




Memorandum

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To: The Honorable Mari Tere Rojas, Chair
and Members, Miami-Dade School Board

Dr. Jose L. Dotres, Superintendent
Miami-Dade Public Schools

From: Felix Jimenez, Inspector General 

Date: April 30, 2024

Subject: Arrest of Former M-DCPS Travel Management Services Vendor Michele Hand; Ref IG-22-0003-SI

Michele Hand, former South Florida Manager for Scholastic Journeys, a certified Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) travel management services vendor, was arrested today on one count of Bid Tampering. The M-DCPS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigated the matter jointly with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office Public Corruption Task Force.

Ms. Hand is charged with rigging the bids for student travel services. In 2020 and 2022, Ms. Hand submitted fictitious bids that purported to be from a competitor.

Scholastic Journeys was one of 32 vendors in a pre-approved travel agency services pool under M-DCPS's awarded Invitation to Bid, ITB-18-032-CM. Scholastic Journeys organized student travel to locations throughout Florida such as Orlando theme parks, and St. Augustine for students at Winston Park K-8 Center and Key Biscayne K-8 Center. The trips were funded by the individual students who attended the trips.

The OIG is grateful for the cooperative working relationship with the SAO's Public Corruption Task Force and the assistance provided by School District staff and administrators during the course of the investigation. The OIG's administrative investigation is continuing.

cc: Jose Bueno, Chief of Staff, Office of the Superintendent
Ron Steiger, Chief Financial Officer
Vivian Santiesteban-Pardo, Chief Communication Officer
Ivan E. Silva, Chief of Police, Miami-Dade County Schools Police Department
Walter Harvey, School Board Attorney, Office of General Counsel
Jon Goodman, Chief Auditor, Office of Management and Compliance Audits