

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Western Area Career and Technology Center Washington County, Pennsylvania

October 2014



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

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

Mr. Fred R. Rockage
Joint Operating Committee Chairperson
Western Area Career and Technology Center
688 Western Avenue
Canonsburg, Pennsylvania 15317

Dear Governor Corbett and Mr. Rockage:

We conducted a performance audit of the Western Area Career and Technology Center (Center) to determine its compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures (relevant requirements). Our audit covered the period February 18, 2011 through May 2, 2014, except as otherwise indicated in the report. Additionally, compliance specific to state subsidies and reimbursements was determined for the school years ended June 30, 2011 and June 30, 2012. Our audit was conducted pursuant to Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 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 Center complied, in all significant respects, with relevant requirements.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale".

Eugene A. DePasquale
Auditor General

October 9, 2014

cc: **WESTERN AREA CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER** Joint Operating
Committee Members

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Executive Summary

Audit Work

The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General conducted a performance audit of the Western Area Career and Technology Center (Center) in Washington County. Our audit sought to answer certain questions regarding the Center's compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

Our audit scope covered the period February 28, 2011 through May 2, 2014, except as otherwise indicated in the audit scope, objectives, and methodology section of the report. Compliance specific to state subsidies and reimbursements was determined for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years.

Center Background

According to Center officials, the Center provided educational services to 393 secondary pupils and 105 post-secondary pupils through the employment of 23 teachers, nineteen (19) full-time and part-time support personnel, and four (4) administrators during the 2011-12 school year. A joint operating committee (JOC), which is comprised of nine (9) members from the following school districts, directs the operation, administration, and management of the school:

Avella Area
Burgettstown Area
Canon-McMillan
Chartiers-Houston
Fort Cherry
McGuffey

Peters Township
Trinity Area
Washington

The JOC members are appointed by the individual school boards at the December meeting, each to serve a two-year term. The Center received \$799,726 in state funding in the 2011-12 school year.

Audit Conclusion and Results

Our audit found that the Center complied, in all significant respects, with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. Our audit resulted in no findings or observations.

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

Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

Scope

What is a school performance audit?

School performance audits allow the Pennsylvania 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 Pennsylvania Department of Education, and other concerned entities.

Our audit, conducted under authority of Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 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 February 28, 2011 through May 2, 2014, except for the verification of professional employee certification, which was performed for the period July 1, 2013 through April 14, 2014.

Regarding state subsidies and reimbursements, our audit covered the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years. While all LEAs 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 (PDE) 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 Center's compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, 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 objectives:

- ✓ Were professional employees certified for the positions they held?
- ✓ Were there any declining fund balances that may pose a risk to the Center's fiscal viability?
- ✓ Did the Center take appropriate steps to ensure school safety?
- ✓ Were votes made by the Center's Board of Joint Operating Committee members free from apparent conflicts of interests?

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 certain relevant state laws, regulations, 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 results and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our results and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Center management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Center is in compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures (relevant requirements). In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of the Center's internal controls, including any information technology controls, as they relate to the Center's compliance with relevant requirements that we consider to be significant within the context of our audit objectives. We assessed whether those controls were properly designed and implemented. Any deficiencies in internal controls that were identified during the conduct of our audit and determined to be significant within the context of our audit objectives 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 and reimbursements, pupil transportation, pupil membership, and comparative financial information.

Our audit examined the following:

- Records pertaining to pupil transportation, pupil membership, bus driver qualifications, professional employee certification, state ethics compliance, financial stability, reimbursement applications, tuition receipts, and deposited state funds.
- Items such as JOC meeting minutes and pupil membership records.

Additionally, we interviewed select administrators and support personnel associated with the Center's operations.

Findings and Observations

For the audited period, our audit of the Western Area Career and Technology Center resulted in no findings or observations.

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the Western Area Career and Technology Center resulted in no findings or observations.

Distribution List

This report was initially distributed to the Center's Superintendent of Record, the Joint Operating Committee, our website at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us, and the following stakeholders:

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

The Honorable Carolyn Dumaresq
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The Honorable Robert M. McCord
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This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@auditorgen.state.pa.us.