



**MINERSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**MAY 2014**

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



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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE**  
AUDITOR GENERAL

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

Mr. Albert Wank, Board President  
Minersville Area School District  
Battlin Miner Drive & Low Road  
Post Office Box 787  
Minersville, Pennsylvania 17954

Dear Governor Corbett and Mr. Wank:

We conducted a performance audit of the Minersville 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 January 5, 2010 through April 9, 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, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 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

May 1, 2014

cc: **MINERSVILLE 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 Minersville Area School District (District) in Schuylkill 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 and to determine the status of corrective action taken by the District in response to our prior audit recommendations.

Our audit scope covered the period January 5, 2010 through April 9, 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 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 school years.

### **District Background**

The District encompasses approximately 55 square miles. According to 2010 federal census data, it serves a resident population of 9,172. According to District officials, the District provided basic educational services to 1,258 pupils through the employment of 85 teachers, 69 full-time and part-time support personnel, and six (6) administrators during the 2011-12 school year. The District received \$7,708,306 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.** With regard to the status of our prior audit recommendations to the Minersville Area School District (District) from an audit released on August 27, 2010, we found the District had taken appropriate corrective action in implementing our recommendations pertaining to unmonitored vendor system access and logical access control weaknesses (see page 6).

## 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 January 5, 2010 through April 9, 2013, except for the verification of professional employee certification, which was performed for the period July 1, 2012 through March 1, 2013.

Regarding state subsidies and reimbursements, our audit covered the 2008-09, 2009-10, 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?
- ✓ Did the District have sufficient internal controls to ensure that the membership data it reported to PDE through the Pennsylvania Information Management System was complete, accurate, valid, and reliable?

- ✓ In areas where the District received state subsidies and reimbursements based on payroll (e.g. retirement), did it follow applicable laws and procedures?
- ✓ In areas where the District received transportation subsidies, was the District, and any contracted vendors, in compliance with applicable state 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?
- ✓ Were there any declining fund balances that may pose a 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?
- ✓ 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 votes made by the District's Board of School Directors free from apparent conflicts of interest?
- ✓ Were there any other areas of concern reported by independent auditors, citizens, or other interested parties?

## **Methodology**

*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.

*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.

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.

To determine the status of our audit recommendations made in a prior audit report released on August 27, 2010, we performed additional audit procedures targeting the previously reported matters.

## **Findings and Observations**

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**F**or the audited period, our audit of the Minersville 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 Minersville Area School District (District) released on August 27, 2010, resulted in one (1) observation pertaining to unmonitored vendor system access and logical access control weaknesses. As part of our current audit, we determined the status of corrective action taken by the District to implement our prior recommendations. We performed audit procedures and interviewed District personnel regarding the prior observation. As shown below, we found that the District did implement our recommendations related to unmonitored vendor system access and logical access control weaknesses.

### **Auditor General Performance Audit Report Released on August 27, 2010**

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**Observation:** **Unmonitored Vendor System Access and Logical Access Control Weaknesses**

Observation Summary: The District uses software purchased from an outside vendor for its critical student accounting applications (membership and attendance). The software vendor has remote access into the District's network servers. During our prior audit, we determined that a risk existed that unauthorized changes to the District's data could occur and not be detected because the District was not able to provide evidence that it was adequately monitoring vendor activity in its system.

Recommendations: Our audit observation recommended that the District should:

1. Maintain documentation to evidence that terminated employees are properly removed from the system in a timely manner.
2. Implement a security policy and system parameter settings to require all users, including the vendor, to change their passwords on a regular basis (e.g., every 30 days). Passwords should be a minimum length of eight (8) characters and include alpha, numeric, and special characters. Also, the District should maintain a password history that will prevent the use of a repetitive password (e.g., last ten (10) passwords).
3. Require the vendor to assign unique userIDs and passwords to vendor employees authorized to access the District system. Further, the District should obtain a list of vendor employees with access to its data and ensure that changes to the data are made only by authorized vendor representatives.

4. Generate monitoring reports (including firewall logs) of vendor and employee access and activity on their system. Monitoring reports should include the date, time, and reason for access, change(s) made and who made the change(s). The District should review these reports to determine that the access was appropriate and that data was not improperly altered. The District should also ensure it is maintaining evidence to support this monitoring and review.
5. Ensure that upgrades/updates to the District's system are made only after receipt of written authorization from appropriate District officials.
6. Consider implementing additional environmental controls around the network server sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the manufacturer of the server and to ensure warranty coverage. Specifically, the District should install fire extinguishers in the computer room.

Current Status:

During our current audit, we found that the District did implement our recommendations by revising policy and procedures.

## **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

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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).