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2025 ANNUAL REPORT



REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR,
GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS,
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION,
AND
THE INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON SCHOOL
CONSTRUCTION

December 1, 2025


The Honorable Governor of the State of Maryland
The Honorable President of the Maryland Senate
The Honorable Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates
The Honorable President of the Maryland State Board of Education
The Honorable Maryland State Superintendent of Schools
The Honorable Chairperson of the Interagency Commission on School Construction

I am pleased to submit our Annual Report on the Office of the Inspector General for Education (OIGE) activities in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, specifically Education Article §9.10-105(a). This Annual Report summarizes investigations and audits conducted during the reporting period from December 1, 2024, to November 30, 2025. It also highlights other significant accomplishments.

Like other state agencies, OIGE is currently experiencing staffing shortages in key areas, which continue to create operational challenges. As OIGE has demonstrated over the years, despite significant funding and staffing limitations, it has carried out its mandate with independence, efficiency, and results that benefit Maryland taxpayers and all stakeholders. This year's OIGE Annual Report, like in previous years, highlights some of our investigations and reviews that continue to show OIGE's efforts to strengthen internal controls and reduce the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse. It is essential that education funds are used effectively to achieve core educational goals and are not misappropriated or mismanaged. The challenge for OIGE remains to uphold its oversight responsibilities despite significant funding and staffing gaps.

The OIGE would like to thank Governor Moore, Senate President Ferguson, House Speaker Jones, and the Maryland State Department of Education for their continued support. I look forward to serving a second term as Maryland's Inspector General and working with you and the members of the Maryland General Assembly to identify and prevent fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement of education funds.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard P. Henry
Inspector General



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the OIGE is to ensure integrity within the operations of Maryland Public Schools, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Boards of Education, the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), and Nonpublic schools that receive State funds by conducting independent, meaningful, accurate, and thorough investigations into allegations of fraud, waste and abuse, and financial mismanagement.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The State of Maryland established the OIGE in 2019 by enacting Maryland Education Code § 9.10. The Association of Inspectors General, a standard-setting organization for Inspectors General, asserts that an Office of Inspector General should be created by law to define its authority and credibility.

To ensure Maryland's early childhood, primary, and secondary education systems perform at the highest levels, the Maryland legislature established this independent investigative agency to ensure accountability for the use of public education funds. The position of Inspector General (IG) is appointed unanimously by the Governor, the Attorney General, and the State Treasurer, with the advice and consent of the Maryland Senate.

The OIGE consists of investigative auditors, investigators, and specialists who have the authority to examine all functions within state and local education, as well as those of private entities conducting business with the State of Maryland and local education agencies (LEA). The Investigative Audit Unit performs audits and evaluations across a broad spectrum of programs, processes, functions, areas, and topics. The Investigations Unit conducts reviews and investigations into individual crimes and misconduct. Investigative audits and investigations support the State's ongoing efforts to reduce risk by thoroughly reviewing information pertaining to education executives, senior managers, vendors, and contractors. The OIGE's responsibilities include the following:

- Examining and investigating school boards, local education agencies, public schools, nonpublic schools that receive state funds, the MSDE, and the IAC.
- Conducting management reviews and investigations into cases of educational fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Recommend corrective actions related to fraud, waste, abuse, compliance, and internal control weaknesses.

BUDGET

OIGE maintains integrity in Public School operations by conducting thorough, accurate, and meaningful investigations and audits into allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, and financial mismanagement. Additionally, the OIGE reviews local school systems, practices, and procedures to evaluate their effectiveness in preventing these issues.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the OIGE operational budget was \$2.67 million, which is **0.027%** of Maryland's total education funding of **\$9.7** billion.

The OIGE is authorized to have 16 operational positions, including a Deputy Inspector General (DIG). This role oversees audit and investigative work and assists the Inspector General in managing daily operations. The OIGE is also supported by an assistant attorney general and an administrative staff member who ensures all work complies with state standards, rules, and regulations. Like other state agencies, OIGE had to reduce its staffing level from 16.5 to 16 in FY 2025.

