



Memorandum



1501 NE 2nd Avenue, Suite 343, Miami, Florida 33132
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To: Dr. Jose L. Dotres, Superintendent
Miami-Dade County Public Schools

From: Felix Jimenez, Inspector General

Date: March 21, 2024

Subject: Receipt of M-DCPS 2nd Status Report and OIG Closeout Re: *Report of Investigation – Master Schedule at Miami Carol City Senior High School*, Ref. IG19-0005-SI

In connection with the above-captioned Report of Investigation,¹ the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) received the Administration's first status report on October 27, 2023, regarding its implementation of the OIG's recommendations. The response was unclear as to whether the recommendations would be implemented in full or part, thus necessitating the OIG to request a second status report.² Specifically, we requested clarification on whether a formal policy on the use of TBAs and placeholders would be drafted; if the Region Offices would be required to approve the use of placeholders as recommended; and/or whether M-DCPS would implement mandatory training for all staff who create, revise, or approve master schedules.

On February 14, 2024, the OIG received your second status report. (Attached) We are pleased to learn that although no formal policy has been established, school site administrators were given guidance on the use of placeholders in January during the monthly training webcast and that the topic will be covered again in March. Additionally, we understand that due to the complexity of the creation of the master schedule and the adjustments that must be made for staffing assignments, it is not feasible to have the Region Offices approve the use of placeholders in every instance. We accept your decision on this. We acknowledge that M-DCPS will establish a process where schools report on the number of placeholders that will be communicated to DSIS that includes an attestation that no non-instructional employees are being used in the master schedules. We understand that this process will be monitored by the Region Offices for compliance.

However, we agree to disagree on the Administration's decision to not make master schedule training mandatory for all staff involved in the creation, revision, or approval of master schedules. We feel that mandatory training will ensure that the master schedules are properly and accurately developed. We understand that M-DCPS is in the process of

¹ [OIG Final Report of Investigation dated August 2, 2023, Ref. IG19-0005-SI](#)

² [Receipt of Status Report Re: Report of Investigation – Master Schedule at Miami Carol City Senior High School](#)

revising the Master Schedule Guidelines for the next school year that will include our recommendations on the use of placeholders and the prohibition of non-instructional staff in the master schedule and that we will be provided a copy of those revised guidelines for review when they are available. We are pleased to know that principals, assistant principals, and their leadership teams will be given training on the revised guidelines during your upcoming leadership meetings. We are hopeful that this training will ensure that master schedules in the future are free from inappropriate placeholders and that there will be adequate monitoring of the revised guidelines.

By way of this memorandum, the OIG advises that our investigation of the above-captioned investigation is complete and, as such, this investigation is closed. We would like to thank you and your staff for their cooperation and for the courtesies extended to us throughout this investigation, and we look forward to receiving a copy of the revised guidelines upon completion.

Attachment

cc: Mr. Jose Bueno, Chief of Staff, Office of the Superintendent
Dr. John D. Pace III, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Yesenia Aponte, Region Superintendent
Mr. Jon Goodman, Chief Auditor, Office of Management & Compliance Audits



Miami-Dade County Public Schools

giving our students the world

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Jose L. Dotres

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February 14, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC EMAIL

Felix.jimenez@miamidade.gov

Mr. Felix Jimenez
Miami-Dade Office of the Inspector General
1501 NE 2nd Ave, Suite 343
Miami, Florida 33132

RE: REPORT OF INVESTIGATION: MASTER SCHEDULE AT MIAMI CAROL CITY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL REF: IG19-0005-SI ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dear Mr. Jimenez,

Please allow this letter to serve as additional information for the response to the report of investigation: Master Schedule at Miami Carol City Senior High School Ref: IG19-0005-SI.

The allegations that precipitated the report were determined to be unfounded, but as a result of your investigation, some recommendations were made regarding the use of placeholders in the master schedule. The following is a status report on the implementation of those recommendations.

Recommendation 1: The OIG recommends that M-DCPS create a formal procedure on the use of placeholders and TBAs for vacant positions at the time of rolling over the schedule into DSIS. If a school uses long-term substitutes, classroom supervisors, and FLVS teachers they should be included in DSIS to ensure parents and caregivers receive accurate information about who is teaching and supervising their children.

Additional Information Requested

It is not clear from the response whether a formal policy on the use of TBAs and placeholders will be drafted. Please advise whether a policy on the use of TBAs and placeholders will be drafted and if so, please provide a copy to the OIG.

M-DCPS Response

Information has been presented to school site administrators providing guidelines on the use of placeholders only when necessary. These guidelines were presented during the January Educast presentation, which is a monthly training webcast for all principals and selected school staff. The guidelines will also be reviewed at the March Scaled Leadership meetings with principals and assistant principals and will be included in a document called Master Schedule Guidelines, which is released annually by the Office of Academics and Transformation.

