

2026 Annual REPORT

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



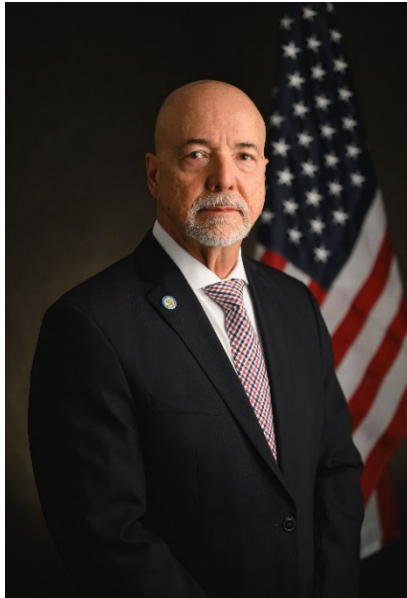
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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR INSPECTOR GENERAL



To the Chair and Members of the Miami-Dade County Public School Board, the Miami-Dade Schools Administration and employees, M-DCPS families, and the residents of Miami-Dade County:

In accordance with the Inter-local Agreement between the School Board and Miami-Dade County, I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office of the Inspector General for Fiscal Year 2026. This report highlights our independent oversight work and our continued efforts to strengthen integrity and accountability throughout the district.

Over the past year, the OIG conducted investigations and reviews involving allegations of payroll fraud, theft of time, improper use of funds, and procurement concerns. Our assessment of purchasing procedures and P-card expenditures led to process improvements that modernize district operations. A second review of current and former direct reports to the Board is ongoing. As in previous years, cases were presented to the Contractor Disciplinary Review Committee resulting in the debarment of two firms. Several additional investigations opened during the year remain active and will be reported once completed.

We continue to value the strong collaboration with the Audit and Budget Advisory Committee and the Ethics Advisory Committee, and we thank Chairmen Johnson and Slesnick, and all committee members for their dedicated service.

I extend my appreciation to Chair Rojas, the Board Members, Superintendent Dotres, and his staff for their continued support of the OIG. I also look forward to working with incoming Superintendent Villalobos and his administration. I appreciate the commitment of my colleagues as we collectively pursue our mission to detect, investigate, and prevent fraud, waste, mismanagement, and abuse across Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

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I. ABOUT US

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office of the Inspector General (M-DCPS OIG), through independent oversight of school district affairs, detects, investigates, and prevents fraud, waste, financial mismanagement, and other abuses, and promotes accountability, integrity, economy, and efficiency. The organization and administration of the M-DCPS OIG is independent to ensure that no interference or external influence adversely affects the objectivity of the M-DCPS OIG.



MISSION

To detect, investigate, and prevent fraud, waste, financial mismanagement, and other abuses, within the school district.

INTER-LOCAL AGREEMENT

The Inter-Local Agreement between the School Board of Miami-Dade County and Miami-Dade County, initially executed in 2007, sets forth the functions, responsibilities, authority, and jurisdiction of the M-DCPS OIG. The current agreement expires on December 18, 2028.

The M-DCPS OIG promotes accountability, integrity, and efficiency through its efforts in conducting investigations, audits, and oversight activities of school district employees, contractors, projects and programs. All case assignments are conducted with the goal of improving M-DCPS's ability to provide the highest quality education.

II. THE OIG EXECUTIVE TEAM



*(left to right) Hector Ortiz, Arleen Stanek, Felix Jimenez,
James Schlotzhauer, Marie Perikles*

Inspector General Felix Jimenez is the head of the organization. His Executive Team includes Assistant Inspector General for Investigations Hector Ortiz, General Counsel Marie Perikles, Audit Manager Arleen Stanek, and Director of Data Analytics James Schlotzhauer.

Assistant Inspector General Hector Ortiz leads the Investigations Unit. In addition to direct supervision of the M-DCPS investigators, he leverages the main office's three investigative squads and a team of skilled investigative analysts in support of the M-DCPS office.

General Counsel Marie Perikles oversees the Legal Unit which consists of five additional attorneys. The Legal Unit provides continuous support and guidance to all OIG personnel from the

moment a complaint is received to case closure, which often involves the issuance of public reports and memoranda. OIG attorneys provide counsel on jurisdictional questions and help assess the strengths and weaknesses of OIG cases for potential civil, administrative, or criminal implications.

