



**RIDGWAY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ELK COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**MARCH 2014**

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018  
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General  
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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE**  
**AUDITOR GENERAL**

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

Ms. Lisa Connelly, Board President  
Ridgway Area School District  
62 School Drive  
Ridgway, Pennsylvania 15853

Dear Governor Corbett and Ms. Connelly:

We conducted a performance audit of the Ridgway Area School District (District) to determine its compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures (relevant requirements). Our audit covered the period August 16, 2011 through December 6, 2013, 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 District complied, in all significant respects, with relevant requirements.

We appreciate the District'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

March 20, 2014

cc: **RIDGWAY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT** Board of School Directors

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## **Executive Summary**

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### **Audit Work**

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

Our audit scope covered the period August 16, 2011 through December 6, 2013, 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.

### **District Background**

The District encompasses approximately 181 square miles. According to 2010 federal census data, it serves a resident population of 6,558. According to District officials, the District provided basic educational services to 935 pupils through the employment of 81 teachers, 47 full-time and part-time support personnel, and six (6) administrators during the 2011-12 school year. The District received \$6.8 million in state funding in the 2011-12 school year.

### **Audit Conclusion and Results**

Our audit found that the District complied, in all significant respects, with certain relevant state laws, regulations, 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 or observations in our prior audit report.

## Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

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### 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 August 16, 2011 through December 6, 2013, except for the verification of professional employee certification, which was performed for the period July 1, 2013 through November 13, 2013.

Regarding state subsidies and reimbursements, our audit covered the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years.

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 (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 District'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 audit objectives:

- ✓ Were professional employees certified for the positions they held?
- ✓ In areas where the District received state subsidies and reimbursements based on pupil membership (e.g. basic education, special education, and vocational education), did it follow applicable laws and procedures?

- ✓ In areas where the District received state subsidies and reimbursements based on payroll (e.g. Social Security and retirement), did it follow applicable laws and procedures?
- ✓ Did the District, and any contracted vendors, ensure that current bus drivers were properly qualified, and did they have written policies and procedures governing the hiring of new bus drivers?
- ✓ Did the District take appropriate steps to ensure school safety?
- ✓ Did the District have a properly executed and updated Memorandum of Understanding with local law enforcement?
- ✓ Were there any other areas of concern reported by independent auditors, citizens, or other interested parties?

## 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.

The District's management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the District 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 District's internal controls, including any information technology controls, as they relate to the District'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 board meeting minutes and policies and procedures.

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

## **Findings and Observations**

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**F**or the audited period, our audit of the Ridgway Area School District resulted in no findings or observations.



## **Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations**

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**O**ur prior audit of the Ridgway Area School District resulted in no findings or observations.

## **Distribution List**

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This report was initially distributed to the Superintendent of the District, the Board of School Directors, our website at [www.auditorgen.state.pa.us](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us), and the following stakeholders:

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

The Honorable Carolyn Dumaesq  
Acting Secretary of Education  
1010 Harristown Building #2  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126

The Honorable Robert M. McCord  
State Treasurer  
Room 129 - Finance Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Ms. Lori Graham  
Acting Director  
Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Management  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
4th Floor, 333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dr. David Wazeter  
Research Manager  
Pennsylvania State Education Association  
400 North Third Street - Box 1724  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Mr. Lin Carpenter  
Assistant Executive Director for Member Services  
School Board and Management Services  
Pennsylvania School Boards Association  
P.O. Box 2042  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.auditorgen.state.pa.us](http://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](mailto:news@auditorgen.state.pa.us).