



MARYLAND OFFICE OF THE
INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR EDUCATION

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Inspector General

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Deputy Inspector General

October 4, 2024

VIA EMAIL (superintendent@pgcps.org)

Mr. Millard House II
Superintendent
Prince George's County Public Schools
14201 School Lane
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

Ref: OIGE Case 24-0207-C

Management Alert Report

Prince George's County Public Schools Teacher's Rights

Dear Superintendent House,

The Office of the Inspector General for Education (OIGE) received a complaint alleging that an Assistant Principal instructed a teacher to refrain from speaking at a Board of Education meeting regarding the athletic field conditions at a PGCPSS high school. Additionally, it was reported that the Athletic Director advised the same teacher against participating in a media interview about the field conditions.

This management alert report addresses the rights of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) employees concerning public speaking engagements, specifically before the Board of Education, and participation in media interviews.

The PGCPSS Office of General Counsel provided the relevant policies and procedures governing these activities in response to these allegations. According to Board Policy 8345, dated September 26, 2013, while members of the public are limited to three minutes of speaking time, employees have no specified limitations or restrictions. Furthermore, Administrative Procedure 1121, effective August 1, 2006, titled "*Release and Dissemination of Information*," assigns the Office of Communication the primary responsibility for media relations. This procedure mandates that all media inquiries be directed to school principals, who are advised to coordinate with the Office of Communication and the designated Area Superintendent.

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The OIGE notes that Board Policy 8345 does not exclude employees from speaking at board meetings as they are members of the public. Additionally, while Administrative Procedure 1121 outlines the roles of the Office of Communication and principals in media relations, it does not provide specific directives for staff member responses to media requests.

The lack of clear guidelines for employee participation in Board of Education testimony and media interviews warrants attention. Policies must explicitly clarify these rights to prevent ambiguity and ensure employees are free to engage in public discourse without undue restraint.

We recommend reviewing and, if necessary, updating the current policies to define and support employees' rights in these matters.

The OIGE is referring this matter to the Prince George's County Public School System for further review.

Respectfully,



Richard P. Henry
Inspector General

Cc: Darnell L. Henderson, Esq., General Counsel, PGCPS
Frank S. Turner, II, Integrity & Compliance Officer, PGCPS