

CURWENSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
CLEARFIELD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

DECEMBER 2012



**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-0018**

**JACK WAGNER
AUDITOR GENERAL**

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

Ms. Darlene Wriglesworth, Board President
Curwensville Area School District
650 Beech Street
Curwensville, Pennsylvania 16833

Dear Governor Corbett and Ms. Wriglesworth:

We conducted a performance audit of the Curwensville Area School District (CASD) to determine its compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. Our audit covered the period August 6, 2010 through July 17, 2012, except as otherwise indicated in the report. Additionally, compliance specific to state subsidy and reimbursements was determined for the school years ended June 30, 2010 and June 30, 2009. 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, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

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

Sincerely,

/s/

**JACK WAGNER
Auditor General**

December 20, 2012

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



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Executive Summary

Audit Work

The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General conducted a performance audit of the Curwensville Area School District (CASD). Our audit sought to answer certain questions regarding the District's compliance with applicable state laws, 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 6, 2010 through July 17, 2012, 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 2009-10 and 2008-09.

District Background

The CASD encompasses approximately 115 square miles. According to 2010 federal census data it serves a resident population of 7,365. According to District officials, in school year 2009-10 the CASD provided basic educational services to 1,160 pupils through the employment of 92 teachers, 73 full-time and part-time support personnel, and 8 administrators. Lastly, the CASD received more than \$9.4 million in state funding in school year 2009-10.

Audit Conclusion and Results

Our audit found that the CASD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, 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 CASD from an audit we conducted of the 2007-08 and 2006-07 school years, we found the CASD had taken appropriate corrective action in implementing our recommendations pertaining to membership (see page 8).



Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

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 6, 2010 through July 17, 2012, except for the verification of professional employee certification which was performed for the period July 1, 2011 through June 8, 2012.

Regarding state subsidy and reimbursements, our audit covered school years 2009-10 and 2008-09.

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 CASD's compliance with applicable state laws, 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?

- ✓ Does the District have sufficient internal controls to ensure that the membership data it reported to the Pennsylvania Information Management System is complete, accurate, valid and reliable?
- ✓ In areas where the District received state subsidy and reimbursements based on payroll (e.g. Social Security and retirement), did it follow applicable laws and procedures?
- ✓ In areas where the District receives transportation subsidies, are the District and any contracted vendors in compliance with applicable state laws and procedures?
- ✓ Did the District, and any contracted vendors, ensure that their current bus drivers are properly qualified, and do they have written policies and procedures governing the hiring of new bus drivers?
- ✓ Are there any declining fund balances that may impose 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?
- ✓ Were there any other areas of concern reported by local auditors, citizens, or other interested parties?
- ✓ Is the District taking 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 members free from apparent conflicts of interest?
- ✓ 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, 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, observations 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, 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. Additionally, we gained a high-level understanding of the District's information technology (IT) environment and evaluated whether internal controls specific to IT were present.

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 transportation, and comparative financial information.

Our audit examined the following:

- Records pertaining to bus driver qualifications, professional employee certification, and financial stability.
- Items such as Board meeting minutes, pupil membership records, and reimbursement applications.
- 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 23, 2010, we reviewed the CASD's response to PDE dated April 16, 2012. We then performed additional audit procedures targeting the previously reported matters.

Findings and Observations

For the audited period, our audit of the Curwensville Area School District resulted in no findings or observations.

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the Curwensville Area School District (CASD) for the school years 2007-08 and 2006-07 resulted in one reported finding. The finding pertained to errors in reporting membership data. 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 Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), performed audit procedures, and questioned District personnel regarding the prior finding. As shown below, we found that the CASD did implement recommendations related to errors in reporting membership data.

School Years 2007-08 and 2006-07 Auditor General Performance Audit Report

Finding: **Errors in Reporting Pupil Membership Resulted in Overpayments of \$83,680**

Finding Summary: Our prior audit found that the CASD's pupil membership reports submitted to PDE for the 2007-08 and 2006-07 school years were inaccurate. Clerical errors resulted in overpayments of \$45,885 and \$37,795 in Commonwealth-paid tuition for children placed in private homes for the 2007-08 and 2006-07 school years, respectively.

Recommendations: Our audit finding recommended that the CASD:

1. Perform an internal review of all pupil membership reports and supporting documentation prior to submission to PDE.
2. Ensure the District receives and retains placement letters from the placement agencies. These letters should include the district where the parents/guardians of children placed in a private home resides.
3. Review subsequent school years' membership reports submitted to PDE for accuracy and resubmit if necessary.

We also recommended that PDE:

4. Adjust the District's future allocation to correct the overpayments of \$83,680.

Current Status: During our current audit procedures we found that the CASD complied with our recommendations by performing an internal review, ensuring the District receives and retains placements letters from the placement agencies, and reviewing subsequent school years' membership reports submitted to PDE. Corrections were submitted for 2009-10 school year.

Our current audit found no significant membership reporting errors.

As of July 17, 2012, PDE had not yet adjusted the District's overpayments of \$83,680.



Distribution List

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

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