The Audit Unit, overseen by Audit Manager Arleen Stanek, consists of a team of certified professionals with a wide range of government and private sector experience. The work of the OIG's Contract Oversight Unit includes active monitoring and random inspections of contracting and construction activities to ensure fairness in the procurement process and compliance with contract specifications. The Audit Unit frequently coordinates with the Contract Oversight Unit. Both units assist and coordinate with the Investigations Unit.

As the Director of Data Analytics, James Schlotzhauer has the primary responsibility of ensuring the alignment, development, and integration of data analytics, business intelligence, and artificial intelligence necessary to support the mission, vision, strategies, objectives, and goals of the OIG. Mr. Schlotzhauer organizes and assembles resources necessary to address the current and future analytical needs of the OIG.

III. THE M-DCPS OIG TEAM

Welcome to the M-DCPS Team



Dr. Ivan Ramirez joined the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office of the Inspector General on April 3, 2026, as a Special Agent (SA). Prior to his new assignment, SA Ramirez served as a sworn Federal Law Enforcement Officer with a distinguished 20-year career as a U.S. Postal Inspector for the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS). During his career, he conducted numerous domestic and international white collar crime investigations, to include mail and wire fraud, violent crimes investigations and was a member of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, and the Joint Terrorism Task Force with the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

SA Ramirez also served as the USPIS' Public Information Officer for over a decade, addressing all media inquiries in English and Spanish, and as a certified training instructor at the Federal Law Enforcement Career Development Unit in Potomac, Maryland.

Prior to USPIS, SA Ramirez served as an Immigration Inspector, later becoming a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer with the Department of Homeland Security. Before his decorated career in federal law enforcement, SA Ramirez served as a media producer and public affairs specialist for Miami-Dade County Government's Communications Department.

SA Ramirez holds both a Master of Public Administration from Barry University and a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership and Management from St. Thomas University. His experience of over 25 years in law enforcement will enhance the ability of our office to provide impartial and effective results. Dr. Ivan Ramirez is a welcome addition to our team!



(left to right) Reldys Torres, Tracey Skwarek, Jose Gonzalez, Mabel Lezcano, Ivan Ramirez, Archie Moore

IV. OPERATING BUDGET AND STAFFING



The School Board funds the M-DCPS OIG annually to provide inspector general services to the school district. All personnel costs are funded under an annual budget allocation. For the 2025 -2026 fiscal year, the School Board approved a \$1,364,838 budget to cover operating needs, and personnel staffing.

The M-DCPS OIG is staffed with a supervisor, four special agents, and an administrative assistant. M-DCPS OIG employees are contracted managerial

exempt personnel and serve at the will of the Inspector General, who, by virtue of the ILA between the School Board and Miami-Dade County, is the County Inspector General who will serve as the Inspector General for the School Board.

The ILA also enables County OIG staff to provide services to the M-DCPS OIG on a reimbursement basis. OIG investigative analysts provide investigative and analytical support to the M-DCPS OIG upon request. OIG attorneys provide legal advice and guidance in support of M-DCPS OIG investigations and operations. The Inspector General and the Assistant Inspector General of Investigations directly oversee all operations of the M-DCPS OIG.

V. COMPLAINT INTAKE AND DISPOSITION

Most cases opened each year stem from complaints submitted to the M-DCPS OIG by school district employees, vendors, parents, and other concerned citizens. Other cases result from ongoing investigations and audits, some of which are self-initiated. We strive to provide a voice to all complainants. Complaints involving personnel matters and other similar issues, as well as matters beyond the M-DCPS OIG's jurisdiction, are referred to appropriate parties, like other governmental entities, for further review and action.

