


Internal Audit Unit
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

September 19, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Ms. Marquette R. Singleton, Principal
Brown Station Elementary School

From: Mary J Bergstresser, Supervisor, Internal Audit Unit 

Subject: New Principal Appointment Review of the Report on Audit of Independent Activity Funds for the Period November 1, 2020, through October 31, 2022

Independent Activity Funds (IAFs) of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are established to promote the general welfare, education, and morale of students as well as to finance the recognized extracurricular activities of the student body. School principals are the fiduciary agents for the IAFs and are charged with determining the manner in which funds are raised and expended for activities such as field trips, admission events, and fund-raisers. They are responsible for ensuring that the IAFs are administered in accordance with Board of Education policies and MCPS regulations and procedures.

It should be noted that your appointment as principal was effective July 1, 2023. When a new principal is appointed to a school, we normally conduct an audit of Independent Activity Funds (IAF). Based upon the recently conducted audit of January 6, 2023 (see attachment), it is not necessary to conduct another IAF audit at this time. At our September 8, 2023, meeting with you, and Mr. Rodrigo Godinez, assistant principal, we reviewed the prior audit report, and the status of present conditions. No response to this report is necessary.

MJB:rg

Attachment

Copy to:

Members of the Board of Education

Dr. McKnight

Mr. Hull

Dr. Murphy

Ms. Morris

Mr. Stockton

Mrs. Williams

Mr. Adams

Mr. Reilly

Mrs. Chen

Ms. Eader

Mr. Klausing

Mrs. Ripoli

Mr. Zarchin


Ms. Webb

Internal Audit Unit
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Rockville, Maryland

January 6, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Ms. Vilma C. Najera, Acting Principal
Brown Station Elementary School

From: Mary J. Bergstresser, Supervisor, Internal Audit Unit 

Subject: Report on Audit of Independent Activity Funds for the Period
November 1, 2020, through October 31, 2022

Independent Activity Funds (IAFs) of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are established to promote the general welfare, education, and morale of students, as well as to finance the recognized extracurricular activities of the student body. School principals are the fiduciary agents for the IAFs charged with determining the manner in which funds are raised and expended for activities such as field trips, admission events, and fundraisers. They are responsible for ensuring that the IAFs are administered in accordance with Board of Education policies and MCPS regulations and procedures.

The IAF audits are conducted regularly to evaluate compliance with policies, regulations, and procedures, and to review processes for continuous improvement. Generally accepted audit procedures guide the work of the auditors who examine samples of the IAF records and financial accounts selected from documentation of various activities to verify their accuracy, as well as to assess the effectiveness of financial control procedures. An IAF audit does not review every transaction or school activity but seeks to provide reasonable assurance that any significant errors or omissions in the financial records are detected.

At our December 7, 2022, meeting with you; Ms. Monica P. Robles, school administrative secretary (secretary); and Mrs. Pamela K. Dunn, visiting bookkeeper, we reviewed the prior audit report dated December 30, 2020, and the status of the present conditions. It should be noted that your appointment as acting principal was effective October 1, 2022 and Ms. Robles' assignment as secretary was effective January 25, 2021. This audit report presents the findings and recommendations resulting from our examination of the IAF records and financial accounts for your school for the period designated above.

Findings and Recommendations

MCPS Form 280-54, *Independent Activity Funds Request for a Purchase*, is used to obtain principal approval to proceed with an intended purchase (refer to the *MCPS Financial Manual*, chapter 20, page 4). The purpose of each disbursement must be fully explained on this form in

order to properly record expenditures in appropriate accounts and to ensure that expenditures comply with IAF requirements. Invoices for goods or services must be signed by the purchaser to indicate satisfactory receipt. The secretary will then mark the documentation as “paid” prior to disbursing the funds. Disbursements made by Automated Clearing House (ACH) drawn on the school’s IAF bank account, regardless of the documentation that approved the procurement of goods and services, are required to be approved by the principal using MCPS Form 280-54, with a summary spreadsheet detailing the IAF account(s) to be charged, prior to expenditure of funds (refer to the *MCPS Financial Manual*, chapter 20, page 6). In our sample of disbursements, we found instances in which purchases were not pre-approved, MCPS i-Payment invoices had not been reviewed and authorized for payment by the principal, MCPS documentation supporting purchases not stamped or marked “paid,” and invoices and online purchase confirmations were not always signed by the receiver to indicate goods or services were received, and that payment could be processed. We recommend that MCPS Form 280-54 be prepared by staff with an estimate of expected expenditure and signed by the principal at the time verbal approval is sought. We also recommend that all MCPS iPayments be reviewed and approved by principal using MCPS Form 280-54, support documents be marked “paid”, the purchase be verified as complete by the recipient, and that the invoice/packing slip be marked “received” and signed/dated by the recipient when goods are received at the school. Requiring invoices to be marked “received” ensures that goods or services have been satisfactorily received prior to payment.

