

**APS INVESTIGATION OF
GRADY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM**

MARCH 5, 2013

Date of Complaint

An anonymous complaint (Exhibit A) was received via fax in the Department of Student Relations on November 8, 2013. The complaint contains allegations of address fraud and recruiting as follows:

Allegations of Address Fraud and Recruiting

1. Over 85% of the Grady HS football team members do not live in the area and are commuting from various neighborhoods throughout the metro Atlanta area.
2. There are 4 to 6 students on the Grady High School football team that previously attended Westlake High and transferred from our area to Grady High School. Students did not have a bona fide move into the Grady area. Students are using a false address, bogus utility bills, and other false information to enroll in Grady.
3. Coach on staff and his wife who is a teacher in the APS system have enrolled their children at Grady using a false address for multiple years.
4. Head Football Coach Ronnie Millen and Athletic Director Kathleen Washington allowed the process to continue or did not report to authorities or the board of education even when they know students live outside of the school zone.
5. A number of the students on the team have played recreational football over the years together.
6. There are 21 students on the football team that do not reside in the Grady High School attendance zone and are utilizing false addresses to attend Grady High School. They are attending Grady and participating on the football team.
7. Grady HS has a large number of parents who are using grandmothers, aunts or relatives' addresses to falsely enroll students in Grady High School and none of them have actually moved into any of those residences.
8. APS is not monitoring the situation and holding parents accountable who supply fraudulent documents. Coaches are recruiting players outside of Grady's attendance zone, specifically from the Westlake area.
9. Coaches know that students reside outside of the zone and are dropping students off at their homes outside of the APS district.
10. The head coach and the coaching staff are aware that the students and parents falsified documents to attend the school.

Additional Allegations

During the investigation the following additional allegations were raised during witness interviews:

11. Student4 was participating in football practice at Grady High School during the summer and the student had not made a bona fide move into the school district.
12. Student50 and his parent were being harassed by other parents and students in the school and on the football team.
13. Coach Millen had a copy of the complaint and notified parents named on the list to get their affairs in order and to target whoever they believe contacted the school district.

Summary of Findings

Jeff Beggs, APS Athletic Director, was provided a copy of the complaint by Chantel Mullen, Dean of Student Discipline on November 11, 2013. Mr. Beggs was instructed by Ms. Mullen to keep the complaint confidential. Mr. Beggs was told that the coaches were not to be provided with a copy of the actual complaint or allowed to see the complaint. Mr. Beggs was advised not to share any specific allegations contained in the complaint with the coaches, but only to ask the following four questions:

1. Are you personally aware of any student-athlete currently playing football at Grady High School that lives outside the Grady cluster attendance zone?
2. Have you ever transported in your personal vehicle any student-athlete playing football at Grady High School who lives outside the Grady cluster attendance zone?
3. Have you ever spoken to or attempted to recruit student-athletes from outside the Grady cluster attendance zone to come to Grady High School to play football?
4. Is there any other information you would like to provide concerning this situation?

Mr. Beggs reviewed the complaint and met with the Grady HS coaching staff on November 12th. The Grady HS coaching staff currently consists of one head coach (R. Millen) and eight assistant coaches (D. Dowdell, M. Hazel, D. Mason, F. Shambry, D. Farley, R. Martin, C. Lawrence, W. Davison, and C. Anderson). Coach Millen is a full time APS teacher employee certified to teach Health & Physical Education (P-12). One coach is an APS hourly employee at Long Middle School. The remaining eight coaches are assistant coaches and are not full time employees of Atlanta Public Schools. The assistant coaches are classified as “community coaches” or “lay coaches.” Lay coaches are part-time employees who receive a stipend for coaching.

The coaching staff was notified that a complaint had been filed regarding address fraud and recruiting. Each coach denied having any knowledge of members of the football team residing outside of the Grady school zone or anyone recruiting players onto the Grady football team. The coaches were also asked whether they had given members of the football teams rides to their homes. With the exception of Assistant Coach Dowdell who indicated that he had given students rides to the Mid-Town and North Avenue MARTA stations, all assistant coaches stated that they had not given students a ride home.

Despite being instructed not to share the actual complaint or specifics of the allegations with anyone, it was learned that Mr. Beggs provided Coach Millen with the actual complaint on or about November 12, 2013.

A list of student names was provided to the Grady registrar with a request for all of the students’ residency documentation currently in the students’ Permanent Record (PR) folder. After a review of the documents, home visits began for students identified in the anonymous complaint.

The Grady HS social worker (Ms. Scott) was requested to complete home visits. She was provided the list of students and residency documents for the identified students. The social worker was not provided the anonymous complaint or provided information about why a home visit was needed for each student. The list of students was given in the same manner as a typical address home visit request. A second social worker assisted (Dr. White, Inman Middle School) due to the number of home visits needed.

The home visits began on November 14, 2013. Students and staff were on Thanksgiving break the week of November 25 – 29 and no home visits were completed during this time. By December 6 the

preliminary results of the home visits and records review for the identified 21 student athletes in the complaint were:

- 12 suspected address fraud;
- 6 addresses needed further verification including one address which appeared to be utilized by 8 students and was the address of an assistant coach (7 other students were non-football players); and
- 3 addresses appeared valid

On December 6, 2013, APS began an official investigation. During a press conference on December 9, 2013, Atlanta Public Schools outlined the allegations of the complaint. The anonymous complaint alleged that there were additional students on the football that were out of zone (address fraud) and that student athletes were recruited. On December 9, 2013 an interview notice was mailed to each student athlete's official address of record. Student athletes who were at school on December 9, 2013 were provided a copy of the interview notice to take home to their parents. Initial interviews with parents and students took place at Grady High School on December 11, 12 and 13.