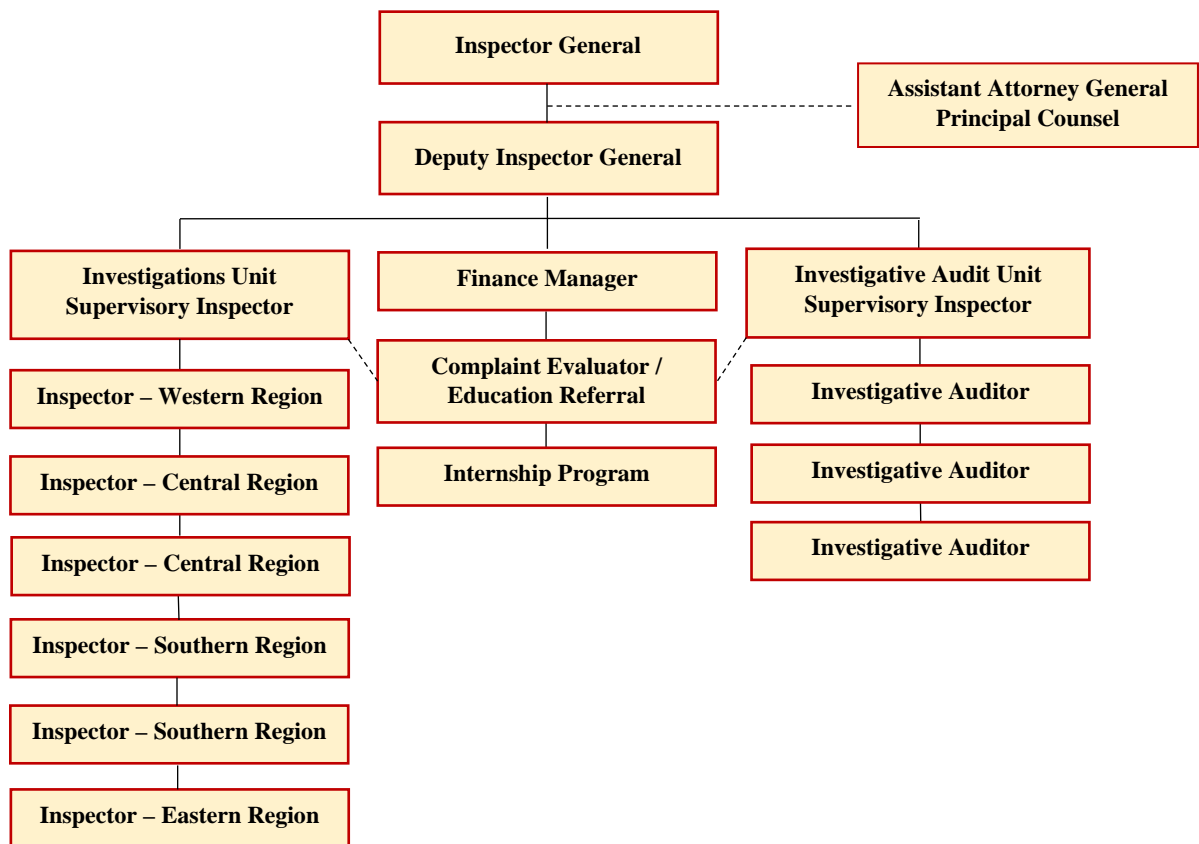
During this report period, OIGE has identified nearly \$12 million in mismanaged education funds. This equates to a taxpayer's return on investment of \$4.12 for every dollar spent to ensure education accountability.



ORGANIZATION AND STAFF

The IG is appointed by the Governor, Attorney General, and Treasurer. The IG oversees the OIGE with assistance from one Deputy Inspector General and two Supervisory Inspector Generals. The office has expanded from a single position in 2020 to a staff of 16 full-time employees (FTE) who carry out the mission of the OIGE. Due to budget cuts, OIGE had to decrease its staff and its Certified Public Accountant position.

Office of the Inspector General Organization Chart



CREDENTIALS AND QUALIFICATIONS

OIGE employs highly educated professional staff, most of whom hold advanced degrees and professional certifications in their fields. The staff also demonstrates a diligent work ethic and is dedicated to providing quality service to all state stakeholders. OIGE benefits from a diverse workforce that reflects the makeup of the state it oversees.

