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# PRESS RELEASE

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## Attorney General Brown Seeks Penalties against Prince George's County Private High School and Principal for COVID Aid Fraud

**Baltimore, MD (October 13, 2023)** – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown announced today that the State has filed [suit](#) against Metropolitan Washington High School and its Principal Gamaliel Onyemaobi-Prince for submitting a fraudulent application for COVID-related aid.

In response to the COVID pandemic, the Maryland State Department of Education made emergency funds available to private schools to cover COVID-related expenses such as cleaning supplies, PPE, improving ventilation systems, installing physical barriers to allow social distancing, testing, and educational technology needed for on-line or hybrid instruction.

Onyemaobi-Prince submitted an application on behalf of Metropolitan Washington High School, claiming that the school enrolled six hundred students and providing copies of receipts for supplies and services the school claimed to have purchased as a result of COVID. The school, however, allegedly operates out of a residential address and the receipts submitted were forgeries. The Maryland State Department of Education noticed these discrepancies and did not approve the application for COVID aid.

“Maryland children faced unprecedented upheaval during the COVID pandemic and falsifying an application to wrongfully receive funds intended to alleviate some of that turmoil is inexcusable,” **said Attorney General Brown.** “I commend the Maryland State Department of Education on its vigilance in preventing this alleged fraudulent use of funds intended for COVID relief.”

“The Maryland State Department of Education is grateful that the Maryland Office of the Attorney General is acting to protect the public from the defendants’ attempt to wrongfully obtain COVID related aid,” said Acting State Superintendent of Schools Sylvia Lawson, Ph.D. “The MSDE’s vigilance in carefully reviewing every grant application and denying this application prevented the misuse of public funds intended to help schools and students continue their education during the COVID pandemic.”

The Maryland False Claims Act prohibits the submission of false or fraudulent claims for payment from the government. Submission of a false or fraudulent claim is punishable by fines of up to \$10,000 per instance and treble damages.

The State has filed suit against Metropolitan Washington High School and Onyemaobi-Prince for \$140,000 in penalties for the fraudulent application and forged supporting documents. Anyone aware of fraudulent applications for or uses of COVID aid may report their suspicion to the Office of the Attorney General, False Claims Unit by calling 410-576-6300 or 1-888-743-0023 toll-free.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/101323a.pdf>