

Jennifer L. Kerkhof

From: Minton, Brooke <Brooke.Minton@fldoe.org>
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2024 10:09 AM
To: Jennifer L. Kerkhof
Subject: FDOE OIG 2022-0005 Broward Grand Jury
Attachments: 2022.09.12_Superintendent Cartwright.pdf

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Good Morning Ms. Kerkhof,

Please see the attached correspondence from Commissioner Diaz to Superintendent Cartwright in September of 2022.

As discussed earlier, we would like to schedule a phone call with Dr. Licata to discuss the investigation.

Thank you,

Brooke Minton

Investigator
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September 12, 2022

Dr. Vickie L. Cartwright, Superintendent
Broward County Public Schools
600 S. E. Third Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301

Dear Superintendent Cartwright,

The recent release of the Final Report of the Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury (Case No. SC19-240) identified credible allegations that the SMART Bond Program initiated in the School District of Broward County (District) has, through fraud and deceit, been mismanaged and will continue to be mismanaged absent change. The Grand Jury committed 78 pages of its report to its scathing critique of the District's implementation of the SMART program and the financial mismanagement thereof. The Grand Jury also called the District to task for "school officials either passively . . . or actively suppressing unflattering information." The report explicitly identifies the potential that, despite the changes that have occurred in District leadership, it "will still be plagued by individuals who have worked in an atmosphere where the putative leaders view themselves as above all judgment, where the work accountability is meaningless, and . . . (that) do not know how to look internally, find and fix problems."

Under s. 1001.20, F.S., if the Commissioner of Education determines that a district school board is "unwilling or unable to address substantiated allegations made by any person relating to waste, fraud, or financial mismanagement" within the school district, the Department's Office of Inspector General "shall conduct, coordinate, or request investigations into such substantiated allegations." After reviewing the findings in the Grand Jury Report, it is clear to me that an independent review is necessary to determine the full scope of what has occurred. The District is unable to provide a review that will attain the level of independence necessary to ensure the transparency and accountability needed to instill public confidence in the outcome.

Accordingly, I have directed the Department's Office of Inspector General to investigate this matter. Inspector General Mike Blackburn, or his designee, will be in touch with you shortly to coordinate the review. I request that you and all members of the School District of Broward County cooperate fully in the Inspector General's inquiries.

Sincerely,


Manny Diaz, Jr.