

Internal Audit Report

Melwood Elementary School

School Activity Funds

For the Period Ended March 31, 2024

**Melwood Elementary School
School Activity Funds
Internal Audit Report
For Period Ended March 31, 2024**

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Internal Auditor's Report

We have examined the Student Activity Funds (SAF) of Melwood Elementary School for the period November 1, 2017 to March 31, 2024. Melwood Elementary School's principal is responsible for administration of the SAF. Our responsibility is to express an opinion based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards and, accordingly, included examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting SAF, and performing such other procedures, as we considered necessary in the circumstances. We believe that our examination provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

Our examination disclosed the following findings:

- *Administration of Financial Records*
- *Delinquent Deposits*
- *Financial Reporting Requirements*
- *Restricted Fund Account Deficits*
- *Administration of Contracts*
- *Administration of Voided Checks*
- *Fundraiser Reports Not Completed*

The findings resulted in a material deviation from Board of Education (BOE) policies and procedures and the requirements of the Accounting Procedures Manual for the School Activity Funds (APM).

In our opinion, there is significant non-compliance with BOE policies and procedures and the APM, for Melwood Elementary School SAF, for the period ended March 31, 2024.

Janice Walters-Semple, CPA
Acting Director, Internal Audit

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SUMMARY

Internal Audit completed an audit of the school activity funds (SAF) for Melwood Elementary School for the period November 1, 2017 through March 31, 2024. The audit was conducted as part of the department's annual audit plan.

The audit report includes 7 findings which occurred under the leadership of the former and acting principals. A listing of the findings and the personnel responsible are included in the appendix at the end of the audit report. In addition, detailed findings are cited on the following pages with accompanying recommendations for corrective action. The audit results determined that there was non-compliance with the requirements of Accounting Procedures Manual for School Activity Funds (APM) during the period of audit.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the audit were to determine the effectiveness of the system of internal controls and whether the school was in compliance with the policies and procedures of the Accounting Procedures Manual for School Activity Funds (APM) and the Board of Education (BOE). It is important to recognize that, while the audit report focused on deficiencies, it was intended to be constructive. The audit was not designed and conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational programs in the school. Therefore, the absence of comments related to the educational programs should not be construed to imply that these programs are either adequate or deficient.

SCOPE

The audit was based on our examination of available bank statements, financial reports, cancelled checks, all voided checks and Monetary Transmittal Form (MTF) envelopes submitted for the period November 1, 2017 to March 31, 2024. Also, available receipts, disbursements and supporting documentation were reviewed for the said period. ***Certain financial records requested for review were not provided. See Finding 2024.01, Administration of Financial Records.***

This is an audit of funds related to students' activities at the school and does not include SOR funds or any funds not derived from students' activities for the audit period.

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FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The audit resulted in the following findings and recommendations:

2025.01 Administration of Financial Records

The following **20** financial records were not provided to substantiate SAF transactions during the audit period:

- **3 Disbursements:** School Funds Expenditure Forms (SFEF): FY 2024 (2); FY2022 (1)
- **13 Canceled Checks:** FY 2018 (3); FY 2019 (10)
- **3 Voided Checks:** FY 2019 (2); FY 2021 (1)
- **End of Year Monetary Transmittal Forms** – MTFs for FY 2018.
(This condition was noted during the previous audit for the period ended October 31, 2017.)

The APM Section 6.12, *Record Retention*, requires the retention of all financial records for **7** years and or until audited, including the current fiscal year. Financial records include but is not limited to, financial reports, bank statements, receipts, disbursement authorities, monetary transmittal forms, school funds expenditure forms, canceled checks, and contracts.

The former principal transferred to another location. The former recordkeeping staff retired from PGCPs in October 2023. Therefore, a cause could not be established for the missing SFEFs canceled checks, voided checks, and FY 2018 MTFs.

The absence of a reliable records management system affects the retrieval and accessibility of requested documentation to substantiate the school's financial transactions. The audit fieldwork was impacted by the school's inability to support financial transactions. Evidence for determining that relevant policies and procedures were followed is removed when financial records are unavailable for review.