OIGE is committed to upholding the highest professional standards in our oversight mission. Our staff actively participates in professional organizations, such as the Association of Inspectors General (AIG), the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), and the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE).

INVESTIGATION STANDARDS

The OIGE conducts its investigative audits and investigations in accordance with the AIG's *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspectors General*, as well as generally accepted principles, quality standards, and best practices applicable to federal, state, and local offices of Inspectors General.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The OIGE receives reports of educational concerns and complaints through various channels. Individuals can contact OIGE by phone, website, or email to provide their contact information. They can also report anonymously through the tip line, email, or website. Once a report is received, it is documented in the OIGE case management system.

The individual(s) who reported the concern are only identified if they have given permission for the OIGE to share their name and contact information.

After an initial assessment, a decision is made on how to address the issue. The Complaint Evaluator reviews relevant policies and procedures to determine if the complaint should be referred to an LEA or escalated to the respective Supervisory Inspector General (SIG) for an investigative audit or investigation.

If the evaluator determines that the reported concern is administrative, they will work directly with the respective LEA Accountability or Compliance Officer to resolve the issue. The OIGE requires all LEAs that receive a referral to provide a resolution memorandum detailing how the concern was resolved.

Issues involving a sexual allegation or urgent threat to the safety of students and staff are promptly reported to law enforcement, LEAs, and the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS).

INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS

The OIGE investigative process starts by reviewing complaints to assess if there are signs of possible misconduct. The OIGE examines records and interviews relevant witnesses when an investigation is necessary.

If a complaint does not warrant a full investigation, the OIGE may refer it to the appropriate parties, such as the Chief of Accountability, Compliance Officer, or law enforcement (if criminal acts seem to have been committed).

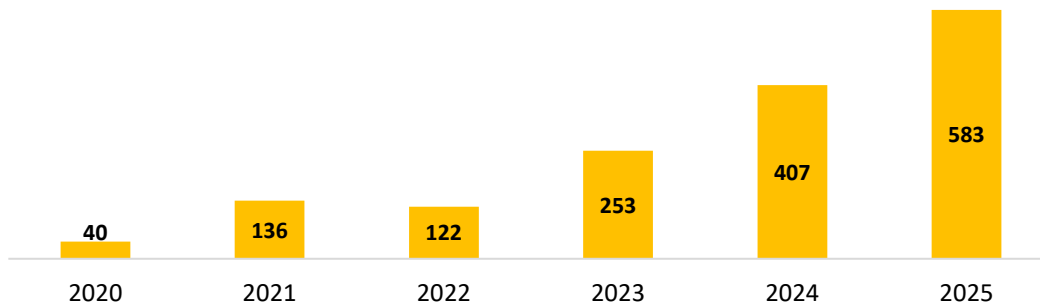
The OIGE is authorized by law to subpoena witnesses, administer oaths or affirmations, take testimony, and compel the production of all information that reasonably relates to an inquiry or investigation undertaken by the OIGE.

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

OIGE receives allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse from various sources, including mail, in-person interactions, email, referrals from other state departments and outside agencies, and the OIGE's hotline and website. All complaints received through the OIGE hotline are reviewed, and issues that require action are initiated as an investigation or an investigative audit or referred to the appropriate LEA for proper resolution. The hotline also facilitates anonymous communication between complainants/whistleblowers and OIGE.

During the reporting period from December 1, 2024, to November 30, 2025, OIGE received **583** complaints alleging misconduct, fraud, waste, abuse, and financial mismanagement. This represents a **43%** increase from FY 2024 and a **1,358%** increase in complaints filed with the OIGE since its establishment in 2020. These complaints included allegations of misconduct by education employees or vendors, as well as allegations that the county board of education had exceeded its statutory spending authority.

