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PRESS RELEASE

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Former District of Columbia Government Employee Pleads Guilty To Federal Charges in Bribery Schemes Crimes Cost Government More Than \$400,000

WASHINGTON – A former management analyst for the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) pled guilty today to federal charges stemming from schemes in which she accepted bribes in return for clearing the way for payments to be made on fraudulent invoices that cost the D.C. government more than \$480,000.

The announcement was made by U.S. Attorney Jessie K. Liu, Andrew W. Vale, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, and Daniel W. Lucas, Inspector General for the District of Columbia.

Shauntell Harley, 48, of Washington, D.C., pled guilty in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to two counts of conspiracy to commit bribery. Each charge carries a statutory maximum of five years in prison and potential financial penalties. Under federal sentencing guidelines, the parties have estimated that Harley faces a likely range of 70 months to 87 months in prison and a fine of up to \$125,000. The Honorable Randolph D. Moss scheduled sentencing for June 7, 2018.

As part of the plea agreement, Harley must pay \$488,311 in restitution to the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education. She also has agreed to pay a forfeiture money judgment in the amount of \$100,400.

OSSE is an agency of the District of Columbia government. Harley was a management analyst for fiscal policy and grant management in OSSE's Division of Special Education. From 2009 through 2014, her responsibilities included issuing requests for services through the government's procurement process and then reviewing invoices from those who supposedly provided the services.

According to a statement of offense submitted at today's plea hearing, Harley took part in two separate schemes involving fraudulent invoices paid by the D.C. government.

In one, scheme which began in or about June of 2012, she and business owner Vashawn Strader agreed that Harley would receive money and other things of value in exchange for favorable official action for Strader's companies. They agreed that Strader would create fraudulent invoices purporting to reflect work that his companies did not actually perform. This work purportedly included early intervention services and professional development training.

Harley used her official position at OSSE to provide Strader with non-public information about OSSE contracts, assist him in creating fraudulent invoices, and submit these fraudulent invoices and other documents as necessary in order to cause OSSE to make the payments for services the companies never performed. In total, this led to \$308,311 in payments in 2012 and 2013 to the two companies for services that never were provided. In return for her actions, Harley personally obtained a total of \$43,900 in proceeds traceable to the scheme.

Strader, 39, of Washington, D.C., pled guilty in October 2017 to one count of conspiracy to commit bribery. He is awaiting sentencing. Under his plea agreement, Strader is required to pay \$308,311 in restitution to OSSE and an identical amount in a forfeiture money judgment.

In the second scheme, which unfolded in 2013 and 2014, Harley admitted conspiring with the owner of another company to have that firm invoice OSSE for work that was not performed. Harley used her official position to create and submit fraudulent purchase orders and otherwise caused OSSE to pay the company. In exchange, the company owner provided Harley with a portion of the proceeds. According to the statement of offense, in this scheme Harley used her official position to cause OSSE to pay \$179,999 for services that the company never provided. The company owner made approximately \$53,000 in payments to Harley.

In announcing the plea, U.S. Attorney Liu, Assistant Director in Charge Vale, and Inspector General Lucas commended the work of those who investigated the case from the FBI's Washington Field Office and Office of the Inspector General of the District of Columbia. They acknowledged the efforts of those who worked on the case from the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Swanton, who assisted with forfeiture issues, and Paralegal Specialists Joshua Fein and Kristy Penny. Finally, they expressed appreciation for the work of Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter C. Lallas, who is investigating and prosecuting the matter.