Recommendations: The current principal must establish an effective records management system, which ensures that all financial documents are retained by fiscal year and are retrievable upon request. The principal should complete a periodic review of financial records to determine proper organization and retention.

2025.02 Delinquent Deposits

There were at least **2** instances where collections were not deposited with the financial institution in a timely manner as required. The delinquency was **5** and **6** days. *(This condition was noted during the previous audit for the period ended October 31, 2017.)*

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The APM Section 4.5.2.2 (1) *Collecting Funds and Guidelines for Bank Deposits, Completing the MTF, and Preparing Bank Deposits*, require all funds collected to be remitted to the bookkeeper on the day of collection. The bookkeeper is also required to make timely deposits (at least every other day) with the financial institution. Funds collected must be deposited in the same form and denominations as received.

The current recordkeeping staff stated that he was unable to deposit the funds timely and held them in the school's safe due to competing responsibilities in the main office. Internal controls are compromised and there is the risk of embezzlement or loss of funds when funds are not deposited as required.

Recommendations: The principal must designate specific time for daily processing of remittances. The recordkeeping staff must be held accountable for depositing funds timely with the financial institution. The principal should conduct periodic reviews of deposits and MTF logs to ensure compliance.

2025.03 Financial Reporting Requirements

There were at least **5** instances where monthly bank reconciliations and monthly financial reports were not timely prepared. This resulted in untimely reviews by the principal. The delinquencies ranged from **7** to **63** days. (*This condition was noted during the previous audit for the period that ended in October 2017.*)

The APM section 5.1.2 *Monthly Reconciliation and Financial Reporting* states that the bookkeeper is required to complete the reconciliation within 7 days after receiving the statement from the bank. All financial reports should be completed by the 15th day of the subsequent month and submitted to the principal for review and approval.

The former recordkeeping staff retired in October 2023, and therefore no explanation for 3 delinquent monthly financial reports could be ascertained. The current recordkeeping staff did not receive SAF financial training until January 23, 2024, resulting in 1 delinquent report. The bank statement was not delivered timely and the the principal did not have online access to the school's bank statements in the final instance.

The principal's fiscal responsibility is compromised when monthly financial reporting is not available for review as required. Timing differences or other errors may not be detected and corrected promptly when the reconciliation process does not occur as intended.

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Recommendations: The principal and recordkeeping staff should implement internal controls to ensure that the monthly financial reporting process is performed in accordance with the scheduled requirements included in the APM (bank reconciliation within 7 days of receiving the statement from the bank and the completion of financial reports by the 15th of each month).

The principal and recordkeeping staff should meet monthly to review and approve the financial reports to ensure compliance. Also, the principal should contact the Assistant Treasurer's Office to request access to the school's online bank statements to facilitate timely financial reporting.

2025.04 Restricted Fund Account Deficits

The following restricted fund accounts had deficits that totaled **(\$3,022.85)** as of 03/31/24:

| Account # | Account Description | Account Balance |
|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 442.15 | Spirit Wear Fundraiser | (\$ 884.50) |
| 480.00 | Yearbook | (\$ 728.40) |
| 517.00 | Time for Kids | <u>(\$ 1,409.95)</u> |
| | Total | <u>(\$ 3,022.85)</u> |

The APM, Section 4.3 *Fund Accounts*, states that expenditures for all restricted fund accounts are limited to the amount of funds collected for those activities. Therefore, if restricted account expenditures exceed the available fund balance the account is insolvent. As the fiduciary agent for the SAF, the principal is responsibly to ensure that restricted fund accounts are solvent at all times.

The Spirit Wear Fundraiser account deficit resulted from a theft of approximately \$800.00 that occurred at the school in December 2023. Security Services was contacted and results of the investigation is currently under supervisory review. The Yearbook deficit was initially noted in FY 2017 in the amount of (\$30.30) and increased to the current deficit of \$728.40 in June 30, 2019 due to projected yearbook sales being less than actual yearbook sales. The Time for Kids deficit occurred in FY 2015. No further activity has occurred in the Time for Kids fund account. An explanation was not obtained for this deficit as the then principal and recordkeeping staff are no longer at the school.

