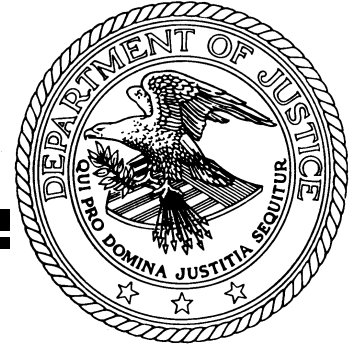


# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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## ***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA***

***San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney  
Laura E. Duffy***

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***For Immediate Release***

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### **FORMER EL CENTRO SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT PLEADS GUILTY TO MORE THAN \$325,000 IN FEDERAL GRANT FRAUD**

#### **NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY** -March 12, 2012

United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy announced today that the former Superintendent of the El Centro Elementary School District, Michael P. Klentschy, pleaded guilty to mail fraud charges in two related cases alleging fraud in elementary school math and science grants. In conjunction with his pleas, Klentschy admitted that his fraud caused losses of more than \$325,000. Klentschy entered the pleas in both cases earlier today before United States Magistrate Judge Nita L. Stormes subject to final acceptance by United States District Court Judge Marilyn L. Huff at, or before, sentencing.

According to court documents, from 1994 until 2007, Klentschy was the Superintendent of the El Centro Elementary School District, in Imperial County. During his tenure as Superintendent, Klentschy had significant experience with and involvement in the use and administration of grant monies. As part of his plea arrangement, Klentschy admitted that during his tenure as Superintendent: (1) he fraudulently arranged to hire, on a federal grant, a partnership entity, to pay that entity nearly \$400,000, and, in return, was

paid \$90,000 of grant funds back from the entity that were disguised as “Research Assistant” payments although Klentschy was not a Research Assistant for that partnership and was not entitled to that money; (2) Klentschy made arrangements with an individual involved with a grant to pay him more than \$78,000 disguised as “salary” for being an “Assistant Research Director” when, in fact, he was not an Assistant Research Director and was not entitled to that money; (3) Klentschy arranged to pay two close family friends with federal grant monies for work that was not completed; and (4) Klentschy knowingly and intentionally sought and obtained nearly \$60,000 in duplicate travel reimbursements for the identical travel expenses by knowingly and intentionally providing duplicates of receipts to two or more reimbursement sources.

Klentschy also admitted that data that he presented to grant officials on a National Science Foundation grant that purported to validate Klentschy’s own elementary school science teaching methods was, in fact, inaccurate and unreliable. Court papers filed by the United States Attorney’s Office in one of the cases (No. 10cr4642-H) state that, through this grant, Klentschy presented to grant authorities, and subsequently published in his own name, data that purportedly showed that the results of standardized testing of students for school year 2004-2005 in Imperial County, California validated Klentschy’s elementary school science teaching methods. According to the Assistant United States Attorney’s court filing, however, approximately 75% of the test scores reported to the grant authorities were falsified by Klentschy.

As part of his plea arrangement, Klentschy will pay restitution to the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and the El Centro Elementary School District totaling \$325,282.

These cases are the product of an investigation by the National Science Foundation - Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Department of Education - Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sentencing for Klentschy in both cases is set for June 25, 2012 at 9:00 a.m., before Judge Huff.

## **DEFENDANT**

Michael P. Klentschy                      Criminal Case. Nos. 10cr4642-H and 10cr4643-H

## **SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Title 18, United States Code, Section 1341-Mail Fraud (one count in each of the above-cases)

Maximum penalties: 20 years in prison and a fine equal to twice the gross gain to any person or twice the loss caused to persons by the offense.

**INVESTIGATING AGENCIES**

National Science Foundation - Office of Inspector General

U.S. Department of Education - Office of Inspector General

Federal Bureau of Investigation