



State Auditor

**Dave Boliek**

## RAPID RESPONSE SPECIAL REPORT

North Carolina

Office of the State Auditor

Rapid Response Division

1-800-730-TIPS

June 04, 2026

# Summerfield Charter Academy

## WHY WE CONDUCTED THIS REPORT

The North Carolina Office of the State Auditor (OSA) received anonymous allegations via the State Auditor's Tipline (the Tipline) regarding Summerfield Charter Academy (SCA). The allegations included claims that SCA administrators improperly used payments from vendors from a school fundraiser to pay favored employees, sold unused school property for personal gain, forced staff to improperly alter Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and generally mismanaged school funding, including funding intended for COVID intervention and the school's special education program.

Heritage Academies (NHA), a charter school management company that operates more than 100 schools across nine states and serves more than 65,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade.<sup>2</sup>

Subject to oversight from SCA's Board of Directors, NHA provides a wide range of services necessary for day-to-day operations at SCA, including student recruitment and admissions, academic testing, and accounting.<sup>3</sup>

## OBJECTIVE

To review and determine whether the allegations submitted to the Tipline about SCA could be substantiated.

## WHAT WE FOUND

To determine the accuracy of the allegations received by OSA, we analyzed financial records; interviewed SCA and NHA personnel; and reviewed documents, including internal policies provided by NHA and an incident report prepared by NHA regarding the alleged payment made to SCA teachers using school fundraiser funds.

## BACKGROUND

Established on July 1, 2013, SCA is a tuition-free public charter school in Summerfield, North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> SCA is managed by National

<sup>1</sup> [Top Charter School in Summerfield NC | Schools in Summerfield.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Who We Are | Grand Rapids Michigan | National Heritage Academies](#)

<sup>3</sup> The relationship between SCA and NHA is memorialized in a Services Agreement that NHA provided and OSA reviewed as part of its investigation. NHA's specific duties to SCA are detailed in Article III of the Services Agreement.

## WHAT WE FOUND cont.

Based on this review, OSA determined that the allegations of misconduct by SCA administrators could not be substantiated. Specifically, OSA found that:

- No evidence of improper handling of school funds or improper revisions to IEPs at SCA was submitted to OSA;
- Fundraising proceeds are properly collected and accounted for in SCA's financial records;
- No SCA personnel are signors on any SCA bank accounts, and all payments out of SCA's accounts are processed through a central service center operated by NHA which also performs bank reconciliations for SCA. NHA does maintain a "principal discretionary fund" for SCA, but NHA personnel must approve SCA administrators' decisions on how monies from this fund are spent;<sup>4</sup> and
- NHA approves any changes to SCA operational plans and procedures, including IEPs, and has a special education department to ensure regulatory compliance.

Based on the information provided by SCA and NHA and OSA's independent review, OSA concludes that the Tipline allegations regarding SCA cannot be substantiated.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

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<sup>4</sup> Laura Knauf, Director of Accounting and Financial Reporting at NHA, provided the following explanation of the principal discretionary fund to OSA via email:

"[T]he cash/checks related to that fund would all be deposited in the same General bank account...No one at the school level is a signor on any school or NHA account. All checks out of any accounts are processed by the Accounts Payable team at the Service Center and all bank reconciliations are processed by a separate team at the Service Center. The principal does lead discussions on how the principal discretionary fund is spent, but everything runs through approval from their School Finance Partner at the Service Center before any checks are cut."

## **Response from Laura Knauf, CPA, Director of Accountings & Financial Reporting, National Heritage Academies**

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Good afternoon,

I apology for the late response. We have received and reviewed the report. We are good with it. Please let me know if you need anything further.

Thanks,  
Laura

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# Ordering Information

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Copies of this report may be obtained by contacting:



**Office of the State Auditor**  
State of North Carolina  
20601 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699

Telephone: 919-807-7500  
Fax: 919-807-7647  
Internet: [www.auditor.nc.gov](http://www.auditor.nc.gov)

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**Telephone: 1-800-730-8477**

**Internet: [www.auditor.nc.gov/about-us/state-auditors-tipline](http://www.auditor.nc.gov/about-us/state-auditors-tipline)**

NOTE: OSA maintains strict confidentiality when handling personally identifiable and other sensitive information in accordance with State and federal law. OSA takes all necessary precautions to ensure that sensitive information is not compromised or improperly shared. This special report is based on the limited information available to OSA during our investigation and is not exhaustive. This report does not constitute an audit or attestation engagement conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.