Overspending in restricted fund accounts has resulted in insufficient funds being available to administer students' activities. Moreover, overspending in restricted funds accounts can result in the school becoming insolvent.

Recommendations: The principal should contact Financial and Reporting Services to obtain guidance for resolving the deficit account balances. The principal should contact Security Services

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to obtain the results of the investigation into theft of SAF which caused the Spirit Wear Fundraiser deficit. Appropriate action must be taken to recover the stolen funds.

2025.05 Administration of Contracts

The acting principal signed a multi-year contract(2 years) with Lifetouch Picture Company. Also, there are 4 vending machines located in the teachers' lounge. There was no signed contract available to substantiate the school's vending activities. *(This condition was noted during the previous audit for the period that ended in October 2017.)*

Administrative Procedure 5135.2, *Principal's Contracting Authority*, requires the principal, as an agent of the BOE, to approve and sign all agreements and contracts entered into for all school activities. The APM 6.5 *Contracts* states that *Schools may not enter into any multiple year agreements*. Also, the APM, Section 9.8, *Vending Machine Sales*, states, "*all schools with vending machines must have a signed contract stipulating commissions due to the school and frequency that these commissions are remitted.*"

The acting principal was not aware of the guideline that prohibits signing a contract with a term that exceeds one year. Lack of awareness of the requirement to have a signed vending contract was also expressed.

Failure to properly administer contracts on behalf of the school has resulted in noncompliance with the BOE's policies and procedures and may result in inadequate maintenance of the vending machines and insufficient commission revenue being realized from the vending machines operation.

Recommendations: The principal must review the school's picture contract with the vendor to ensure that the term is adjusted to one year as required. Effort must be made to contact the vending machine company to secure a vending contract for the vending machines in operation at the school. The principal must contact Purchasing and Supply Services to identify an alternate vendor in the absence of a signed vending contract.

2025.06 Administration of Voided Checks

The following 9 instances occurred where voided checks were not properly administered.

- A. ***Checks Not Properly Voided:*** There were 4 instances where checks were not properly voided with the signature removal line.
- B. ***Voided Checks Not Entered in SFO:*** There were 5 instances where voided checks were not entered into SFO.

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The APM, Section 4.5.3.2 *Summary of Check Disbursement Procedures* requires accounting for a physical check when an error is made at the time of processing or when a check is damaged. Voided checks are required to be defaced by removal of the signature and account lines. Section 4.5.3.4 (e), *Check Writing* states that all checks are required to be included in SFO as part of the financial records for supporting expenditures of the school.

Improper administration of checks occurred prior to the former recordkeeping staff's retirement in October 2023. Therefore, no explanation was provided for the improperly administered voided checks in 7 instances. Reportedly, the remaining 2 improperly defaced checks occurred due to the recordkeeping staff's oversight.

Inappropriate administration of voided checks exposes the school to check fraud through potential unauthorized negotiations.

Recommendations: The recordkeeping staff should ensure that checks are properly voided by removal of the signature and account lines. Also, all voided checks should be entered into SFO. The principal should perform periodic reviews of voided checks to ensure compliance with BOE policies and procedures relative to defacement.

2025.07 Fundraiser Reports Not Completed

The school did not comply with the requirements for administering fundraisers during the audit period. The school conducted approximately 14 clubs and organizations fundraisers and 7 school-wide fundraisers for the audit period FY 2018 – FY 2024. However, Fundraiser Requests and Initiation Forms and Fundraiser Completion Reports were not completed for the sponsored fundraisers. Also, annual reports summarizing the fundraising activities for FY 2018 through FY 2024 were not completed to support compliance with the fundraising requirements.

Administrative Procedure 5135.1, *Fundraising* requires schools to complete the Fundraiser Request and Initiation Forms and Fundraiser Completion Reports for sponsored fundraisers. Annual reports summarizing fundraising activities for all fundraisers are also required. These documents must be maintained on file for public and auditor review upon request.

