between 1996 and 2000, Lakewood Cheder School submitted false information and statements to the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the State of New Jersey, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Child Nutrition. The false information resulted in excessive payments to Lakewood Cheder under the National School Lunch Program. Specifically, it was alleged that Lakewood Cheder submitted claims for school lunches that were served at approximately 90 private residences which were ineligible and unapproved school sites under the program.

Under terms of the settlement, Lakewood Cheder School does not admit liability.

More than 1,100 pre-school age children were claimed by Lakewood Cheder to have received the lunches at the ineligible and unapproved sites. In this way, the school obtained an increased payment of \$953,421 under the National School Lunch Program to which it was not entitled. The settlement amount is \$1,295,549.

Christie credited Special Agents from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent-in-Charge for Investigations Brian L. Haaser, and auditors from the U.S. Attorney’s Office Affirmative Civil Enforcement Unit, with investigating the case.

The case was handled by Assistant U. S. Attorney Rudolph A. Filko, Deputy Chief of the Civil Division.

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Counsel for Lakewood Cheder School, Inc.: David G. Liston, Esq., New York, N.Y.