



MARYLAND OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR EDUCATION

INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY | 21-0015-I

Findings Regarding the Misuse of Education Funds to Conduct an Improper Investigation of Several Elected Board Members by the Prince George's County Board of Education (PGBOE) – Ethics Advisory Panel (EAP).

The Maryland Office of the Inspector General for Education (OIGE) initiated an investigation after receiving complaints alleging that the PGBOE EAP conducted an improper investigation into members of the PGBOE. The EAP alleged that seven (7) members of the PGBOE operated unethically concerning three main issues, 1) the vote to hire a private lobbyist, 2) the vote to extend or expand a community workforce agreement, and 3) the reorganization of the PGBOE's administrative staff in violation of PGBOE Policy 0107. The EAP report also indicated that the seven (7) board members did not cooperate with the panel when requested to provide statements during the investigation. There was not such hesitancy with the OIGE investigation.

The OIGE investigation found that EAP had provided a list of interrogatories (written questions which is formally put to one party in a case by another party) to the members. The OIGE found that six (6) of the seven (7) members did provide responses to the EAP.

The OIGE did substantiate some statements found in the EAP's report after reviewing PGBOE meeting minutes, emails, board video meetings, and conducting witness interviews. However, the OIGE also found that the EAP's report omitted many contradictory statements directly related to the three (3) allegations which could have exonerated the members during the initial phase of their investigation. Furthermore, the OIGE found identified statements contained in the EAP's report which would be categorized as "opinion-based conclusions" and regarded as unrelated or inconsistent with the factual findings.

The OIGE has completed its investigation and provided its report to the PGBOE and the Maryland State Board of Education for appropriate action.

Unless otherwise noted, the OIGE applies the preponderance of the evidence standard in determining whether local education agency personnel have committed misconduct.