COMPLAINTS PER YEAR

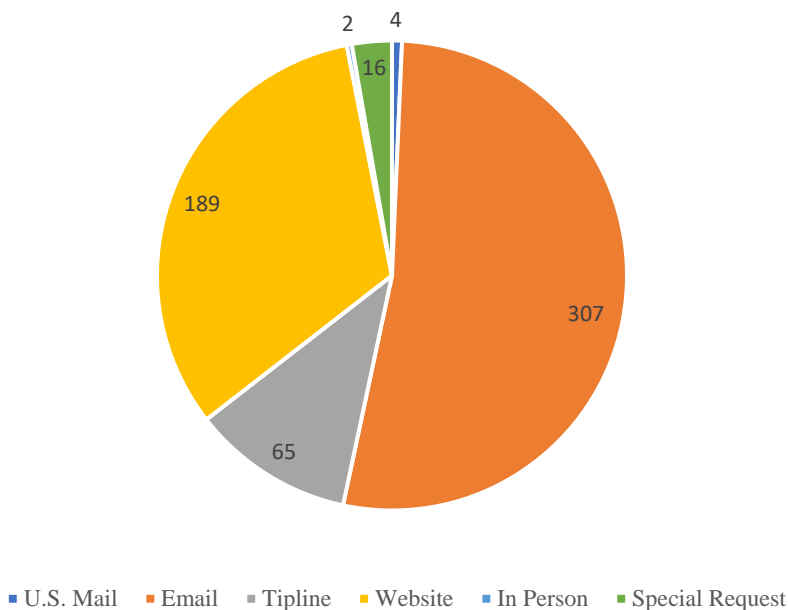


Of the complaints received, 156 (27%) were submitted anonymously. While OIGE responds to anonymous complaints, it is much more challenging to launch an investigation without questioning the complainant and evaluating the credibility of the information provided.

During one complaint, OIGE received **2,260** related complaints about the same incident. OIGE responded to each complainant but considered the actions as a single complaint.

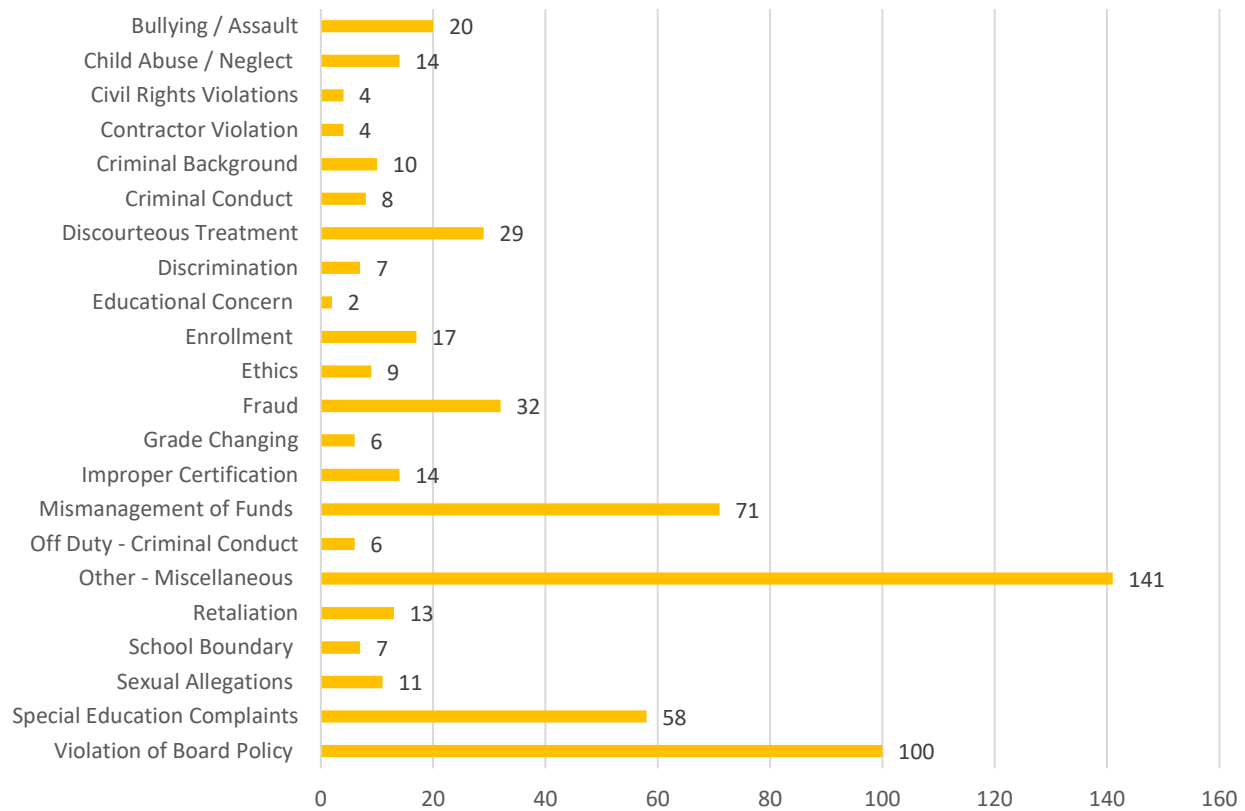
The chart below reflects the method used to notify the OIGE of a complaint.