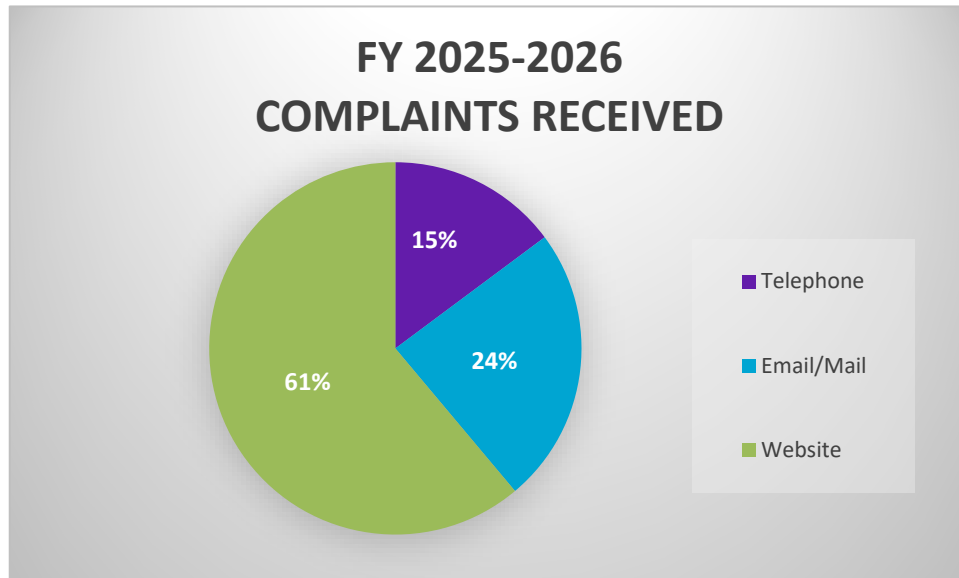
The M-DCPS OIG receives complaints by mail, via our website, through the OIG fraud hotline, and in person. M-DCPS OIG investigators are trained to maintain not only the confidentiality of the information provided, but to ensure the confidentiality of a complainant's identity pursuant to any applicable laws and policies. The M-DCPS OIG logs every complaint received, and each one undergoes a review process to determine if action is warranted. Some complaints will result in the M-DCPS OIG initiating an investigation, audit, or review. Other complaints may be determined to be more appropriately addressed by the M-DCPS administration or by another governmental agency. In the case of most referrals, the receiving agency is requested to provide the M-DCPS OIG with its findings.

In accordance with Section 3(h) of the ILA, the M-DCPS OIG is the school district's designee for purposes of receiving Whistle-blower's Act disclosures pursuant to Section 112.3187(6), Florida Statutes. Any individual who makes such a disclosure is entitled to have their identity kept confidential pursuant to state law. The M-DCPS OIG does not investigate allegations of retaliation. Investigations of retaliation are conducted in accordance with the policies established by the School Board for the management of such claims. Florida law also provides civil court remedies in cases of retaliation.

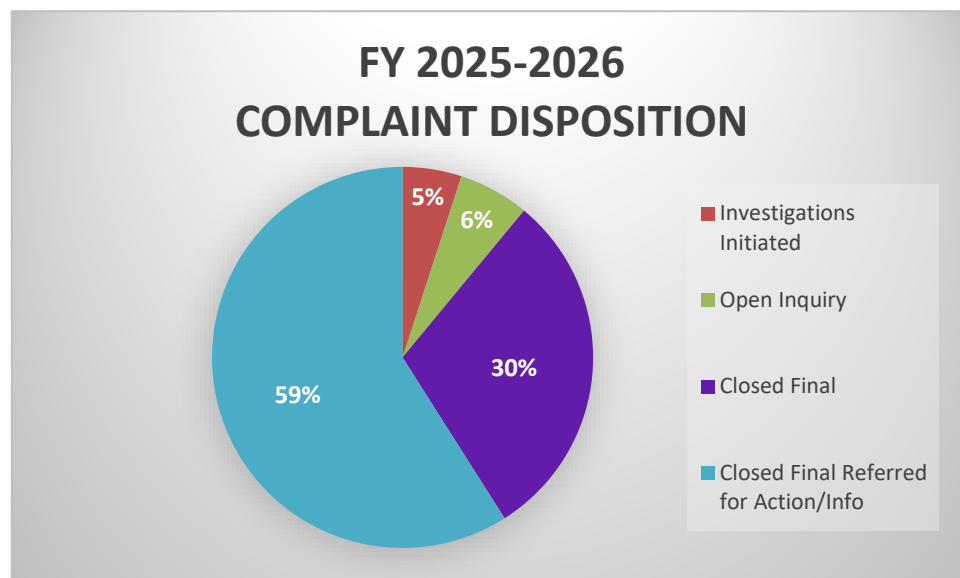
The M-DCPS OIG addresses every complaint received. Except for those complaints received anonymously where the complainant's identity is unknown, complainants are advised of the disposition of their complaints.



The Office received 54 complaints in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 - 61% of the complaints received were submitted through our website's report fraud page: www.miamidadeig.org/inspector-general/fraud.page. The remainder of the complaints were received through a variety of means as depicted in the chart below.