Reportedly, neither the acting principal nor the recordkeeping staff were aware of the fundraising requirements. The former principal transferred to a new location and the former recordkeeping staff retired from PGCPs. Therefore, further explanation could not be obtained regarding the noncompliance.

Failure to complete fundraiser forms constitutes non-compliance with BOE policies and procedures. In addition, it decreases the transparency of fundraising activities and the associated profits to interested parents and community members. It could not be readily determined whether

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the school's fundraisers yielded an overall profit. As a result, pertinent financial information for the school's administrators to make fiscal decisions was not available.

Recommendations: The principal must enforce the requirement for completion of all required fundraiser report documents including the Fundraiser Request and Initiation Forms and Fundraiser Completion Reports for all sponsored fundraisers held during the school year. In addition, the principal or designee should complete a report at the end of the school year to summarize fundraising activities held. Required reports must be maintained on file for public and auditor review.

STATUS OF PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS

The previous audit report for Melwood Elementary School was issued for the period ended October 31, 2017. During the previous audit, neither the principal nor the recordkeeping staff was on staff. There were **6** findings noted as a result of that audit of which **5** findings still exist and all are summarized below:

- **Mismanagement of Funds Received** – Condition partially still exists. **See Finding 2024.02** regarding *Delinquent Deposits*.
- **Mismanagement of Disbursements** – Condition partially still exists. **See Finding 2024.06** *Administration of Voided Checks*.
- **Excessive Spending in Principal Sponsored Activities Funds Account** – Controls appear to be working.
- **Administration of Vending Machines** – Condition still exists. **See Finding 2024.05** *Administration of Contracts*.
- **Delinquent Financial Reporting** – Condition still exists. **See Finding 2024.03** *Financial Reporting Requirements*.
- **Administration of Monetary Transmittal Form Envelopes** – Condition still exists. **See Finding 2024.01** *Administration of Financial Records*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank the principal and staff of Melwood Elementary School for their cooperation and assistance extended during the audit.



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Audit Report Appendix - Findings Timeline
March 31, 2024

| AUDIT FINDINGS | Andrew Dalton, Former Principal (8/01/16 - 8/13/23) | Summer Carter, Acting Principal (8/14/23 - Current) | Beverly Gore, Former Recordkeeping Staff (8/16/13 - 10/31/23) | Anthony Garrett, Recordkeeping Staff (11/13/23 - Current) |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| 2025.01 Administration of Financial Records | X | X | X | X |
| 2025.02 Delinquent Deposits | N/A | X | N/A | X |
| 2025.03 Financial Reporting Requirements | X | X | X | X |
| 2024.05 Restricted Account Fund Deficits | X | X | X | X |
| 2025.05 Administration of Contracts | X | X | X | X |
| 2025.06 Administration of Voided Checks | X | X | X | X |
| 2025.07 Fundraiser Reports Not Completed | X | X | X | X |
| | | | | |
| Total | 6 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| | | | | |

Prince George's County Public Schools
Internal Audit Department
School/Office: Melwood Elementary School – School Activity Funds
Response Due Date: October 4, 2024

| | Findings | Recommendations | Action Plan | Corrective Action Date | Implemented | Status Partially Implemented | Not Implemented |
|---|--|---|--|------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2024.01 <u>Administration of Financial Records</u> | <p>The following 20 financial records were not provided to substantiate SAF transactions during the audit period:</p> <p>3 Disbursements: School Funds Expenditure Forms (SFEF): FY 2024 (2); FY2022 (1)</p> <p>13 Canceled Checks: FY 2018 (3); FY 2019 (10)</p> <p>3 Voided Checks: FY 2019 (2); FY 2021 (1)</p> <p>End of Year Monetary Transmittal Forms – MTFs for FY 2018. (This condition was noted during the previous audit for the period ended October 31, 2017.)</p> | <p>The current principal must establish an effective records management system, which ensures that all financial documents are retained by fiscal year and are retrievable upon request. The principal should complete a periodic review of financial records to determine proper organization and retention.</p> | <p>The book keeper has established an effective financial records management office system. There are a set of 3 binders dedicated to the Student Activities Fund.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MTFs - (tracking log and completed MTFs) This document is available electronically for the Principal and bookkeeper. 2. Monthly Reconciliation reports. 3. General SAF information and account data. <p>A desk file (separately) contains check expenditures, voided checks, and other blank documents needed. Prior year records have been cataloged in boxes, noting the year and file types (MTF's, etc).</p> | May 2024 | July 2024 | Implemented | |

