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JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

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**Former Middle School Employee Pleads Guilty in Texas to
Production and Distribution of Child Pornography**

WASHINGTON – A former middle school employee pleaded guilty today in Austin, Texas, to production and distribution of material relating to the sexual exploitation of children, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Texas Robert Pitman.

Robert Ramos Jr., 33, of Austin, pleaded guilty today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Lane in the Western District of Texas to one count of production of child pornography and one count of distribution of child pornography.

At his plea hearing, Ramos, who was previously an assistant band director at Dessau Middle School in Pflugerville, Texas, admitted that he obtained sexually explicit images of a 13-year-old girl by communicating with her on Facebook and that, to do so, he used Facebook accounts that falsely portrayed him as a teenage girl. Ramos also admitted to distributing those images to Timothy Bek, a teacher in New York who was also contacting underage girls for the purpose of obtaining sexually explicit images.

Ramos also admitted at his plea hearing that he viewed via Internet webcam and saved to his computer a video of a five-year-old girl being sexually abused by Jennifer Mahoney, of New Jersey.

Bek was sentenced on May 23, 2012, in U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York to 30 years in prison for production and possession of child pornography. Mahoney pleaded guilty on May 9, 2012, in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey to one count of sexual exploitation of a child, and she awaits sentencing.

Ramos has been in custody since his arrest by FBI agents in January 2012.

At sentencing, Ramos faces a maximum penalty of 50 years in prison.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

This case was investigated by the FBI and CEOS. CEOS Trial Attorney Keith Becker and Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew Devlin of the Western District of Texas are prosecuting this case.

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Criminal Division