



MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR
STACEY E. PICKERING, AUDITOR

PERFORMANCE AUDIT DIVISION
DISTRICT EXIT CONFERENCE

February 10, 2015

Scott County School District

Beginning on Wednesday, February 04, 2015, the Office of the State Auditor's Performance Audit Division (PAD) performed a limited review of the accuracy and reliability of student and personnel data transmitted to the Mississippi Department of Education for the purpose of determining funding for local school districts. OSA reviewed the following:

Student Enrollment

1. I determined whether there is a written policy on enrollment requirements and procedures at each school. As a result, I found the following:

Lake Middle School does have a written policy on enrollment requirements and procedures.

Scott Central Attendance Center does have a written policy on enrollment requirements and procedures.

Sebastopol Attendance Center does have a written policy on enrollment requirements and procedures.

2. I determined whether the school is following policy regarding student enrollment records. As a result, I found the following:

Scott Central Attendance Center is not following policy regarding student enrollment. Of the records reviewed, 6 out of 30 had missing, incomplete, or invalid proof of residency.

Sebastopol Attendance Center is not following policy regarding student enrollment. Of the records reviewed, 7 out of 31 had missing, incomplete, or invalid proof of residency.

3. I determined whether the selected student's information is in the student package and is the same as the information kept in the student's record. As a result, I found the following:

At Lake Middle School, the selected student's information in the student package **is the same** as the information kept in the student's record.

Student Attendance/Absenteeism

1. I determined whether there is a written policy on monitoring and reporting student absences. As a result, I found the following:

Scott Central Attendance Center does have a written policy on monitoring and reporting student absences.



Sebastopol Attendance Center does have a written policy on monitoring and reporting student absences.

2. I determined whether the school is following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism. As a result, I found the following:

Scott Central Attendance Center is not following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism. Of the excuses reviewed, 2 out of 30 did not contain enough information to actually validate the excused absence.

Sebastopol Attendance Center is not following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism. Of the excuses reviewed, 1 out of 34 did not contain enough information to actually validate the excused absence; 1 out of 34 excuses did not comply with district and/or school policies; and 1 out of 34 did not have a valid excuse on file.

School Attendance Reporting

1. I determined whether the school is following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. As a result, I found the following:

Scott Central Attendance Center is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. Of the records reviewed, 4 out of 20 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences; and 15 out of 20 students reviewed were not reported in a timely manner, as specified by law, after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences.

Sebastopol Attendance Center is not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences. Of the records reviewed, 5 out of 8 students reviewed were not reported to the school attendance officer after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences; and 1 out of 8 students reviewed was not reported in a timely manner, as specified by law, after accumulating five (5) or more unexcused absences.

2. I determined whether the school attendance officer is following policy regarding reporting of unexcused absences. As a result, I found the following:

Scott Central Attendance Center attendance officer is following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences.

Sebastopol Attendance Center attendance officer is following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences.

Reporting of Suspensions

1. I determined whether the school is following policy regarding the reporting of suspensions. As a result, I found the following:

Lake Middle School is not following policy regarding the reporting of suspensions. Of the suspensions reviewed, 2 out of 2 were not reported to the school attendance officer as they occurred, as required by law.



Sebastopol Attendance Center is not following policy regarding the reporting of suspensions. Of the suspensions reviewed, 6 out of 6 were not reported to the school attendance officer as they occurred; and 3 out of 6 suspensions were not coded as an unexcused absence, as required by law.

Posting of Historical Documents

1. I determined whether the school is posting the required historical documents. As a result, I found the following:

Lake Middle School is posting the required historical documents.

Scott Central Attendance Center is posting the required historical documents.

Sebastopol Attendance Center is posting the required historical documents.

Teacher Endorsements

1. I determined whether teachers in the school have proper endorsements for the subjects they teach. As a result, I found the following:

At Lake Middle School, all the teachers reviewed have proper endorsements for the subjects they teach.

At Scott Central Attendance Center, all the teachers reviewed have proper endorsements for the subjects they teach.

At Sebastopol Attendance Center, all the teachers reviewed have proper endorsements for the subjects they teach.

Note: OSA is aware that Process Standard 8.1 allows no more than 5% of FTE units, not including academic core subjects, to work outside of the area or areas of endorsement.

Textbooks

1. I determined whether each child in the school is assigned a textbook in each applicable class. As a result, I found the following:

Of the classes reviewed at Lake Middle School, 11 out of 20 classes did not assigned textbooks to all students enrolled.

Of the classes reviewed at Scott Central Attendance Center, 18 out of 20 classes did not assigned textbooks to all students enrolled.

Of the classes reviewed at Sebastopol Attendance Center, 13 out of 18 classes did not assigned textbooks to all students enrolled.



