

EAST PENN SCHOOL DISTRICT
LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

JANUARY 2012

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

Mr. Charles H. Ballard, Board President
East Penn School District
800 Pine Street
Emmaus, Pennsylvania 18049

Dear Governor Corbett and Mr. Ballard:

We conducted a performance audit of the East Penn School District (EPSD) to determine its compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. Our audit covered the period June 2, 2009 through September 2, 2011, 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 EPSD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

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

Sincerely,

January 20, 2012

/s/
JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

cc: **EAST PENN SCHOOL DISTRICT** Board Members

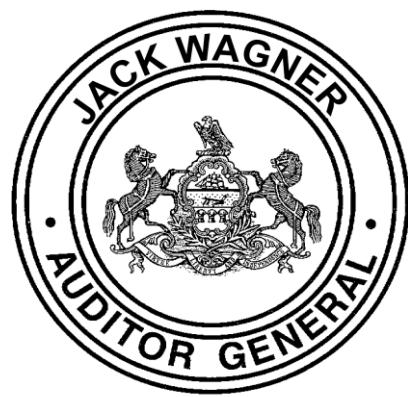
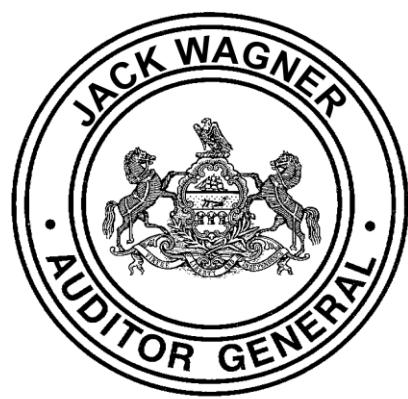


Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	1
Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology	3
Findings and Observations	6
Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations	7
Distribution List	9



Executive Summary

Audit Work

The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General conducted a performance audit of the East Penn School District (EPSD). 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 EPSD in response to our prior audit recommendations.

Our audit scope covered the period June 2, 2009 through September 2, 2011, 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.

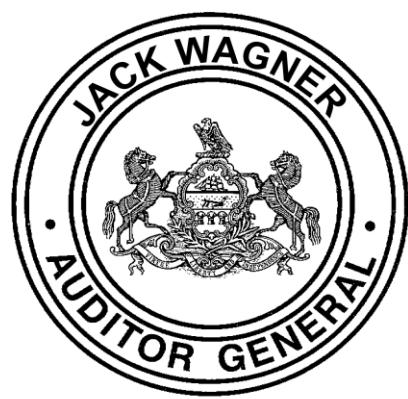
District Background

The EPSD encompasses approximately 45 square miles. According to 2011 local census, it serves a resident population of 54,491. According to District officials, in school year 2009-10 the EPSD provided basic educational services to 7,985 pupils through the employment of 526 teachers, 503 full-time and part-time support personnel, and 39 administrators. Lastly, the EPSD received more than \$21.7 million in state funding in school year 2009-10.

Audit Conclusion and Results

Our audit found that the EPSD 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 EPSD from an audit we conducted of the 2007-08 and 2006-07 school years, we found the EPSD had taken appropriate corrective action in implementing our recommendations pertaining to Memorandums of Understanding not updated timely and appropriate corrective action in implementing five of the six recommendations regarding their unmonitored vendor system access and logical access control weaknesses (see page 7).



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 June 2, 2009 through September 2, 2011.

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 Department of Education 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 EPSP'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?
- ✓ Is the District's pupil transportation department, including any contracted vendors, in compliance with applicable state laws and procedures?
- ✓ 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 use an outside vendor to maintain its membership data and if so, are there internal controls in place related to vendor access?
- ✓ 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 conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for conclusions based on our audit objectives.

EPSD 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.

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 bus driver qualifications, professional employee certification and financial stability.
- Items such as Board meeting minutes and reimbursement applications.

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

Lastly, to determine the status of our audit recommendations made in a prior audit report released on January 19, 2010, we performed additional audit procedures targeting the previously reported matters.

Findings and Observations

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

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the East Penn School District (EPSD) for the school years 2007-08 and 2006-07 resulted in two reported observations. The first observation pertained to Memorandums of Understanding not being updated timely, and the second pertained 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 questioned District personnel regarding the prior observations. As shown below, we found that the EPSD did implement recommendations related to Memorandums of Understanding and implemented five of our six recommendations related to unmonitored vendor system access and logical access control weaknesses.

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

Observation No. 1: Memorandums of Understanding Not Updated Timely

Observation Summary: Our prior audit of the District's records found that the Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between the EPSD and the three local police departments were not updated timely.

Recommendations: Our audit observation recommended that the EPSD:

1. In consultation with the solicitor, review, update and re-execute the current MOU between the District and all appropriate local law enforcement agencies.
2. Adopt a policy requiring the administration to review and re-execute the MOU every two years.

Current Status: During our current audit procedures we found that the EPSD did implement the recommendations.

Observation No. 2: Unmonitored Vendor System Access and Logical Access Control Weaknesses

Observation Summary: Our prior audit found that the EPSD 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.

- Recommendations: Our audit observation recommended that the EPSD:
1. Ensure the contract with the vendor contains a non-disclosure agreement for the District's proprietary information.
 2. Establish separate information technology policies and procedures for controlling the activities of the vendors and have the vendor sign this policy, or the District should require the vendor to sign the District's Acceptable Use Policy.
 3. Implement a security policy and system parameter settings to require all users, including the vendor, to change their passwords on a regular basis (i.e., every 30 days). Passwords should include alpha, numeric and special characters and lock out users after three unsuccessful attempts.
 4. 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.
 5. Allow access only to their system when the vendor needs access to make pre-approved changes/updates or requested assistance. This access should be removed when the vendor has completed its work. This procedure would also enable the monitoring of vendor changes.
 6. 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.

Current Status: During our current audit procedures we found that the EPSD did implement recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 and implemented part of recommendation 3 pertaining to passwords including alpha, numeric and special characters and lock out users after three unsuccessful attempts. However, they have not implemented a security policy or system parameter settings to require all users, including the vendor, to change their passwords on a regular basis (i.e., every 30 days). We once again urge the District to adopt the remaining procedures outlined in that recommendation.

Distribution List

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

The Honorable Tom Corbett
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This report is a matter of public record. Copies of this report may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 318 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. If you have any questions regarding this report or any other matter, you may contact the Department of the Auditor General by accessing our website at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us.