Cash and checks collected by sponsors and others for IAF activities must be remitted promptly to the secretary. These receipts must be deposited promptly, and all receipts must be deposited on the last working day of each month and before each weekend or holiday (refer to the *MCPS Financial Manual*, chapter 7, pages 4-5). In your action plan, you indicated that sponsors would remit funds collected promptly. We found that at times, staff were holding funds and not remitting them to the secretary when received. We also noted that funds had been held by the secretary over the allowable *Cash Holding Authority* (CHA). In addition, we noted that MCPS Form 280-34, *Remittance Slip*, was not always prepared in completion by the sponsor and the secretary, and at times was missing the date and the secretary’s signature. We recommend that all sponsors complete the remittance slip in full and to minimize the risk of loss; all funds collected must be remitted daily and deposited to the bank promptly.

Sponsors of field trips must have a complete class or club roster of student names and annotate how much each student paid, date paid, students who did not participate in the trip, and students who received waivers, scholarships or reduced fees. This data together with a list of all chaperones and volunteers must be provided to the secretary at the completion of each trip, and compared to remittances recorded in the trip account history report (refer to the *MCPS Financial Manual*, chapter 20, page 10). In your action plan, you indicated that sponsors would complete MCPS Form 280-41, *Field Trip Accounting*, or equivalent, to document and maintain proper accounting of field trips. We found that not all sponsors are providing completed data at the conclusion of each trip, field trip fees were not always being remitted in a timely manner, and that data is not being compared to the final account history report. We recommend trip sponsors use MCPS Form 280-41, or its equivalent, and provide complete data at the conclusion of each trip. This data must be

reconciled by the secretary with remittances recorded in activity accounts (refer to the *MCPS Financial Manual*, chapter 20, page 10).

Admission receipts for school events must be controlled according to MCPS Regulation DMB-RA, *Control of Admission Receipts*. These events must be controlled with serially numbered tickets, separation of duties, use of the required MCPS Form 280-50, *Tickets and Cash Report of Admissions Manager*, for tracking and reconciling sales, and perpetual inventory of tickets. We found that the ticket reports on file were not completed correctly by the admission manager and were not signed by the report auditor upon return of the unsold tickets. As tickets are given to the admission's manager, the ticket controller and admission's manager must sign the form as an acknowledgement of actual tickets received for potential event sales. Upon return of the unsold tickets, the admission manager and auditor sign and date ticket report to acknowledge that the tickets and funds were returned. Another weakness includes the lack of a perpetual inventory of tickets. We recommend that all admission events be controlled in accordance with the above cited regulation.

Notice of Findings and Recommendations

- Purchase requests must be approved by the principal prior to procurement.
- MCPS iPayments must be reviewed and approved by principal using MCPS Form 280-54.
- Purchaser must confirm receipt of goods or services prior to disbursement and documents stamped as "Paid".
- Funds collected by sponsors must be promptly remitted to the secretary (**repeat**).
- Cash and checks (funds) remitted by sponsors must be promptly receipted and deposited in the bank by the secretary (**repeat**).
- Field trip records prepared by sponsors must provide comprehensive data to account for all eligible to participate, including volunteers and chaperones, and secretary must complete a reconciliation upon completion of trip (**repeat**).
- Admission events must be conducted in accordance with MCPS Regulation DMB-RA and a perpetual inventory must be on hand (**repeat**).

Other matters were discussed and satisfactorily resolved. We appreciate the cooperation and assistance of your staff. In accordance with MCPS Regulation DIA-RA, *Accounting for Financial Operations/Independent Activity Funds*, using the attached action plan, please provide a written response to the Internal Audit Unit within 30 calendar days of this report. In your response, please share a detailed plan for addressing these issues, including appropriate staff training and support.

Prior to returning your completed audit action plan, please contact Mr. David W. Adams, director of school support and well-being, Office of Student Support and Well-Being, for written approval of your plan. Based on the audit recommendations, Mr. Adams will indicate whether he will conduct an electronic review of your action plan or schedule a time to meet in person with you and your secretary to support you with developing a well-defined plan to address the findings.

Attachment

Copy to:

Members of the Board of Education

Dr. McKnight

Mr. Hull

Dr. Murphy

Ms. Reuben

Mr. Stockton

Mrs. Williams

Dr. Floyd-Cooper

Mr. Reilly

Mrs. Chen

Mr. Adams

Ms. Eader

Mr. Klausling

Mrs. Ripoli

Ms. Webb

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Report Date:	Fiscal Year:
School:	Principal:
OSSWB Associate Superintendent:	OSSWB Director:
<p><u>Strategic Improvement Focus:</u> As noted in the financial audit for the period _____, strategic improvements are required in the following business processes :</p>	

Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Monitoring Tools / Data Points	Monitoring: Who & When	Results/Evidence

Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Monitoring Tools / Data Points	Monitoring: Who & When	Results/Evidence

OFFICE OF SCHOOL SUPPORT AND WELL-BEING (OSSWB)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Please revise and resubmit plan by _____
Comments: _____ _____	
Director: _____ <i>David W. Adams</i> _____	Date: _____