



# DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY DISTRICT

## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### 1. What is the function of the Office of Inspector General?

**Response:** The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducts investigations and forensic audits to detect, deter, and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. The OIG is an independent office; whose mission is to “promote integrity, economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the operations of the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) by conducting meaningful and accurate investigations, audits, and program reviews, to prevent, detect and deter fraud, waste, and abuse; as well as identify opportunities for improving internal controls.” We aspire to a goal of enhancing the public’s trust and confidence in our school system by assisting in improvement of the School District’s programs and operations, through fostering districtwide integrity and responsible stewardship.

#### 2. What is the jurisdiction of the OIG?

**Response:** The OIG’s jurisdiction encompasses all district schools, departments, personnel, and programs. This jurisdiction extends to all district employees, vendors, and contractors doing business with DPSCD. The OIG’s authority is derived from Board Policy 1270: Authority and Responsibilities of the Inspector General (which was adopted by the Board in May 2018).

#### 3. How do I report acts of fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement and/or corruption to the OIG?

**Response:** A complaint may be filed with this office via these ways. You can meet directly with the Inspector General or any of the OIG staff. You may call our OIG **24-hour Fraud hotline (313) 870-3436** and leave a voicemail message. You can also visit the Inspector General’s web-page and complete the **Online Complaint Form** and submit it electronically. Our fax number is **(313) 870-3405** and email is **inspectorgeneral@detroitk12.org**. For all other matters you may contact us directly at **(313) 870-5664** or via postal mail; 3011 W. Grand Boulevard, 12<sup>th</sup> floor Fisher Building, Detroit, MI 48202.

#### 4. How is the Office of Inspector General Staffed?

**Response:** The OIG has a highly-educated and diverse professional staff; where all members have at least a four-year degree, and have either advanced degrees, or one or more professional certificates and training in their area of expertise.

#### 5. What types of complaints do you investigate?

**Response:** Anything that involves fraud, waste, abuse, financial mismanagement and conflicts of interest related to district employees, district assets or its resources. Provide as much detailed information (*who, what, where, when, and how*) to ensure our appropriate determination and action. If you are not sure, simply call, email or send your tip to the fraud hotline.

#### 6. Can I remain anonymous when forwarding complaint information?

**Response:** Yes. You may remain anonymous; however, you are encouraged to identify yourself to our office so that we may follow-up on your call or email if necessary to obtain additional information that would help us in our investigation. If you give us your name and request confidentiality, your identity will be protected to the extent permissible by law.

#### 7. What are my protections as a potential complainant?

**Response:** You are protected by the Whistleblower Protection – Board Policy 1411; which allows and encourages the reporting of violations of law by employees. This Board Policy provides protection to employees who report a violation of state, local, or federal law to the OIG; or who assist in OIG investigations. In addition, this Policy prohibits your supervisor or employer from retaliating against any employee for reporting wrongdoing to the OIG. Employees who are retaliated against as result of having reported misconduct or illegal acts to the OIG should immediately notify the Inspector General.

**8. Is the Office of the Inspector General a law enforcement agency?**

**Response:** No. The OIG is not a law enforcement agency. However, the OIG has active partnerships with law enforcement organizations (LEOs) who assist with respect to pursuing criminal investigations. These include: the Detroit Public Schools Police Department, Michigan State Police, Wayne County Prosecutors Office, the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

**9. When does the OIG initiate an investigation?**

**Response:** Investigations are initiated upon the receipt of credible information alleging an act of waste, fraud, abuse, ethical violations, financial mismanagement or corruption within the OIG's jurisdiction. Only the Inspector General can authorize the initiation of an investigation. The matter is then assigned to any of the investigative staff for review and action.

**10. How long does an investigation take from start to finish?**

**Response:** Unfortunately, it is impossible for us to predict the length of an investigation. It depends on the complexity of the case, the number of witnesses to be interviewed, documents to review, and/or detailed forensic audit to conduct. Whenever possible, we like to expedite our work while doing a thorough and accurate investigation. Other determinant factors include the number of other ongoing investigations, the priority level of the case and if it's a criminal investigation.

**11. If I bring an allegation to the attention of the Office of Inspector General, can a DPSCD employee be referred for disciplinary action including termination?**

**Response:** Yes, depending upon the allegation and subsequent investigation findings, this may result in a referral for administrative discipline, and if merited, the employee may be terminated, or issued other discipline, for their actions.

**12. What happens at the conclusion of an OIG investigations when the allegations are proven?**

**Response:** If the wrongdoing involves district employees, internal discipline and/or referral for prosecution may be recommended. Often, the OIG provides recommendations to improve internal policies, procedures, and administrative controls. The recommendations are tracked by the OIG to ensure timely responses and implementation when warranted.

**13. Are OIG investigations confidential?**

**Response:** Ongoing investigations and forensic audits are exempt from public disclosure. However, once an investigation is finalized, it becomes a matter of public record, pursuant to Michigan's public record laws.

**14. What happens if the OIG does not have jurisdiction over a matter?**

**Response:** You will be advised, and the OIG will refer your complaint to the DPSCD department or external agency with jurisdictional oversight over the reported matter. We make these referrals by written notification, and the complainant may follow up with the appropriate department to address their concerns.

**15. What are the similarities and/or differences between what an OIG does and the role of Internal Audit (IA)?**

**Response:** An inspector general is an internal watchdog whose role is to investigate allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, financial mismanagement and employees' ethical misconduct within an organization. Typically, OIG investigations and forensic audits specifically look for financial misconduct, and abusive, wasteful or illegal activity. An internal auditor, on the other hand, conducts proactive audits aimed at providing reasonable assurance of an organization's processes and to assess the risk of internal control deficiencies, and in some instances, may expose fraudulent acts committed. Some OIGs perform both an investigative and audit function for their organizations. Within DPSCD, the OIG primarily performs a reactive (fact-finding) role, in response to allegations, but we also offer a series of instructional-based and online fraud-awareness and ethics courses, designed for all District employees to develop critical thinking skills to help them recognize potential ethical dilemmas as well as prevent fraudulent behavior. Both OIGs and IA agencies have a common goal of improving internal controls and ensuring that operations are efficiently and effectively in place within an organization.