



J. Kevin Stitt
Office of the Governor
State of Oklahoma

July 7, 2022

Via FedEx Delivery

The Honorable Cindy Byrd
Oklahoma State Auditor & Inspector
2300 North Lincoln Boulevard, Room 123
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

RE: Audit request of Tulsa Public Schools

Dear Auditor Byrd:

In response to a threefold series of troubling events described in more detail below, I hereby respectfully request a special audit of Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) pursuant to the powers vested in me by Sections 212 and 213(C) of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

First, in a letter dated July 1, 2022, Tulsa School Board Members for Districts 3 and 4 disclosed to me that most board members were left “in the dark” while the TPS Superintendent conducted an internal investigation into what one *Tulsa World* article described as “almost \$20,000 in irregularities tied to a vendor contract within the district’s Talent Management Department.” According to Tulsa School Board Members, there is “substantiating evidence” that this mishandling of public funds “is not a one-time situation but a pattern of operation.”

Second, pursuant to federal law passed in response to the coronavirus pandemic, TPS has been allocated three rounds of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, totaling a little more than \$205 million. Although ESSER funds were intended to minimize disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic and support the well-being of students, TPS stayed closed over 300 days—longer than any other school district.

Third and finally, sources have publicly indicated TPS may have conducted a training in contravention of House Bill 1775 and the administrative rules adopted in response to the legislation, which banned the teaching of critical race theory.

A “special audit”—defined by 74 O.S. § 213(C)(3)—includes but is not limited to “a compliance audit,” which is “designed to review items for management’s compliance with statutes, rules, policies and internal control procedures.” Such an audit is, therefore, the appropriate response to this troubling series of events.

I look forward to reviewing the findings of this special audit and appreciate the State Auditor & Inspector's assistance with enforcing the rule of law and safeguarding taxpayers' hard-earned dollars.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Stitt". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "K" and "S".

J. Kevin Stitt
Governor