

MIDWESTERN INTERMEDIATE UNIT #4  
MERCER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

OCTOBER 2011



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

Mr. Cedric Butchy, Board President  
Midwestern Intermediate Unit #4  
435 Maple Street  
Grove City, Pennsylvania 16127

Dear Governor Corbett and Mr. Butchy:

We conducted a performance audit of the Midwestern Intermediate Unit #4 (MIU) to determine its compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements and administrative procedures. Our audit covered the period May 22, 2009 through March 25, 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 MIU complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

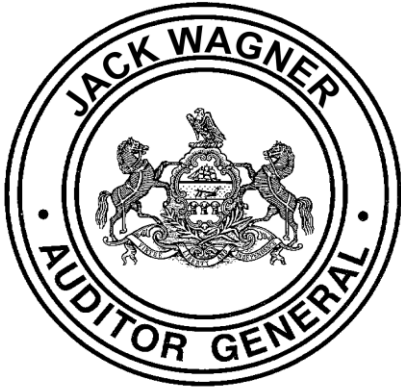
Sincerely,

/s/

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

October 12, 2011

cc: **MIDWESTERN INTERMEDIATE UNIT #4** Board Members

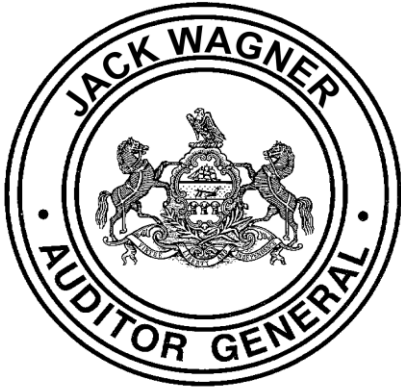


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## **Executive Summary**

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### **Audit Work**

The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General conducted a performance audit of the Midwestern Intermediate Unit #4 (MIU). Our audit sought to answer certain questions regarding the MIU's compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

Our audit scope covered the period May 22, 2009 through March 25, 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.

### **Intermediate Unit Background**

The intermediate unit (IU) is a legal entity established under the terms of Pennsylvania Law (Act 102, May 4, 1970) to function as a service agency for the 27 participating school districts, nonpublic schools, and institutions in Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties. The IU is governed by a 13 member board appointed by the participating school districts on a rotating basis. The administrative office is located at 453 Maple Street, Grove City, Pennsylvania.

The programs offered by the IU served 8,488 students in public schools and 2,940 students in nonpublic schools. The staff consisted of 69 administrators, 248 teachers, and 214 full-time and part-time support personnel.

The accounts of the IU are organized on the basis of programs and account groups, each of which are considered a separate accounting entity. IU resources are allocated to, and accounted for, in individual programs based on purposes for which the funds are to be spent and the means by which spending activities are controlled.

The various programs which receive Commonwealth funds are accounted for in the following:

### **General Fund**

The general fund is the primary operating fund of the IU. It is used to account for all financial resources and accounts for the general governmental activities of the IU.

Services provided to participating school districts through the general fund included:

- administration;
- curriculum development and instructional improvement;
- educational planning;
- instructional materials;
- management services;
- continuing professional education;
- pupil personnel;
- state and federal liaison; and
- nonpublic program subsidy - Act 89.

Lastly, the MIU received more than \$5.9 million from the Commonwealth in general operating funds in school year 2009-10.

### **Special Revenue Fund**

The special revenue fund accounts for the financial resources received to provide, maintain, administer, supervise and operate schools, classes, service programs, and transportation for exceptional children in accordance with the school laws of Pennsylvania and the approved IU plan for special education. The special revenue fund accounts for financial resources available for programs and services for exceptional children in state centers, state hospitals, private licensed facilities, and other child care institutions.

The special education program offered services at all grade levels for pupils whose physical, mental, or emotional needs required such services. If appropriate facilities were not available in a neighborhood school, the IU provided the necessary transportation.

Special education programs included:

- . gifted support;
- . learning support;
- . life skilled support;
- . emotional support;
- . deaf or hearing impaired support;
- . blind or visually impaired support;
- . speech and language support;

- . physical support;
- . autistic support; and
- . multi-handicapped support.

Act 25 of 1991 amended the Public School Code regarding the funding of special education services. IUs received direct funding for certain institutionalized children programs, CORE services, special payments to certain IUs, and a contingency fund.

Lastly, the MIU received more than \$3.6 million from the Commonwealth in special revenue funds in school year 2009-10.

### **Audit Conclusion and Results**

Our audit found that the MIU complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. We report no findings or observations in this report.

**Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations.** There were no findings or observations 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 May 22, 2009 through March 25, 2011.

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

While all LEAs have the same school years, some LEAs 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 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.

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 MIU'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 objectives:

- ✓ Were professional employees certified for the positions they held?
- ✓ In areas where the IU receives state subsidy and reimbursements based on payroll (e.g. Social Security and retirement), did it follow applicable laws and procedures?
- ✓ Is the IU's pupil transportation department, including any contracted vendors, in compliance with applicable state laws and procedures?

- ✓ Does the IU 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 IU?
- ✓ Did the IU 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 IU taking appropriate steps to ensure school safety?
- ✓ Did the IU use an outside vendor to maintain its membership data and if so, are there internal controls in place related to vendor access?
- ✓ Did the IU 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.

MIU's management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the IU 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 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 meeting minutes, pupil membership records, and reimbursement applications.

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

## **Findings and Observations**

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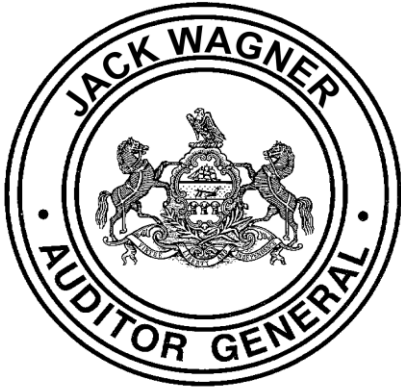
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**F**or the audited period, our audit of the Midwestern Intermediate Unit #4 resulted in no findings or observations.

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

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**O**ur prior audit of the Midwestern Intermediate Unit #4 resulted in no findings or observations.



## **Distribution List**

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This report was initially distributed to the executive director of the intermediate unit, 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  
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Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Ronald J. Tomalis  
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The Honorable Robert M. McCord  
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