Each complaint is reviewed and evaluated by members of the OIG Executive staff, the M-DCPS Supervisory Special Agent, and ultimately the Inspector General. Of the 54 complaints received last year, 5% resulted in investigations. The remainder of the complaints were resolved in the manner depicted in the chart below.



VI. INVESTIGATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

The M-DCPS OIG conducts criminal and administrative investigations of fraud, waste, financial mismanagement, abuse, and misconduct related to M-DCPS programs, operations, contracts, and employees and promotes accountability, integrity, economy, and efficiency in government. M-DCPS OIG special agents have a wide variety of professional experience from prior positions with law enforcement and regulatory agencies. They have extensive training in white collar crime, financial fraud, and public corruption investigations. The M-DCPS OIG coordinates with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, the U. S. Attorney's Office, and other law enforcement authorities to leverage resources and fraud fighting efforts. Our investigations often lead to criminal cases and/or administrative reports with recommendations and monetary recoveries.

During this past fiscal year, numerous administrative investigations, reviews, and inspections were completed pertaining to allegations of fraud, waste, financial mismanagement, coercion, and misconduct. OIG investigations, audits and reviews are confidential until completed. Multiple investigations were opened during this year that remain ongoing. These cases will be reported, when completed, in subsequent annual reports. Summaries of select completed cases are presented below.

Fraudulent Vendor Documentation

The M-DCPS OIG initiated this investigation predicated on a referral received from the district's Chief Procurement Officer alleging that a school district contractor had submitted Work Performance Forms (WPFs) for payment that contained the forged signatures of M-DCPS employees. Several WPFs, submitted to the M-DCPS's Facilities Operations-Maintenance Department (FOM), included the forged signatures of former M-DCPS employees at the time the WPFs were prepared by the contractors' employees.

The concerns referred were substantiated. Pursuant to M-DCPS's contract, WPFs were required to be completed whenever the contractor serviced or inspected equipment; a school employee of the site visited was asked to sign off on the WPF to confirm the contractor had been to the site and performed the necessary services. The contractor was to then submit the WPFs along with an invoice as evidence the work was completed prior to any payment. Once processed, the WPF and invoice were used to pay the contractor for the work performed.

The OIG investigation found that the contractor submitted fraudulent forms to M-DCPS seeking payment. The OIG confirmed that WPFs were submitted for seventeen (17) M-DCPS sites by the contractor, that contained forged information, including the names, employee numbers, and signatures of M-DCPS employees. The OIG investigation revealed that the M-DCPS employee information used on the forged forms was likely obtained from prior WPFs signed at school sites. A sampling of the sign-in logs by the OIG found no record of the contractor's employees signing the logs. Per their contractual agreement with M-DCPS, the contractors' employees were required to complete WPFs detailing the work they performed on various types of equipment at M-DCPS sites to be paid for services rendered. They were also tasked with having an M-DCPS employee co-sign the

WPF confirming their presence at the M-DCPS sites. Although the owner of the business denied knowledge of the forgeries, he acknowledged WPFs were not always completed as they should have been by his technicians. While the forged WPFs submitted by the contractor to M-DCPS for payment were not paid, their conduct was in violation of their contractual and ethical obligations to M-DCPS.

The OIG presented this case to the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office (SAO); however, the SAO declined to pursue a prosecution of the contractors' employees for the submitted forgeries. Although the SAO exercised its discretion in declining criminal prosecution, the OIG's investigation found sufficient evidence indicating that the actions of the contractor in submitting fraudulent WPFs are not only contrary to the M-DCPS School Board Policy, but Florida law. As such, the OIG recommended debarring the company.

M-DCPS policy provides for the Contractor Disciplinary Review Committee (CDRC) to recommend suspension and/or debarment of a contractor to the School Board for several reasons, including breaching a contract, violating the Business Code of Ethics found in Board Policy 6460, and any other cause of a serious or compelling nature that affects the responsibility of a Board contractor to perform work. In the instant case, the CDRC convened to consider the OIG's recommendation to debar, and on September 3, 2026, after reviewing the evidence presented, the CDRC voted to debar the company from conducting business with the District for a period of three (3) years.

Alleged Theft of Time

This investigation was initiated pursuant to a confidential complaint alleging that an M-DCPS employee was stealing time by reporting to work more than an hour late, taking an extended lunch period, and leaving early every day. The allegation detailed that the behavior had been going on for years. The OIG initiated an inquiry and found that the confidential complainant did not have first-hand knowledge about the time theft allegations.