Note: If you are found not in compliance in this area, it is in no way OSA's intention for you to purchase textbooks for each student in your district. OSA is simply pointing out the lack of compliance with this law as it is currently written. At this time, OSA is working diligently with the MS Legislature to amend this law in such a manner that the intent of the law is met, but there is no undue burden placed on the district/school.

Safety

1. I determined whether the district/schools are in compliance with all required safety laws and policies. As a result, I found the following:

District

Scott County School District is not in compliance with all required safety laws and policies. The district did not have a listing of Programs that Promote Compliant Behavior and Reduce Prohibited Conduct, earthquakes, threats unique to the geographical location of the school and a designated family reunification point, as required by State law and/or the Department of Education policy.

Schools

Lake Middle School is in compliance with all required safety laws and policies.

Scott Central Attendance Center is not in compliance with all required safety laws and policies. The school did not have all documented fire drills, as required by State law and/or Department of Education policy.

Sebastopol Attendance Center is not in compliance with all required safety laws and policies. The school did not include all staff actions and a protocol for threats unique to the geographical location of the school and all documented fire drills, as required by State law and/or Department of Education policy.

Property Internal Controls

1. I determined whether the district has internal controls related to property and whether the district is adhering to those controls. As a result, I found the following:

My School District has written internal controls related to property and is adhering to those controls.

Vehicles

1. I determined whether the district is following policy regarding the marking of district vehicles. As a result, I found the following:

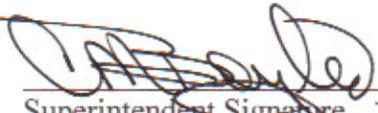
Scott County School District is following policy regarding the marking of district vehicles.



NOTE: Please be advised, a copy of this report is made available to the Mississippi State Board of Education and the Commission on School Accreditation as an element of review for administering the State performance-based accreditation system for public schools. As a result, any adverse findings in this report may affect your accreditation status. In addition, if you have any vehicles that were not properly marked, you have five days to correct this. If the correction is not made, vehicles will be impounded by the State Auditor's Office and the Tax Commission will be notified to withhold any sales and excise tax due.

I would like to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to discuss the results of the review in your district. Copies of all audit exceptions are available upon your request. Please submit formal comments regarding the audit to me, at **P.O. Box 11183, Jackson, MS 39283, by 2/18/2015. If you do not respond within two weeks after this date, the response for the audit report will state that you chose not to respond.** If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact me or Keyla Bradford, Project Manager, at 601-576-2800.

By signing below you agree that you have received a copy of this report and a brief explanation of the exceptions.



Superintendent Signature

2-11-15

Date

Please check the box if you received a survey from your auditor.

SCOTT COUNTY SCHOOLS

Marc Boyles
Conservator

100 EAST FIRST STREET, SUITE B
FOREST, MISSISSIPPI 39074
TELEPHONE: 601-469-3861
FACSIMILE: 601-469-3874

February 12, 2015

Re: Response to Performance Audit beginning on February 4, 2015

Student Enrollment

- Item #2 – Schools not following policy regarding student enrollment records.

Resolution: Each deficiency will be corrected by school level personnel. The Scott County School District will begin to hold registration for all new kindergarten students beginning in March of this school year and in August for all current students so that dates on residency proofs will be within 60 days of parental enrollment of students. Our policy on enrollment will be updated to reflect the change from 30 days to 60 days for proofs of residence.

Student Attendance/Absenteeism

- Item #2 – Schools not following policy regarding attendance and absenteeism, excuses did not contain enough information to actually validate the excused absence, excuses did not comply with district and/or school policies and valid excuse not on file.

Resolution: Each deficiency will be corrected by school level personnel. All excuses will reflect full parent name / full student name (first and last names) to better associate parent/student. All excuses will be date stamped.

School Attendance Reporting

- Item #1 – Schools not following policy regarding the reporting of unexcused absences.

Resolution: Each deficiency is being corrected. The Scott County District Policy on attendance will be updated to reflect that students have to bring excuses for absences on the day they return to school from being absent.

Reporting of Suspensions

- Item #1 – Schools not following policy regarding the reporting of suspensions.

SCOTT COUNTY SCHOOLS

Marc Boyles
Conservator

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Resolution: All deficiencies are being corrected by school level personnel. The changes to policy for excuses being required on the first day back to school after an absence will to correct these deficiencies.

Textbooks

- Item #1 – Schools not assigning textbooks.

Resolutions: The district will try to provide/assign textbooks to each student.

Safety

- Item #1 – District not in compliance with all required safety laws and policies.

Resolution: The district does have policies in-place to reduce and prohibit behaviors. These policies are attached but can also be view from our district webpage under Board Policies.