COMPLAINT SOURCES



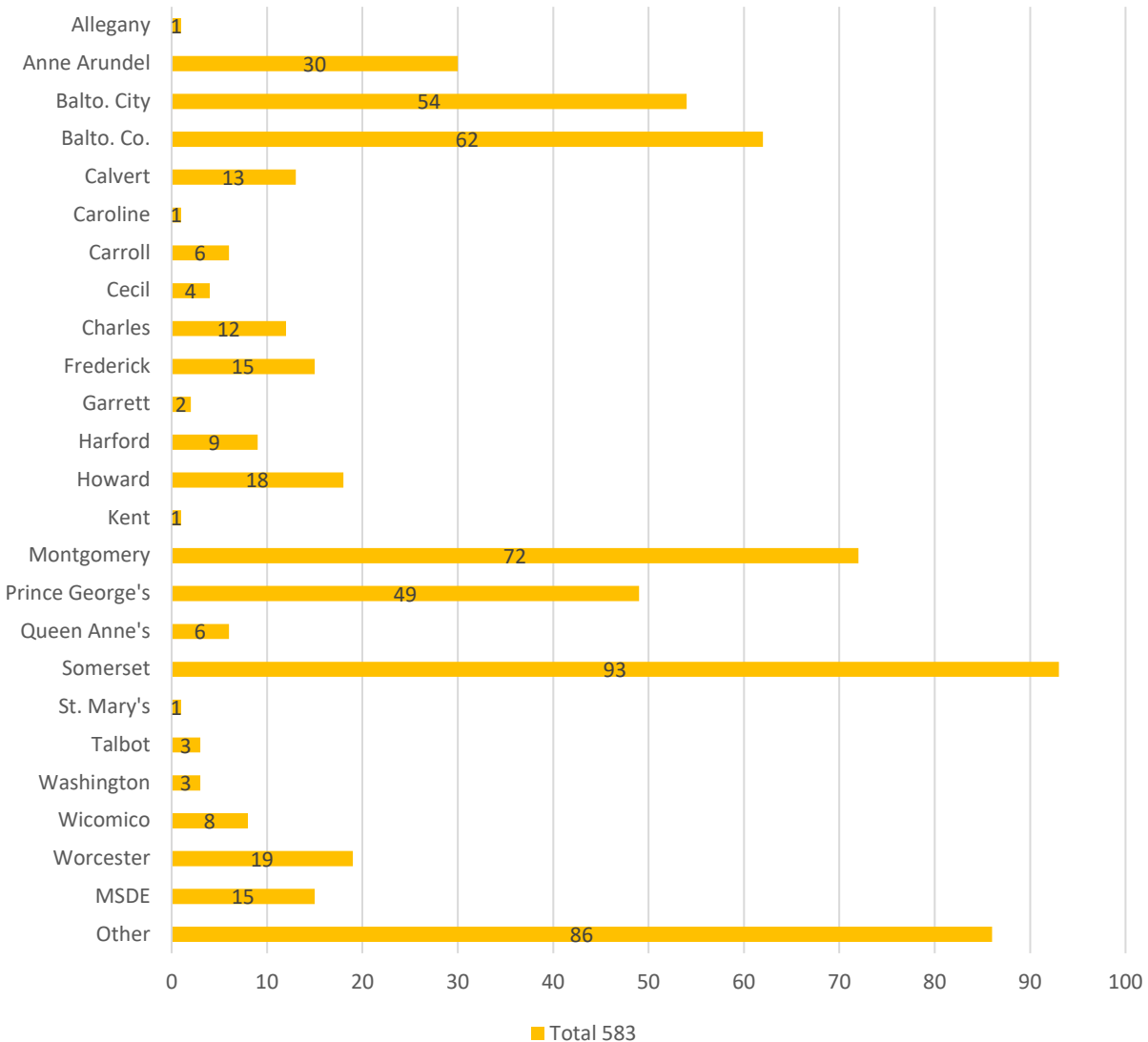
During this reporting period, 597 complaints (including FY and carryover) were closed, 15 were escalated for investigation, and two were assigned for an investigative audit. The chart below shows the categories used to identify complaints.

