

# CRAIN'S **NEW YORK BUSINESS**

Crain's New York Business ■ January 25, 1993



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Aggressive marketing by Xerox Corp. has triggered a Board of Education investigation into charges the copying giant peddled unneeded high-priced equipment to New York's public schools.

The inquiry, conducted by **Marlene Malamy**, director of the school board's Office of Special Investigations, was launched after Public School 40 on East 19th Street found its monthly copying costs skyrocketed to \$1,800 from \$137 when Xerox persuaded it to upgrade its equipment.

Management consultant **Matthew R. Smith**, parent of a child at P.S. 40, contacted school officials, saying Stamford-based Xerox was deliberately marketing high-priced machinery to schools far beyond their needs, targeting officials unfamiliar with the billing process. Mr. Smith is a former Xerox employee who says he quit the company on good terms in 1984, a claim Xerox does not dispute.

The zealous Mr. Smith has mounted a one-man crusade, writing 48 school systems around the country suggesting they scrutinize Xerox sales practices. Officials in Detroit and Boulder, Colo., confirm they've begun preliminary investigations.

"Xerox denies conducting any unethical marketing campaigns anywhere in the country," a company spokesman says. "Xerox conducts all its sales activities with utmost attention to ethical practices, and we're confident any inquiry would find that is the case."