

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

**SUBJECT: IMMEDIATE REVIEW AND AUDIT OF PURCHASING PROCEDURES RELATED TO PCARD AND TRAVEL CARD EXPENDITURES IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, INCLUDING THE OFFICES OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, AND SUPPORT FURTHER REVIEW/AUDITS BY THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: EFFECTIVE & SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONAL PRACTICES**

A recent investigative report from the Office of the Inspector General narrates some very troublesome allegations of mismanagement of funds which has led to the arrest of a former School Board Member. While the alleged actions of one individual should not create an atmosphere of distrust and questionable practices, the School Board, as constitutional officers, owes it to the citizens of Miami-Dade County to confirm and ensure that the Board has always acted in an honest and transparent manner and will take appropriate action to safeguard that all Board policies and procedures are carefully monitored and all expenditures, including the Board Members Offices, are properly accounted for.

It is of utmost importance to inform our community that School Board Members are bound by state statutes and Board policies regarding standards of ethical conduct. Specifically, School Board policy 0124 states "Board members will strive to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct and will comply with applicable Florida Constitution ethics provisions, statutory provisions of F. S. Chapter 112, *Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees*, and Bylaws 0141.1, *Conflict of Interest*, and Bylaw 0141.3 *Conflicting Employment or Contractual Relationship*."

Furthermore, there are a number of School Board policies that clearly delineate processes and procedures language related to expenditure of funds and travel reimbursement procedures. Some of these include:

- School Board Policy 6100 – *Uniform Records and Accounts*

"Accurate records of all financial transactions and all needed or required reports shall be kept in the proper form as required by law, rules of the State Board of Education and additional records and reports as approved by the Board."

- School Board Policy 6320 – *Purchasing*

"Pursuant to Board Policy 4424, purchasing cards may be used to make small dollar purchases and acquire materials and supplies as needed for operations."

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Purchasing cards shall not be used to circumvent the general purchasing procedures established by State law and Board policy. Purchasing cards shall only be used for expenses in connection with Board-approved or school-related activities, that benefit the District and serve a valid and proper public purpose. Periodically, procurement staff shall review the PCard expenditures to ensure compliance with Board policies and the purchasing threshold requirements.”

- School Board Policy 6424 – *Purchasing*

“The Superintendent shall develop administrative procedures that specify those authorized to use purchasing cards, the type of expenses which can be paid with purchasing cards, and the proper supervision and use. Personal, inappropriate or illegal use of the purchasing card and/or failure to strictly comply with the limitations and requirements set forth in the administrative procedures may result in a loss of purchasing card privileges, disciplinary action, up to and including termination, personal responsibility for any and all inappropriate charges, including finance charges and interests assessed in connection with the purchase, and/or possible referral to law enforcement authorities for prosecution.”

- School Board Policy 6480 – *Expenditures*

“Neither the District, nor any person acting on behalf of the District, may expend public funds for (1) purchase of items for personal use (i.e., bottled water, coffee, cups, etc.); (2) food for meetings, awards, hospitality, and special observations; (3) equipment for personal use (i.e., microwaves, refrigerators, coffee makers, etc.); (4) donations to outside parties; (5) individual membership in professional, educational and community organizations and related activities and services except pursuant to administrative guidelines based on the District’s best interests developed by the Superintendent and approved by the Board; (6) taxes, late penalties; and/or (7) beautification and decoration accessories.”

- School Board Policy 6530 – *Travel and Per Diem*

“Travel policies apply to employees and authorized individual eligible to be reimbursed from either tax funds or an Internal Fund account for travel-related expenses. Authorized individuals include School Board members, Board administrative assistants, consultants, Title I parents, and chaperones of students. If the personnel to be reimbursed for travel expenses from tax funds is a Board employee, the Payroll Department will process the reimbursement.”  
“The Payroll department shall have the authority to deny travel privileges to individuals or departments that fail to properly submit Travel Expense Reports. The Payroll Department shall have the authority to disallow any and all expenses not consistent with Florida law and Board policies.”

Even though there are a number of policies that outline processes and procedures for the allowance of the use of PCard and travel card expenditures, the recent Inspector General’s Investigation necessitates for the Board, as part of their fiduciary responsibility, to take further action. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) will now include financial review audits by an external accounting firm on an annual basis of the Office of School Board Members, the Office of the Superintendent, the Office of Management Audits, and the Office of the General Counsel to strengthen and monitor compliance with the appropriate use of taxpayer dollars entrusted to M-DCPS. We welcome the review of our procedures and control by the Office of the Inspector General.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the General Counsel's Office as to form and legal sufficiency.

This item does not appear on the published Agenda. There exists good cause to vary from the published Agenda because the Inspector General Investigative Report was released after the Agenda was published.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR  
MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County,  
Florida,

1. direct the Superintendent of Schools and the Chief Auditor to support the Office of the Inspector General for any further review/audits to be conducted regarding PCard and travel card expenses for the Office of School Board Members, including previous and present Board members; and
2. direct the Chief Auditor to adjust the current annual audit plan for 2023-2024 and prioritize the audit of the PCard process during this school year, which was previously scheduled for the 2024-2025 school year and include additional audit procedures for the School Board Members Offices, the Office of the Superintendent, the Office of Management and Compliance Audits, and the Office of the General Counsel, as part of the annual financial statement audit by the external accounting firm on an annual basis.