COMPLAINT CATEGORIES



The chart below shows the number of complaints filed with the OIGE by local education agencies or departments.

REPORTING BY COUNTY / DEPARTMENT



As of November 30, 2025, the OIGE has received, reviewed, referred, closed, or initiated investigations into the above-mentioned local education agencies, boards of education, or state agencies.

The OIGE conducted numerous investigations of allegations that did not uncover evidence of wrongdoing. Many complaints highlight systemic problems. Therefore, OIGE carefully examines LEA policies and procedures to ensure that the best interests of students and educational professionals are protected.

HOW WE WORK

OIGE conducts its mission through investigations, audits, and evaluations. It performs these activities in line with the Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General. These principles and standards serve as widely accepted guidelines, quality benchmarks, and best practices for federal, state, and local Offices of Inspector General.

The OIGE begins by reviewing complaints to determine if the facts suggest possible misconduct. If an investigation, audit, or evaluation is necessary, OIGE reviews records and interviews relevant witnesses. Consequently, OIGE produces Investigative Reports, Investigative Audit Reports, Evaluation Reports, Management Alerts, and Referrals throughout the year.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Investigations Unit examined various alleged misconducts, including fraud, bribery, theft, extortion, public corruption, misuse of public resources, mismanagement, self-dealing, and nepotism. While the OIGE serves as an investigative body, it lacks law-enforcement accreditation and does not have the authority to make arrests. Most OIGE investigations are administrative.

If a complaint does not require a full investigation, the OIGE may refer it to the appropriate parties, such as the Chief of Accountability, the Compliance Officer, or law enforcement (if criminal acts seem to have occurred).

AUDITS & EVALUATIONS

Some complaints involving complex issues require more than just a detailed investigation. The OIGE's Investigative Audits Unit handles cases with broader scope or topics that demand extensive data analysis. An investigative audit employs audit techniques to examine programs and operations. It has specific objectives and provides stakeholders with a written report that addresses those objectives and offers practical recommendations.

MANAGEMENT ALERTS

The OIGE uses these notifications to inform LEA and Department Executive Management about high-risk or systemic issues that could pose a serious, immediate threat of fraud or abuse and require urgent action. These alerts, usually triggered by findings from our audit, evaluation, or investigative work, may also include recommendations to address the identified concerns. The OIGE issued four MARs during this reporting period.

COLLABORATION

As OIGE grows and expands its reach, the office remains committed to building robust partnerships with oversight and law enforcement agencies across all levels of government. The OIGE collaborates closely with the state and local police departments and State Attorney's Offices, the Office of the State Prosecutor, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Federal DOE OIG office. Additionally, the OIGE has established memorandums of understanding with the OIG offices of the City of Baltimore, Baltimore County, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, further strengthening its network. These partnerships have been instrumental in tackling major fraud and corruption cases. The OIGE firmly believes that teamwork is the hallmark of success.

INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARIES

Somerset County Public Schools Board of Education's Alleged Violation of State Law and Board Policies in Procuring Legal Services

During March 2025, OIGE received numerous complaints regarding the Somerset County Public Schools Board of Education's (the Board's) procurement of legal services.

OIGE's review focused on how these services were procured and examined the objectives of Maryland Procurement law, as outlined in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). COMAR §21.05.07.06 states that the purpose of soliciting bids or offers is to foster competition in obtaining necessary goods and services in a cost-effective manner. OIGE recognized the Board's authority to contract any legal services provider of its choice and summarized relevant actions.