A listing of the specific allegations and the associated findings follows:

ADDRESS FRAUD AND RECRUITING
<p><u>Allegation #1:</u></p> <p>Over 85% of the Grady school football team members do not live in the area and are commuting from various neighborhoods throughout the metro Atlanta area.</p> <p><u>Findings:</u></p> <p>There are approximately 58 players on the Grady High School football team. A document review was conducted for each student athlete which included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Permanent Record Folders<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Proof of Residency Documents○ Enrollment History○ Attendance Reports○ Returned Mail• Athletic Certification• Fulton County Property and Tax Records (if needed)• DeKalb County Property and Tax Records (if needed)• Clayton County Property and Tax Records (if needed)• Douglass County Property and Tax Records (if needed)• Address history – People Smart <p>Currently 14 student athletes are verified as enrolling at Grady High School with falsified documents: Student37; Student12; Student17; Student21; Student6; Student15; Student10; Student3; Student31; Student13; Student 11; Student7; Student14, and Student34.</p> <p>There are 13 student athletes whose residency remains under continued investigation.</p>

Allegation #2:

There are 4 to 6 students on the Grady High School football team that previously attended Westlake High and transferred from our area to Grady High School. Students did not have a bona fide move into the Grady area. Students are using a false address, bogus utility bills, and other false information to enroll in Grady.

Findings:

There are approximately 58 student athletes on the Grady High School football team. Initially, the enrollment records of the 21 students identified in the complaint were reviewed. The enrollment records reflected that 17 of the 21 students identified attended a school that was not in the Grady feeder pattern. Nine of the 17 students attended a school outside of the City of Atlanta prior to enrolling at Grady HS. Only one of the students in the group of 21 attended Westlake HS prior to enrollment at Grady HS. Three of the 17 students were zoned to attend Westlake HS but did not attend that school. They enrolled in other schools in Fulton County. Four of the 17 students used falsified documents to enroll in Grady HS.

One student reportedly resides in the Grady attendance zone. The residency began in August 2013, a few days before the start to the 2013-2014 school year. A home visit was made in November to the residence of this student which revealed the residence to be a studio apartment. The student purportedly resides at this residence with one parent. The student previously lived at an address in Fulton County which is still listed as the homestead of the parents. The father indicated the rest of the family does not reside with him and the student. The father reported he travels 3-4 days a week but indicates the student stays at home and is taken to school by other family members.

The remaining student athletes' enrollment records were reviewed. There were 11 other students that transferred to Grady from outside of the feeder pattern. Three students transferred from out of state.

Of the named 21 students, there were four students who previous address was zoned for Westlake HS, a Fulton County school, that now attend Grady HS and play on the football team. Three of the four were enrolled with falsified residency documents. One student's residency is suspect and does not appear to be a bona fide move.

Of the additional students on the football team, there is one student who was previously zoned for Westlake HS. The parent's homestead is listed as a Fulton County address and is zoned for Westlake HS. The student's 2012-2013 school records show the Fulton County address as the address of record. However, the parent indicated that he and the student had resided in a one bedroom apartment for 2 years which is not consistent with the student's previous school records and the utility bill usage records. This residency is suspect and does not appear to meet the definition of a bona fide move.

Action Taken:

The three students who falsified residency documents were notified to withdraw from Grady and pay tuition. Two of the students are currently enrolled in Westlake HS. One student moved during the Christmas break to an address in the Grady zone. Additional residency verifications are continuing on the remaining students.

Allegation #3:

Assistant Coach on staff and his wife who is a teacher in the APS system have enrolled their children at Grady using a false address for multiple years.

Finding:

Grady HS Assistant Coach's son was enrolled in Grady HS and played on the football team. An interview was conducted on December 11, 2013. During the interview, the Assistant Coach indicated that he resided at the address of record along with his brother, nephew and son in a two bedroom apartment. The Assistant Coach was then asked if he knew the 6 other students also utilizing this address and attending Grady. He denied knowledge of any other persons residing at the address¹.

Property records show the Assistant Coach and his wife own a house in South Fulton County. They claim a homestead exemption on this property. The Assistant Coach also has another younger child. When asked during the interview where this child was enrolled, he refused to disclose where this child was enrolled.

An interview was held with the property owner of an address used by 4 sets of parents. The property owners are listed as Robin and Randy Reed. At the time of the interview with Mrs. Reed, it was disclosed that Mr. Reed had recently passed away. She indicated her husband handled all of the property previously. Mr. Reed was a former APS employee who worked and retired from Grady HS. Mr. Reed also served as a lay coach for the Grady HS Track Team. Mrs. Reed was accompanied to the interview by Assistant Coach. Mrs. Reed was just becoming familiar with the property. All leases for the property were hand written. Mrs. Reed's explanation for the multiple leases with the same address was that it was an error on the lease and the other persons resided in another apartment.

A review of the enrollment records shows that all parents utilizing this address listed the exact same apartment number (#3) on all documents (driver's license, voting records, utility bills, etc.). When asked to provide current documentation, the only parent who could provide current and original documents was the brother of the Assistant Coach. Another parent provided current Georgia power documents for the apartment she indicated was hers (#2); however, the start date for the documents was February 2014.

The social worker made a home visit to the residence. There were limited clothing and items in the home. The social worker also did not observe items or clothing for another child in the home. The child of the Assistant Coach's brother reportedly resides at this address as well.

Enrollment records reviewed during the course of the investigation revealed a sibling of Student12 enrolled at Young MS. An interview was held with the Student12's mother who is also the spouse of the Assistant Coach. When questioned about the address she used to enroll her daughter in Young MS, the mother admitted that she had not resided at the address since 2011. The affidavit in the middle school permanent record file was only signed by the Assistant Coach. The mother did not sign the affidavit.

¹ Two students utilizing the same address as the Assistant Coach withdrew 6-8 days after the interview with the Assistant Coach, but prior to the district contacting them regarding their residency.

In summary there are two affidavits signed by the Assistant Coach for two different students at two different schools for two different addresses during the same school year. The Assistant Coach and his wife reportedly do not live together. However, he accompanied his wife to her interview.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed. The student and his sibling have been withdrawn from the respective schools. The Assistant coach's relationship with the football program will be reviewed.

Note – Additional Residents reportedly residing at the same residence of Student 12

Parent 2 was reportedly living at the same address with his child, a Grady HS student. Parent 2 withdrew his child from Atlanta Public Schools at the end of the semester. The child is now enrolled in Carroll County.

