MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Ensuring a bright future for every child

COMPLIANCE
October 2021

UPDATES & USEFUL TIPS
Creating a Culture of Compliance

TIMELY PAYMENT OF INVOICES

All invoices must be paid within 45 days of receipt unless there are extenuating circumstances. See Miss. Code Ann. §37-7-304(2)(3). Vendors should submit invoices to the Office of Accounting as directed via mail on the approved purchase order sent to vendors or directly to accountspayable@mdek12.org.

- Once invoices are received, the Office of Accounting places the time and date stamp and the PO stamp (if applicable) on the invoices and submits an Information Request Slip along with the stamped invoice to the appropriate program office for processing.

- Upon receipt of the Information Request Slip from Accounting, the program office within seven (7) days of receipt of the Information Request Slip must complete the accounting stamp if a PO is applicable in its entirety or submit a requisition and email the invoice packet (Information Request Slip, requisition—if applicable, invoice, and a copy of the purchase order—if applicable) to accountspayable@mdek12.org.

- The Office of Accounting will process the invoice packet in MAGIC to route to DFA if threshold for automatic approval is not met.

Please work with your vendors to encourage sending invoices to the Office of Accounting/ Accounts Payable.

PROPERTY

MDE Make a Note

Kenya Gardner is no longer with the agency. Please forward all emails concerning Property to Christopher Anthony (canthony@mdek12.org) and Yulanda Wesley

Inside this issue

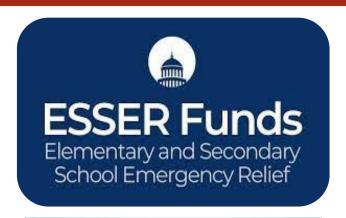### Special points of Interest

- Look for information on upcoming Compliance training opportunities
- Make sure your inventory checklist are up to date

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE

To report suspected fraudulent activity, go to the MDE Home webpage and select the Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse link. (**https://compliance.mdek12.org/Fraud/**)

ESSER Funds
Elementary and Secondary
School Emergency Relief

As you are aware the Mississippi has received approximately $2.5B in Elementary Secondary School Emergency Relief ESSER I, II, and ARP (ESSER III) funds with most of these funds going to the local school districts. The purpose of these funds is to address the impact COVID-19 has had and is still having on elementary and secondary schools to ensure the health and safety of our teachers and students.

The State has a 9.5% set-aside from these funds which must be used to provide direct support to the school districts. In addition, with ESSER III, the law outlined some specific uses of the fund such as learning loss, afterschool programs, and summer enrichment programs.

"Accountability is the glue that ties commitment to result."

Bob Proctor

√ **Develop Written Policies & Procedures**

Although MDE has procedures for procurement and accounting processes. It is important to develop internal procedures for your staff to guide fund obligation, expenditure, and program management. They provide written notice to all employees of the agency's expectations and practices; provide direction in the correct way of processing transactions; serve as reference material; and provide a training tool for new employees. Written procedures also provide a source of continuity and a basis for uniformity. Without clear, written and current procedures, an internal control structure is weaker because practices, controls, guidelines and processes may not be applied consistently, correctly and uniformly throughout the agency.

√ **Perform Internal Reviews Regularly**

Reviews are often an underappreciated internal control. When performed correctly and routinely, they provide a powerful control to identify and correct errors on a timely basis. Programs should review all contracts and invoices on at least a monthly basis and record any necessary adjustments in a timely manner.

√ **Review & Approve Processes/Transactions**

When a significant process or transaction is performed within your program, there should always be another level of review and approval. The reviewer should have the experience and knowledge to be able to identify errors and omissions. The approval should be documented to verify that a review has been done. Review and approval help to reduce uncorrected errors, irregularities and inaccurate or incomplete information in funds, accounts, and reports.

√ **Provide adequate training to Staff**

Employees should be properly trained and authorized to perform their duties. It is important to remember that training should be considered an ongoing process and staff training needs should be periodically evaluated to consider changes in business processes, technology, new laws and regulations, etc.

√ **Maintain Adequate Supporting Documentation**

Auditors and program monitors often assume that "if it isn't documented, it didn't happen." Adequate supporting documentation provides the hard evidence to properly verify that the appropriate processes and controls are being used.

If you see any evidence of fraud, waste or abuse, say something!

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PAYROLL AND TRAVEL

Angela Oxendine is our new payroll accountant. She will process all contract workers' timesheets. Please forward all emails concerning contract workers' timesheets to Angela (aoxendine@mdek12.org) and *Yulanda Wesley* (ywesley@mdek12.org).

Ammie Rayburn will continue to process all contract workers' travel, board and commission members' travel and all employees' travel. Please forward all emails concerning travel to Ammie (arayburn@mdek12.org) and Yulanda Wesley (ywesley@mdeK12.org).

The lodging rates for specified areas for October 2021 through September 2022 has changed.

* **Oxford (Lafayette County)** $99.00
* **Southaven (Desoto County)** $109.00
* **Starkville (Oktibbeha County)** $103.00

Standard rate for all locations without specified rates is $96.00

Travel Resources

MDE Travel Policy

MDE Travel Training

DFA Travel Policy