

Internal Audit Unit
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Rockville, Maryland

July 10, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Ms. Dara Brooks, Principal
Bel Pre Elementary School

From: Mary J. Bergstresser, Acting Supervisor, Internal Audit Unit *MJB*

Subject: Report on Audit of Independent Activity Funds for the Period
September 1, 2016, through December 31, 2019

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 February 19, 2019, meeting with you and Mrs. Rebecca V. Williams, school administrative secretary, we reviewed the prior audit report dated September 28, 2016, and the status of present conditions. 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 school administrative secretary will mark the documentation as “paid.” In our sample of disbursements, we found instances in which controls over purchases were insufficient due to missing documentation, including MCPS Form 280-54. MCPS Form 280-54 was not always signed by the principal prior to procurement, and documentation was not annotated by recipient to indicate purchased goods or services were satisfactorily received. By requiring prior approval and complete documentation, the principal retains control over the expenditure of IAF funds. We recommend that MCPS Form 280-54 be prepared by staff and signed by you at the time verbal approval is sought, and that invoices/packing slips be marked “received”, signed and dated by the receiver once merchandise has been satisfactorily received. Certain sponsors would benefit from a memorandum granting staff authority to expend IAF not to exceed a specified amount each fiscal year.

Cash and checks collected for IAF activities by sponsors and other authorized individuals must be remitted with MCPS Form 280-34, *Independent Activity Fund (IAF) Remittance Slip*, to the administrative secretary on the day the funds are received. We found instances in which staff collecting funds for field trips and other activities were holding funds rather than remitting them timely to the administrative secretary. We recommend that all staff who collect funds for school activities be reminded of remittance requirements (refer to the *MCPS Financial Manual*, Chapter 7, page 4).

Notice of Findings and Recommendations

- Check disbursements must be documented using MCPS Form 280-54.
- Purchase requests must be approved by the principal prior to procurement.
- Purchaser must confirm receipt of goods or services prior to disbursement.
- Cash and checks (funds) collected by sponsors must be promptly remitted to the school administrative secretary.

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 form, 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 Dr. Sarah E. Sirgo, director of learning, achievement, and administration, Office of Teaching, Learning, and Schools. Based on the audit recommendations, Dr. Sirgo will indicate whether she will conduct an electronic review of your action plan or schedule a time to meet in person with you and your school administrative secretary to support you with developing a well-defined plan to address the findings.

MJB:RCM:sh

Attachment

Copy to:

Members of the Board of Education

Dr. Smith

Dr. McKnight

Dr. Johnson

Mr. Turner

Dr. Wilson

Mrs. Ahn

Mrs. Dyson

Mrs. Camp

Mrs. Chen

Mr. Marella

Ms. McGuire

Mr. Reilly

Dr. Sirgo

Mr. Tallur

Ms. Webb

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Report Date:	Fiscal Year:
School:	Principal:
OSSI Associate Superintendent:	OSSI 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 IMPROVEMENT (OSSI) REVIEW & APPROVAL	
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Please revise and resubmit plan by _____
Comments: _____ _____	
Director: <u>Sarah Sirgo</u>	Date: _____