Parent 3 was reportedly living at the same address with her child, a Grady HS student. A few days before the end of the 2013 semester, Parent 3 contacted Student Relations indicating that she had moved from that address. She requested to have her daughter remain at Grady HS. Parent 3 was subsequently questioned about her residency. She admitted she has never resided at this address and resides in Southwest Atlanta. When asked about her relationship with other persons possibly living at that address or in relation to the lease she provided, Parent 3 declined to answer. One person indicated in the lease as the lessor has the same last name as Parent 4. Parent 3 is a current APS employee. The student was withdrawn from Grady HS. This matter was referred to Employee Relation.

Parent 4 was reportedly living at the same address. She has three children enrolled at Grady and one child at Inman MS. Parent 4 was interviewed and she maintains that the lease has an error. The apartment number is incorrect and should be apartment #2 as opposed to apartment #3. However, on all of the documents she submitted, documents reflect apartment #3 as opposed to #2. Parent 4 was given an opportunity to provide current and original residency documents. Parent 4 could not provide a past Georgia Power bill for apartment 2 or 3. She subsequently provided an establishment of service for February 4, 2014 for apartment 2.

Parent 4 did acknowledge that the previous Georgia Power bill submitted was falsified. She indicated that she had been going between two residences for two years but had recently moved into apartment #2 full-time. Parent 4 indicated her children do participate in athletics but not on the football team. Parent 4's address is still under investigation and a subsequent home visit will be made.

Parent 5 was reportedly living at the same address with his son, an Inman MS student. Parent 5 provided current and original residency documents for the address. Parent 5 is related to the assistant coach. The social worker made a home visit for Student12. During the home visit Parent 5 was not present. The social worker did not observe items which would seemingly indicate a middle school student currently resided in the home. Additional address verification activities are needed for Parent 5.

Allegation #4:

Head Football Coach Ronnie Millen and Athletic Director Kathleen Washington allowed the process to continue or did not report to authorities or the board of education even when they know students live outside of the school zone.

Finding:

Interviews have been conducted with both Coach Millen and Director Washington. According to their statements, they had no knowledge of students residing outside of the school zone. Jeff Beggs also confirmed that a flag should have been raised with Coach Millen or Ms. Washington that less than 50% of the students came from the feeder school, Inman Middle School.

Jeff Beggs indicates that the athletics verification should take place by the athletic director which includes residency and transcripts. Home visits are included in the residency process. Ms. Washington indicated that she did not verify any student information. She obtains the information from the registrar and submits the packet to GHSA.

Previously the district's athletic department verified student athlete's residency; however, since 2010 the process was changed to have the schools manage student athletic verifications.

Link to Georgia High School Constitution: <http://www.ghsa.net/ghsa-constitution-and-laws#by-law-1.70>

Action Taken:

There is insufficient evidence to find that recruiting of out of zone or out of district students occurred. However, there were indicators that should have triggered the need for some investigation into the students on the football team.

Action Taken:

The district will review the procedures for verifying student athletes.

Allegation #5:

A number of the students on the Grady High School football team have played recreational football over the years together.

Finding:

After interviewing the Grady HS football players and their parents, the following recreational teams were identified as the teams that the student athletes played on. It was noted that 17 student athletes played football at one or more of the following recreational parks: **Adamsville, Ben Hill, Sandtown, Gresham and Welcome All**. The student athletes played at one or more of the above parks during the same time periods or on the same teams.

Adamsville: Student 18; Student33; Student26

Ben Hill: Student10; Student2; Student43; Student26; Student13; Student4; Student22

Sandtown: Student2; Student43

Gresham: Student8; Student47; Student1; Student9; Student53

Welcome All: Student12; Student31; Student15

The Assistant Coach indicated he served as a former coach at Ben Hill and Welcome All parks. The parents and students interviewed indicated that he had not served as their coach and they did not play on his team.

Ten students in the anonymous complaint played together on recreational teams, although not all ten at the same park. Five of the 10 students are confirmed as address fraud. The remaining five students are currently under address review.

Action Taken:

None taken or contemplated.

Allegation #6:

There are 21 students on the football team that do not reside in the Grady High School attendance zone and are utilizing false addresses to attend Grady High School. They are attending Grady and participating on the football team.

Finding by Student:

Eleven of the 21 students identified in the complaint are verified as having committed address fraud. Five students are still being investigated.

STUDENT17

A home visit was made on November 21, 2013 to the address of record for Student17. The social worker completed a walk-through but did not observe any women's clothing or items in the apartment. There were reportedly bags and shoes in a bedroom that possibly belonged to a teenager.

While conducting the home visit the social worker did not see any evidence that the family resided with the male leaseholder who reportedly was a relative of the parent. The parent indicated to the social worker that she goes back-and-forth between this residence and her husband's house. She also reported that a coach told her that someone reported the family did not live at the residence and that there was going to be an investigation. However, during the interview the parent denied making this statement to the social worker.

The parent presented an affidavit of residency that indicated the parent had been living at the address since March 20, 2013. The affidavit was notarized by the parent who is also a Fulton County notary. The document showed that Student 17's parent notarized her own signature and the signature of the male family member.

While Student17 was enrolled at Grady HS, he never attended any classes at Grady HS. Student transferred from a Fulton County charter school and is a "Move on When Ready/Dual Enrollment" student. His only interaction with Grady HS was playing on the football team. Student played football at previous school.

While enrolled at Grady HS, the parent submitted documents to external agencies with an address different from the enrollment address. On December 3, 2013, parents submitted a dual enrollment

application to Georgia Piedmont Technical College with a southwest Atlanta address. Parent also submitted an ACT high school report for test scores taken September 2013. The address for the student listed on the ACT report is a southwest Atlanta address.

Student17 attended a Fulton County school for the 9th - 11th grade. Student17 has a sibling enrolled in an APS charter school. Sibling was enrolled utilizing the same address used to enroll in Grady HS. Sibling is not listed on lease. There was no mention by parent of sibling being at the reported apartment. The parent reported during home visit that only she, Student17 and relative resided at the apartment. The sibling is a female and no female clothing or items were viewed at the apartment even though the sibling and the parent reportedly reside at the address.

