




# Memorandum



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Phone: (305) 523-0623 Fax: (305) 523-0613

To: Mr. Alberto Carvalho, Superintendent  
Miami-Dade County Public Schools

From: Felix Jimenez, Inspector General 

Date: January 31, 2022

Subject: OIG Request for a Second Status Report Regarding the Implementation of Driver Education Program Recommendations; Ref. IG-17-0001-SI

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On September 2, 2021, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a final report on the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Driver Education Program. In that report, the OIG made eight recommendations. The M-DCPS Administration concurred with all of them and expressed its full commitment to implementing them.

Further, the School Board, on September 9, 2021—seven days after the OIG’s report was released—“directed the Superintendent to initiate rulemaking proceedings to amend Board Policy 2432, Driver Education, to include a description of the district’s Driver Education Program and the intended student population it serves, as well as provisions that include but are not limited to, compliance with those outlined in the Driver’s Education Safety Trust Fund, as required by the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with Miami-Dade County and/or any related statutes, ordinances, and/or agreements...”<sup>1</sup> The OIG notes that Policy 2432 consisted of only one sentence stating that: “A program of driver education will be offered to students.” No other particulars about the program were included. The new policy, which was finally adopted on second reading on January 12, 2022, sets forth the parameters of the program and address compliance with all the applicable statutes and local code provisions to the extent that the School District applies for and receives funds from the Driver’s Education Safety Trust Fund.

In the Final Report, the OIG requested a 90-day status update pertaining to M-DCPS’s progress of implementing the recommendations. We received M-DCPS’s progress report dated December 10, 2021. (Attachment A) We have reviewed the status report and are pleased that M-DCPS has made some progress on each recommendation, although many have yet to be fully implemented. As such, the OIG is requesting another status report in 90 days, to be received on or before April 28, 2022, that describes additional progress made in implementing the recommendations and resolving the outstanding financial liability to the Trust Fund.

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<sup>1</sup> See Agenda Item G-1 of the School Board’s Meeting of January 12, 2022.

Below are our original recommendations, M-DCPS progress reports, and our requests for additional information.

### **OIG Recommendation No. 1**

OIG recommended the purchase of an Adaptive Driver Education vehicle and hire of an Adaptive Driver Education instructor for the upcoming School Year 2021-2022 or outsource it to an outside vendor.

#### **M-DCPS 90-Day Status Update**

*M-DCPS has identified a vehicle that will be retrofitted for Adaptive Driver Education, and another is currently being procured. Two positions have been provided to the Department of Life Skills for Adaptive Driver Education instructors. One instructor has been hired, and the second instructor has been identified and is expected to be hired in January. Both will have the appropriate endorsements.*

#### **Additional Information Requested**

Please provide an update on the retrofit of the vehicles, when they will be ready for use, the status of the two instructors, and whether actual instruction using these vehicles is taking place.

### **OIG Recommendation No. 2**

The OIG recommended that the ineligible reimbursement of \$6.2 million be recompensed.

#### **M-DCPS 90-Day Status Update**

*M-DCPS met with Miami-Dade County (County) and reviewed the plans to invest the \$6.2 million in enhancements for the DEP by retrofitting existing driving ranges and building new ones at schools that are currently not equipped with driving ranges but have space to build them. M-DCPS will continue to purchase vehicles for all of the schools with driving ranges in order to provide students the required behind-the-wheel experience. As mentioned in (1) above, M-DCPS is purchasing two cars that will be retrofitted for Adaptive Driver Education. Funds will also be invested in the cost required to ensure that the vehicles are securely stored. Further, funds will be allocated for vehicle maintenance to ensure the safe functioning of the vehicles for students. Additionally, M-DCPS will incentivize teachers to obtain Driver Education certification by offering stipends. The cost of the new investments outlined above, as well as other eligible expenditures incurred since Fiscal Year 2016-2017 that have yet to be approved, are intended to serve as reimbursement to the County.*

#### **Additional Information Requested**

Please provide any reports of eligible expenditures approved by Miami-Dade County demonstrating write-down of the \$6.2 financial liability.

### **OIG Recommendation No. 3**

The OIG recommended that M-DCPS devise an acceptable process where the County may provide M-DCPS an advance of funds at the commencement of the school year to cover expenses for enhancements of the program.

#### **M-DCPS 90-Day Status Update**

*On a yearly basis, M-DCPS will provide the County with a detailed listing of the costs it incurred during its previous fiscal year that are eligible for reimbursement from the Driver's Education Trust. The amounts received will be invested in the replacement of Driver Education vehicles as they start to deteriorate, the maintenance of the fleet of Driver Education vehicles, the cost to maintain the driving ranges, and any other eligible expenditures required to enhance the DEP. M-DCPS and the County will continue to explore opportunities to forward-fund additional DEP enhancements where possible.*

#### **Additional Information Requested**

The OIG requests to be notified of any meetings that are held relative to this discussion and be made aware of any new implementation of any forward-funding decisions.

### **OIG Recommendation No. 4**

To avoid comingling of funds, the OIG recommended that M-DCPS create an account to be used exclusively for receipt of Trust Funds for funds dispersed in advance.

