



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

LAMONT O. REPOLLET, Ed.D.
Commissioner

March 7, 2019

Mr. Bart Cocchiola, Board President
Alexandria Township Board of Education
557 County Road 513
Pittstown, NJ 08867

Dear Mr. Cocchiola:

SUBJECT: Superintendent's Conduct
OFAC Case #INV-021-18

The New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance (OFAC), received a letter from the law firm of Fogarty & Hara, which represents the Delaware Valley Regional High School Board of Education (Delaware Valley Board), requesting the OFAC to initiate an investigation into the business practices of Dr. Matthew J. Jennings, superintendent of the Alexandria Township School District.

The letter stated that the Delaware Valley Board entered into a "Business Services Subcontract Agreement" (Agreement) with the Alexandria Board of Education (Alexandria Board) for the 2017-2018 school year.

In summary, the concerns of the Delaware Valley Board Business Administrator (BA) with the conduct of Dr. Jennings are as follows:

1. Approving professional travel over the budget;
2. Approving professional development without Alexandria Board approval;
3. Providing payroll with contractual direction without Alexandria Board approval; and
4. Circumventing the BA for payment of merit goal achievement.

The letter also stated that based upon the overall experience of the Delaware Valley Board BA, the Agreement would not be renewed, and the Delaware Valley Board felt an obligation to report its concerns to the OFAC.

A review of the educational statutes and regulations related to this matter, documents provided by representatives of the Delaware Valley Board and the Alexandria Board, documents provided by the Somerset County Office of Education, a review of the 2017-2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Audit and interviews with persons knowledgeable of the events related to this matter, revealed that

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Dr. Jennings *did not* violate any provisions of educational statutes or regulations or act upon any matters which required the Alexandria Board's approval.

During the investigation, it was noted that the Alexandria Board's minutes cited the maximum travel amount for the 2017-2018 school year, and it was within close range of the amount expended. However, the maximum travel allowance cited in the Alexandria Board's minutes for the 2018-2019 school year better coincides with the anticipated expenditures.

Although a corrective action plan is not required, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.6, the Alexandria Board is required to discuss the findings of the investigation at a public meeting of the Alexandria Board no later than 30 days after receipt of the findings. Within 30 days of the public meeting, the Alexandria Board must adopt a resolution certifying the findings were discussed in a public board meeting. This resolution must be submitted to the OFAC within 10 days of adoption by the Alexandria Board. Direct your response to my attention.

Also, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.6(c), the findings of the OFAC investigation must be posted on the school's district's website. Should you have any questions, please contact Thomas C. Martin, Manager, Investigations Unit, at (609) 376-3606.

Sincerely,



Christine A. Soto, Executive Legal Affairs Officer
Acting Director, Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance

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- c: Kellie LeDet
- Robert Bumpus
- Abdulsaleem Hasan
- Michael Yapple
- Juan Torres
- Matthew J. Jennings