Both parents were interviewed on December 11, 2013. The parents indicated that they were separated currently and that was the reason the mother and son were residing at the other address. Parent contends she resides at the enrollment address.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed. The student was withdrawn from Grady HS and advised to enroll in zoned school. A residency review will occur for the sibling.

STUDENT10

A home visit conducted determined that parent and student did not live at the residence used to enroll in Grady. An interview was conducted on December 11, 2013. During the interview, parent acknowledged the lease was fictitious but was very evasive. It also appears the Georgia Power Bill was altered to coincide with fictitious lease and other documents were fabricated. Parent admitted during interview she did not reside at address. The leasing office confirmed the lease as false and verified the parent was not a current resident.

The parent indicated that they became homeless during the school year but indicated she had not notified the school. The parent provided an address in the Mays zone which she indicated is her current residence.

A review of enrollment records indicated parent utilized a different (3rd) address during the 2013-2014 to enroll a sibling at another APS middle school. This child was enrolled in Douglass County Schools during the 2012-2013 school year. Enrollment records also indicate that parent had a child enrolled in APS and Douglass County Schools simultaneously in the 2012-2013 school year.

Action Taken:

Address Fraud confirmed and the parent notified to withdraw from Grady HS. Student is currently enrolled at his zoned school.

STUDENT12

Finding:

Grady HS Assistant Coach's son was enrolled in Grady HS and played on the football team. An interview was conducted on December 11, 2013. During the interview, the Assistant Coach indicated that he resided at the address of record along with his brother, nephew and son in a two bedroom apartment.

The assistant coach was then asked if he knew the 6 other students also utilizing this address and attending Grady. He denied knowledge of any other persons residing at the address².

Property records show the assistant coach and his wife own a house in South Fulton County. They claim a homestead exemption on this property. The assistant coach also has another child. When asked during the interview where this child was enrolled, he refused to disclose where this child was enrolled.

The social worker made a home visit to the residence. There was limited clothing and items in the home. The social worker also did not observe items or clothing for another child in the home. The child of the brother reportedly resides at this address as well.

Enrollment records reviewed during the course of the investigation revealed a sibling of Student12 enrolled at Young MS. An interview was held with Student12's mother who is also the spouse of the assistant coach. When questioned about the address she used to enroll her daughter in Young MS, the mother admitted that she had not resided at the address since 2011. The affidavit in the middle school PR file was only signed by the assistant coach. The mother did not sign the affidavit.

In summary there are two affidavits signed by the assistant coach for two different students at two different schools for two different addresses during the same school year. The assistant coach and his wife reportedly do not live together. However, the Assistant Coach accompanied his wife to her interview.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed and student and his sibling have been withdrawn. The Assistant Coach's relationship to the football program will be reviewed. Also see Allegation #3.

STUDENT7

Two home visits were made to the residence. During the initial home visit made by Dr. White, the grandmother indicated that the student and his father stayed at the apartment with her. The grandmother also indicated the family was homeless.

Enrollment records were reviewed to determine if the student was identified as homeless or if the social worker was aware of the case. The student was not identified as homeless and the enrollment records indicated the family had enrolled with an affidavit of residency, a lease, GA power bill and father's driver's license among other documents. The affidavit identified 4 persons (2 adults and two children) as residing in the home.

The property records indicated this building to be a senior citizens residence. Children and other persons are not permitted to reside in the building. The building website indicates the building has the following floor plans: 1 bedroom or studio apartments. During the second home visit, the property manager reviewed the documents and indicated the lease provided was fraudulent.

The parent was interviewed on December 11, 2013. He indicated the student still lives there but the parent lives somewhere else and "bounces around from here to there". The parent indicated he was at the address for about 2 months. When asked where his other child was enrolled in school, the parent

² Two students utilizing the same address as Coach Dowdell withdrew 6-8 days after the interview with Coach Dowdell but prior to the district contacting them regarding their residency.

would not provide information regarding this child. Parent indicated he provided false documents because he did not “know what do to get his child enrolled since he was homeless”. He also indicated that the unit was a two bedroom apartment.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed. The student was withdrawn and is now enrolled in West Lake HS.

STUDENT31

A home visit was conducted and the building management verified that the lease provided is not one of their leases. The building management did not know the parent on the lease and parent was not listed with management as a resident. GA Power bill and cable bill appeared altered.

During interview with the parent on December 12, 2013, the parent acknowledged the documents were fraudulent and offered to pay tuition. The parent provided current address in South Fulton which is zoned for Westlake HS.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed. The student withdrew and enrolled in West Lake HS. Parent paid tuition for time student was illegally enrolled.

STUDENT15

On November 21, 2013, a home visit was conducted and the social worker was informed by the property management that the parent did not reside at the address. On December 12, 2013, the parent was interviewed and the parent indicated she was currently residing at the address. The parent identified the residency documents provided as proof of residence (affidavit, lease, Comcast bill, GA Power bill bank statement, IRS document, and student loan document) and indicated all had the correct address.

An additional follow up was made with the property manager who then reviewed the lease and Georgia Power Bill provided by the parent. The manager indicated that none of the names listed on the lease is associated with the unit or any unit in that building. Additionally residents of the property do not receive electric bills from Georgia Power. The electricity is billed directly to the association which is then added to the homeowner’s monthly assessments.

In a subsequent conversation, the parent admitted the documents were false and she had not resided at the address. The parent actually lived at an address in the North Atlanta attendance zone. Over the holiday break, parent moved into an apartment in the Grady HS attendance zone.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed. Parent notified to withdraw student and enroll in zoned school. Parent then presented a second lease within the Grady HS zone. Parent reportedly moved to address during the winter holiday break. Parent is confirmed as living at this address. Parent’s previous address was in the West Lake HS attendance zone.

Parent recommended for additional consequences (civil/criminal) and parent is employee of Fulton County Schools.

STUDENT21

The parent was interviewed on December 11, 2013. During the interview the parent indicated she was separated from her husband. She reported that she and her son lived with her parents at the address of record since 2007. The parent had a lease, affidavit and credit card statement as her proof of residency. Parent indicated she paid rent but could not provide any type of receipts.