The inquiry revealed that management was aware of the subject employee's timeliness issues and had addressed the matter through conversations with the employee or through Official Job Duties Memorandums to enforce compliance. The OIG also reviewed claims that the employee's outside employment interfered with their regular working hours. Management was also aware of the subject employee's seasonal work with a package and parcel delivery company during the holidays, which was not found to have interfered with their M-DCPS work schedule or the fulfillment of their job duties and responsibilities. The allegations made by the confidential complainant were determined to be unfounded.

Allegations of Improper Use of Funds and Preferential Treatment at Hialeah Gardens High School

The M-DCPS OIG received an anonymous complaint alleging a high school principal improperly collected and used school funds and misused their position as principal to benefit or provide preferential treatment to certain teachers. The financial mismanagement accusations included

improper fundraising activities, \$5,000 purchase of a school mascot, a cash payment to a contractor for work performed in a classroom, overspending resulting in the suspension of the school's purchasing card (P-Card), and cash only sales for a school store located in the school's main office. Finally, the complainant alleged that mismanagement of funds resulted in the termination of the dance program.

The OIG investigation determined that the allegations were unfounded. While accused of mismanaging funds and showing preferential treatment to certain staff members, the OIG found no evidence to support that the school's principal did either. School fundraising activities, which were done through the school as well as the PTSA, were properly approved and collected. Evidence revealed that the school mascot at issue was a dog, on campus, for the school's district-approved veterinary program. The dog was owned by the school staff who were responsible for all aspects of the dog's care and custody. No evidence was found that a contractor was improperly hired or paid. M-DCPS Accounts Payable confirmed that the Principal's P-Card was not suspended for any misuse or wrongdoing, and the PTSA's school store was used by the PTSA—not the principal—to sell or provide uniforms and spirit shirts to students in compliance with district fundraising rules and the school's uniform policy. While the principal was alleged to have caused the demise of the school's dance program, evidence revealed that the dance program is still in operation under a new instructor. Finally, there was no evidence to support preferential treatment of certain staff.

Allegations of Inappropriate Behavior and Payroll Fraud

The M-DCPS OIG initiated an inquiry predicated on a referral of a complaint from the Office of the Board Chair for M-DCPS. The complaint alleged that the school's Security Monitor exhibited bullying and unprofessional behavior toward employees at the school creating a toxic work environment. The complaint also alleged that the Security Monitor was hired part-time by the night school, after 2:45 p.m., but was performing the work during regular school day work hours.

The OIG's review was limited to this allegation to determine if the Security Monitor was committing payroll fraud during their regular school day work hours instead of during the night school session. Based on the information gathered during this investigation, the allegation was determined to be unfounded. The OIG found no violations of Board policy or State law.

Alleged Misuse of Federal Special Education Funds

The M-DCPS OIG initiated this investigation predicated on a complaint alleging that a High School Principal misused federal special education funds to pay for the football coach to monitor a School Center for Special Instruction (SCSI), indoor suspension, class during the 2023-2024 school year. The anonymous complainant also alleged that the principal's misuse of funds deliberately denied students with disabilities all the services they were entitled to receive.

The OIG investigation confirmed that the High School did receive federal special education funding through a grant for the 2023-2024 school year. The grant identified was an Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA) grant, which was used to fund positions related to special education at the school. The OIG determined that the principal assigned a Special Education Teacher/Head Football Coach to periodically cover the SCSi indoor suspension class during the 2023-2024 school year. However, the Principal did not use the IDEA grant to fund the teaching position in the SCSi. Therefore, the allegation that the principal used federal special education funds for the teacher to cover the SCSi was unfounded.

The OIG investigation determined that the Special Education Teacher did not receive any special federal education funding (i.e., IDEA grant funds) while he taught special education classes or when he covered the SCSi during the 2023-2024 school year. The non-discretionary special education allocation that paid for the Special Education Teacher's position came from local resources from the school district's General Fund.

During the investigation the OIG found that the principal used non-discretionary (local) special education funds to fund the position as a special education teacher during the 2023-2024 school year. The investigation found that those funds were incorrectly used to fund the teachers' payroll when he periodically covered the SCSi. The OIG learned that non-discretionary special education funds, per M-DCPS allocation procedures, are only to be used for the purpose for which they were allocated. The OIG determined, based on information from officials with the school district's Office of Exceptional Student Education, that the SCSi is not considered an official class, nor is it considered a "special education class," that could be funded with non-discretionary special education funds.

