

State Auditor Shad White issued the following statement:

“Yesterday my team and I wrote a letter that pointed out that the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) was ignoring the law on COVID-19 stimulus money for technology.

Again, as the letter stated, MDE told schools that schools ‘shall . . . purchase products from vendors listed on the Express Product List.’ This contradicts the law. And I didn’t make those words up. Those are MDE’s words. We have multiple documents showing this, along with emails from MDE confirming that this was their position, along with accounts from several local superintendents who were told this. Facts are stubborn things.

Today MDE wrote a press release finally acknowledging that schools do not have to buy from MDE’s preferred vendors. I’m glad they changed their position, even if it did take them being called on the carpet. I hope this will give school districts at least some flexibility to buy outside of MDE’s favored vendor list.”