

# Professional Standards Audit

Internal Audit Report  
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## **BACKGROUND:**

The Office of Professional Standards is designated by the Superintendent to conduct investigations into alleged violations of district school board policies, management directives, and the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida, which governs employee behavior. It is this office's responsibility to conduct thorough and impartial investigations and provide guidance and support to both school-based and district administrators in matters of employee behavior and performance. The team also provides services to schools and departments with the Fitness-For-Duty evaluations and employee assistance program, reporting of arrests, and the drug and alcohol-free workplace.

In recent years, the department has experienced an increase in workload, reflecting the growing demand for its services. The table below shows the total number of cases handled over the past three fiscal years and the year-over-year changes:

Fiscal Year	Cases Handled	Changes from Previous Year
2022/23	2,667	-
2023/24	2,716	+49
2024/25	3,296	+580

Source: OCPS Professional Standard Office

This upward trend underscores the critical role the office plays in maintaining professional standards and supporting the district in addressing complex employee-related matters.

## **OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY:**

### **Objectives**

The objective of this audit was to evaluate the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Professional Standards department. Specifically, it assessed whether the department conducts thorough and impartial investigations, provides appropriate guidance to the district regarding employee behavior and performance, and manages the Relief of Duty (ROD) and Fit-for-Duty (FOD) processes efficiently.

*The Office of Professional Standards investigates employee conduct and supports administrators, while managing fit-for-duty evaluations, arrest reporting, and workplace compliance programs.*

*The total number of cases handled rose from 2,667 in fiscal year 2022/23 to 2,716 in fiscal year 2023/24, and then 3,296 in fiscal year 2024/25.*

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### Scope

The scope of the audit covers fiscal year 2025, specifically activities conducted between July 1, 2024, and May 31, 2025.

### Methodology

We conducted this audit in accordance with The Institute of Internal Auditor's *Global Internal Audit Standards (Standards)* and performed procedures as deemed necessary to provide reasonable assurance regarding the audit objective. Internal Auditing is an independent, risk-based, and objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It strengthens the organization's ability to create, protect, and sustain value by providing the board and management with independent, risk-based, and objective assurance, advice, insight, and foresight. In accordance with the *Standards*, we are required to note any non-conformance with the *Standards* with reasons and impact on audit results and conclusions, and any material deficiencies in accordance with Florida Statutes, School Board Policy and sound business practices. We also provide recommendations to enhance controls and improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

The audit began with interviews of department staff to understand key processes. Internal Audit (IA) reviewed applicable Florida Statutes (Section 1012.796(d)(1)) and obtained the department's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to identify control activities. Audit procedures included verifying monitoring activities for compliance, reviewing supporting documentation, and confirming that Professional Standards employees adhered to Management Directives and Ethics and Compliance (KCE) policy.

IA directly accessed the department's Case IQ (iSight) system. The case population consisted of 3,186 cases from July 1, 2024, through May 31, 2025, which included the following case types: Professional Standards, Inquiry, Fit for Duty, Safe Driver, and Work Performance. Some cases remained open at the time of extraction.

*Our scope included activities conducted between July 1, 2024, through May 31, 2025.*

*We conducted this audit in accordance with The Institute of Internal Auditor's Global Internal Audit Standards (Standards) and performed procedures as deemed necessary to provide reasonable assurance regarding the audit objective.*

*The audit reviewed departmental processes, SOP compliance, and state regulations using interviews, document checks, and a sample of 40 cases from 3,186, finding no material deficiencies.*

IA also confirmed that Professional Standards employees completed the required Management Directives 2024–2025 training. Completion certificates demonstrate awareness and affirmation of Management Directives and KCE policy.

**Case Population Overview:**<sup>1</sup>

<b>By Case Status:</b>	
Closed	2,314
Open	872
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,186</b>

<b>By Case Type:</b>	
PS	2,949
Inquiry	98
Fit For Duty	12
Safe Driver	123
Work Performance	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,186</b>

Based on assessed risk, IA used weighted judgmental sampling to select 40 cases across all types and statuses, forming a representative sample for review. Each case contained multiple supporting files, ranging from as few as 3–4 to more than 10, making the review process significantly more extensive than the case count alone suggests.

A series of targeted tests were performed on the samples to assess specific attributes. The following criteria were tested:

- Timeliness of Case Assignment (based on case open vs. reported date)
- Documented Justification for Action Taken
- Pre-determination Meeting (PDM) Conducted When Applicable
- Timely Referral to Professional Practices Services (PPS)
- Presence of Full Investigative Summary for Serious Outcomes
- Availability of Supporting Documentation
- Recorded Outcomes for Closed Cases (e.g., Directives, Suspension, Dismissal)

*Tests assessed case handling for timeliness, documentation, required meetings, referrals, investigative summaries, supporting evidence, recorded outcomes, closure notifications, and recommendations for school board action.*

<sup>1</sup> IA directly accessed the department’s Case IQ (iSight) system

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- Closure Notification Sent to Complainant and Subject
- Recommendations for School Board Action, if applicable

The audit focused on these tests to evaluate compliance with departmental SOPs and applicable state regulations. No material deficiencies were noted.

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

The Professional Standards department consistently demonstrates strong procedural compliance with its Standard Operating Procedures and effectively upholds the principles of professional conduct for Florida education professionals. Their commitment to case management supports a culture of accountability and integrity within the district.

The Professional Standards team continues to demonstrate a high level of professionalism, responsiveness, and dedication to the district's values. Their openness to feedback and continuous improvement is commendable and positions the department well for sustained success in supporting the educational community.

### **RESULTS AND CONCLUSION:**

IA reviewed sampled cases and processes within the Professional Standards department and confirmed overall compliance with established procedures. Consistent with the latest Auditor General's report, one instance of untimely filing with Professional Practices Services (PPS) was noted. Management has already taken corrective action; therefore, no formal finding was issued, and the matter was communicated. No additional audit findings were identified.

The department is encouraged to maintain strong practices while implementing measures to ensure timely filing within state-mandated timeframes and to keep procedures clear and concise. These efforts will help sustain compliance, reduce risk, and strengthen operational efficiency.

*The Professional Standards department ensures compliance and accountability while promoting integrity and continuous improvement to support the district's educational community.*

*IA noted one already corrected untimely PPS filing, and no additional audit findings were identified.*

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**Overall Conclusion:** Our overall conclusion is that the Professional Standards department was generally compliant with its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and demonstrated effective practices in upholding professional conduct standards. All tested attributes were met. As part of the audit scope, IA also reviewed Relief of Duty cases involving Fitness-For-Duty evaluations. Overall, the department's operations were found to be functioning effectively in service to the district.

We wish to thank the Office Professional Standards for their cooperation and assistance with this audit.

*Our overall conclusion is that the Professional Standards department was generally compliant with its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and demonstrated effective practices in upholding professional conduct.*