

Date: February 20, 2021
To: Audit Committee
From: Mary Kane
Subject: Update on Contractor Training

As part of the audit review, we were asked to update the Board on our phased implementation of the mandatory training requirements for contractors and to explain the change in for in the original implementation plan. Our initial implementation was stalled by language in the Professional Conduct policy requiring all contractors to be trained before working with DHS. Amendments to the Professional Conduct Policy adopted by the Board in February have provided us a clearer path to completing the plan. Specifically, the change requires mandatory training only for contractors with direct, unsupervised contact with students.

IMPLEMENTATION

In the fall of 2019, a group comprising, among others, members of the General Counsel's office, Human Resources, Purchasing & Contracting, Title IX, Strategic Partnerships, and OTIS convened to develop the training procedures for volunteers and contractors.

The District enters into approximately 700 personal services contracts each year, ranging in cost from \$0 to over \$1,000,000 per year. These contracts range from a single contractor giving a one-hour presentation to a class or a dance troupe performing at an assembly to large organizations providing individual student mentoring and outreach to hundreds of students both in the school and in the community. The District also has other types of contractors, such as landscapers and facilities specialists, who are in schools but have no contact with students. We began differentiating the types of contracts in order to determine which trainings should be required for each type. Although the Professional Conduct Policy requires only training on that policy, we believed that certain contractors needed additional training.

We noted in the February 2020 follow up to the Whitehurst report that we were adding training requirements for certain contractors to include 1) Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting (includes identifying sexual abuse); 2) Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Retaliation (includes info about how to report and prohibited retaliation following report); and 3) Staff to Student: Sexual Conduct (from Safer Schools).

Because we realized the work of modulating the number and types of trainings we wanted to require of the different types of contractors would take longer than anticipated, we took a tiered approach to the work. We looked first to our large RESJ community partners, *e.g.*, SEI, IRCO, Latino Network, etc., because of the duration and intensity of their direct and unsupervised contact with students. We determined that these community partners should be required to participate in all of the student-safety trainings required of PPS staff. This compliance

requirement was incorporated into the 2019-2020 contracts and is now a standard requirement in their contracts.

As part of this first phase, the Office of Technology and Information Services offered PPS email addresses to contractors so they could take the trainings through the District's training platform. This platform, called Pepper, allows PPS to track training compliance with contractors, as well as employees. With this important piece in place, a team turned its attention to the field of other contractors working with the District.

We began work on developing criteria for our other contractors and quickly ran up against issues of capacity, security, and fiscal impact as the initial requirement was that all contractors, even those with no direct, unsupervised contact with students, were required to complete trainings. These problems slowed implementation progress considerably. Covid slowed things further. The June 2020 reconfigured team expanded to include representatives from OTL, Student Success and Health, Multiple Pathways, and Funded Programs to understand better the types of work we were contracting for and what safeguards were already in place.

In February 2021, the Board amended the Professional Conduct policy. It now provides that all contractors with direct, unsupervised contact with students must complete training in order to work in the District. With this amended mandate, the team is moving forward in completing its work identifying tiers of training, which we believe best align to the type of student-facing work to be performed by the contractor. We have developed a template that will be incorporated into contracts as an exhibit to require the contract manager to choose one of the tiers based on certain outlined factors. This exhibit will provide the internal control and guidance to ensure that both the contractor and contract manager understand what is required of them. We are also developing a training handbook to assist contract managers in managing training for contractors.