

UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
CLARION COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

MARCH 2010



The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Mr. Ray Scott, Board President  
Union School District  
354 Baker Street, Suite 2  
Rimersburg, Pennsylvania 16248

Dear Governor Rendell and Mr. Scott:

We conducted a performance audit of the Union School District (USD) to determine its compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements and administrative procedures. Our audit covered the period October 1, 2007 through January 12, 2010, except as otherwise indicated in the report. Additionally, compliance specific to state subsidy and reimbursements was determined for the school years ended June 30, 2008 and June 30, 2007. 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 USD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

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

Sincerely,

/s/

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

March 25, 2010

cc: **UNION 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 Union School District (USD). Our audit sought to answer certain questions regarding the District's compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures; and to determine the status of corrective action taken by the USD in response to our prior audit recommendations.

Our audit scope covered the period October 1, 2007 through January 12, 2010, 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 2007-08 and 2006-07.

### **District Background**

The USD encompasses approximately 80 square miles. According to 2000 federal census data, it serves a resident population of 4,903. According to District officials, in school year 2007-08 the USD provided basic educational services to 718 pupils through the employment of 66 teachers, 51 full-time and part-time support personnel, and 3 administrators. Lastly, the USD received more than \$7.1 million in state funding in school year 2007-08.

### **Audit Conclusion and Results**

Our audit found that the USD 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.** With regard to the status of our prior audit recommendations to the USD from an audit we conducted of the 2005-06 and 2004-05 school years, we found the USD had taken appropriate corrective action in implementing our recommendations pertaining to board members failing to file Statements of Financial Interests and school bus drivers' qualifications deficiencies (see page 7).





## 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 October 1, 2007 through January 12, 2010, except for the verification of professional employee certification which was performed for the period August 1, 2007 to November 19, 2009.

Regarding state subsidy and reimbursements, our audit covered school years 2007-08 and 2006-07.

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 (DE) 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 USD'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 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?
- ✓ In areas where the District receives state subsidy and reimbursements based on payroll (e.g. Social Security

and retirement), 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?
- ✓ Does the District 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 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 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**

*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.

USD management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the District is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. Within the context of our

*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.

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 pupil transportation, bus driver qualifications, professional employee certification, state ethics compliance, and financial stability.
- Items such as Board meeting minutes, pupil membership records, and reimbursement applications.

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

Lastly, to determine the status of our audit recommendations made in a prior audit report released on February 19, 2008, we reviewed the USD's response to DE dated January 15, 2009. We then performed additional audit procedures targeting the previously reported matters.

## **Findings and Observations**

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**F**or the audited period, our audit of the Union School District resulted in no findings or observations.

## Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the Union School District for the school years 2005-06 and 2004-05 resulted in two findings reported. The first finding pertained to board members failing to file Statements of Financial Interests, and the second finding to school bus drivers' qualifications deficiencies. 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 USD Board's written response provided to the Department of Education (DE), performed audit procedures, and questioned District personnel regarding the prior findings. As shown below, we found that the USD did implement recommendations related to board members' Statements of Financial Interests and school bus drivers' qualifications.

<i>School Years 2005-06 and 2004-05 Auditor General Performance Audit Report</i>		
<i>Prior Recommendations</i>	<i>Implementation Status</i>	
<p><u><i>I. Finding 1: Board Members Failed to File Statements of Financial Interests in Violation of the Ethics Act</i></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seek the advice of the District's solicitor in regard to the board's responsibility when an elected board member fails to file Statements of Financial Interests.</li> <li>2. Develop procedures to ensure that all individuals required to file Statements of Financial Interests do so in compliance with the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Background:</b></p> <p>Our prior audit found that three board members failed to file Statements of Financial Interests for 2005 and one board member failed to file for 2006.</p>	<p><b>Current Status:</b></p> <p>Our current audit found that all board members' Statements of Financial Interests were filed.</p>
<p><u><i>II. Finding 2: School Bus Drivers' Qualifications Irregularities</i></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that the District's transportation coordinator reviews each driver's qualifications prior to that person transporting students.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Background:</b></p> <p>The District did not have on file valid driver's licenses for two van drivers, and child abuse clearances for two drivers. All necessary documents were obtained from the transportation contractors after the auditor brought the deficiencies to the attention of District personnel.</p>	<p><b>Current Status:</b></p> <p>Our current audit found that all bus drivers documentation was maintained on file. The District now uses bus driver checklists to ensure that all necessary documentation is obtained and kept on file.</p>

<p>2. Maintain files, separate from the transportation contractors, for all District drivers, and work with the transportation contractors to ensure that the District's files are up-to-date and complete.</p> <p>3. Develop written procedures with annual administrative sign-offs that would help ensure that the previous two recommendation are implemented.</p>		
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## **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:

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