Complaint Procedures Prohibiting Fraud, Waste, Mismanagement, Corruption or Misuse of Funds

Purpose

In compliance with White House Executive Order 12731, the Richmond County School System provides all employees, clients, vendors, and individuals with confidential channels to report suspicious activities. The Richmond County School System shall not tolerate fraud, waste, abuse or corruption of any kind and has an established system for the reporting and investigating of suspicious activities.

A. Grounds for a Complaint

Any employee, individual, organization or agency ("complainant") may file a complaint with the Richmond County Board of Education if that individual, organization or agency believes and alleges that a violation of a Federal or State statute or regulation has occurred that applies to a program operated by the School System and supported by Federal or State funds including: **Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C; Title I, Part, D; Title II, Part A; Title III, Part A; Title VI, Part B; the McKinney-Vento Act; School Improvement 1003(a) and 1003(g) (SIG); and IDEA**. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered to be systemic or ongoing.

Definitions

"Fraud" means the intentional deception perpetrated by an individual or individuals, or an organization or organizations, either internal or external to Richmond County Schools that could result in a tangible or intangible benefit to themselves, others, or the locality or could cause detriment to others or the locality. Fraud includes a false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading statements, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, which deceives and is intended to deceive.

"Waste" means the intentional or unintentional, thoughtless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, use or squandering of resources owned or operated by the locality to the detriment or potential detriment of the locality. Waste also includes incurring unnecessary costs because of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.

"Abuse" means the excessive or improper use of something, or the employment of something in a manner contrary to the natural or legal rules for its use; the intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, maltreatment, or misuse of resources owned or operated by the locality: or extravagant or excessive use so as to abuse one's position or authority.

"Corruption" includes dishonest proceedings, bribery, debasement, alteration, or perversion of integrity. Corruption threatens equal access, quantity and quality of education.

Examples of Fraud, Waste, Abuse and Corruption (Not all-inclusive)

- Personal use of district-owned vehicles
- Long distance personal phone calls
- Personal use of district owned supplies or equipment
- Violations of system and/or state procurement policy
- Excessive or unnecessary purchases
- Falsification of official documents (timesheets, leave reports, travel vouchers, etc.)
- Contract fraud
- Serious abuse of time
- Inappropriate expenditures
- Embezzlement
- Theft or misuse of school funds or property
- Neglect of duty
- Bribery

Statement of Administrative Regulations:

- Any and all reports of suspicious activity and/or suspected fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption, shall be investigated. The Richmond County School System shall not tolerate fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption of any kind, and any reported cases of suspected fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption will be thoroughly investigated to determine if disciplinary, financial recovery, and or criminal action should be taken.

Confidentiality

- All reports of suspected fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption must be handled under the strictest confidentiality. Only those directly involved in the investigation should be given information. Informants may remain anonymous but should be encouraged to cooperate with the investigators and should provide as much detail and evidence of alleged fraudulent act as possible.

B. Programs for Which Complaints Can Be Filed

A Complaint may be filed regarding any alleged incident of fraud, waste, mismanagement and misuse of funds designated for any program operated by the School System, including, but not limited to, all programs operated or supported by Federal or State funds: **Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C; Title I, Part, D; Title II, Part A; Title III, Part A; Title VI, Part B; the McKinney-Vento Act; School Improvement 1003(a) and 1003(g) (SIG); and IDEA**

C. Filing a Complaint

A formal complaint must be made in writing to the Richmond County School System Superintendent or his/her designee.
The complaint must include the following:

1. A statement that the LEA has violated a requirement of a Federal or State statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program;
2. The date on which the violation occurred;
3. The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the Federal of State statute or regulation);
4. A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information;
5. Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position; and
6. The name, address and contact information of the complainant.
7. The formal complaint shall be sent to:

   Richmond County School System
   Superintendent of Schools
   864 Broad Street
   Augusta, GA 30901-1215

D. Investigation of Complaint

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, the Superintendent or his/ her designee will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

1. The date the Superintendent's office received the complaint;
2. How the complainant may provide additional information;

3. A statement of the ways in which the Superintendent's office may investigate or address the complaint; and
4. Any other pertinent information.

If the Superintendent has sufficient information from which to make a determination, he/she shall enter a Letter of Findings with thirty (30) days from receipt of the complaint. If additional information or an investigation is necessary, the Superintendent shall have (60) days from receipt of the information or completion of the investigation to issue a Letter of Findings. If the Letter of Findings indicates that a violation has been found, corrective action will be required and timelines for completion will be included. Either the 30-day or the 60- day timelines outlined above may be extended, in the sole discretion of the Superintendent or his designee, if exceptional circumstances exist. The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant.

E. <u>Right of Appeal</u>

If the complaint cannot be resolved at the local level, the complainant has the right to request review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the Superintendent's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.

COMPLAINT FORM

To Report Fraud, Waste, Mismanagement, Corruption or Misuse of State or Federal Funds for Programs Operated by the School System

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ALLEGATION

Please provide as much information as possible. Detailed, complete and accurate information will improve the Superintendent's ability to respond to your allegation. If you do not know the answer to a question, you can leave the space blank.

STATEMENT REGARDING ALLEGED VIOLATION

Please provide a statement regarding the alleged violation of a requirement of a federal or state statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program. Please provide details of the alleged fraud, waste, mismanagement, corruption or misuse. Examples of facts and circumstances may include items such as: (1) a description of the misconduct; (2) how you know about the allegation; (3) how and when the misconduct was discovered; (4) where the misconduct occurred: (5) the amount of money involved; (6) how long the alleged misconduct occurred; (8) attempts by the alleged violator(s) to hide the misconduct; and (9) any other information you believe may be relevant.

DATE ON WHICH VIOLATION OCCURRED

When did the misconduct occur? If the misconduct occurred over time or is currently ongoing, enter the actual or approximate start date.

ADDITIONAL FACTS ON WHICH THE STATEMENT IS BASED AND THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE ALLEGED FRAUD, WASTE, MISMANAGEMENT, CORRUPTION OR MISUSE OF FUNDS

How do you know the complaint involves the misuse of or fraud regarding federal or state funds?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Federal or State Agency that awarded, distributed or administered the funds in question:

_____
_____

Description of Grant, Contract, Loan or Program: _____

Please list any other Government entities you have notified or plan to notify about this incident (Federal, State and Local) _____
_____

CONTACT INFORMATION OF INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please identify the names and contact information of individuals who can provide additional information:

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Address : _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Company, organization, or other entity affiliation, if applicable): _____

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Address : _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Company, organization, or other entity affiliation, if applicable): _____

(If additional individuals can provide information, please attach separate page.)

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Please provide any additional information concerning this misconduct, such as (1) a list or description of any documents you or others may have that is relevant to the complaint; (2) any other information you believe may be relevant to the complaint.

CONTACT INFORMATION OF THE COMPLAINANT

Please provide your contact information.

Name: _____
E-mail Address: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Tel: _____ _____
FAX: _____

If employed by the Richmond County Board of Education, please provide Department/School, supervisor and job site location:

_____
_____
_____
_____

PLEASE SUBMIT FORMTO:
Richmond County School System
Superintendent of Schools
864 Broad Street
Augusta, GA 30901-1215