

SPOTLIGHT FOLLOW UP

# Ex-teacher molested pupils, Milton Academy says

By [Jonathan Saltzman](#) Globe Staff, February 21, 2017, 12:24 p.m.



Four former employees of Milton Academy engaged in sexual misconduct with students decades ago, school officials disclosed Tuesday. BARRY CHIN/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

As head of the theater program at Milton Academy from 1975 to 1987, Rey Buono introduced youngsters to acting and improvisation, directed student productions, and

taught courses on Shakespeare.

On Tuesday, leaders of the prestigious private school disclosed something else about Buono's years at Milton Academy: He was a sexual predator.

In a remarkable letter to the school community, officials said a nine-month investigation by a New York security consulting firm it hired had determined Buono and three other former employees had molested several students decades ago.

The investigation found that Buono abused at least 12 male students, all minors, before he was fired in 1987 after admitting to molesting a student. No names and few details about the other employees were provided by the school.

The consultant, T&M Protection Resources, also found that Jerome A. Pieh, headmaster of Milton Academy from 1973 to 1991, "had some knowledge of Rey Buono's misconduct in 1982," but Buono continued to work there for five more years.

"Milton Academy's leadership at that time failed to protect students and failed to investigate whether Rey Buono had abused other students during his tenure at the school," Todd Bland, the current head of school, and Lisa Donohue, president of the board of trustees, wrote.

"On behalf of Milton Academy and its board of trustees, we want to acknowledge and deeply apologize for those failures," they added.

The letter was the latest in a series of apologies sent by private schools in New England in recent months about educator sexual abuse. Dozens of schools launched investigations in response to [a Boston Globe series last year that found staff at more than 110 private schools in New England have faced allegations of sexual](#)

## [misconduct over the past 25 years.](#)

Buono, who lived in a dormitory at Milton Academy and helped supervise the boarding students as a floor master, moved in 1988 to Southeast Asia. He has worked for nearly 30 years in Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand as a theater director, acting coach, and performing arts educator, according to his LinkedIn profile.

Milton Academy said it has contacted immigration authorities about T&M's findings as well as all the employers he worked for after leaving the school, which appear to total about 18 schools and theater organizations.

Neither Buono, who began working at Milton Academy in 1973, nor Pieh could be reached for comment. A spokeswoman for the school said the administration wouldn't comment Tuesday.

Three other male employees committed misconduct with three female minors that ranged from making lewd comments to sexual intercourse, the letter said. Most of those incidents occurred on campus but weren't reported to the school administration at the time. The letter did not give a timetable.

The school didn't identify those employees, citing factors such as the severity of the offense, whether the employees committed repeated misconduct, and whether the victims feared that disclosure would compromise their privacy.

The letter said school officials have filed reports with "appropriate officials and law enforcement agencies" and banned "all perpetrators" from campus.

T&M found that the administration had investigated a number of other cases of employees engaging in sexual misconduct with students at the time those incidents

occurred and that “those employees were consequently separated from the school.” The letter did not elaborate.

T&M began its investigation in May, soon after the first [Globe report](#), and invited anyone with knowledge of misconduct at Milton Academy to contact the firm.

The consultant ended up extensively interviewing 60 alumni, parents, and current and former officials of Milton Academy, a K-12 boarding and day school.

Eric MacLeish, a Cambridge lawyer who has represented hundreds of victims of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy and by educators, credited Milton Academy leaders for sharing what they did but said they haven’t been fully transparent about Buono.

MacLeish said that in 1993 he represented a 1977 graduate of Milton Academy who contacted the school to say Buono had repeatedly molested him as a student. His client then met with a psychiatrist hired by the school as well as with the head of the Milton Academy board of trustees twice, he said.

“Milton Academy was certainly aware in 1993 that there were multiple allegations about Mr. Buono,” said MacLeish. “My client was upset when he didn’t see any reference in today’s announcement about the fact that he had come forward in 1993.”

Milton Academy officials did not respond to those allegations.

MacLeish urged Milton Academy to make the full report of T&M’s findings public.

In the letter to the community, school leaders acknowledged that victims of sexual misconduct “can live with the repercussions of those acts for years.” The school is offering to pay for professional counseling for anyone affected by the abuse.

Jonathan Saltzman can be reached at [jonathan.saltzman@globe.com](mailto:jonathan.saltzman@globe.com).

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