



MARYLAND OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR EDUCATION



Investigative Report Summary

OIGE Case 22-0004-I

Issued: October 26, 2022



MARYLAND OFFICE OF THE
INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR EDUCATION
Richard P. Henry, Inspector General



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To the Citizens of Maryland and Anne Arundel County,

The General Assembly, at its First Session after the adoption of the Maryland Constitution, established throughout the State a thorough and efficient System of Free Public Schools; and shall provide by taxation, or otherwise, for their maintenance.¹ The Maryland Office of the Inspector General for Education (OIGE) plays a vital role in safeguarding State funds provided to local school systems. Our primary mission is to prevent and detect fraud, waste and abuse, and educational mismanagement within School Boards, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Interagency Commission of School Construction (IAC), the twenty-four (24) local education agencies (LEA), and non-public schools who receive State funding throughout the State of Maryland. Except under limited exceptions, the Inspector General may not disclose the identity of the source of a complaint or information provided.

Background

The OIGE initiated an investigation after receiving a complaint alleging that a private vendor was not paying the Anne Arundel County Public School system (AACPS) for using a school facility to generate a personal profit.

Investigation

The OIGE, in cooperation with the AACPS – Office of Investigations (OI), reviewed established AACPS policy and the School Facilities Manual (Manual) governing the use of school facilities. The Manual states, “*No school facility shall be used by any employee, individual, organization, or group for their own personal business or benefit.*”² Our review further indicated that the AACPS Board of Education (Board) encourages the community’s use of school facilities³ and provides a list of user group examples.⁴

The OIGE investigation showed the alleged event had been held, on an annual basis, for over twenty years. The event was organized by an Anne Arundel County club and featured student members from the AACPS community. The OIGE further determined the club to be a recognized school-sponsored group and was not required to pay for room use or energy.⁵

¹ Constitution of Maryland, Article VIII, Education, Section 1

² AACPS Use of School Facilities Manual, AACPS Facilities Division, August 1, 2022, page 3

³ AACPS Policy, KC-RA, Community Use of Facilities, B, Issue

⁴ Ibid., 2, Chart, page 22

⁵ Ibid., 2, School Sponsored Groups, page 12

Findings

The OIGE investigation did not substantiate the allegation.

The OIGE, in collaboration with the OI, did find that AACPS lacked internal controls regarding the collection of admission (at-the-door) revenue during sponsored events. Interviews with staff indicated that employees and event volunteers utilized their own methods to document attendance and account for collected revenue. Staff further stated that upon the conclusion of an event, employees are required to immediately deposit all collected revenue into the school's organization account.

Recommendations

- 1) The AACPS should review current practices used by employees and volunteers responsible for collecting event revenue to ensure they comply with established procedures in the School Activity Funds Manual (February 2018).
- 2) The AACPS should develop an annual School Activity Funds training program for employees assigned or who oversee sponsored events.

The OIGE understands that information may be changed or updated after an investigation has been completed. The OIGE appreciates the cooperation provided by the Anne Arundel Public School system members, the Office of Legal Services, and the staff of the Office of Investigations.

Respectfully,



Richard P. Henry
Inspector General

cc: Dr. Mark T. Bedell, Ed.D. – Superintendent of Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Ms. Laurie I. Pritchard, Esq., Director of Legal Services