CFO/Principal/Director's Signature Jewel Custis
Date 10/4/24

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <p>2024.02 <u>Delinquent</u> <u>Deposits</u></p> | <p>There were at least 2 instances where collections were not deposited with the financial institution in a timely manner as required. The delinquency was 5 and 6 days. <i>(This condition was noted during the previous audit for the period ended October 31, 2017.)</i></p> | <p>The principal must designate specific time for daily processing of remittances. The recordkeeping staff must be held accountable for depositing funds timely with the financial institution. The principal should conduct periodic reviews of deposits and MTF logs to ensure compliance.</p> | <p>The financial record keeping staff will make deposits daily as needed. Time will be provided during the duty day to make the deposits or the financial recordkeeping staff will leave at 2 pm to make deposits before the bank closes.</p> <p>Deposit slips will be made available for the Principal and Assistant Principal in the case that the financial record keeper is absent and funds need to be deposited.</p> <p>During the submission of the Trimester Financial Report, the principal will conduct a review of the deposits and MTF logs to ensure compliance.</p> | <p>May 2024</p> | <p>July 2024</p> | <p>Implemented</p> |
| <p>2024.03 <u>Financial</u> <u>Reporting</u> <u>Requirements</u></p> | <p>There were at least 5 instances where monthly bank reconciliations and monthly financial reports were not timely prepared. This resulted in untimely reviews by the principal. The delinquencies ranged from 7 to 63 days. <i>(This condition was noted during the previous audit for the period that ended in October 2017.)</i></p> | <p>The principal and recordkeeping staff should implement internal controls to ensure that the monthly financial reporting process is performed in accordance with the scheduled requirements included in the APM (bank reconciliation within 7 days of receiving the statement from the bank and the completion of financial reports by the 15th of each month).</p> | <p>The principal has access to online banking and receives electronic banking statements on the first of each month. This statement is provided to the bookkeeper enabling completion of a monthly bank reconciliation before the 15th of each month.</p> <p>The bookkeeper has received all available financial training to date.</p> <p>The Principal and Bookkeeper meet bi-monthly to review financial records and the school budgets and spending.</p> | <p>May 2024</p> | <p>August 2024</p> | <p>Implemented</p> |

CFO/Principal/Director's Signature *Jewel Crest*
Date 10/4/24

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----------|-----------|-----------------------|--|
| | | The principal and recordkeeping staff should meet monthly to review and approve the financial reports to ensure compliance. Also, the principal should contact the Assistant Treasurer's Office to request access to the school's online bank statements to facilitate timely financial reporting. | | | | | |
| 2024.04 <u>Restricted Fund</u> <u>Account Deficits</u> | The Spirit Wear Fundraiser account deficit resulted from a theft of approximately \$800.00 that occurred at the school in December 2023. Security Services was contacted and results of the investigation are currently under supervisory review. The Yearbook deficit was initially noted in FY 2017 in the amount of (\$30.30) and increased to the current deficit of \$728.40 in June 30, 2019 due to projected yearbook sales being less than actual yearbook sales. The Time for Kids deficit occurred in | The principal should contact Financial and Reporting Services to obtain guidance for resolving the deficit account balances. The principal should contact Security Services to obtain the results of the investigation into theft of SAF which caused the Spirit Wear Fundraiser deficit. Appropriate action must be taken to recover the stolen funds. | Restitution has been garnered for the stolen funds that were dedicated to The Spirit Wear fundraiser. Melwood ES is awaiting DA funds transfer from Payroll to complete an incur the deficit on this line item. The Yearbook and Time for Kids line items are dormant negative accounts that will be removed by Student Activity Funds staff. Management of all funds will occur by two fiscal officers of MES (Principal and Bookkeeper). The Assistant Principal will act in the absence of the Principal. All funds will be placed in the safe until a bank deposit can be made. | May 2024 | July 2024 | Partially Implemented | |