The guidelines are as follows:

- Schools should make all efforts to fill instructional vacancies with a qualified teacher in a timely manner.
- All courses should be directly tied to a position in a school's Position Control List.
- If the need arises to utilize a placeholder for a vacant position, this should be accomplished with the employee number of a certified instructional employee. The gradebook and Schoology will not recognize classes without an appropriate and corresponding employee number.
 - Teachers that can be utilized as a placeholder for a vacant position: department chairs, instructional coaches, counselors, administrators, media specialists, and other released instructional professionals.
 - These employees must be informed that they are being utilized as a placeholder and what their responsibilities will be as to working with the substitute handling the class.
 - Non-instructional employees (i.e.: custodians, Food Service employees, security, clerical) should **NEVER** be utilized in a master schedule.
- Employee numbers used as placeholders must be changed before February FTE.
- As with all out-of-field assignments, parental notification is required by law.

Recommendation 2: The OIG recommends that if master schedules will be rolled over into DSIS prior to permanent instructors being assigned the regional office should approve the use of placeholders.

Additional Information Requested

It is not clear from the response if the Region Offices will approve the use of placeholders. Please advise how the Region Offices will monitor the use of placeholders, including whether Region Offices will approve the use of placeholders before they are entered in the master schedules.

M-DCPS Response

The creation of the master schedule begins in the spring of the previous year and is not completely finalized until the October FTE reporting period. During this time, numerous factors can cause the temporary need to utilize placeholders (retirement, hiring, position change, transfers, among others). It is not feasible for the Regions to approve these placeholders every time. The district will have a process where before rollover the school will report the number of placeholders that will be communicated to DSIS and attest to

the compliance of the guidelines provided above. In particular, they will attest that no non-instructional employees are reflected in the Master Schedule.

This attestation will be monitored by the Region Office for compliance.

Recommendation 3: The OIG recommends mandatory training for all M-DCPS staff who create, revise, or approve master schedules. Such training should include clear guidance that non-instructional personnel should never be used on a master schedule as a placeholder or otherwise.

An OIG special agent attended the initial session of the updated master schedule training. The use of non-instructional staff is only noted in the presentation as a footnote on a page that discusses the Position Control List Report. The special agent attending the training verbally raised the issue, bringing it to the attention of the trainer. We understand that there will be several training opportunities in the near future, however, master scheduled training is not mandatory – either for new schedulers or for those experienced with building the master schedule. One principal the OIG spoke to recently had been building the master schedule for sixteen years and had never taken the training course.

It is not clear from the response whether training in master schedule creation will become mandatory, The OIG requests M-DCPS advise 1) whether the training will be mandatory, 2) how the information on the use of placeholders will be incorporated in the training materials and 3) how the instructional responsibilities of the staff used as placeholders on the schedule will be communicated to the placeholders.

Last, we acknowledge the programmatic block instituted in DSIS, but to our understanding, this won't prevent non-instructional personnel from being included in Aspen Master Schedule. How are school staff being reminded that under no circumstances may a non-instructional staffer be used as a placeholder?

M-DCPS Response

The training course referenced above is the technical training course. Guidance on creating master schedules is communicated through the Master Scheduling Guidelines distributed yearly by the Office of Academics and Transformation. The Master Scheduling Guidelines discuss course offerings and requirements for all subject areas. The guidance regarding the use of placeholders referenced above will be incorporated into the Master Scheduling Guidelines document for the next school year. This document is currently in the process of revision and will be forwarded to the OIG when published. The use of these guides is mandatory. The technical training will continue to be voluntary.

The guidelines were shared during the January Educast. Additionally, this information will be shared at Scaled Leadership meetings for principals and assistant principals in March. Please note that principals and assistant principals are required to attend Scaled Leadership and watch all Educast with their leadership teams as well.

Aspen Scheduler is a tool utilized by secondary schools to create their master schedules. Secondary schools work in that environment before rollover. Many schools work on multiple schedules simultaneously setting up different scenarios and enrollment and staffing scenarios. While working in Aspen, the recommendation is that schools use TBA-PCL numbers to identify vacant positions. The entry of an employee number is only needed upon the information being transferred to DSIS. In the event of an inadvertent data input error in the Aspen environment, wherein a school utilizes a non-instructional or invalid number, it is important to note that the information will be rejected by DSIS. Consequently, this data will not be reported to the state for funding purposes, and the respective courses will not be reflected in the gradebook or Schoology. The schedule does not become official until it is transmitted to DSIS.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Dr. John D. Pace, III, Deputy Superintendent, Office of School Leadership and Performance at 305 995-2938 or Mr. Jose Bueno, Chief of Staff at 305 995-1450.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jose L. Dotres
Superintendent of Schools

JLD:ga
L0601

cc: Mr. Jose Bueno, Chief of Staff
Dr. John D. Pace III, Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Yesenia Aponte, Region Superintendent