



October 12, 2022

Representative Steve Drazkowski
[Sent via e-mail: rep.Steve.Drazkowski@house.mn]

Dear Representative Drazkowski:

I am writing to follow-up on the letter you sent last week regarding the alleged misuse of public funds designated for feeding children during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, you asked:

At what point [was the Office of the Legislative Auditor] made aware of the alleged fraud by the Department of Education or Governor Walz. If you could supply the date that the initial notification was made and whether your office was updated as developments arose, that would suffice.

The Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) has no record that the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) or Governor Walz notified OLA about the potential misuse of public money. In response to questions, an MDE official told us that they called OLA and notified a staff person (or left a voicemail) about the alleged fraud in “mid- to late March, 2021.” OLA has a fairly robust process for tracking and reviewing allegations, complaints, and agency notifications; we have no record of such a call taking place. Further, we searched our phone records for March 2021, and found no record of the MDE official calling any OLA staff.

OLA learned about the alleged fraud when it was first reported in the news in late January 2022. On February 14, 2022, OLA sent a letter to MDE requesting information regarding the department’s oversight of Feeding Our Future. MDE responded to that request on March 4, 2022. In September, OLA initiated a special review of MDE’s oversight of Feeding Our Future. We plan to release a report in early 2023.

Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Randall".

Judy Randall
Legislative Auditor