The OIG investigation concluded that the principal assigned the Special Education Teacher to cover the indoor suspension, or SCSi, when the primary teacher was not available. Although the Principal's assignment of the Special Education Teacher to the SCSi was made with the best of intentions, his position was paid with non-discretionary special education funds allocated to ESE and not the SCSi.

The OIG investigation also found that the principal's assignment of the Special Education Teacher to the SCSi during the 2023-2024 school year did not deny any special education students the services to which they were entitled.

Allegations That an M-DCPS Employee Used an M-DCPS School Bus for Personal Use

The M-DCPS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) received an anonymous complaint via its website, alleging that an M-DCPS employee at the Northwest Transportation Center, used the M-DCPS school bus as a personal ride share to transport their grandchildren to and from school. The allegation that the employee was using M-DCPS school buses as a personal ride share to transport their grandchildren to and from school was determined to be unfounded.

The inquiry revealed that the employees' grandchildren were utilizing a Space Available Bus Pass for transportation to and from two Schools. The Space Available Pass was intended to allow students that are not eligible for transportation to ride the bus from an existing bus stop if there was space available

on the bus. Both schools advised that there was space available on their buses. Students riding Space Available may only use existing bus stops that have been established for eligible students. New stops will not be created for students requesting a bus. The OIG verified that the students are utilizing existing bus routes.

Alleged Fronting of Minority Certified Vendor

The M-DCPS OIG initiated an investigation predicated on a complaint referral from the M-DCPS Civilian Investigative Unit (CIU). The complaint alleged that an individual associated with a former school principal made several inappropriate statements during a business meeting about becoming an M-DCPS vendor.

The individual was not an M-DCPS employee or vendor but served as a member, and later the Chair, of the M-DCPS Wellness Advisory Committee.

The OIG investigated allegations that, during a meeting with the owners of a local business, the individual made comments suggesting a potential fronting arrangement involving a minority/veteran certified contractor, as well as claims implying improper or undue influence with M-DCPS officials.

The investigation found the allegations unsubstantiated. While the individual did know the minority/veteran certified contractor referenced in the complaint and had interactions with the director of the M-DCPS Food and Menu Program, there was no evidence that he had any interest in—or the ability to influence—the contractor’s business operations or M-DCPS’ decisions regarding the Food and Menu Program or any district contract. There was also no evidence that he attempted to exert such influence.

Inappropriate Use of a School Board Member’s Travel Card by Former Chief of Staff

The M-DCPS OIG initiated this investigation based upon the reported findings and exceptions noted in a review conducted by the OIG in conjunction with the accounting firm Verdeja and Alvarez. The review examined the School Board Members’ use of their Purchasing Cards and Travel Cards. *(Those findings were previously reported in the OIG’s 2025 Annual Report)*

This specific investigation focused on exceptions discovered in the use of a School District Travel Card by a former School Board member’s then Chief of Staff. The School District Travel Card under review was issued to the former School Board member. The Chief of Staff accompanied the former School Board member on several trips to New York, Tallahassee, Baltimore, and Orlando.

The investigation found that the actions of the Chief of Staff violated School District policies in two ways. First, she violated established School District Policy stating that the Travel Card issued to the former School Board member should only have been used to pay for the Board member’s travel expenses and not the travel expenses of a member of their staff. Second, the investigation found

that the School Board paid for non-reimbursable travel expenses for the Chief of Staff when she either submitted inaccurate reimbursement requests or failed to submit any reimbursement requests. There were several instances where the Chief of Staff's hotel and airfare were improperly paid with the former School Board member's Travel Card. While such use is contrary to the clear guidelines in place, there were, as noted in the OIG's review preceding this investigation, deficiencies in the oversight of the use of Travel Cards by Board members.

The Chief of Staff admitted knowing the procedure she should have followed. The OIG recommended and the former Chief of Staff through her attorney, made full restitution in the amount of \$2,039.95 to the School District for the non-reimbursable expenses that were charged to the former School Board member's Travel Card.

CONTRACT OVERSIGHT, REVIEWS AND INSPECTIONS

Invitation to Negotiate (ITN)-22-026-CM Universal ID Software Review

The M-DCPS OIG received a request from a School Board Member, for the OIG to review the solicitation process for the Universal ID Software Program contract. The OIG conducted a review of the Universal ID Software Program solicitation documents that were provided during the pre-proposal meeting. The information in the solicitation documents was carefully prepared to provide the participating firms with the necessary information to address the school district's needs for the development of a universal student identification system that could integrate with other functions within and outside the school district.

