OCEAN CITY FAIRNESS IN TAXES
POST OFFICE BOX 565
OCEAN CITY, NEW JERSEY 08226

Monday, August 7, 2023

Mr. Chris Halliday, Board President
Ocean City Board of Education
501 Atlantic Avenue – Suite 1
Ocean City, New Jersey 08226

Subject: **Dr. Matthew Friedman Attendance Record Reconciliation Update #3 – Attendance and District Equipment**

Dear Mr. Halliday:

The irregularities with the work attendance of former superintendent Dr. Matthew Friedman is a serious matter. Dr. Friedman was trusted with the responsibility to lead the district with realizing its full potential but ended up deceiving the school community. Clearly, his abrupt departure was surprising but what is more surprising is his unethical conduct during his brief tenure. Ocean City Fairness in Taxes (FIT) has highlighted his unacceptable attendance record and his unethical attempt to receive economic gain that he was not entitled to by misleading the district on his vacation record. FIT has supplied you and the board with strong evidence and overwhelming documentation of times when Dr. Friedman was not in district but deliberately did not record his absence. Based on FIT calculations, Dr. Friedman should not receive a vacation buy out check, in any amount, and that he owes the district approximately $4,350 for exceeding his vacation allowance by 5.5 days. On Thursday, August 3, 2023, FIT alerted you and the board of his latest discrepancy in his attendance record when he failed to show up for work on Friday, June 30, 2023, as documented by district access records received through an OPRA request.

Now, one might be willing to overlook Dr. Friedman's missing his last day of work and allow him the benefit of the doubt, however, this should not take place considering his broader misconduct while in office. His premeditated effort to mislead the district in order to realize a larger personal financial gain should disqualify him from any benefit of the doubt consideration. That behavior is unprofessional and should not be rewarded in anyway.

Furthermore, what also needs to be taken into account is Dr. Friedman's unwise decision to take some of his district issued property and equipment with him after his departure from Ocean City and hold it "hostage" in a misguided attempt to influence his vacation buy out check process. It is FIT's understanding that this taxpayer property has since been returned, only after the involvement of the board solicitor. Besides being a desperate move on his part, it also shows his total lack of character. What kind of leader does this and how did the district ever hire such a person who lacks basic decency? These are questions deserving of answers and should be directed to the recruitment firm that recommended Dr. Friedman to the Ocean City School District. Perhaps the district should be seeking some amount of financial reimbursement from them due to their poor selection and recommendation of Dr. Friedman. No doubt some questions should be asked of the recruiting firm's judgement during this process.

Obviously, the Ocean City school community did not gain a full appreciation of Dr. Friedman's character prior to employing him. His unethical business practices, abusing and bullying of staff and his lack of due diligence with his work responsibilities harm the district and as a result, Dr. Friedman must be held fully accountable, including but not limited to reimbursing the district for exceeding his contractual vacation leave allowance along with any legal cost incurred with securing the return of district property taken by Dr. Friedman.

Respectfully submitted,

David Breeden, President
Ocean City Fairness in Taxes

ATTACHMENTS:

Exhibit "A" – Dr. Friedman Property Access Record for June 29 and 30, 2023
Exhibit "B" – Friedman Attendance Update #2 Email dated August 3, 2023

cc: Tim Kelley, Board Secretary/Business Administrator
Michael Stanton, Board Solicitor
Ocean City Board of Education Members
Ocean City Fairness in Taxes Board of Directors

Panel Date	Source	Event	Event Type	Card Number	Last Name	First Name	Message	Notes
6/29/2023 18:37	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 18:36	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 18:35	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 18:35	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 18:31	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 17:35	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 15:33	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 15:32	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 15:29	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 12:32	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 10:28	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 10:05	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		
6/29/2023 10:04	HS [redacted]	Local Grant	Valid Credential	4005	Friedman	Matthew		

↑ ↖ Always coming in late.

- Did not come to work on Friday June 30, 2023 - Last Day
- No access to District property recorded
- When/Where did Friedman leave District issued property?
- Took ½ day off for professional development on Thursday June 29, 2023

Exhibit "A"

(609) 399-4161
oceancityschools.org
Ocean City School District
501 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 1
Ocean City, NJ 08226

OCEAN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

August 3, 2023

Mr. David Breeden
114 Victoria Lane
Ocean City, NJ 08226

danddbreeden@aol.com

OPRA | Open Public Records Act

VIA EMAIL

Dear Mr. Breeden,

The Ocean City School District received your Open Public Records Act (OPRA) request on Friday, July 28, 2023. The official Records Custodian, Timothy E Kelley, received your OPRA request on July 28, 2023. As such, the seven (7) business day deadline to respond to your request is August 8, 2023. This response to your request is being provided to you on the 4th business day after the custodian's receipt of said request.

The table below identifies the records that are being denied in whole or in part as well as the legal basis for each denial, as is required by N.J.S.A. 47:1A-6.

List of all records responsive to OPRA request (include the number of pages for each record).	**List of all records provided, with redactions, or denied in their entirety.**	**If records are disclosed with redactions, give a general nature description of the redactions.**	**If records were denied in their entirety, give a general nature description of the record.**	**List the legal explanation and statutory citation for the denial of access to records in their entirety or with redactions.**
Electronic access log for Matthew Friedman June 29 2023 and June 30, 2023	Access Log	Specific Door locations / access points (building remains undredacted)	N/A	N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1.1 Security Measures or Surveillance Techniques which, if disclosed, could create a risk to the safety or persons, property, electronic data or software

DID NOT COME TO WORK ON FRIDAY JUNE 30, 2023

Exhibit "B"

Friedman Attendance Record — Update #2

From: DONNA BREEDEN (danddbreeden@aol.com)

To: challiday@ocsdnj.org

Cc: jclark@ocsdnj.org; dvanderslice@ocsdnj.org; kbarnes@ocsdnj.org; jmcalister@ocsdnj.org; cgallelli-keyes@ocsdnj.org; lnicoletti@ocsdnj.org; cpanico@ocsdnj.org; rshaffer@ocsdnj.org; fnewman@ocsdnj.org; wholmes@ocsdnj.org; kchisholm@ocsdnj.org; tkelley@ocsdnj.org

Date: Thursday, August 3, 2023 at 02:31 PM EDT

Good afternoon Mr. Halliday —

Please accept this email instead of more formal correspondence as there is a sense of urgency regarding this update on Dr. Friedman's work attendance record while in Ocean City. Consider this update #2. As a result of an OPRA response received from the Ocean City School District late this morning, FIT has discovered yet another day in which Dr. Friedman was not in district but his absence was not properly recorded in his attendance record. That day was Friday, June 30, 2023, Dr. Friedman's last day at work. So much for saying goodbye to his valued coworkers.

Of course this begs the question when did Dr. Friedman turn in his district issued equipment and property? Having a good sense of Dr. Friedman's ethics and values, or lack thereof, it would be very much "in character" for him to withhold valuable district property in some misguided effort to leverage the district to issue the vacation buy out check that was being held up as a result of the ongoing investigation. If that did occur, hopefully board leadership responded immediately and forcefully.

Having discovered another day that should have been recorded as an absence, it should be abundantly clear that Dr. Friedman is not entitled to any vacation buy back check, in any amount, as he clearly exceeded his contractual vacation leave allowance. Based on this additional day, Dr. Friedman would now owe the district in excess of $3,800.

Please be guided accordingly with this additional information concerning Dr. Friedman's work attendance record.

Thank you.

David Breeden, President
Ocean City Fairness in Taxes

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone