



MARYLAND OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR EDUCATION

INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY | CASE 24-0003-I

Findings Regarding The Misuse of Education Funds By The Superintendent Of The Cecil County Public School System To Promote Improper Political Activities.

The Maryland Office of the Inspector General for Education (OIGE) initiated an investigation after receiving a complaint alleging that Dr. Jeffrey Lawson, Superintendent of the Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS), abused his authority by misusing education funds while allegedly participating in improper political activities.

The OIGE does not investigate allegations of ethical violations and recommends that they be reviewed by the local Board of Education's Ethics Panel or the Maryland State Ethics Commission.

The OIGE's investigation focused on two allegations: 1) misuse of the CCPS email system to promote an event, and 2) the misuse of education funds to pay for bus services to transport education and community members to an organized event or rally outside of the Cecil County Administrative Building on February 6, 2024.

The OIGE confirmed that a CCPS principal initially emailed students on January 25, 2024, regarding ways to advocate for schools. The OIGE further confirmed that following this email and within a concise window of time, the Executive Director of Elementary Education sent a separate email to all elementary, middle, and high school principals, informing them, "*You cannot distribute that information to your student groups. When scheduling these to be sent, please only send them to adults on your mailing lists.*" The OIGE could not substantiate that Dr. Lawson directed the principal staff to send out this email.

The OIGE could not substantiate the allegation that taxpayer funds were used to transport attendees to the Cecil County Administrative Office on February 6, 2024. The OIGE interviewed the bus owners and was advised that both companies had donated their time and services for the day in question to transport teachers, parents, and students to the event.

The OIGE has completed its investigation.

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