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Sex Abuse at School

Principal Will Face Hearing

By Liz Willen
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A popular Queens principal has admitted that he sexually abused a 13-year-old student 15 years ago, officials said yesterday.

Edward Huckemeyer, a tenured principal at PS 71 in Ridgewood who is widely praised by parents and teachers, has been reassigned to Board of Education offices in Brooklyn Heights while awaiting a disciplinary hearing. He could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Because the incident occurred 15 years ago, no criminal charges will be filed against Huckemeyer, who was a creative writing teacher at JHS 226 in Ozone Park at the time of the alleged incident, said Edward Stancik, special commissioner of investigation for New York City public schools.

Stancik said the male student began having nightmares about the alleged abuse by Huckemeyer as the former student made plans to get married. He first told his fiancée, who contacted Stancik.

The student agreed to confront Huckemeyer, and met his former teacher while wearing a hidden tape recorder. During the student's visit, Huckemeyer apologized, according to Stancik. When confronted by investigators last month, Huckemeyer - a former deacon at Precious Blood Roman Catholic Church in Long Island City - admitted he sexually abused the student, according to a transcript released by Stancik's office yesterday.

"It happened once . . . I can't lie about it," Huckemeyer said, according to the transcript. "It has not been my code of behavior. I have been married and I have three children, and it was a very unfortunate situation, of course singular in nature . . . I know that what occurred was wrong, and that it was not appropriate . . . It's something that I wish I could erase both from my memory and from his."

Stancik sent a copy of the transcript to Schools Chancellor Ramon Cortines, whose staff ordered Huckemeyer removed from the school. In a letter to Cortines, Stancik also said that the student described inhaling fumes from a liquid used as a locker room deodorizer - at Huckemeyer's request.

"He stated that . . . Huckemeyer called him from class . . . gave him the jar to sniff . . . then pulled down his pants and performed oral sex on him," Stancik's letter to Cortines said.

Cortines' legal staff decided that Huckemeyer should not be assigned to District 24 offices, said Board of Education spokesman Robert Terte.

"The district was uncomfortable about having him in their office so it was agreed that he would be placed in central," Terte said. Disciplinary charges are being drawn up against Huckemeyer, and school board members in District 24 will vote on them during their next meeting, Terte said.

An attorney for the Council of Supervisors and Administrators said yesterday that Huckemeyer had not contacted the union for assistance.

Stancik said he decided to release the contents of his investigation because so many parents had contacted his office, bewildered by the sudden removal of Huckemeyer several weeks ago.

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