An address search was performed and showed a possible active address in another county since 2008. A search of property tax records indicated a home in Clayton County. A notice was sent to that home which led to contact with the spouse. He indicated that they were not separated and he, his wife and Student21 resided in Clayton County in the family home. The spouse then confirmed the student has resided in Clayton County during his entire enrollment at Grady High School. The parent did reside at one time at the enrollment address but had not resided there since her marriage to the spouse.

Action Taken:

Student notified to withdraw. However, since the student is a senior, he was allowed to remain if the parents made tuition arrangements.

STUDENT6

A home visit was conducted and the property manager indicated the parent and student did not reside at the property and they did not know the family. The lease was reviewed and verified as false by the property manager. During the interview on December 11, 2013, the parent admitted that she did not reside at residence and the documents were false. The parent and student reside in Union City.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed. The student withdrew and enrolled in the zoned school. Parent sent a tuition bill.

STUDENT3

A home visit was conducted and the property manager confirmed that the lease was fraudulent. The listed resident was not a resident and had never been a resident of the property. The parent was interviewed on December 11, 2013. She indicated she lived at another address but student3 was staying with his "Godmother" who actually did reside at the address. Parent acknowledged that documents she submitted to prove residency had a false address (lease, affidavit, W-2 form, employee benefits statement, checking statement, employee self-serve document).

Parent indicated she submitted the documents because she was homeless and needed documents to enroll him in school. During the interview parent provided a new lease with an address in the Grady HS attendance zone. The lease was dated December 11, 2013.

Action Taken:

Address Fraud confirmed and student was withdrawn and enrolled in another school. Note: Parent provided a new address for a different school during the week of February 10th.

STUDENT13

A home visit was conducted and the owner of the property (the parent's aunt) who indicated the parent did not live there. She did not know where the parent lived but suggested an apartment complex across the street. The social worker visited that property but the parent did not reside at that complex.

An interview was conducted on December 11, 2013. The parent indicated that she had previously resided with her aunt but moved in the last 2-3 weeks. She provided a lease dated **November 15, 2013** with an address in the Grady HS attendance zone. The parent indicated that she lived at the Irwin address off and on for 2-3 years. She reported being married but separated and her husband lives in southwest Atlanta. During 6-8 grades, Student13 went to middle school in southwest Atlanta.

The parent also acknowledged that she knew Coach Millen prior to her son enrolling at Grady. She initially indicated she had a nephew who played for Coach Millen. She later reported that her older son played for Coach Millen for four years.

The enrollment records and documents reflect that the parent utilized multiple addresses to enroll her children at two different schools in two different school attendance zones during the same time frame. The older son was enrolled at Grady with a Hillard Street address and Irwin Street address from 2007-2011. The younger son was enrolled at Bunche MS and Deerwood Academy utilizing another address from 2007-2011.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed. Parent reportedly moved to address on November 15, 2013. Parent recommended for additional consequences (civil/criminal).

STUDENT11

Student11 enrolled in Grady HS with an address for an extended stay hotel. The parent was interviewed on December 11, 2013. Parent moved to extended stay hotel due to an eviction. **The parent and student are related to a Grady Football coach.**

The records from the hotel indicate the student resided at the extended stay for only 30 days. Parent reportedly moved to an address in the Therrell zone. The new address was not reported to the school. The parent then moved into a residence in the Grady zone in October 2013. Prior to moving into the extended stay hotel, the parent resided in South Fulton.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed as parent did not reside in the attendance zone at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. Parent did not report the new address to the school. Parent presented a lease within the Grady HS zone. Parent reportedly moved to address in October 2013. Information on student11's move will be reported to the GHSA.

STUDENT37

During interview with the parent on December 13, 2013, the parent started off knowingly providing inaccurate information. After realizing the extent of false information, the parent admitted the lease and bills were fraudulent. The parent then provided a current address in Fulton County zoned for Tri Cities HS.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed. The student was withdrawn and referred to enroll in zoned school. Parent sent an invoice for tuition.

STUDENT14

During interview with parent on December 11, 2013, the parent had unaccounted time between two residents he purportedly moved from. He did not realize this and later admitted to committing address fraud. Parent indicated that he never lived in the residence used for enrolling Student14 at Grady HS and was willing to accept consequences of action.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed. The student was withdrawn and enrolled in his zoned school.

STUDENT 34

During interview with parent, the parent admitted falsifying Georgia Power Bill but continue to report he lived at residence on file. However, he indicated student34 mostly resided with mother. Parent was informed of APS residency requirements involving separated/divorced parents.

Action Taken:

Address fraud confirmed. Student34 and sibling were withdrawn and enrolled in their zoned school.

Allegation #7:

Grady HS has large number of parents who are using grandmothers, aunts or relatives addresses to falsely enroll students in Grady HS and none of them have actually moved into any of those residences.

Finding:

The district is aware that there are parents within the APS district utilizing the address of a relative with whom they do not live. The support of the community is fundamental in supporting the district's existing process to identify families that have failed to make a bona fide move into school attendance zones. The district has made anonymous reporting tools available but receives few tips. The community is encouraged to participate in supporting the district.

Parents indicated during interviews that address documents can be purchased from Craigslist or from other sources. A number of the documents were only revealed as false after being reviewed by the property owner or property manager. A number of residential forms are available on the internet. Parents are able to create realistic forms using editing software.

Action Taken:

The district should consistently withdraw students who do not provide updated residency documents, provide additional training for enrollment/registration personnel. The district will review consequences for address fraud.

Allegation #8:

APS is not monitoring the situation and holding parents accountable who supply fraudulent documents.

Finding:

The district has taken several steps to monitor the enrollment and registration process. The district has implemented a district wide registration process for all schools. Parents are asked to provide on an annual basis residency documents. The district has also included with administrative regulations a requirement that parents notify the school district within 14 business days of any move or change of address information.

Last school year, the district began to audit Grady HS and found students out of zone. Once caught, the parents claimed homeless, gave guardianship to other persons, rented an apartment or other measures after the district had investigated.

