



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
3318 FOREST HILL BLVD., C-306
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33406

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LUNG CHIU, CIG, CPA
INSPECTOR GENERAL

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Chair and Members of the School Board
Dr. Robert Avossa, Superintendent
Chair and Members of the Audit Committee

FROM: ^{KLC} Lung Chiu, Inspector General

DATE: August 25, 2016

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Final Report
Case # 16-390 Teacher Certification

In accordance with School Board Policy 1.092(6)(d), we hereby transmit the above-referenced final report.

The report involves an allegation regarding a District employee offering a person a fee in exchange to take courses in order for the employee to obtain a teaching certification.

The results of our investigation determined the allegation is unsubstantiated.

Office of Inspector General
The School District of Palm Beach County

Case No. 16-390

Issue: Teacher Certification

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

AUTHORITY

School Board Policy 1.092, Inspector General (4)(a)(iv) provides for the Inspector General to receive and consider complaints, and conduct, supervise, or coordinate such inquiries, investigations, or reviews as the Inspector General deems appropriate.

This investigation was conducted by Veronica Rodriguez #200, Senior Investigator, in compliance with the *Quality Standards for Investigations, Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General*, promulgated by the Association of Inspectors General.

BACKGROUND

On February 22, 2016, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) received an anonymous complaint via the OIG hotline regarding District employee, Dawn Byrd. Ms. Byrd was a temporary teacher at Glades Central High School. The complaint alleges that in September 2015, Ms. Dawn Byrd offered a person a fee in exchange to take courses so that Ms. Byrd may obtain her teaching certification.

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. *Florida Statute 817.566 Misrepresentation of Association with, or Academic Standing at, Postsecondary Educational Institution*
2. *School Board Policy 3.02 Code of Ethics*
3. *School Board Policy 3.84 Employment of Certified Personnel*
4. Florida Department of Education Certification Requirements
5. Florida Department of Education Code of Ethics & Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida
6. Employee Termination Letter

INTERVIEWS/CONSULTATIONS CONDUCTED

1. Certification/High Quality Standards Manager
2. School Police
3. Representative of Pearson Vue Testing Center

AFFECTED PARTY RESPONSE

A draft copy of this report was provided to Ms. Byrd, who was given an opportunity to respond. Ms. Byrd provided a response on August 15, 2016. *See Exhibit 1.*

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

The OIG informed Detective McCoy from School Police regarding the allegations surrounding Ms. Byrd on February 25, 2016.

Records indicate Ms. Byrd obtained a non renewable temporary teaching certificate on July 1, 2013, valid through June 30, 2016. Ms. Byrd was to obtain a professional teaching certification by completing the requirements established by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) during the three year period of her temporary certificate.

The OIG spoke to the District's Certification Office regarding Ms. Byrd. The Certification Manager stated Ms. Byrd did not submit any paperwork for the completion of course requirements. As a result, Ms. Byrd was terminated effective July 1, 2016 for failure to provide verification of completion of the necessary course requirements. *See Exhibit 2.*

Additionally, the OIG contacted Pearson VUE Testing Center¹ to obtain their identification procedures. The procedures state the following are required and obtained from the examinee:

1. Two valid, unexpired forms of identification. The first form of identification must be government issued and have a clear photo and signature
2. A photograph and scan of the palm

Since the complainant did not provide contact information, our attempts to obtain additional information regarding the allegation were unsuccessful.

CONCLUSION

Since the OIG cannot confirm that Ms. Byrd paid someone to take the required courses for her, the allegation is unsubstantiated. No violation of law, rule or policy was identified.

¹ Pearson VUE is a computer based that serves test takers in industries like; academia, financial, government, health care, information technology, military and US licensing



Veronica Rodriguez (AUDITOR SENIOR) <veronica.rodriguez.1@palmbeachschools.org>

Dawn Byrd (Case NO.16-390)

1 message

Dawn Byrd <dawn.byrd@palmbeachschools.org>

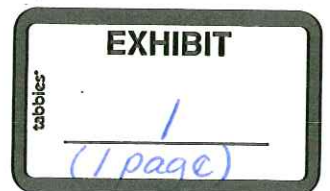
Mon, Aug 15, 2016 at 2:27 PM

To: "Veronica Rodriguez (AUDITOR SENIOR)" <veronica.rodriguez.1@palmbeachschools.org>

Hi, Mrs. Rodriguez

This is Dawn Byrd per our conversation on Thursday ,August 14 ,2016. I am responding in writing to the False Allegations or Compliant Of This Letter I recieved. These False Allegations is not true and in no way represent my Character as a person of Integrity.

Sincerly yours,
D.Byrd





THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL

CAROL HARTMAN
DIRECTOR

GONZALO S. LA CAVA
CHIEF OF HUMAN RESOURCES

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
3300 FOREST HILL BLVD., SUITE A-132
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33406-5813

PHONE: 561-434-8043 / FAX: 561-434-8561
WWW.PALMBEACHSCHOOLS.ORG/JOBS

July 1, 2016

Dawn Byrd
1746 Pierside Circle
Wellington, FL 33414

Empl ID: 1091270

Dear Dawn Byrd:

Please be advised that effective July 1, 2016, your reappointment for FY17 became null and void; and your employment with the School District of Palm Beach County was officially terminated. This action was taken as a result of your failure to provide verification to the District's Certification Office that you completed the necessary requirements for a valid Florida Educator's Certificate as required by Florida Statute 1012.56.

Until you complete the necessary professional requirements as applicable for your certification status, you may wish to consider substitute teaching as an alternative. To do so, please visit the District's website, click on Employment, then click on Substitute Teachers and follow the guidelines for becoming a substitute.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact Kim Pirtle, Certification Manager, at (561) 434-8151 or PX 48151.

Thank you for your service to the students of Palm Beach County.

Sincerely,

Carol Hartman, Director
Recruitment and Retention

c: Principal, Glades Central High
Mark Mitchell, Compensation & Employee Information Services
Kim Pirtle, Certification Office
Personnel File (Compensation & Employee Information Services)



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