

For Immediate Release

November 4, 2024

Prince George's County Board of Education Responds to The Washington Post Inquiry

Upper Marlboro, MD – In response to recent inquiries from *The Washington Post* to the Chair of the Board of Education, Prince George's County, various issues have been clarified relating to board member attendance and financial accountability.

1. Can the School Board Request the ~\$9,700 Paid to Murray Back? And, if so, how would that process work? Is there any intent to pursue getting those wages back?

The Prince George's County Board of Education is committed to the responsible management of public resources. It is unclear if the Board has standing to pursue legal action to recover wages from a former board member, however, the Board will explore all available options to ensure that resources are utilized responsibly and align with our policies. We remain dedicated to maintaining public trust and reinforcing safeguards that uphold our values of accountability, transparency, and integrity.

2. The Integrity and Compliance Office (ICO) recently recommended updating attendance policies, including publishing board member attendance on the website and ruling in favor of appellants when school system-caused hardships result from quorum issues.

The Board does not see this as an issue, as quorum has consistently been met under current leadership. As per standard procedure, these recommendations will be sent to the Policy and Governance (P&G) Committee for review and consideration. As other recommendations and proposals, these will be carefully vetted and discussed to ensure alignment with state laws and regulations. The Board will continue to uphold our commitment to transparency and accountability.

3. Why Wasn't Murray's Attendance Discussed on April 25? What was the reasoning behind the delay?

Former Board Member Murray's attendance and potential next steps were scheduled for the April 25 closed session. Other agenda items required more time than anticipated, and the session concluded before the Board could address this matter. This timing issue was not intended to defer or minimize the matter but, was due to the demands of the meeting agenda.

4. When you sent him a notice on July 8, did he reply? Or was his next response his resignation letter?

Board Member Murray did not reply to the July 8 notification regarding his attendance violations. His next communication with the Board was his resignation letter, received on July 16.

5. The ICO claims "recurrent observations and recommendations related to Board members' attendance violations and enforcement action" and that the board "failed to promptly and effectively address Murray's continuous attendance violations." Is this a fair characterization of the board's response?

No, this is not a fair characterization. The board demonstrated full awareness and adherence to internal policies and acted in accordance with Board Policy 0108 and COMAR, notifying Mr. Murray of his attendance violations on April 4 and July 8, as required, scheduling attendance matters for discussion.

While competing agenda priorities prevented immediate action, the board's consistent scheduling and documentation of these sessions reflect compliance with required procedures. Mr. Murray's resignation before a final vote did not negate the board's efforts to address the matter within the requirements of the state laws and regulations.

The Prince George's County Board of Education remains committed to serving our students and community with integrity and diligence. We look forward to continuing our efforts to educate, advocate, and act together in the best interests of Prince George's County.

For further information, please contact:

Ryvell D. Fitzpatrick
Prince George's County Board of Education Office
301-952-6115