Action Taken:

The district will use all available tools up to and including civil and criminal penalties. Other districts have utilized tools such as the prompt removal of students and civil and criminal litigation in cases of falsified information. Atlanta Public Schools will become consistent in its application of the rules and application of penalties. The district will also update any policies or regulations as needed.

School Residency Fraud:

<http://www.verifyresidence.com/faq.html>

http://blogs.findlaw.com/law_and_life/2013/06/school-enrollment-fraud-can-be-costly.html

http://www.phillyburbs.com/my_town/burlington/burlington-township-school-district-cracks-down-on-residency-fraud/article_ac9d9480-dca6-55f4-acb6-1a8955c09b64.html

<http://www.lccr.com/assets/in-the-news/GUSD%20hires%20retired%20police%20officer%20to%20investigate%20residency%20fraud.pdf>

<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/SF-school-district-goes-after-residency-cheats-3167934.php>

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/nov/19/residency-fraud-still-plagues-schools/?page=all>

<http://heartland.org/newspaper-article/2012/07/02/schools-spy-suspected-out-district-kids>

<http://www.wjla.com/articles/2012/09/school-residency-fraud-in-charles-county-targeted-by-officials-79976.html>

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-06-16/news/ct-met-orland-park-residency-20110616_1_fraud-court-documents-months-of-court-supervision

<http://berkeley.accountableschools.com/blog/stop-enrollment-fraud-in-berkeley-schools/>

<http://www.ward5heartbeat.org/news/tally-local-public-schoolchildren-arrive-at-school-in-out-of-state-vehicles/>

<http://k12newsnetwork.com/blog/2011/02/11/go-listen-to-it-kelley-williams-bolar-speaks-to-npr-about-school-residency-fraud/>

Allegation #9:

Coaches are recruiting players outside of Grady's attendance zone, specifically from the Westlake area.

Finding:

According to the Georgia High School Association's constitution, recruiting activities include: personal contact initiated by coaches, boosters, or other school personnel in an attempt to persuade transfer; gifts of money, jobs, supplies or clothing; free transportation; free admission to contests; an invitation to attend practices and/or games a social event (other than an official school wide Open House program) specifically geared for prospective athletes; free tuition beyond the allowable standards found in by-law 1.82; a coach asking a prospective student for contact information.

All students and parents that were interviewed were specifically asked if any of the above recruiting activities occurred to which all replied in the negative. No concrete evidence of recruiting activities was discovered.

Principal Murray was interviewed regarding the allegations. He indicated that there are rumors of recruiting. However, **he has not been provided with specifics to substantiate any recruiting activities.** During last school year, Dr. Murray and Mr. David White, APS Regional Director, met with Ms. Washington to discuss the continued rumors of recruiting and to reiterate that recruiting should not occur at Grady HS.

Of the named 21 students, there were four students who previous address was zoned for Westlake HS that now attend Grady HS and play on the football team. Three of the four were enrolled with falsified residency documents. One student's residency is suspect and does not appear to be a bona fide move.

Jeff Beggs also confirmed that a flag should have been raised with Coach Millen or Ms. Washington that only six or seven students came from the feeder school, Inman Middle School. Coach Millen stated that he was aware that two students came to Grady from Westlake. He spoke with the Westlake coach specifically about one of the players, but he did not have knowledge that the player was using fraudulent information to attend Grady.

Additionally, Coach Millen stated that he has not recruited any students to attend Grady High School.

However, he does tell parents “when they move into the district...come and see him.”

Link to Georgia High School Constitution: <http://www.ghsa.net/ghsa-constitution-and-laws#by-law-1.70>

Action Taken:

Based on the evidence, the district cannot conclude that recruiting of out of zone or out of district students occurred. However, there were indicators that should have triggered the need for some investigation into the residency of some students on the football team.

Allegation #10:

Coaches know that students reside outside of the zone and are dropping students off at their homes outside of the APS district.

Finding:

The parents and students were interviewed and asked about their knowledge of students residing outside of the attendance zone and dropping off students outside of APS district. All reported no knowledge of students residing outside of APS district, indicated they had not seen coaches giving students ride and reported that no coach had ever given their child a ride home. Only one parent indicated she had given a student a ride home. She did not recall the child’s name and gave him a ride to South Fulton. However, she reported that supposedly the child was going to his dad’s home because the mom was not home.

Coach Millen initially indicated that he had not given any students a ride home. However, during a later interview Coach Millen admitted that he has given students a ride home before. He said that during the 2013 football season, a parent called him and asked him to give her son a ride home because her van was inoperable. According to Coach Millen, the student lived in the Kirkwood area, which is within the Grady district. Also, Coach Millen is not aware of whether any of the lay coaches have given anyone a ride home because he is normally the last person to leave and all players and coaches are usually gone when he leaves. Additionally, Coach Millen recalled dropping students off during previous school years, but he does not remember where the students lived.

Jeff Beggs stated that a flag should have been raised with Coach Millen or Ms. Washington that only six or seven students came from the feeder school, Inman Middle School. Additionally, a parent whose son played football at Inman Middle School was surprised by the number of players on Grady’s team that did not come from the feeder schools.

Action Taken:

None to date. However, based on the evidence gathered during the investigation and the number of students not playing from the feeder, the district will investigate this did not trigger an investigation.

Allegation #11:

The head coach and the coaching staff are aware that the students and parents falsified documents to attend the school.

Finding:

All coaches were interviewed regarding their knowledge of parents falsifying documents to attend the school. Each coached replied that they had no knowledge of documents provided to the school's registrar office.

However, it was reported during interviews and home visits with parents that Coach Millen told them to "get their affairs in order". Within days of Jeff Beggs giving the complaint to Coach Millen, parents began obtaining residences within the Grady zone.

