



MARYLAND OFFICE OF THE
INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR EDUCATION

Richard P. Henry
Inspector General

Douglas H. Roloff, III
Deputy Inspector General

September 7, 2021

VIA EMAIL (mohammed.choudhury@maryland.gov)

Mr. Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

REF: 21-0013 - I

Dear State Superintendent Choudhury,

The Maryland Office of the Inspector General for Education (OIGE) has had an opportunity to investigate your complaint filed on August 11, 2021. The complaint alleged that possible undue influence or collusion was applied in the awarding of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Early Childhood (DEC) - Child Care Scholarship Case Management and Payment Processing contract (R00R1600082) to Deloitte Consulting, LLP.

On January 6, 2021, the contract was presented to the members of the Maryland Board of Public Works (BPW) for discussion and vote to award. The BPW members in attendance were Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford, State Treasurer Nancy Kopp, and Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot. Representing MSDE were Deputy State Superintendent Amalie Brandenburg, Assistant State Superintendent Steven Hicks, Assistant State Superintendent Christy Shockley, and DEC Branch Chief Rene Williams. In addition to the individuals identified, Ms. Kim Newson Bridges represented Conduent State and Local Solutions, Inc. (Conduent) Conduent had previously provided case management and payment processing services for MSDE – DEC.

Our investigation involved interviews and the review of documents, including the transcript from the January 6, 2021, Maryland Board of Public Works meeting. The transcripts of this meeting indicate only one vendor; Deloitte Consulting LLP, having submitted a bid.

The following testimony, excerpted from the BPW meeting, indicated Conduent's position on this contract:

MS. BRIDGES: *Yes, Good afternoon, Mr. Comptroller, Mr. Governor, and Madam Treasurer. We would like to share some information about why we chose not to bid.*¹

Following a discussion between members of the BPW and MSDE, the following testimony was provided:

TREASURER KOPP: *All right. And as I understand it, though, I mean, Conduent didn't bid.*

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR RUTHERFORD: *Right.*

TREASURER KOPP: *They could have bid, and they didn't bid.*²

Furthermore, on October 13, 2020, Ms. Kimberly Newson Bridges provided the following Vendor Feedback Form remarks on behalf of Conduent State and Local Solutions, Inc.:

*"We want to continue as your child case management service provider. It is only after careful consideration at the highest level of our company that we decided the risk to our company of operating the project as required in this TORFP, and the resulting cost to MSDE, is simply too great."*³

and,

*"It is with great disappointment and after careful consideration at the highest level of our company, that Conduent State & Local Solutions, Inc. (Conduent) submits this Vendor Feedback Form to indicate that we are not submitting a proposal for the Child Care Scholarship Case Management and Payment Processing Functions Task Order Request for Proposals (TORFP), Solicitation No: R00R1600082. We did not make this decision lightly."*⁴

Without the submission of a bid by Conduent, the opportunity to file a bid protest or appeal the disputed award to the Maryland State Board of Contract Appeals is ultimately unfounded.

¹ Maryland Board of Public Works Transcript, January 6, 2021, page 52, lines 1 thru 3, Hunt Reporting Company

² Ibid, page 64, lines 13 thru 16, Hunt Reporting Company

³ Vendor Feedback Form, Solicitation No: R00R1600082, page 2, paragraph 3

⁴ Ibid, page 7, paragraph 4

After a review of all documents and interview statements, our investigation did not find any evidence that MSDE staff influenced or improperly colluded with Deloitte Consulting, LLP., in the awarding of the Division of Early Childhood, Child Care Scholarship Case Management and Payment Processing contract.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard P. Henry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a stylized "H".

Richard P. Henry
Inspector General