

To: Superintendent Carlton D. Jenkins  
Board of Education  
Mike Hertting, Interim Assistant Superintendent Staff and Operations  
Deirdre Hargrove-Krieghoff, Chief of Human Resources

From: Heidi Tepp, MMSD Labor Relations Attorney

Date: September 28, 2020

Re: Executive Summary of Independent Administrative Review

### ***Scope of Administrative Review***

MMSD hired Attorney Malina Piontek to conduct an independent administrative review of MMSD's field trip policies and procedures following an incident that occurred at a DECA student club overnight field trip in Minneapolis during December, 2019. In addition, Attorney Piontek reviewed concerns regarding the District's alleged failure to make a mandatory report and failure to immediately commence its own investigation. The administrative review did not encompass the MMSD staff member's alleged misconduct because the staff member had resigned from MMSD.

### **Conclusions**

Based upon the preponderance of the evidence analyzed during this Independent Administrative Review, Attorney Piontek found that there was no failure on the part of District staff to follow [Board Policy 3350 Field Trips](#) or [Board Policy 4222 Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect](#) or statutory requirements for making mandatory reports of child abuse. However, the former staff member violated [MMSD Social Media and Digital Communication Guidelines for Staff](#) by using his personal cell phone to communicate with students and parents during the DECA trip to Minneapolis. Finally, Attorney Piontek concluded that the District acted appropriately when it waited to commence its own investigation until law enforcement completed its investigation and issued a Grand Jury Indictment against the former staff member.

## **Recommendations**

While no violations were found with respect to the District's field trip policy and procedures, several recommendations were offered. They include:

- Staff should be issued a District owned device for student and parent communication. This is for all chaperones.
- The District should define authorized chaperone in policy and the expectations of an authorized chaperone. The Review revealed that it was the EHS chaperone's understanding that the EHS staff member was responsible for all aspects of the extended trip, while the chaperone was simply to do as directed. While there is a valid need to have a designated leader on an extended trip, that should not diminish a chaperone's responsibility to adequately supervise students on the trip. Such a definition should include reporting requirements.
- The District should identify other safety protocols to be included in the field trip process (i.e. Behavior, Special Risk, Student Health, Emergency Actions). Such information would include what chaperones should do in terms of contacting parents, school staff and the supervising teacher.
- Information should be provided to authorized chaperones (not parent volunteers) which includes copies of student contact information. Again, there needs to be articulation of the chaperone's role and responsibilities.
- A more defined process should be implemented regarding who the chaperones contact in an emergency situation. Unless there is no working cell phone, immediate contact should be made directly to the principal or district administration.
- There needs to be further articulation of the district policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines that authorized chaperones are to follow. Ideally, a sign off would be included.
- For overnight trips, there needs to be a process for distributing room keys or access cards. There should be a sign off that each key or access card has been distributed. This sign-off should be reviewed by at least two chaperones.

## **Next Steps**

Revise the Extended Field Trip Process and update the Social Media Guidelines. After these revisions are completed the matter will be closed, though we know closure for families will be longer lasting and dependent on the outcome of the criminal case.