Also, the Assistant Coach's son was enrolled in Grady HS and played on the football team. He was aware of the documents that he provided to enroll his son were falsified. The assistant coach indicated that he resided at the address of record along with his brother, nephew and son in a two bedroom apartment. In addition to the Assistant Coach, four (4) other sets of parents used the same address. A review of the enrollment records show that all parents utilizing this address listed the exact same apartment number (#3) on all documents (driver's license, voting records, utility bills, etc.). When asked to provide current documentation, the only parent who could provide current and original documents was the brother of the assistant coach. Another parent provided current Georgia power documents for the apartment she indicated was hers (#2); however, the start date for the documents was February 2014.

Ms. Holland, registrar, was also interviewed regarding knowledge of falsified documents. Ms. Holland indicated she has identified numerous cases of obvious falsified documents and enrollment was denied in those cases. However, she indicated that the high volume of enrollments into the school was problematic and requested additional support and training to support personnel.

Jeff Beggs indicates that the athletics verification should take place by the athletic director which includes residency and transcripts. Home visits are included in the residency process. Ms. Washington indicated that she did not verify any student information. She obtains the information from the registrar and submits the packet to GHSA.

Previously the athletics department verified students, however, in 2010 the process was changed to have the schools manage student athletic verifications.

Action Taken:

Student of assistant coach withdrawn from both schools based on home visit and the two affidavits signed by the assistant for two different students at two different schools for two different addresses during the same school year. Additional training and support for enrollment/registration personnel to be provided along with a district review of consequences for address fraud.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Allegation #12:

Student4 was playing football at Grady High School during the summer and the student had not made a bona fide move into the school district.

Finding:

On or about July 25, 2013, Student Relations received an anonymous call that reported that Student4 was practicing with the Grady High School football team but did not reside in the Grady attendance zone. The complaint was forwarded to Jeff Beggs, Athletic Director.

Jeff Beggs stated Coach Millen reported Student4 was not playing football during the summer. Mr. Beggs also advised that Coach Millen reportedly tells parents that they must be in zone to play on the football team.

On July 26th, the parent visited the Department of Student Relations to ask about paying tuition to enroll at Grady High School. At this time, he indicated that he did not live in the Grady High School attendance zone. The parent was advised that he would have to reside in the Grady attendance zone in order for his son to attend that school. Grady High School was not accepting students from outside of the zone. He was provided a list of the documents that needed to prove residency and the requirements to be a resident.

Subsequently, the parent presented a lease for a residence in the Grady HS attendance zone. The lease was in the name of his business. The parent indicated that because a family member is high profile that property is put in the name of the company to prevent persons from finding the family in public records.³ The parent presented a lease that commenced on August 2, 2013 for the property located on Peachtree St. NW. Only the parent and Student4 are purported to have moved to residence. Student4 was enrolled at Grady High School on August 7, 2013.

Prior to attending Grady HS, Student4 attended a South Fulton charter school where he played football. The previous address for the family is zoned for Westlake HS.

The anonymous complaint reports student is residing at his previous address and should be attending Westlake High School. The parents reported living in College Park for 12 years. This residence is claimed as the homestead residence. The parent reportedly moved to new address because of personal reasons between him and his wife.

The parent was interviewed on December 11, 2013. He indicated he resided at the Peachtree address. He also indicated that he had "wind of the (anonymous) complaint".

A home visit was conducted. The building manager verified that lease was valid for the parent. The social worker observed the apartment was a studio apartment. There were personal clothing and effects for the parent and Student4. The parent was interviewed again on December 19, 2014 and admitted that he did have a copy of the complaint that he received from a "confidential" source. He indicated Student4 **may have played football during the summer**. However he could not remember what date his

³ Parents are permitted in some instances to provide documents with an alternate name or their address is masked in the student information system for safety and security purposes. Examples are parents in domestic violence situations, public officials, etc.

son went to football practice.

The parent indicated that he resided at the Peachtree address with his son. He acknowledged that it was a studio but that he was looking for a larger place in the zone and took a smaller place until he can find something suitable for his whole family. The parent also indicated that he traveled during the week sometimes between 3 to 4 days and other family members picked up student and took him to school.

Reports from students and parents confirm that Student4 was practicing with the football team before moving into the Grady attendance zone and prior to being enrolled at Grady High School. The parent eventually admitted that Student4 had played football during the summer.

In July 2013, Mr. Beggs had a conversation with Coach Millen regarding Student4 practicing with the team over the summer. Coach Millen reported that Student4 was not practicing and that the allegation was untrue. **However, during his interview January 2014 Coach Millen admitted that Student4 began practicing with the team as early as June.** Coach Millen also stated that all players are supposed to be certified and cleared by the Athletic Director before they can begin practicing. He stated that he informed Athletic Director Washington and Jasper Jewell, Program Manager – High Schools that Student4 was coming to Grady in early summer.

Action Taken:

Student practiced with the team during a time period he was ineligible. Violation will be reported to Georgia High School Association.

Allegation #13:

Parent and student being harassed by other parents and students in the school and on the football team.

Finding:

All Grady High School students and parents that were interviewed were questioned about the possible harassment of a parent and player on the team. Several students confirmed having knowledge that the prevalent rumor was that Student50's parent submitted the anonymous complaint. **Student50 was reportedly the subject of taunting by other students as well as threats being made via social media.** Student50 and his parent were interviewed. The parent denied being the author of the complaint. The parent had concerns regarding whether or not Student50 was safe and the possibility of him being harmed by other students. When questioned about possible threats, Student50 indicated that he was not worried about any threats and that he had not been approached by anyone in a threatening manner. The student displayed no signs of distress or concern.

Coach Millen later admitted he received the complaint from Jeff Beggs on November 12, 2013. Coach Millen denies providing the complaint to another parent. Student4's parent indicated he received a copy of the anonymous complaint from a confidential source. Between November 12 – 14, the parents of Student4, Student21, Student1, Student 18 and possibly 2 other parents met after football practice. During this meeting, the parent of Student4 was discussing the complaint and identified a booster club member as the writer of the complaint. Coach Millen stepped into the room while the parents were there. He reportedly told student4's parent to leave the matter alone and did not believe a booster club member wrote the letter. Student50's parent were approached later in the week by other parents at the

November 15 football game and asked if they were the author of the complaint.

