



**NORWIN SCHOOL DISTRICT
WESTMORELAND COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

NOVEMBER 2013

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL





Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

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

Mr. Robert J. Perkins, Board President
Norwin School District
281 McMahan Drive
North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania 15642

Dear Governor Corbett and Mr. Perkins:

We conducted a performance audit of the Norwin School District (District) to determine its compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures (relevant requirements). Our audit covered the period June 16, 2010 through May 28, 2013, except as otherwise indicated in the report. Additionally, compliance specific to state subsidies and reimbursements was determined for the school years ended June 30, 2010 and June 30, 2009. Our audit was conducted pursuant to Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 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 District complied, in all significant respects, with relevant requirements.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale".

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

November 13, 2013

cc: **NORWIN SCHOOL DISTRICT** Board of School Directors

Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	1
Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology	2
Findings and Observations	5
Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations	6
Distribution List	7

Executive Summary

Audit Work

The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General conducted a performance audit of the Norwin School District (District). Our audit sought to answer certain questions regarding the District's compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures and to determine the status of corrective action taken by the District in response to our prior audit recommendations.

Our audit scope covered the period June 16, 2010 through May 28, 2013, except as otherwise indicated in the audit scope, objectives, and methodology section of the report. Compliance specific to state subsidies and reimbursements was determined for the 2009-10 and 2008-09 school years.

District Background

The District encompasses approximately 36 square miles. According to 2010 federal census data, it serves a resident population of 35,529. According to District officials, the District provided basic educational services to 5,247 pupils through the employment of 308 teachers, 212 full-time and part-time support personnel, and 24 administrators during the 2009-10 school year. Lastly, the District received \$22.6 million in state funding in the 2009-10 school year.

Audit Conclusion and Results

Our audit found that the District complied, in all significant respects, with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. Our audit 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 District from an audit released on January 4, 2011, we found that the District had taken appropriate corrective action in implementing our recommendations pertaining to errors in reporting non-resident membership (see page 6).

Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

Scope

What is a school performance audit?

School performance audits allow the Pennsylvania 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 Pennsylvania Department of Education, and other concerned entities.

Our audit, conducted under authority of Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 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 16, 2010 through May 28, 2013.

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

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 District's compliance with certain relevant 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:

- ✓ In areas where the District received state subsidies and reimbursements based on pupil membership (e.g. basic education, special education, and vocational education), did it follow applicable laws and procedures?
- ✓ 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 did the current employment contract(s) contain adequate termination provisions?

- ✓ Did the District have sufficient internal controls to ensure that the membership data it reported to PDE through the Pennsylvania Information Management System was complete, accurate, valid, and reliable?
- ✓ Were there any declining fund balances that may pose a risk to the District's fiscal viability?
- ✓ Did the District take appropriate steps to ensure school safety?
- ✓ Did the District have a properly executed and updated Memorandum of Understanding with local law enforcement?
- ✓ Were there any other areas of concern reported by independent auditors, citizens, or other interested parties?
- ✓ Did the District take appropriate corrective action to address recommendations made in our prior audit?

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 certain relevant state 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 results and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our results and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The District's management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the District is in compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures (relevant requirements). In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of the District's internal controls, including any information technology controls, as they relate to the District's compliance with relevant requirements that we consider to be significant within the context of our audit objectives. We assessed whether those controls were properly designed and implemented. Any deficiencies in internal control that were identified during the conduct of our audit and determined to be significant within the context of our audit objectives 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 and reimbursements, pupil transportation, pupil membership, and comparative financial information.

Our audit examined the following:

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

Additionally, we interviewed select administrators and support personnel associated with the District's operations.

Lastly, to determine the status of our audit recommendations made in a prior audit report released on January 4, 2011, we reviewed the District's response to PDE dated April 17, 2012. We then performed additional audit procedures targeting the previously reported matters.

Findings and Observations

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

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the Norwin School District (District), released on January 4, 2011, resulted in one finding. The finding pertained to reporting non-resident membership. As part of our current audit, we determined the status of corrective action taken by the District to implement our prior audit recommendations. We analyzed the District's written response provided to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), performed audit procedures, and interviewed District personnel regarding the prior finding. As shown below, we found that the District did implement our recommendations related to reporting non-resident membership.

Auditor General Performance Audit Report Released on January 4, 2011

Finding: **Errors in Reporting Non-Resident Membership Resulted in a \$10,774 Underpayment in Tuition for Children Placed in Private Homes.**

Finding Summary: Our prior audit of the District's non-resident pupil membership records submitted to PDE for the 2007-08 school year found errors in the reporting of non-resident membership. The errors resulted in PDE underpaying the District \$10,774 in tuition for children placed in private homes.

Recommendations: Our prior audit finding recommended that the District:

1. Review membership data thoroughly to ensure students are properly classified prior to submitting reports to PDE.
2. Review reports submitted subsequent to the years audited and submit revised reports to PDE if errors were found.

We also recommended that PDE:

3. Adjust the District's allocations to correct the underpayment of \$10,774 in tuition for children placed in private homes.

Current Status: During our current audit, we found that the District did implement the recommendations. The special education and student services secretary now monitors the status and reporting of non-resident students with the information technology manager throughout the year and during child accounting updates to the Pennsylvania Information Management System.

Distribution List

This report was initially distributed to the Superintendent of the District, the Board of School Directors, our website at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us, and the following stakeholders:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
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Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Carolyn Dumaesq
Acting Secretary of Education
1010 Harristown Building #2
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The Honorable Robert M. McCord
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