

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Delaware County Technical Schools Delaware County, Pennsylvania

August 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. Edward J. Cardow
Joint Operating Committee Chairperson
Delaware County Technical Schools
200 Yale Avenue
Morton, Pennsylvania 19070

Dear Governor Corbett and Mr. Cardow:

We conducted a performance audit of the Delaware County Technical Schools (Center) to determine its compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures (relevant requirements). Our audit covered the period October 5, 2010 to March 5, 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, 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 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 dark ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale".

Eugene A. DePasquale
Auditor General

August 28, 2014

cc: **DELAWARE COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS** 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 Delaware County Technical Schools (Center) in Delaware 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 October 5, 2010 through March 5, 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 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 school years.

Center Background

According to Center officials, the Center provided educational services to 1,091 secondary pupils and 76 post-secondary pupils through the employment of 59 teachers, 36 full-time and part-time support personnel, and six (6) administrators during the 2011-12 school year. A joint operating committee (JOC), which is comprised of fifteen (15) members from the following school districts, directs the operation, administration, and management of the school:

Chester-Upland
Chichester
Garnet Valley
Haverford Township
Interboro
Marple Newtown

Penn Delco
Radnor Township
Ridley
Rose Tree Media
Southeast Delco
Springfield
Upper Darby
Wallingford Swarthmore
William Penn

The JOC members are appointed by the individual school boards at the December meeting, each to serve a three-year term.

The Center received \$1.3 million 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 October 5, 2010, through March 5, 2014, except for the verification of professional employee certification, which was performed for the period June 30, 2010 through December 11, 2013.

Regarding state subsidies and reimbursements, our audit covered the 2008-09, 2009-10, 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?
- ✓ Did the Center 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?

- ✓ Did the Center, 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 Center's fiscal viability?
- ✓ Did the Center take appropriate steps to ensure school safety?
- ✓ Did the Center have a properly executed and updated Memorandum of Understanding with local law enforcement?
- ✓ Were votes made by the Center's Joint Operating Committee members free from apparent conflicts of interests?
- ✓ 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 Center's 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 reimbursement, 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 Joint Operating Committee meeting minutes and policies and procedures.

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 Delaware County Technical Schools resulted in no findings or observations.

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the Delaware County Technical Schools 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
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Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Carolyn Dumaesq
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1010 Harristown Building #2
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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.