The student athletes became involved through the parents. During an interview, a student identified a relative of a football player as walking over to a car of football players and indicating that Student50's parent wrote the letter. Several student athletes indicated they knew about the letter before the game on November 15. A majority indicated they heard rumors. **One student indicated that players on the team were "mad about the complaint". When asked if they were mad because the complaint was made or because the complaint was true – the student replied both.**

On December 10, 2013 Student4's parent organized a parent meeting held at the Courtyard Marriott on Spring Street. Parents were invited via text message. Student4's parent paid for the meeting room. Between 10-20 persons attended the meeting. Not all attendees were parents as some persons brought relatives or other support persons to the meeting. Discussed at the meeting was the purported harassment of Student50, Student50's parent being identified by parents on the team as a person suspected of writing the complaint and how to support Coach Millen. The booster club was asked to release a written statement on the coach's behalf. The group did not reach consensus to do so. Student50's parent denied being the author of the complaint. **During the meeting, Student4's parent pulled the complaint from his pocket and read the complaint to all who were in attendance at the meeting.**

Action Taken:

Upon learning that a parent and student were identified as being the writer of the complaint the district took the following steps:

- Social media was monitored and any threatening messages were provided to the school to make identification of those persons and if needed, conference with any current students;
- School administrators met with members of the football team to advise them that the person who wrote the complaint was unknown and may not even be a Grady student or parent. That student's should refrain from speculating and should not target or harass anyone that they suspect had written the complaint.
- A meeting held with the alleged targeted student to determine if he had received any threat of any nature either verbal or electronic or if any persons had harassed him.

Allegation #14:

Coach Millen had a copy of the complaint and notified parents named on the list to get their affairs in order as well as target whoever they believe contacted the school district.

Finding:

A parent reported on November 18th that Coach Millen had a copy of the complaint and notified the students' parents [specifically Student4, Student21 and Student18] to "get their affairs in order". He also was reported to have contacted each parent named in the anonymous complaint.

Parents were asked during their interview if any coach had called them about the complaint or warned them regarding a possible home visit. All parents denied any such action took place. However, Dr. White, social worker, reported that the parent of Student17 said during her home visit that a coach told her that someone reported the family did not live at the residence and that there was going to be an investigation. During her interview, the parent denied making this statement to the social worker.

Coach Millen admitted that during the week of November 11, 2013, he had a conversation with the aunt of Student18 because he was told that she was the person who informed the students about the complaint. He called Student18's aunt and told her that she should not have done that because it was causing dissension amongst the players.

During the same week, Coach Millen also had a conversation with Student21's mother. He told the parent that he did not think that Student50's parent was the person that wrote the anonymous letter. The conversation between him and Student21's parent took place in the parking lot. It was necessary for him to have the conversation with her because the letter had surfaced with the parents and it was alleged that Student50 was being harassed and bullied by some of the players.

Jeff Beggs, APS Athletic Director, was questioned regarding whether he had any knowledge of how Coach Millen came to receive a copy of the complaint. He indicated that he had no knowledge and he did not give Coach Millen a copy of the complaint. He suggested Dr. Murray be asked if he gave a copy of the complaint to Coach Millen.

The district received a letter from the attorney of Coach Millen indicating that the coach was provided a copy of the anonymous complaint by Mr. Beggs. **Mr. Beggs was subsequently interviewed in January 2014 and admitted giving a copy of the confidential complaint to Coach Millen on the same day or next day after he received it.** He also acknowledged that he was instructed not to provide the complaint to the coaches. Information provided to Mr. Beggs during the week of November 11 indicated the district would begin home visits for the students listed in the complaint.

Conclusion:

The investigation revealed that Jeff Beggs impeded the investigation by providing a copy of the complaint to Millen, and provided false or misleading statements during the course of the investigation.

Based on the evidence gathered during the investigation, a flag should have been raised due to the low number of students from the feeder patten and home visits conducted by the athletic director. The investigation revealed that at fourteen students played on Grady's football team that should not have been enrolled at the school. Also, Coach Millen was not cooperative during the investigation, on two occasions. Coach Millen was instructed by Dr. Vincent Murray, Principal, to report to the Center for Learning and Leadership Building on December 6, 2013. After repeated requests, he reported four hours later. During the same meeting, the keys to Coach Millen's office were retrieved from him, to prevent tampering with material integral to the integrity of the investigation. Although this information was clearly explained to him, Millen instructed a lay coach to enter the office and to remove material and electronic devices.

CONCLUSION

During the interviews, it became apparent that there were some parents were more knowledgeable than others. One parent even defined it as a "clique" that met regularly in the parking lot after games and after practices. However, during interviews the parents could barely recall each other's names and indicated little interaction with other parents. All parents and students denied coming to Grady High School for football. A number of students on the football team had played football together for multiple years. The parents indicated that they did not know each other. However, the students clearly recalled who they had played football together with at the recreational level.

During the interviews some parents indicated that the writer of the complaint appeared to be a parent who was disgruntled over playing time. Their answers were similar to an answer given by Coach Millen on November 12 wherein he indicated that the person making the complaint was disgruntled about playing time.

There are 14 students on the football team confirmed with address fraud. There are a number of other students still currently under investigation. The number of students playing on the football team from outside of the feeder pattern should have raised a red flag for the coaching staff and athletic director given the school no longer has a magnet program and has not accepted general administrative transfers for several years.

Jeff Beggs and Coach Millen knowingly or unknowingly interfered with the investigation. Jeff Beggs failed to maintain the confidentiality of the complaint. Coach Millen hindered the investigation by speaking with parents and providing advance notice of pending actions. Ms. Washington should have verified information obtained by the registrar pursuant to directions given by Jeff Beggs which according to Jeff Beggs should have included some home visits.

There are three issues to be addressed with the Georgia High School Association which are:

1. Students playing on team that are nonresidents and/or without bona fide moves;
2. Football practice began earlier than allowed under Georgia High School Association rules;
3. Student not enrolled at Grady permitted to practice with team before moving into zone;
4. Students playing on the team not listed on the roster submitted to the Georgia High School Association.

A copy of the report and relative documentation will be provided to the Georgia High School Association.