The OIG reviewed the mandatory goals utilized during the solicitation that were established by the school district's Goal Setting Committee. The OIG interviewed school officials who participated in the setting of the mandatory goals for this solicitation whereby they acknowledged that the goals would be difficult to achieve since similar goals were attempted during fiscal years 2022 and 2023 with seven Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSR)-funded solicitations, which resulted in all those solicitations being rejected by the district because the proposed bidders could not meet the mandatory minority goals.

During the selection committee meeting, the two prospective firms produced sample ID cards that were examined by committee members, which included representatives of the district's Food and Nutrition Department, Transportation, and Information Technology. The selection committee convened a third and final meeting and, through a consensus vote, recommended the Universal ID Software Program contract be awarded to one of the two prospective bidders.

The OIG reviewed each firm's proposals and briefly noted that one bidder offered to produce ID cards remotely and off-site while the prevailing bidder's model was to acquire software and printers that would allow "in-house" development of the ID cards within the school district at a cost that was lower than what was offered by their opponent. The OIG also noted that the losing bidder had proffered

having over thirty (30) years of prior experience in ID card management and ID card systems, while the prevailing bidders prior experience was based primarily on Cybersecurity training for governmental entities, that included school districts, but they did not list any relevant experience pertaining to ID card management or development. The OIG also learned that district officials had concerns that the prevailing bidder's local business address was at a local UPS mail store location.

On May 15, 2024, Board Agenda Item E-143 to Award Invitation to Negotiate ITN-22-026-CM was scheduled to be presented before the School Board for review, but district staff decided to withdraw the item. On September 11, 2024, the School Board officially rejected Board Agenda Item E-143. District officials cited a solicitation that employed a methodology that would not result in the best value to the district. The OIG learned after speaking with district officials in Procurement Management Services and School Operations, there were no immediate plans to reissue the solicitation for the Universal ID Software Program. In the event this solicitation is reissued in the future, the OIG will monitor the solicitation process.

Review of Food Services and Food Laboratories Pest Control ITB-24-020-MC

The M-DCPS OIG initiated a review of the rebid of the school district's Food Service and Food Laboratories Pest Control Services contract under Invitation to Bid (ITB)-24-020-MC. In December 2025, the selection process was completed, and district officials prepared a Board Agenda Item to recommend award to a selected vendor. On February 11, 2026, the School Board voted and approved the award of the contract to a primary vendor and to an alternate vendor.

The OIG conducted a review of the solicitation documents that were provided during the pre-proposal meeting. The information in the solicitation documents was carefully prepared to provide the participating firms with the necessary information to address the school district's needs for a Food Service and Food Laboratories Pest Control contract. In addition, all participating firms were informed of the price preference of 5% for certified Small Business Enterprise (SBE), Micro Business Enterprise (MBE) and Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE) and the licensing requirements. Participating firms were required to submit copies of a valid pest control license, pest control identification cards of their employees, and the Certified Operator-in-charge license from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Bureau of Entomology and Pest Control to district officials.

The OIG determined that all phases of the solicitation, including the evaluation of the bid proposals and due diligence, were completed in accordance with School Board policies and Florida Statutes.

VII. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Conviction and Sentence of Former School Board Member

As previously reported, the M-DCPS OIG initiated an investigation of the former District 7 School Board Member predicated on a referral by M-DCPS Administration. Following the then District 7 School Board Member and Vice-Chair's resignation in December 2022, the Superintendent's Chief of Staff was asked to approve the former School Board Member's final purchases. As a School Board member, she had been issued two credit cards—one for small purchases (commonly referred to as a P-Card) and one to be used for travel expenses (a Travel Card). The Chief of Staff found irregularities with the former School Board Member's M-DCPS issued P-Card statements, which had not been reconciled before her resignation.

All M-DCPS employees and School Board members who are issued P-Cards or Travel Cards are trained on and must attest to understanding the M-DCPS Purchasing Card Program Policies. Personal use is strictly prohibited. The former School Board Member was first employed with M-DCPS in 2002 and held various administrative positions. The OIG investigated the matter jointly with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office (SAO) Public Corruption Task Force.

The investigation found that the former School Board Member used her M-DCPS issued P-Card for personal purchases totaling over \$100,000, including 178 gift cards, all purchased within a 12-month period amounting to over \$42,000.