The documentation provided by SCPS and the Board lacked sufficient information to provide a clear timeline or methodology for the procurement process of current legal services. Interviews with Board members were intended to clarify information gathered during the investigation and to assist the OIGE in creating a timeline of events for the procurement process.

Regrettably, the Board's refusal to cooperate with OIGE hampered the OIGE investigation. It prevented the OIGE from understanding how the Board evaluated these factors and how it proceeded with the new counsel procurement process.

OIGE found that the SCPS Board violated state law and SCPS Board Policies in the procurement of its current legal services.



Allegations of Unfair Grade Changing Practices in Prince George’s County Public Schools

The OIGE investigated allegations of irregular grade-changing practices at Suitland High School within Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS). The investigation found that five sections of an English 11 course lacked a dedicated teacher or substitute. Reportedly, only four grades were entered into the district’s grading system during the fourth quarter. Following parents’ complaints, administrators identified the issue at the end of the school year.

A PGCPS document dated June 29, 2022, called for the affected students’ quarter four grades to be 50, 70, or 90. This was determined by attendance, prior performance in English 11 during quarters one through three, and overall academic performance during the fourth quarter. As a result, students received grades for English 11, in which instruction was not provided.

Based on interviews, document review, and policy analysis, OIGE determined that staff at Suitland High School failed to comply with several administrative procedures. Additionally, insufficient supervision and long-term staff absences led to procedural inconsistencies and disruptions. The ongoing shortage of qualified teachers and the difficulty in filling vacancies do not justify ignoring grading and instructional policies.

This investigation highlights the need for PGCPS to strengthen safeguards, such as conducting random audits of grading practices and improving oversight of teacher assignments and attendance.



Howard County Public Schools’ Alleged Staffing and Safety Concerns at Cedar Lane School

The OIGE initiated an investigation in January 2025 in response to complaints alleging staffing and safety concerns at Cedar Lane School (Cedar Lane), a public separate day school operated by the Howard County Public Schools System (HCPSS). The complaint alleged that persistent staffing shortages, particularly the absence of paraprofessionals and unfilled certified teaching positions, had resulted in inadequate student supervision, unsafe learning conditions, and unequal access to educational resources for students with significant physical and cognitive disabilities.

The investigation confirmed that at least two classrooms operated for an extended period without a certified special education teacher assigned directly to the class. While paraeducators in these classrooms received support from nearby certified staff, this staffing model does not fully conform to the instructional standards outlined in COMAR. This staffing approach reflects broader systemic challenges, including the nationwide shortage of certified special educators, particularly in high-needs environments such as Cedar Lane.

Regarding safety, the investigation found that Cedar Lane implemented structured crisis response procedures, including the deployment of a Behavioral Response Team (BRT) and the use of modified lockdowns to manage student outbursts. Staff reported that while these measures effectively prevented escalation, the frequency of incidents and the limited availability of Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) contributed to ongoing disruptions and stress among staff and students. systems.

Despite these challenges, staff demonstrated a strong understanding of behavioral protocols and a commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive environment. The findings underscore the need for systemic solutions to address staffing, safety, and structural barriers affecting the school's ability to serve its complex student population effectively.

Washington County Board Member Alleged Policy Violations

The Office of the Inspector General for Education (OIGE) received numerous complaints alleging that a Washington County Public School Board of Education member (WCPS-BOE) violated WCPS policies and their responsibilities as a WCPS-BOE member by posting offensive posts on social media.

The primary responsibility of a school board member is to steer a school system by establishing policies, hiring and assessing the superintendent, and approving the budget. They are accountable for ensuring the school system meets its goals and operates legally and efficiently. OIGE recognizes that board members act as a vital link between the community and the schools, representing community values and advocating for students.

The OIGE reviewed a WCPS BOE meeting video and social media screenshots, including historical Facebook posts. OIGE examined several of the Washington County Public Schools' policies, the Maryland Education Article, and COMAR, which governs procedures for requesting the removal of a local board of education member.

