

CRANBERRY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
VENANGO COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

DECEMBER 2009



The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Ms. Mary Jo Osborne, Board President  
Cranberry Area School District  
3 Education Drive  
Seneca, Pennsylvania 16346

Dear Governor Rendell and Ms. Osborne:

We conducted a performance audit of the Cranberry Area School District (CASD) to determine its compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements and administrative procedures. Our audit covered the period August 3, 2006 through May 22, 2009, except as otherwise indicated in the report. Additionally, compliance specific to state subsidy and reimbursements was determined for the school years ended June 30, 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005. 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 CASD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

We appreciate the CASD's cooperation during the conduct of the audit and their willingness to implement our recommendations.

Sincerely,

/s/  
JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

December 1, 2009

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



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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 Cranberry Area School District (CASD). Our audit sought to answer certain questions regarding the District's compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures; and to determine the status of corrective action taken by the CASD in response to our prior audit recommendations.

Our audit scope covered the period August 3, 2006 through May 22, 2009, 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 2007-08, 2006-07, 2005-06 and 2004-05.

### **District Background**

The CASD encompasses approximately 155 square miles. According to 2000 federal census data, it serves a resident population of 9,698. According to District officials, in school year 2007-08 the CASD provided basic educational services to 1271 pupils through the employment of 115 teachers, 77 full-time and part-time support personnel, and 7 administrators. Lastly, the CASD received more than \$9 million in state funding in school year 2007-08.

### **Audit Conclusion and Results**

Our audit found that the CASD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. For the audited period, our audit at the CASD resulted in no findings or observations.

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

**Observations.** With regard to the status of our prior audit recommendations to the CASD from an audit we conducted of the 2003-04 and 2002-03 school years, we found the CASD had taken appropriate corrective action in implementing our recommendations pertaining to the internal control weaknesses in administrative policies regarding bus driver qualifications (see page 7).





## Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

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### 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 3, 2006 through May 22, 2009, except for the verification of professional employee certification which was performed for the period May 11, 2006 through April 8, 2009.

Regarding state subsidy and reimbursements, our audit covered school years 2007-08, 2006-07, 2005-06 and 2004-05.

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 Department of Education (DE) 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

Performance audits draw conclusions based on an evaluation of sufficient, appropriate evidence. Evidence is measured against criteria, such as, laws, regulations, and defined business practices. Our audit focused on assessing the CASD's compliance with applicable 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 receives state subsidy and reimbursements based on pupil membership (e.g. basic education, special education, and vocational education), did it follow applicable laws and procedures?

*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 law, regulation, 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.

- ✓ In areas where the District receives state subsidy and reimbursements based on payroll (e.g. Social Security and retirement), did it follow applicable laws and procedures?
- ✓ Did the District follow applicable laws and procedures in areas dealing with pupil membership and ensure that adequate provisions were taken to protect the data?
- ✓ Is the District's pupil transportation department, including any contracted vendors, in compliance with applicable state laws and procedures?
- ✓ Does the District ensure that Board members appropriately comply with the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act?
- ✓ Are there any declining fund balances which may impose risk to the fiscal viability of the District?
- ✓ Did the District pursue a contract buyout with an administrator and if so, what was the total cost of the buy-out, reasons for the termination/settlement, and do 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 which warrant further attention during our audit?
- ✓ Is the District taking appropriate steps to ensure school safety?
- ✓ 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, 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 findings, observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

CASD management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the District is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, 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.

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 membership, pupil transportation, and comparative financial information.

Our audit examined the following:

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

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

Lastly, to determine the status of our audit recommendations made in a prior audit report released on December 11, 2006, we reviewed the CASD's response to DE dated March 23, 2009. We then performed additional audit procedures targeting the previously reported matters.

## **Findings and Observations**

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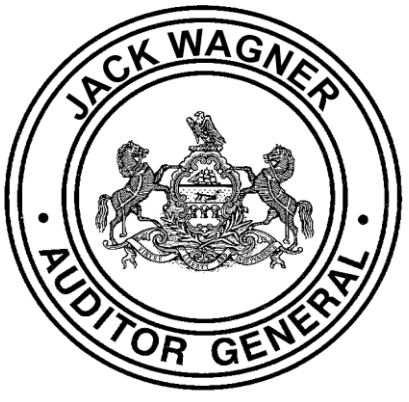
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**F**or the audited period, our audit of the Cranberry Area School District resulted in no findings or observations.

## Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the CASD for the school years 2003-04 and 2002-03 resulted in one observation pertaining to internal control weaknesses in regard to bus driver qualifications. As part of our current audit, we determined the status of corrective action taken by the District to implement our prior recommendations. We analyzed the CASD Board’s written response provided to the Department of Education (DE), performed audit procedures, and questioned District personnel regarding the prior observation. As shown below, we found that the CASD did implement recommendations related to the internal control weaknesses in regard to bus driver qualifications.

<i>School Years 2003-04 and 2002-03 Auditor General Performance Audit Report</i>		
<i>Prior Recommendations</i>	<i>Implementation Status</i>	
<p><u>Observation: Internal Control Weaknesses in Administrative Policies Regarding Bus Driver’s Qualifications.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a process to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether prospective and current employees of the District or the District’s transportation contractors have been charged with or convicted of crimes that, even though not bared by state law, affect their suitability to have direct contact with children.</li> <li>2. Implement written policy and procedures to ensure the District is notified when drivers are charged with or convicted of crimes that call into question their suitability to continue to have direct contact with children.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Background:</b></p> <p>Our prior audit found that neither the District nor contractor had written policies and procedures to ensure that the District would be notified in the event a current employee would be charged with or convicted of serious criminal offenses that would affect their suitability to have contact with children.</p>	<p><b>Current Status:</b></p> <p>Our current audit of written policy and procedures found that the District has as of March 23, 2009, implemented Board Policy #810 that addresses the prior audit observation.</p>



## **Distribution List**

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

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