- Item #1 – Schools not in compliance with all required safety laws and policies.

Resolution: These deficiencies have been corrected.

Sincerely,



Marc Boyles
Conservator

District: Scott County School District
Section: J - Students
Policy Code: JDDA-P - Bullying Procedures

PROCEDURES STUDENT BULLYING

STUDENT COMPLAINTS OF BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR

Students and employees in the Scott County School District are protected from bullying or harassing behavior by other students or employees. It is the intent of the Board and the administration to maintain an environment free from bullying and harassing behavior. This complaint procedure provides a process for filing, processing and resolving complaints of such conduct. Adherence to these procedures is mandatory. The failure of any person to follow these procedures will constitute a waiver of the right to pursue a complaint at any level, including review by the Board.

I. Definitions

Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic that (a) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or (b) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits.

A "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bullying or harassing behavior will not be condoned or tolerated when it takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, or when it takes place off school property when such conduct, in the determination of the school superintendent or principal, renders the offending person's presence in the classroom a disruption to the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils and teacher of such class as a whole.

II. Procedures for Processing a Complaint

Any student, school employee or volunteer who feels he/she has been a victim of bullying or harassing behavior, or has witnessed or who has reliable information that a student, school employee or volunteer has been subject to bullying or harassing behavior shall report such conduct to a teacher, principal, counselor or other school official. The report shall be made promptly but no later than five (5) calendar days after the alleged act or acts occurred. The school official shall complete a "Bullying/Harassing Behavior" complaint form which shall include the name of the reporting person, the specific nature and date of the misconduct, the names of the victim of the misconduct, the names of any witnesses and any other information that would assist in the investigation of the complaint. The report shall be given promptly to the principal or superintendent who shall institute an

immediate investigation. Complaints against the principal shall be made to the superintendent and complaints against the superintendent shall be made to the Board chairman.

The complaint shall be investigated promptly. Parents will be notified of the nature of any complaint involving their student. The District official will arrange such meetings as may be necessary with all concerned parties within five (5) working days after initial receipt of the complaint by the District. The parties will have an opportunity to submit evidence and a list of witnesses. All findings related to the complaint will be reduced to writing. The District official conducting the investigation shall notify the victim and parents as appropriate when the investigation is completed and a decision regarding disciplinary action, as warranted, is determined.

If the victim is not satisfied with the decision of the District official, he/she may submit a written appeal to the superintendent. Such appeal shall be filed within ten (10) working days after receipt of the results of the initial decision. The superintendent will arrange such meetings with the victim and other affected parties as deemed necessary to discuss the appeal. The superintendent shall provide a written decision to the victim's appeal within ten (10) working days.

If the victim is not satisfied with the decision of the superintendent, a written appeal may be filed with the Board. Such appeal shall be filed within ten (10) working days after receipt of the decision of the superintendent. The Board shall, within twenty (20) working days, allow the victim and parents as appropriate to appear before the Board to present reasons for dissatisfaction with the decision of the superintendent. The Board shall provide a written decision within ten (10) working days following the victim's appearance before the Board.

Adopted Date: 4/8/2014

Approved/Revised Date: 4/8/2014

District: Scott County School District
Section: J - Students
Policy Code: JDDA - Bullying

STUDENT BULLYING

The Scott County School District does not condone and will not tolerate bullying or harassing behavior. Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic that (a) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or (b) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits. A "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior. Bullying or harassing behavior will not be condoned or tolerated when it takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, or when it takes place off school property when such conduct, in the determination of the school superintendent or principal, renders the offending person's presence in the classroom a disruption to the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils and teacher of such class as a whole.

The Scott County School District will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no student or school employee is subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by other school employees or students. Likewise, the District will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no person engages in any act of reprisal or retaliation against a victim, witness or a person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior. The District encourages anyone who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior to report the incident to the appropriate school official.

The School Board directs the superintendent or designee to design and implement procedures for reporting, investigating, and addressing bullying and harassing behaviors. The procedures should be appropriately placed in District personnel policy handbooks, school handbooks that include discipline policies and procedures, and any other policy or procedure that deals with student or employee behavior. The discipline policies and procedures must recognize the fundamental right of every student to take "reasonable actions" as may be necessary to defend himself or herself from an attack by another student who has evidenced menacing or threatening behavior through bullying or harassing. Furthermore, the Scott County School District defines "reasonable action" as promptly reporting the behavior to a teacher, principal, counselor, or other school employee when subjected to bullying or harassing behavior.

Ref: SB 2015; Miss. Code Ann. § 37-7-301(e)

Adopted Date: 4/8/2014
Approved/Revised Date: 4/8/2014