

Springboard Education in America Family FAQ

June 13, 2019

About the Incident

Q: Why was Springboard Education in America (Springboard) programming removed from District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)?

A: After receiving a report of alleged misconduct at a school by an employee of after school programming provider Springboard Education in America, DCPS reported the matter to the Child and Family Services Administration (CFSA) and confirmed that the matter had been reported to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

Springboard made commitments to DCPS via a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) related to compliance with various District requirements, including criminal background checks for all staff working with DCPS children. Once DCPS learned that Springboard was unable to provide adequate verification that all staff had passed a criminal background check, DCPS immediately suspended Springboard programming.

Q: Have any other concerns been raised about Springboard staff or programming?

A: At this we have not identified any further concerns with Springboard. However, DCPS is currently conducting a review of Springboard programming at our school sites to assess its compliance with DCPS requirements.

Q: Will Springboard provide a refund for suspended services?

A: Springboard has informed DCPS that families who paid for Springboard services for the last week of school will be refunded. Additional information about refunds will be provided to impacted families by Springboard.

DCPS' Future Partnership with Springboard

Q: What role, if any, will Springboard have in the summer programming at DCPS schools?

A: Springboard Education in America does not provide programming at DCPS sites during the summer. Note, DCPS does partner with a separate nonprofit organization, Springboard Collaborative, to provide early literacy summer programming.

Q: Will Springboard programming also be suspended for next school year?

A: At this time, DCPS has not determined whether Springboard will continue to provide programming next school year. This decision will be communicated to families once DCPS has completed its review of

Springboard's compliance with DCPS requirements. An update on our progress will be provided in the coming weeks.

System Processes

Q: What is the procedure for notifying parents when incidents of this nature occur?

A: When allegations are made that a student may have been placed in harm's way, our first action is to ensure the potential threat is removed from the school and contact the parent(s) of the student(s) involved. If the alleged conduct is criminal in nature, we will notify the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), and if there is an allegation of child abuse or neglect we will also contact the Child Family Services Agency (CFSA). These actions occur as quickly as possible, typically on the same day DCPS becomes aware of the allegations. Once we have gathered enough information to provide a meaningful update to the public, our next step is to provide relevant information to the school community and provide updates as needed. In providing updates regarding matters being investigated by MPD and/or CFSA, we ensure we follow guidance from those agencies regarding the release of potentially confidential information concerning the investigation.

Q: Why were details about the incident not shared? Why did we have to find out from the news?

A: It is our goal to share relevant and timely information with our school communities anytime an incident happens in one of our schools. However, we must balance this goal with the need to protect the privacy of any children or families involved in the matter and to ensure active investigations are not compromised. To that end, we rely on guidance from MPD regarding when information about a pending investigation can be shared with the public and the nature of the information that can be shared. We are working with MPD to ensure there is better understanding and coordination between our agencies around when information about an investigation can be shared with the public by DCPS.

Q: What, if any, role does DCPS Central Office have in oversight of before- and after-care providers working at individual school sites?

A: The DCPS Central Office reviews all providers looking to work with DCPS schools. All providers must be approved through this process before providing any services at a DCPS school. Once approved, this status is valid for three school years. This vetting process requires the provider to complete an online application in which the provider shares an overview of its program model, its alignment to DCPS goals and priorities, and representations regarding its financial sustainability. The provider also agrees to follow DCPS processes and procedures, which includes having all personnel who work with DCPS students undergoing criminal background checks. These requirements are then included in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with DCPS.

Q: Does DCPS have any role in oversight of background checks for employees of before - and after-care providers?

A: All staff, contractors, and volunteers who work with DCPS students and schools must complete the DCPS criminal background check clearance process before beginning work in our schools. DCPS contracts with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which reviews prospective employee, contractor,

and volunteer information against the FBI database and reports concerns to DCPS. Organizations that collaborate with DCPS to provide before or after school services enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) confirming that they will adhere to these requirements.

Q: What procedural safeguards will be enacted to ensure our children are safe when vetting Community Based Organizations (CBOs)?

A: We will conduct a comprehensive review of programs this summer to ensure compliance with all DCPS requirements. Should we need to make any changes to service, you will be notified by your principal.

Q: What additional steps will DCPS be taking moving forward to prevent recurrence?

A: DCPS will be conducting a review of all programs, including a review of provider staffing plans and ensuring compliance with all DCPS requirements, before the beginning of the school year.

In addition, we will ensure that as part of school opening activities, we integrate a personal safety lesson for each grade and continue to ensure that staff are aware of their mandatory reporting obligations.

Q: Who can parents contact if they have questions?

A: We have two teams at central office which are in place to address family and community concerns and ensure appropriate follow up:

- The DCPS Office of Integrity Team and the Comprehensive Alternative Resolution & Equity (CARE) Team. The Office of Integrity Team can be reached at dcps.cio@k12.dc.gov or by phone at (202) 499-0525.
- The CARE Team can be reached via email at dcps.care@dc.gov or by phone at (202) 442-5405.