

Inspector asks court for schools probe help

By Ernie Garcia • elgarcia@lohud.com • The Journal News • December 3, 2010

YONKERS — It's back to the courts for the city's inspector general in his probe of how the Yonkers school district spends its money.

Yonkers Inspector General Dan Schorr is seeking detailed financial records from the Yonkers Federation of Teachers' Welfare Fund, which gets \$4 million a year in taxpayer money from the school district. Schorr filed a motion in the state Supreme Court on Wednesday to compel compliance with a non-judicial subpoena he served on the fund in October.

The fund is used by the teachers union to pay for health care and other benefits.

Schorr and his predecessor, Philip Zisman, have sought to examine the fund's and the school district's books for about two years. Last year, the Yonkers Board of Education asked the court to rule on whether the city's inspector general had authority to scrutinize its finances; this year the court ruled in the inspector general's favor.

"This is while teachers are being laid off and programs are being cut," Schorr said of his and his predecessor's lengthy effort to gain access to education spending documents. "There should be open books so that taxpayers know how their money is being spent."

Yonkers Federation of Teachers President Pat Puleo, who is also the president of the Welfare Fund's board of trustees, said the fund had given some information to Schorr and to the Board of Education, but she said the fund's attorney argued that Schorr did not have a right to all the fund's records.

Puleo said she welcomed Schorr's appeal to the court.

"I'm happy he's gone to court because now a judge will decide whose legal opinion is correct," she said.