The OIGE found the authority to remove a local board member lies with the State Board of Education for elected boards. The four main grounds for removing a member of an elected board are: immorality, misconduct in office, incompetency, or willful neglect of duty. Whether a member serves on an elected or appointed board, a local board member must be granted due process.

The OIGE review showed that all the social media posts cited came from a personal account, not the school's official account. The OIGE found that while the board member had protections under the First Amendment for free speech, they may have contravened several local WCPS BOE policies.

Furthermore, the State Board of Education (SBOE) has reviewed several matters regarding the use of social media by a local school board member. In these cases, the SBOE found that although the posts were inappropriate, unprofessional, and highly offensive, the improper behavior did not warrant removal. The SBOE did, however, caution board members and those using social media to think carefully before posting and to be cognizant of the possible implications of content inconsistent with board positions.

The OIGE referred this matter to the Washington County Public School Board of Education for further review and consideration.



INVESTIGATIVE AUDITS

Management of Concentration of Poverty Grant

Both Montgomery and Somerset County agreed with the recommendations to:

Montgomery County

Somerset County

As part of the 2024 Investigative Audit of MSDE's Management of Concentration of Poverty Grant, OIGE continued reviewing grant fund use, internal controls, and the risk of fraud, waste, or abuse for eight LEAs that received CoP Funding. These reviews incorporated revised policies developed by MSDE in response to the 2024 Investigative Audit report, including updated spending guidance and webinars provided to LEA Superintendents.

In Fiscal Year 2025, OIGE completed the Investigative Audits for Montgomery and Somerset and found no instances of noncompliance with the Concentration of Poverty Grant in Montgomery County. Somerset County was found to have used CoP funds to purchase gift cards at three separate community schools, which is not an acceptable use under the revised MSDE spending guidance. Somerset County concurred with the recommendation to develop policies specifically designed to prevent the purchase of gift cards with CoP funds.

- Align with the updated MSDE CoP spending guidance by updating inventory controls to reflect sensitive items purchased with CoP funds.
- Report separately the amount of unused CoP funds as a specific fund balance carried over from previous years to local government entities.

These measures will help ensure that inventory controls for items purchased with CoP funds align with existing guidance and enable local governments to monitor and address potential underutilization of allocated funds.



PRIORITIES FOR 2026

The OIGE remains committed to working with all stakeholders within the State, the General Assembly, and the education community to provide timely and informative oversight that improves education programs and operations. We also strive to hold accountable those who attempt to undermine a student's right to a comprehensive and effective education. Below are the priorities I have set for the upcoming year.

1: Enhancing Workforce and Operations

Focus on retaining skilled employees, providing professional development, and modernizing technology and processes.

2: Information Security and Management

Implement internal and external management programs to adequately protect its information systems and electronic data from internal and external threats.

3: Compliance Monitoring

Continue to conduct follow-up reviews of recommendations to ensure adherence and prevent non-compliance.

4: Community and Stakeholder Outreach

Continue expanding our outreach efforts to stakeholders by informing them about emerging fraud and risk areas.



Acronyms and Abbreviations

The following provides acronyms and other relevant information.

AG	Attorney General of Maryland
BOE	Board of Education
CFE	Certified Fraud Examiner
CIG	Certified Inspector General
CIGA	Certified Inspector General Auditor
CIGI	Certified Inspector General Investigator
COMAR	Code of Maryland Regulation
CPA	Certified Public Accountant
DIG	Deputy Inspector General
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FTE	Full-Time Employee
IAC	Interagency Commission on School Construction
LEA	Local Education Agency
MAR	Management Alert Report
MCSS	Maryland Center for School Safety
MSDE	Maryland State Department of Education
OSP	Office of the State Prosecutor
SAO	State's Attorney's Office
SBOE	State Board of Education
SIG	Supervisory Inspector General
USAO	United States Attorney's Office

OIGE Work Reports Website Availability

OIGE-issued work reports are generally considered public documents and can be accessed on the OIGE's website unless they contain sensitive information or are otherwise exempt under the Maryland Public Information Act. These documents are not copyrighted. Readers are free to make additional copies of this report as needed. Additionally, most OIGE reports can be downloaded from our website: <https://oige.maryland.gov>.

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