


Internal Audit Unit
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Rockville, Maryland

March 16, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Jennifer Taylor-Cox, Principal
Forest Knolls Elementary School

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

Subject: Report on Audit of Independent Activity Funds for the Period
March 1, 2021, through January 31, 2023

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 March 9, 2023, meeting with you and Mrs. Erika Milosavljevic, school administrative secretary (secretary), we reviewed the prior audit report dated May 3, 2021, and the status of the present conditions. It should be noted that your appointment as principal was effective July 18, 2022. 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. In the school’s action plan, it was indicated that all purchase requests would be pre-approved by the principal prior to purchase, using MCPS Form 280-54, purchaser would mark invoices to indicate satisfactory receipt, and secretary would mark invoice “paid” prior to disbursement. In our sample of disbursements, we found instances in which purchases were not always pre-approved, MCPS documentation supporting purchases were not always 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/dated by the principal at the time verbal approval is sought. We also recommend that all support documents be marked “paid”, and 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.

Notice of Findings and Recommendations

- Purchase requests must be approved by the principal prior to procurement (**repeat**).
- Purchaser must confirm receipt of goods or services prior to disbursement and documents must be stamped as “Paid” (**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 Dr. Peter O. Moran, associate superintendent of school support and well-being, Office of Student Support and Well-Being, for written approval of your plan. Based on the audit recommendations, Dr. Moran 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 school administrative secretary to support you with developing a well-defined plan to address the findings.

MJB:HT:rg

Attachment

Copy to:

Members of the Board of Education
Dr. McKnight
Mr. Hull
Dr. Murphy
Ms. Reuben
Mr. Stockton

Mrs. Williams
Dr. Moran
Mr. Reilly
Mrs. Chen
Ms. Eader
Mr. Klausling
Mrs. Ripoli
Ms. Webb

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Report Date:	Fiscal Year:
School:	Principal:
OSSWB Associate Superintendent:	OSSWB Director:

Strategic Improvement Focus:
 As noted in the financial audit for the period _____, strategic improvements are required in the following business processes :

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>Peter O. Moran</i> _____	Date: _____