She also used the assigned M-DCPS Travel Card for personal travel totaling over \$9,000. Those expenses included tickets and hotel stays for family and friends. These unauthorized purchases, the majority of which took place during calendar year 2022, were for personal benefit.

On February 1, 2024, the former School Board Member was charged by the SAO with two counts of Organized Scheme to Defraud and two counts of Grand Theft.

On April 14, 2026, she entered a plea to one count of Grand Theft, a third-degree felony in violation of Section 812.014(2)(c), Florida Statutes and was sentenced to 14 months in Florida State Prison followed by three years of probation. As a part of the sentencing, the former School Board Member was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$101,109.47 to M-DCPS and write a letter of apology.

VIII. OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES IN OTHER AREAS

Debarment of Vendors

The Inspector General shall have the power to audit, investigate, monitor, oversee, inspect, and review the operations, activities and performance and procurement process including, but not limited to, project design, establishment of bid specifications, bid submittals, activities of the contractor, its officers, agents and employees, lobbyists, School Board staff, and elected officials, in order to ensure compliance with contract specifications and detect corruption and fraud. The Contractor Disciplinary Review Committee (CDRC) is responsible for recommending sanctions to the Board. A recommending department will forward the committee's decision to the Superintendent who shall forward it to the Board for ratification. The department head is responsible for presenting evidence to the CDRC in support of the disciplinary sanction(s) the department is seeking.



On September 3, 2026, the OIG presented two investigations before CDRC, in compliance with School Board Policy No. 6320.04, *Contractor Discipline* and No. 6460, *Business Code of Ethics*.

In one investigation, the OIG determined the vendor submitted 36 Work Performance Forms (WPFs) to M-DCPS Facilities Management alleging work had been completed but instead were determined to have been forged. Another 17 School sites' WPFs had suspected fraudulent information. Each M-DCPS official on the forged WPFs told the OIG that they did not sign the forms, including one official who had retired prior to the date on the form. Some of WPFs had conflicts showing technicians being at different schools at the same time.

The second investigation was conducted by the Miami-Dade County (County) Office of the Inspector General after the subject vendor submitted a bid that required proof of insurance on a County contract. The County noted that the three certificates of insurance provided had irregularities. The subject vendor was also a provider for M-DCPS. The County OIG's investigation revealed the certificates of insurance submitted by a vendor were fraudulent, confirming that the Insurance Agents mentioned in the insurance policies did not produce them. As a result of these findings, the employee deemed responsible was charged with one count of Forgery, a third-degree felony. Following criminal charges, the vendor was barred from submitting new bids to the County for one year.

In both cases the M-DCPS OIG recommended debarment of the vendors and presented each case before the CDRC. Upon conclusion of the OIG's presentations, the CDRC unanimously voted to debar each vendor from conducting business with the District for a maximum period of three (3) years.

IX. AUDIT AND BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Created by School Board Policy No. 6840, the Audit and Budget Advisory Committee (ABAC) serves as the principal advisory committee to assist the Board in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities on budgeting, financial reporting and accounting, and business policies and practices. The eleven ABAC members review and make recommendations to the School Board and Superintendent on fiscal management matters; ABAC is the Board's principal agent in ensuring the independence of the District's

external and internal auditors. The ABAC's goals are to assist in:

- a) strengthening accountability for the stewardship and efficient and effective use of School District funds;
- b) maintaining transparency of the District's financial and business operations; and
- c) promoting an adequate system of internal control.

The ABAC's is also charged with receiving and reviewing reports issued by the OIG and monitoring the corrective action taken by the District in response to the OIG's recommendations. The OIG's annual report is also presented to the ABAC.

X. ETHICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE



The OIG attends all Ethics Advisory Committee (EAC) meetings where we present our annual and investigative reports, and reviews. The EAC works to ensure the integrity of The Board's decision-making processes and to restore

public confidence in our public schools. It is comprised of seven prominent community members: Chairman Donald Slesnick, Esq.; Mr. Frank Silva, Esq.; Dr. Laura Kohn-Wood; Dr. Ursula Wright; Ms. Sharon Watson; Hon. Jerald Bagley; Dr. Jaime Franco; and Dr. Carmen Concepcion. The EAC is regularly attended by one or more board members (or a staff delegate), and a representative from the Office of the General Counsel.

The OIG looks forward to the continued relationship with the EAC and supports its role in helping to ensure ethical governance.

XI. PROVIDING OVERSIGHT TO THE 3RD LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE NATION

