



State of South Carolina
Office of the Inspector General

April 17, 2026

OIG File No.: 2025-0011-I

The Honorable Shawn T. Ragin, D. Min.
Chairman
Sumter School District Board of Trustees
1345 Wilson Hall
Sumter, SC 29150

Dr. Gerald Gary
Superintendent
Sumter School District
1345 Wilson Hall
Sumter, SC 29150

Re: Potential violation of S.C. Code of Laws and Sumter School District Board Policies
by Brian Alston-Carter, Vice Chairman

Dear Chairman Ragin and Superintendent Gary:

Attached to this letter is a copy of an email sent from a Sumter School District (District) Board of Trustees (Board) member that potentially violated state law and Board policies.

During the investigation into the funding, procurement and construction of the Crestwood High School Athletic project, the Office of the State Inspector General (SCOIG) became aware of an email sent from a District Board member to a District administrator that directed the production of all documentation and communication between the District and the SCOIG. The SCOIG confirmed the authenticity of the email as the personal email assigned to Brian Alston-Carter, Vice Chairman of the District's Board of Trustees.

The SCOIG notified the District's counsel that the email and the efforts to obtain the communications and documentation between the SCOIG and the District is protected under SC Code of Laws, §1-6-35(E). The District's counsel informed the SCOIG the issue was addressed internally with Mr. Alston-Carter and the explanation provided by Mr. Alston-Carter was to ensure that the District was cooperating with the SCOIG investigation.

Regardless, the SCOIG investigation was unnecessarily hindered by Mr. Alston-Carter's actions and compromised the integrity of the investigation. Sumter School District Board policy BC ("Board Member Conduct") provides that "*...Individual board members...do not have independent authority to speak for the board and should make no out-of-meeting commitments unless directed to do so on behalf of the board.*"

Mr. Alston-Carter's email attempted to identify the individual witnesses whose identities are protected by SC Code of Laws, §1-6-100, as well as the granular details of the investigation. SCOIG requests for information is authorized pursuant to SC Code of Laws, §1-6-50(A)(4) and §1-6-20(E).

I am bringing this to your attention for appropriate action as the chair for the Sumter School District Board of Trustees. Mr. Alston-Carter potentially violated several South Carolina statutes [§1-6-35(E), §1-6-20(E), §1-6-50(A)(4), §1-6-100], District Board policies BC and BBAA, as well as SC Code of Laws, §59-19-60.

I am available to answer any questions you or members of your staff may have regarding the report or the investigation. I may be reached at (803) 896-1287 (direct) or (803) 605- 3161 (cell).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian D. Lamkin".

Brian D. Lamkin
State Inspector General

Cc: The Honorable Henry Dargan McMaster, Governor of South Carolina

Attachment: *Email-Board member Violation of SC Code of Laws and Board Policies*

From: **Brian Alston-Carter** <alston4sc@gmail.com>

Date: Sat, Aug 9, 2025 at 10:18 AM

Subject: Request for Information

To: Chauntae Scott <chauntae.scott@sumterschools.net>

CC: Shawn Ragin <shawn.ragin@sumterschools.net>, William Wright <william.wright@sumterschools.net>, Gloria Lee <gloria.lee@sumterschools.net>

Good Morning,

I am requesting all documentation that has been requested by the Office of Inspector General and Office of School Facilities to be shared with the Board of Trustees. This request is not limited to the documentation but inclusive of communication to and from the District and investigative parties. In addition, I am requesting a complete organizational chart of Sumter School District to include ELT and respective departments.

As this information should be readily available, I am requesting that this be submitted to the full Board of Trustees by close of business on Monday, August 11, 2025. If there are any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Thank you,

The Honorable Brian L. Alston-Carter
Vice Chairman
Sumter School District
Board of Trustees, Area One

Palmer Memorial Chapel
Special Assistant to Lorin Peri Palmer
Apprentice Funeral Director & Clinical Director