

DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

JULY 2012

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Ms. Jacqueline Fenn, Board President
Downingtown Area School District
540 Trestle Place
Downingtown, Pennsylvania 19335

Dear Governor Corbett and Ms. Fenn:

We conducted a performance audit of the Downingtown Area School District (DASD) to determine its compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. Our audit covered the period August 17, 2009 through January 12, 2012, except as otherwise indicated in the report. Additionally, compliance specific to state subsidy and reimbursements was determined for the school years ended June 30, 2010 and June 30, 2009. Our audit was conducted pursuant to 72 P.S. § 403 and in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Our audit found that the DASD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

We appreciate the DASD's cooperation during the conduct of the audit.

Sincerely,

/s/

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

July 26, 2012

cc: **DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT** Board Members



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Executive Summary

Audit Work

The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General conducted a performance audit of the Downingtown Area School District (DASD). Our audit sought to answer certain questions regarding the District's compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

Our audit scope covered the period August 17, 2009 through January 12, 2012, except as otherwise indicated in the audit scope, objectives, and methodology section of the report. Compliance specific to state subsidy and reimbursements was determined for school years 2009-10 and 2008-09.

District Background

The DASD encompasses approximately 81 square miles. According to 2009 local census data, it serves a resident population of 70,258. According to District officials, in school year 2009-10 the DASD provided basic educational services to 11,790 pupils through the employment of 880 teachers, 508 full-time and part-time support personnel, and 90 administrators. Lastly, the DASD received more than \$34.4 million in state funding in school year 2009-10.

Audit Conclusion and Results

Our audit found that the DASD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. We report no findings or observations in this report.

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations. There were no findings and observations included in our prior audit report.



Audit Scope, Objectives and Methodology

Scope

What is a school performance audit?

School performance audits allow the Department of the Auditor General to determine whether state funds, including school subsidies, are being used according to the purposes and guidelines that govern the use of those funds. Additionally, our audits examine the appropriateness of certain administrative and operational practices at each Local Education Agency (LEA). The results of these audits are shared with LEA management, the Governor, the PA Department of Education, and other concerned entities.

Our audit, conducted under authority of 72 P.S. § 403, is not a substitute for the local annual audit required by the Public School Code of 1949, as amended. We conducted our audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Our audit covered the period August 17, 2009 through January 12, 2012, except for the verification of professional employee certification which was performed for the period July 1, 2009 through November 7, 2011.

Regarding state subsidy and reimbursements, our audit covered school years 2009-10 and 2008-09.

While all districts have the same school years, some have different fiscal years. Therefore, for the purposes of our audit work and to be consistent with Pennsylvania Department of Education reporting guidelines, we use the term school year rather than fiscal year throughout this report. A school year covers the period July 1 to June 30.

Objectives

What is the difference between a finding and an observation?

Our performance audits may contain findings and/or observations related to our audit objectives. Findings describe noncompliance with a statute, regulation, policy, contract, grant requirement, or administrative procedure. Observations are reported when we believe corrective action should be taken to remedy a potential problem not rising to the level of noncompliance with specific criteria.

Performance audits draw conclusions based on an evaluation of sufficient, appropriate evidence. Evidence is measured against criteria, such as laws and defined business practices. Our audit focused on assessing the DASD's compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. However, as we conducted our audit procedures, we sought to determine answers to the following questions, which serve as our audit objectives:

- ✓ Were professional employees certified for the positions they held?
- ✓ Does the District have sufficient internal controls to ensure that the membership data it reported to the Pennsylvania Information Management System is complete, accurate, valid and reliable?

- ✓ Did the District, and any contracted vendors, ensure that its current bus drivers are properly qualified and does it have written policies and procedures governing the hiring of new bus drivers?
- ✓ Are there any declining fund balances that may impose risk to the District's fiscal viability?
- ✓ Did the District pursue a contract buy-out with an administrator and if so, what was the total cost of the buy-out, what were the reasons for the termination/settlement, and does the current employment contract(s) contain adequate termination provisions?
- ✓ Were there any other areas of concern reported by local auditors, citizens, or other interested parties?
- ✓ Is the District taking appropriate steps to ensure school safety?
- ✓ Did the District have a properly executed and updated Memorandum of Understanding with local law enforcement?
- ✓ Did the District take appropriate corrective action to address recommendations made in our prior audits?

Methodology

What are internal controls?

Internal controls are processes designed by management to provide reasonable assurance of achieving objectives in areas such as:

- Effectiveness and efficiency of operations;
- Relevance and reliability of operational and financial information;
- Compliance with applicable laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

Government Auditing Standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings, observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings, observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

DASD management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the District is in compliance with applicable laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. Within the context of our audit objectives, we obtained an understanding of internal controls and assessed whether those controls were properly designed and implemented. Additionally, we gained a high-level understanding of the District's information

technology (IT) environment and evaluated whether internal controls specific to IT were present.

Any significant deficiencies found during the audit are included in this report.

In order to properly plan our audit and to guide us in possible audit areas, we performed analytical procedures in the areas of state subsidies/reimbursement, pupil transportation, and comparative financial information.

Our audit examined the following:

- Records pertaining to bus driver qualifications, professional employee certification, and financial stability.
- Items such as Board meeting minutes and pupil membership records.

Additionally, we interviewed selected administrators and support personnel associated with DASD operations.

Findings and Observations

For the audited period, our audit of the Downingtown Area School District resulted in no findings and observations.

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the Downtown Area School District resulted in no findings and observations.



Distribution List

This report was initially distributed to the superintendent of the school district, the board members, our website address at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us, and the following:

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