



SC Governor's School for Agriculture

AT JOHN DE LA HOWE

July 19, 2021

Re: Response to Your Findings and Report at the SC Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe (JDLH)

Dear Inspector General Lamkin:

When the news article from the *Post and Courier* was released, I contacted you about coming here to investigate the matter. Since many of the concerns were prior to my coming here, I did not know much of the back story. However, you acted immediately and formed a team from your staff to come to our campus, where you interviewed several members of our staff as well as investigated multiple procurement documents.

You and your staff performed a thorough investigation. You made several procedural recommendations that I immediately enforced. Mainly, I am now the last person to approve any procurement. Previously, our procurement officer was the last person to approve. As a new agency head, you also gave me an exuberant amount of leadership suggestions that I am incorporating.

My staff and I are dedicated to this agency/school and to the great state of South Carolina. Your report will help us to achieve transparency among our legislators, board members, taxpayers, and other stakeholders. We will take all of your suggestions and adhere closely to them. In an additional effort to train our staff in procurement, I have asked John White with SFAA to conduct a workshop for all of our staff on August 10, 2021.

After you finished your investigation, I asked you to present a workshop to all of our department heads and other employees with purchasing authority. You and your staff readily agreed – thank you. Your workshop was very informative and well-received by all. Many of our new employees came from a typical school district that handles procurement much differently than a state agency.

In closing, I accept your findings and recommendations found in this report. We will learn from this, move on, and continue to make South Carolina proud of our agency/school – more importantly, produce a great product with our students who will become the future of the agricultural industry in South Carolina!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Keown', written over a horizontal line.

Timothy R. Keown
President