



HENRY McMASTER
GOVERNOR

April 10, 2023

The Honorable Brian D. Lamkin
State Inspector General
111 Executive Center Drive, Suite 204
Columbia, South Carolina 29210-8416

Dear Inspector General Lamkin:

On April 5, 2023, I received the enclosed letter from Representative Fawn M. Pedalino requesting an investigation into “potential financial irregularities” related to the Clarendon County School District (“District”). Representative Pedalino’s correspondence—which followed her delivery to my office on April 4, 2023, of two binders, each containing extensive documentation regarding the District’s operations and fiscal affairs—was accompanied by additional documents and electronic records. Based on a preliminary review of the materials provided by Representative Pedalino, it appears that the cited concerns regarding “potential financial irregularities” warrant further analysis. Accordingly, pursuant to section 1-6-35 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, this letter shall serve as a formal request that you and your staff in the Office of the State Inspector General (“SIG”) initiate and conduct an appropriate investigation or review of the District in connection with the cited “potential financial irregularities,” as well as any different or additional allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, misconduct, violations of state or federal law, or wrongdoing, as you deem appropriate.*

To ensure that you and SIG staff have the opportunity to analyze all of the documents and electronic records relayed by Representative Pedalino, I am transmitting herewith the originals of the same. During the course of reviewing the materials provided or conducting any subsequent investigation, if the SIG concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, misconduct, violations of state or federal law, or wrongdoing has occurred or is occurring, you shall promptly report any such findings to me in accordance with section 1-6-40(A) of the South Carolina Code of Laws. Similarly, as in other contexts, should the SIG determine that there is reasonable cause to conclude that one or more members of District’s Board of Trustees “wilfully commit[ed] or engage[d] in an act of malfeasance, misfeasance, chronic unexcused absenteeism, conflicts of interest, misconduct in office, or persistent neglect of duty in office” as provided by section 59-19-60 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, please advise me of the same so that I may evaluate the information and consider whether removal of any such official is

April 10, 2023

authorized and appropriate. As always, in the event there is reasonable cause to believe that a crime has occurred or is occurring, the SIG must report the conduct to the appropriate state or federal law enforcement agencies and prosecuting authorities that have jurisdiction over the matter. S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-40(B). Of course, if the SIG concludes that any other action or further referral may be appropriate, please proceed as necessary and appropriate under the circumstances.

Finally, by copy of this letter, I am simultaneously advising the Superintendent of Education of Representative Pedalino's concerns and my request for an SIG investigation. Should the SIG initiate an investigation in response to this request, to the extent practicable, I would ask that you notify the Superintendent of Education regarding any such decision so that she and the Department of Education may take any different or additional action that may be warranted. *See id.* § 59-20-90(C)(1)(a)(iii) ("The State Superintendent of Education shall declare fiscal watch [for a district] if . . . there is any type of ongoing, related investigation by any state or federal law enforcement agency or any other investigatory agency of the State . . .").

Should you or SIG staff have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this matter and for your continued service to the State of South Carolina.

Yours very truly,



Henry McMaster

Enclosure

cc w/ enc:

The Honorable Ellen Weaver
Superintendent of Education

The Honorable Kevin L. Johnson
South Carolina Senate

The Honorable Fawn M. Pedalino
South Carolina House of Representatives

* Please note that the cited concerns and accompanying materials are not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive in nature but rather are referenced and provided for purposes of "articulat[ing] the basis of any alleged wrongdoing" in connection with this request. S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-35(B). The description and documentation should not be construed to narrow or confine the scope of any further SIG inquiry or investigation or limit your preexisting or independent authority to, *inter alia*, "receive complaints alleging a violation of a statute or rule relating to the purchase of goods or services by a current or former employee, state officer, special state appointee, or person who has a business relationship with an agency," *id.* § 1-6-30(3), "receive complaints from any individual, including those employed by any agency, alleging fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, misconduct, violations of state or federal law, and wrongdoing in an agency," *id.* § 1-6-30(4), or otherwise identify matters that warrant further investigation.

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Committees:
Interstate Cooperation
Medical, Military, Public and
Municipal Affairs

House of Representatives

State of South Carolina

April 5, 2023

The Honorable Henry McMaster
Governor, State of South Carolina
State House
1100 Gervais Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor McMaster:

I am writing to respectfully request an investigation into the potential financial irregularities of the Clarendon County School District per the documentation I have provided to your office.

Thank you for the great job you do for South Carolina, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "F. Pedalino".

Fawn M. Pedalino

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