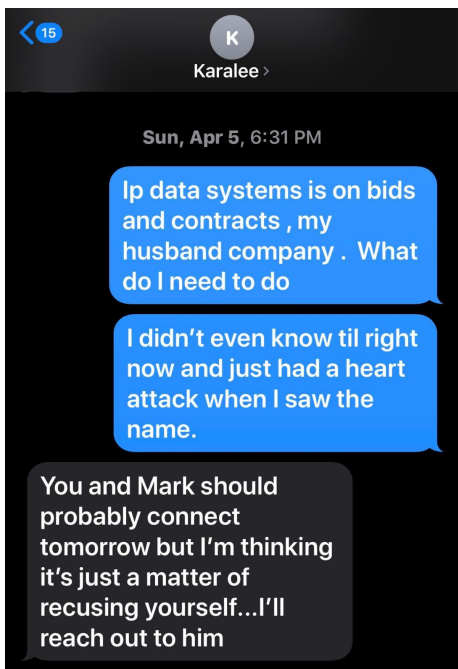


Conflict of Interest Timeline

On April 5th, I reviewed my Board packet for an upcoming April 7th Board of Education meeting. I noticed that my husband’s company, IP DataSystems had been awarded a contract. Neither he nor I were aware of this pending deal as he is now mostly removed from the day to day sales operations of the company. I immediately contacted Deputy Superintendent Karalee Turner-Little to self-report this conflict of interest. She assured me that she would be in contact with Legal Counsel Mark Blom.

April 7th Bids and Contracts PC-53: Uninterruptible power supply devices and services for e-rate funding Company: IP DataSystems, Inc, Amount \$427,369.



On April 6th, the BOE received emails from both Doug Pindell and Kathy Hanks, indicating that PC-53 was being removed from the agenda to allow time to investigate potential conflict of interest. I learned via later telephone conversations with both legal counsel Mark Blom and Mr. Pindell that recusing myself would not satisfy legal and ethical standards and the decision was made to permanently pull the item from the agenda. I believed at the time that this would be the end of it.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY
MEETING AGENDA ITEM**

TITLE: Bids and Contracts

DATE: April 7, 2020

PRESENTER(S): Douglas Pindell, Purchasing Director

Strategic Call to Action Alignment: Operations and practices are responsive, transparent, fiscally responsible and accountable, with students at the heart of all decisions.

OVERVIEW:

Exhibit	Description	Amount
PC-53	UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLY DEVICES AND SERVICES	
	FOR E-RATE FUNDING – Pulled	
PC-61	STUDENT TRANSPORTATION	
	All Bus Contractors	
PC-54	CHROMEBOOKS AND CARTS	
	CDWG Government LLC	\$5,783,988.00
PC-55	MOBILE HOT SPOT DEVICES	
	AT&T	\$115,710.00
PC-56	SCHOOL BUS ROUTING AND FLEET MANAGEMENT SOLUTION	
	Tyler Technologies, Inc.	\$335,904.50
PR-24	NEXT GENERAL FIREWALL EQUIPMENT, SOFTWARE, SERVICES, AND RELATED SUPPORT	
	Daly Computers, Inc.	\$207,813.60

April 8th: News media reached out to me for comment regarding a tip from concerned community member they had received:

“Hey did you happen to see the HoCo BOE agenda yesterday? They were going to procure pandemic-critical technology items from a company that is owned and operated by a BOE member’s spouse. That type of conflict of interest would have gone through without notice because of the rush for technology needs right now.”

I clarified with the reporter that the conflict of interest was self reported and that it was pulled prior to coming before the BOE. I sent a message to the concerned community member to share this same information and [sent an email](#) to my colleagues detailing what had transpired. I once again believed this would be the end of it.

April 14th: [MPIA #2020-372](#): a request for a list of all contracts bid on by IP Datasystems, including contract details and withdrawn contracts. A simple boarddocs search shows that there has been only one proposed contract between HCPSS and IPDataystems, the one that was reported by me and withdrawn.

April 24th: The following letter was shared with me:

I had hoped that this issue was long resolved but the goal is clearly not to ensure that the Board of Education is held up to the highest ethical standards. The goal is to smear my reputation without regard for both the truth and the good name of a company that my husband has spent thirteen years building from the ground up.

It is ironic that an ethics complaint is being threatened against me for being ethical.

April 18, 2020

Ms. Danielle Lueking
MPIA Representative
Howard County Public School System
10910 Clarksville Pike
Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

Dear Ms. Lueking,

Under the Maryland Public Information Act, I am making the following request for information and expect that the results of this request will be placed on full display on the Howard County Public School System MPIA web page. The following is my requests:

1. Copies of any and all emails written to Howard County Board of Education members by Howard County Board of Education member, **Vicky Cutroneo**, with anything and everything related to a conflict of interest violation that exposes the advancement of a contract between her personal business and HCPSS. This was revealed on Facebook and we have a responsibility to understand it further.

I expect that the results for these requests will be posted on the Howard County Public School System MPIA website.

Additionally, I am using this letter as a way to serve as an **official complaint that I am now filing with the HCPSS Ethics Panel**. Ms. Cutroneo has used the prestige of her office for personal gain and this has created a conflict of interest. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

I am copying the The Scott E's Blog to add another layer of accountability and full disclosure with the hope he will investigate.

I ask that you please scan this letter and electronically transmit it to the individuals listed below:

David Clark, School System Independent Auditor
Dr. Michael J. Martirano, Superintendent of Schools, HCPSS
Members of the Howard County Board of Education
Scott E's Blog 8630 - M Guilford Rd #119 Columbia, MD 21046

If you have any questions, I am happy to share any document or email and will answer your questions publicly. Using the MPIA process and ethics panel to advance political and special interest agenda is cowardly and erodes the very spirit of accountability, truth and transparency that we are trying to achieve.