

WISSAHICKON SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

OCTOBER 2011



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

Mr. Young K. Park, Board President  
Wissahickon School District  
601 Knight Road  
Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002

Dear Governor Corbett and Mr. Park:

We conducted a performance audit of the Wissahickon School District (WSD) to determine its compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. Our audit covered the period December 19, 2008 through April 22, 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, 2009, 2008 and 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 WSD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

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

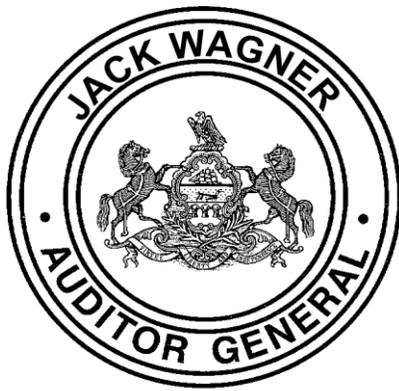
Sincerely,

/s/

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

October 12, 2011

cc: **WISSAHICKON SCHOOL DISTRICT** Board Members

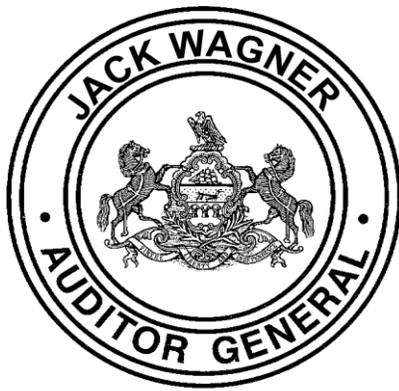


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## **Executive Summary**

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### **Audit Work**

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

Our audit scope covered the period December 19, 2008 through April 22, 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, 2008-09, 2007-08 and 2006-07.

### **District Background**

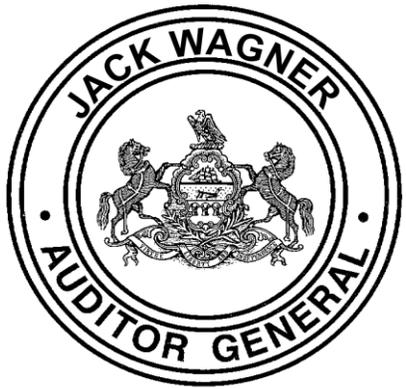
The WSD encompasses approximately 23 square miles. According to 2000 federal census data, it serves a resident population of 35,410. According to District officials, in school year 2009-10 the WSD provided basic educational services to 4,455 pupils through the employment of 387 teachers, 255 full-time and part-time support personnel, and 49 administrators. Lastly, the WSD received more than \$11.6 million in state funding in school year 2009-10.

### **Audit Conclusion and Results**

Our audit found that the WSD 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 WSD from an audit we conducted of the 2005-06 and 2004-05 school years, we found the WSD had taken appropriate corrective action in implementing our recommendations pertaining to the unmonitored vendor system access and logical access control weaknesses observation (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 December 19, 2008 to April 22, 2011.

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

- ✓ In areas where the District receives state subsidy and reimbursements based on pupil membership (e.g. resident/non-resident, special education, and vocational education), did it follow applicable laws and procedures?
- ✓ Is the District's pupil transportation department, including any contracted vendors, bus driver's qualifications 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, 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, observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

WSD 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 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, and financial stability.
- Items such as Board meeting minutes, pupil membership records.

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

Lastly, to determine the status of our audit recommendations made in a prior audit report released on July 29, 2009, we reviewed the WSD's response to DE dated July 15, 2010. 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 Wissahickon School District resulted in no findings or observations.

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

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Our prior audit of the Wissahickon School District (WSD) for the school years 2005-06 and 2004-05 resulted in one observation. The observation 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 analyzed the WSD Board's written response provided to the Department of Education, performed audit procedures, and questioned District personnel regarding the prior observation. As shown below, we found that the WSD did implement recommendations related to the unmonitored vendor system access and logical access control weaknesses observation.

### **School Years 2005-06 and 2004-05 Auditor General Performance Audit Report**

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**Observation:** **Unmonitored Vendor System Access and Logical Access Control Weaknesses**

Observation Summary: Our prior audit found that a risk existed that unauthorized changes to the District's data could occur and not be detected. This was the result of the District's inability to provide support evidence that it was adequately monitoring all vendor activity in its system.

Recommendations: Our audit observation recommended that the WSD:

1. 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.
2. To mitigate information technology (IT) control weaknesses, have compensating controls that would allow the District to detect unauthorized changes to the membership database in a timely manner.
3. Allow access to the system only 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.

4. Obtain a list of vendor employees with access to the District's data and ensure that changes to the data are made only by authorized vendor representatives.
5. Develop policies and procedures to require written authorization when adding, deleting, or changing a userID.
6. Maintain documentation to evidence that terminated employees are properly removed from the system in a timely manner.
7. Establish separate IT policies and procedures for controlling the activities of vendors/consultants and have the vendor sign this policy, or require the vendor to sign the District's Acceptable Use Policy.
8. The District's Acceptable Use Policy should include provisions for accountability (responsibilities of users, auditing, incident handling), and authentication (password security and syntax requirements). Further, the employees should be required to sign the policy.
9. Implement a security policy and system parameter settings to require all users, including the vendor, to change passwords on a regular basis (i.e., every 30 days). Passwords should be a minimum length of eight characters and include alpha, numeric, and special characters. Also, the District should maintain a password history that will prevent the use of a repetitive password (i.e., last ten passwords), lock out users after three unsuccessful attempts, and log users off the system after a period of inactivity (i.e., 60 minutes maximum).

Current Status:

Our current audit found that the WSD implemented our recommendations.

## **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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The Honorable Robert M. McCord  
State Treasurer  
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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).