CFO/Principal/Director's Signature Jewel Crest
Date 10/4/24

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|----------|-------------|-----------------------|--|
| | FY 2015. No further activity has occurred in the Time for Kids fund account. An explanation was not obtained for this deficit as the then principal and recordkeeping staff are no longer at the school. | | | | | | |
| 2024.05 <u>Administration of Contracts</u> | The acting principal signed a multi-year contract(2 years) with Lifetouch Picture Company. Also, there are 4 vending machines located in the teachers' lounge. There was no signed contract available to substantiate the school's vending activities. <i>(This condition was noted during the previous audit for the period that ended in October 2017.)</i> | The principal must review the school's picture contract with the vendor to ensure that the term is adjusted to one year as required. Effort must be made to contact the vending machine company to secure a vending contract for the vending machines in operation at the school. The principal must contact Purchasing and Supply Services to identify an alternate vendor in the absence of a signed vending contract. | The Lifetouch picture contract was amended to reflect 1 school year. The current administration in conjunction with a Lifetouch representative revised the contract and updated specifics in reference to picture dates, yearbook photos, and the length of the contract. Currently, there are 2 vending machines in the teacher's lounge. The vendor has not supplied a contract and the vending machines are scheduled for removal. | May 2024 | August 2024 | Partially Implemented | |
| 2024.06 <u>Administration of Voided Checks</u> | The following 9 instances occurred where voided checks were not properly administered. | The recordkeeping staff should ensure that checks are properly voided by removal of the signature and account lines. Also, | The Bookkeeper has been trained on the correct procedure for voiding checks which includes: 1. Cut off the signature line 2. Remove the account number. | May 2024 | July 2024 | Implemented | |

CFO/Principal/Director's Signature Jewel Crest
Date 10/4/24

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | <p>Checks Not Properly Voided: There were 4 instances where checks were not properly voided with the signature removal line.</p> <p>Voided Checks Not Entered in SFO: There were 5 instances where voided checks were not entered into SFO.</p> | <p>all voided checks should be entered into SFO. The principal should perform periodic reviews of voided checks to ensure compliance with BOE policies and procedures relative to defacement.</p> | <p>3. In School Cash Online, the check shall be voided, providing a proof sheet.</p> <p>Any voided checks will be reviewed during the bi-monthly financial meetings with the Bookkeeper.</p> | | | |
| <p>2024.07 Fundraiser Reports Not Completed</p> | <p>The school did not comply with the requirements for administering fundraisers during the audit period. The school conducted approximately 14 clubs and organizations fundraisers and 7 school-wide fundraisers for the audit period FY 2018 – FY 2024. However, Fundraiser Requests and Initiation Forms and Fundraiser Completion Reports were not completed for the sponsored fundraisers. Also, annual reports summarizing the fundraising activities for FY 2018 through FY 2024</p> | <p>The principal must enforce the requirement for completion of all required fundraiser report documents including the Fundraiser Request and Initiation Forms and Fundraiser Completion Reports for all sponsored fundraisers held during the school year. In addition, the principal or designee should complete a report at the end of the school year to summarize fundraising activities held. Required reports must be maintained on file for public and auditor</p> | <p>The Bookkeeper has been made aware and received a copy of Admin. Procedure 5135 (Fundraising). A fundraiser request shall accompany a preliminary report completed and approved by the Bookkeeper and the Principal. After the conclusion of the fundraiser a completion report entailing expenses and outcomes shall be filled out by the person who submitted the initial fundraiser request.</p> <p>The Principal will complete a EOY Fundraising Summary Report at the end of each fiscal year.</p> | <p>May 2024</p> | <p>July 2024</p> | <p>Implemented</p> |

CFO/Principal/Director's Signature Jewel Rust
Date 10/4/24