#### **M-DCPS 90-Day Status Update**

*Amounts reimbursed to M-DCPS from the Driver's Education Trust will be coded to the program used within its financial system, SAP, to distinguish funds related to the DEP. Any funds received will be appropriated and re-budgeted on a yearly basis to ensure that these funds are used solely to enhance the DEP.*

#### **Additional Information Requested**

Please provide the OIG with reports and/or screen shots from the SAP financial system demonstrating this segregation.

### **OIG Recommendation No. 5**

The OIG recommended that the documents related to applications, requests for reimbursements, and reconciliations that M-DCPS submits to the County for Trust Funds should be certified by the Instructional Supervisor/Program Manager, the Executive Director of the Curriculum Support Department of Life Skills, and the Deputy Superintendent, thus establishing a record of approvals and transparency of activities.

#### **M-DCPS 90-Day Status Update**

*Before M-DCPS submits its reimbursement request to the County per (3) above, it will have all offices/functions mentioned in the recommendation above sign off on*

*the request to ensure that amounts being submitted for reimbursement are correct and eligible expenditures.*

**Additional Information Requested**

Please provide the latest set of documents that comport with the above-described approval process.

**OIG Recommendation No. 6**

The OIG recommended that M-DCPS publish the availability of the DEP to non-public school students and develop a summer DEP curriculum at designated high schools, giving summer priority to non-public school students and students whose schools do not offer the behind-the-wheel driving experience.

**M-DCPS 90-Day Status Update**

*The Department of Life Skills will work with the Office of Communications and Community Engagement to promote the availability of behind-the-wheel Driver Education classes over the summer. Program information and a schedule will be disseminated via social media and posted on the District's website.*

**Additional Information Requested**

Please provide us with a report that describes M-DCPS efforts to promote and advertise the availability of Driver Education to non-public students and M-DCPS students for the summer. Please include screen shots of the disseminated social media and web-postings and include information on how and where the summer classes will operate.

**OIG Recommendation No. 7**

The OIG recommended that the District allocate all operable vehicles in an equitable manner.

**M-DCPS 90-Day Status Update**

*The Office of School Facilities is conducting assessments of school sites with existing driving ranges along with cost estimates to bring each site up to proper operational standards. Further, staff is surveying additional school sites to determine the viability of constructing driving ranges to ensure students across Miami-Dade County have access to behind-the-wheel training.*

**Additional Information Requested**

Please provide an update on all operational driving ranges and where the vehicles are assigned.

## **OIG Recommendation No. 8**

The OIG recommended that M-DCPS build security cages for those senior high schools that were allocated vehicles, but do not have a safe place to store them.

### **M-DCPS 90-Day status Update**

*Inspections were conducted at each school with vehicles. Plans are underway to install new car storage areas at Hialeah-Miami Lakes, North Miami Beach, and South Dade Senior High Schools, all of which currently have vehicles for behind-the-wheel training but lack the equipment for their secure storage. Moving forward, all schools receiving vehicles for behind-the-wheel training will also have storage cages installed.*

### **Additional Information Requested**

The OIG is requesting an update on the installation of all cages.

The OIG has been and will be, actively engaged in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations. We attended the meeting on November 19, 2021, between M-DCPS and Miami-Dade County, and plan to attend future meetings particularly involving the outstanding financial liability to the Trust Fund. We are fully committed to ensuring that the School District's Driver Education Program provides meaningful behind-the-wheel instruction to the students of Miami-Dade County and that disbursements from the County's Driver Education Safety Trust adhere to all applicable statutory requirements. **We look forward to receiving the second 90-day status report from M-DCPS on or before April 27, 2022.**

Attachment

cc: Miami-Dade County School Officials

Perla Tabares Hantman, School Board Chair and Board Members  
Walter Harvey, School Board Attorney  
Jon Goodman, Chief Auditor, Office of Management and Compliance Audits  
Jaime Torrens, Deputy Superintendent  
Ron Y. Steiger, Chief Financial Officer  
Sylvia Diaz, Chief Academic Officer  
Martha M. Diaz, Chief Budget Officer  
Zachary Garvin, Executive Director, Curriculum Support, Division of Life Skills

cc: Miami Dade County Officials

Jimmy Morales, Chief Operations Officer  
Edward Marquez, Chief Financial Officer  
David Clodfelter, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Dan Wall, Assistant Director, Officer of Management and Budget  
Cathy Jackson, Director, Audit and Management Services Department  
Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor  
Jennifer Moon, Chief, Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs



**Superintendent of Schools**  
Alberto M. Carvalho

Attachment A

**Miami-Dade County School Board**

*Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair*  
*Dr. Steve Gallon III, Vice Chair*

*Lucia Baez-Geller*

*Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall*

*Christi Fraga*

*Dr. Lubby Navarro*

*Dr. Marta Pérez*

*Mari Tere Rojas*

*Luisa Santos*

December 10, 2021

Mr. Felix Jimenez, Inspector General  
Miami-Dade Office of the Inspector General  
601 N.W. 1 Court  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Miami, Florida 33126

RE: 90-DAY STATUS REPORT FOR OIG FINAL REPORT OF INVESTIGATION –  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM  
IG-17-0001-SI

Dear Mr. Jimenez:

On September 2, 2021, the Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released the above-referenced report for the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Driver Education Program (DEP). The investigation resulted in three findings and eight corresponding recommendations.

