

News Release: PGCPS Chief Executive Officer Announces Request for MSDE Audit of Head Start Program

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For Immediate Release
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UPPER MARLBORO, MD – Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Chief Executive Officer Dr. Kevin M. Maxwell announced Thursday that he has asked the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to conduct a full performance audit of the Head Start program and the incidents related to the \$6.4 million grant termination.

"Since the start of the school year, questions and concerns regarding the termination of our Head Start program grant have dominated the public landscape," said Dr. Maxwell. "I have asked the Maryland State Department of Education Early Childhood Division to conduct a full performance audit in an effort to bring clarity to our Head Start program operations and management and the circumstances surrounding the grant termination."

The audit will also include recommendations for improvement throughout Prince George's County Public Schools. All employees will be required to provide documents and supporting information as needed by MSDE. The audit timeline and findings will be made public.

In a separate review, superintendents from across the state will dedicate teams to review PGCPS internal communications and employee and labor relations protocols to identify areas for improvement, said Dr. Maxwell.

"Our significant gaps in these two areas are hindering our efforts towards full accountability, transparency and responsiveness to incidences of suspected child abuse, neglect and inappropriate conduct," he said.

Results from this review will also be announced publicly.

Since last spring, PGCPS has focused on eliminating threats to students, using Student Safety Task Force recommendations as a blueprint. Steps taken to date include strengthening volunteer protocols, changing administrative policies to remind employees of their responsibility to report their suspicions, and creating the Office of Monitoring, Accountability and Compliance, which will issue an annual report on school incidents.

"We will continue to focus on our school safety goals to ensure safe learning environments for all students. We will continue working through our challenges and refine our course where needed," said Dr. Maxwell. "And working together, we will continue to reform this school system."