

FORBES ROAD SCHOOL DISTRICT  
FULTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

NOVEMBER 2012



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

Ms. Teresa Bard, Board President  
Forbes Road School District  
159 Red Bird Drive  
Waterfall, Pennsylvania 16689

Dear Governor Corbett and Ms. Bard:

We conducted a performance audit of the Forbes Road School District (FRSD) to determine its compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. Our audit covered the period July 9, 2010 through December 14, 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 FRSD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures, except as detailed in one finding noted in this report. A summary of these results is presented in the Executive Summary section of the audit report.

Our audit finding and recommendations have been discussed with FRSD's management and their responses are included in the audit report. We believe the implementation of our recommendations will improve FRSD's operations and facilitate compliance with legal and administrative requirements. We appreciate the FRSD's cooperation during the conduct of the audit.

Sincerely,

/s/

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

November 1, 2012

cc: **FORBES ROAD 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 Forbes Road School District (FRSD). Our audit sought to answer certain questions regarding the District's compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

Our audit scope covered the period July 9, 2010 through December 14, 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**

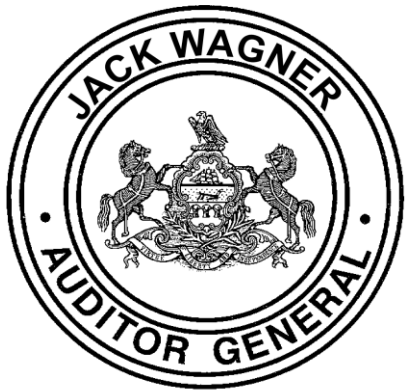
The FRSD encompasses approximately 435 square miles. According to 2007 local census data, it serves a resident population of 3,188. According to District officials, in school year 2009-10 the FRSD provided basic educational services to 467 pupils through the employment of 46 teachers, 31 full-time and part-time support personnel, and 3 administrators. Lastly, the FRSD received more than \$3.8 million in state funding in school year 2009-10.

### **Audit Conclusion and Results**

Our audit found that the FRSD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures, except for one compliance-related matter reported as a finding.

**Finding: Errors in Reporting Nonresident Membership Resulted in Underpayments of \$25,705 in Tuition for Children Placed in Private Homes.** Our audit of membership reports submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for the 2009-10 and 2008-09 school years found errors in reporting nonresident membership days for children placed in private homes (see page 6).

**Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations.** There were no findings or observations included in our prior audit report.





## 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 July 9, 2010 through December 14, 2011, except for the verification of professional employee certification which was performed for the period June 30, 2010 through September 30, 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 Pennsylvania 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 FRSD'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?

- ✓ 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 buy-out 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?

## 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.

FRSD 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 pupil membership records.

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

## Findings and Observations

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### Finding →

#### **Errors in Reporting Nonresident Membership Resulted in Underpayments of \$25,705 in Tuition for Children Placed in Private Homes**

*Criteria relevant to the finding:*

Section 2503 of the Public School Code provides for Commonwealth payment of tuition for children placed in private homes.

Our audit of membership reports submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) for the 2009-10 and 2008-09 school years found errors in reporting nonresident membership days for children placed in private homes.

For the 2009-10 school year, membership for elementary children was understated by 358 days, resulting in an underpayment of \$16,911. For the 2008-09 school year, membership for elementary children was understated by 179 days, resulting in an underpayment of \$8,794. The total of the underpayments for the two school years amounted to \$25,705.

The errors were caused by new personnel being assigned to membership reporting.

Nonresident pupil membership must be maintained and reported in accordance with PDE guidelines and instructions, since it is a major factor in determining the Commonwealth's payments of tuition for children placed in private homes.

### **Recommendations**

The *Forbes Road School District* should:

1. Review membership reports thoroughly prior to submission to PDE to ensure all nonresident membership is properly reported.
2. Review reports submitted subsequent to the years audited and submit revised reports to PDE, if errors are found.
3. Ensure personnel who are assigned the responsibility of membership obtain the proper training.

The *Pennsylvania Department of Education* should:

4. Adjust the District's allocations to correct the reimbursements underpayments of \$25,705.

**Management Response**

Management stated the following:

Management has taken corrective action for the finding.

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

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**O**ur prior audit of the Forbes Road School District resulted in no findings or observations.

## **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:

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

The Honorable Ronald J. Tomalis  
Secretary of Education  
1010 Harristown Building #2  
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Harrisburg, PA 17126

The Honorable Robert M. McCord  
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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](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).