The following provides the status of recommendations and actions taken thus far by M-DCPS:

- (1) OIG recommends the purchase of an Adaptive Driver Education vehicle and hire of an Adaptive Driver Education instructor for the upcoming School Year 2021-2022, or outsource it to an outside vendor.*

M-DCPS has identified a vehicle that will be retrofitted for Adaptive Driver Education, and another is currently being procured. Two positions have been provided to the Department of Life Skills for Adaptive Driver Education instructors. One instructor has been hired, and the second instructor has been identified and is expected to be hired in January. Both will have the appropriate endorsements.

- (2) The ineligible reimbursement of \$6.2 million should be recompensed.*

M-DCPS met with Miami-Dade County (County) and reviewed the plans to invest the \$6.2 million in enhancements for the DEP by retrofitting existing driving ranges and building new ones at schools that are currently not equipped with driving ranges but have space to build them. M-DCPS will continue to purchase vehicles for all of the schools with driving ranges in order to provide students the required behind-the-wheel experience. As mentioned in (1) above, M-DCPS is purchasing



two cars that will be retrofitted for Adaptive Driver Education. Funds will also be invested in the cost required to ensure that the vehicles are securely stored. Further, funds will be allocated for vehicle maintenance to ensure the safe functioning of the vehicles for students. Additionally, M-DCPS will incentivize teachers to obtain Driver Education certification by offering stipends. The cost of the new investments outlined above, as well as other eligible expenditures incurred since Fiscal Year 2016-2017 that have yet to be approved, are intended to serve as reimbursement to the County.

- (3) *Devise an acceptable process where the County may provide M-DCPS an advance of funds at the commencement of the school year to cover expenses for enhancements of the program.*

On a yearly basis, M-DCPS will provide the County with a detailed listing of the costs it incurred during its previous fiscal year that are eligible for reimbursement from the Driver's Education Trust. The amounts received will be invested in the replacement of Driver Education vehicles as they start to deteriorate, the maintenance of the fleet of Driver Education vehicles, the cost to maintain the driving ranges, and any other eligible expenditures required to enhance the DEP. M-DCPS and the County will continue to explore opportunities to forward-fund additional DEP enhancements where possible.

- (4) *To avoid comingling of funds, the OIG recommends that M-DCPS create an account to be used exclusively for receipt of Trust Funds for funds dispersed in advance.*

Amounts reimbursed to M-DCPS from the Driver's Education Trust will be coded to the program used within its financial system, SAP, to distinguish funds related to the DEP. Any funds received will be appropriated and re-budgeted on a yearly basis to ensure that these funds are used solely to enhance the DEP.

- (5) *Documents related to applications, requests for reimbursements, and reconciliations submitted by M-DCPS to the County for Trust Funds should be certified by the Instructional Supervisor/Program Manager, the Executive Director of the Curriculum Support Department of Life Skills, and the Deputy Superintendent, thus establishing a record of approvals and transparency of activities.*

Before M-DCPS submits its reimbursement request to the County per (3) above, it will have all offices/functions mentioned in the recommendation above sign off on the request to ensure that amounts being submitted for reimbursement are correct and eligible expenditures.

- (6) *M-DCPS should publish the availability of the DEP to non-public school students and develop a summer DEP curriculum at designated high schools, giving summer priority to non-public school students and students whose schools do not offer the behind-the-wheel driving experience.*

The Department of Life Skills will work with the Office of Communications and Community Engagement to promote the availability of behind-the-wheel Driver Education classes over the summer. Program information and a schedule will be disseminated via social media and posted on the District's website.

- (7) *The OIG recommends that the District allocate all operable vehicles in an equitable manner.*

The Office of School Facilities is conducting assessments of school sites with existing driving ranges along with cost estimates to bring each site up to proper operational standards. Further, staff is surveying additional school sites to determine the viability of constructing driving ranges to ensure students across Miami-Dade County have access to behind-the-wheel training.

- (8) *The OIG recommends that M-DCPS build security cages for those senior high schools that were allocated vehicles, but do not have a safe place to store them.*

Inspections were conducted at each school with vehicles. Plans are underway to install new car storage areas at Hialeah-Miami Lakes, North Miami Beach, and South Dade Senior High Schools, all of which currently have vehicles for behind-the-wheel training but lack the equipment for their secure storage. Moving forward, all schools receiving vehicles for behind-the-wheel training will also have storage cages installed.

These and other specific measures being undertaken will support Driver Education in our community and improve the DEP in M-DCPS. Ongoing dialogue with the County will continue as we work together to ensure that the children of Miami-Dade reap the maximum and intended benefit of these funds. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at 305 995-2393.

Sincerely,



Jaime G. Torrens  
Deputy Superintendent

JGT:sm  
L019

cc: Mr. Alberto M. Carvalho  
School Board Attorney  
Chief Auditor  
Superintendent's Cabinet