

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Coudersport Area School District Potter County, Pennsylvania

October 2015



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mrs. Alanna Huck, Superintendent
Coudersport Area School District
698 Dwight Street
Coudersport, Pennsylvania 16915

Mr. Joseph Lagrua, Board President
Coudersport Area School District
698 Dwight Street
Coudersport, Pennsylvania 16915

Dear Mrs. Huck and Mr. Lagrua:

We have conducted a performance audit of the Coudersport Area School District (District) for the period November 20, 2012 through May 28, 2015. We evaluated the District's performance in the following areas:

- ü Governance
- ü Contracting
- ü School Safety
- ü Bus Driver Requirements

We also determined the status of corrective action taken by the District in response to our prior audit recommendations and found that the District implemented these recommendations.

Our audit found that the District performed adequately in the areas listed above.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale".

Eugene A. DePasquale
Auditor General

October 1, 2015

cc: **COUDERSPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT** Board of School Directors

Table of Contents

	Page
Background Information	1
Findings and Observations	4
Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations	5
Appendix: Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology	6
Distribution List	9

Background Informationⁱ

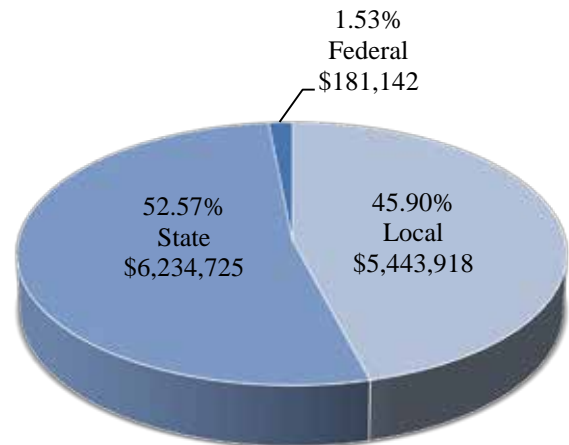
School Characteristics 2013-14 School Year ⁱⁱ	
County	Potter
Total Square Miles	15,500
Resident Population ⁱⁱⁱ	17,457
Number of School Buildings	2
Total Teachers	66
Total Full or Part-Time Support Staff	30
Total Administrators	8
Total Enrollment for Most Recent School Year	812
Intermediate Unit Number	9
District Vo-Tech School	Seneca Highlands Career & Technical Center

Mission Statement

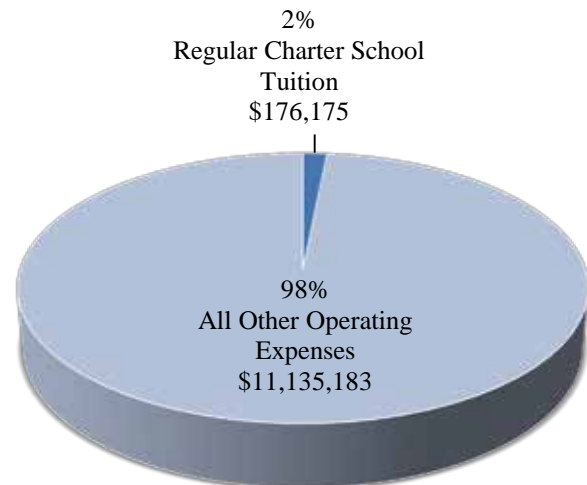
“The mission statement of the Coudersport Area School District, in partnership with students, educators, family and community is to provide a supportive learning environment in which each child has the knowledge and skills to become self-motivated, capable and competent lifelong learner.”

Financial Information

Revenue by Source for 2013-14 School Year



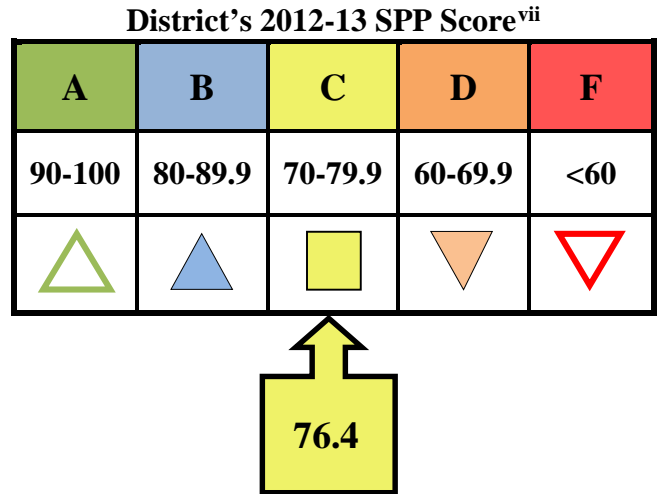
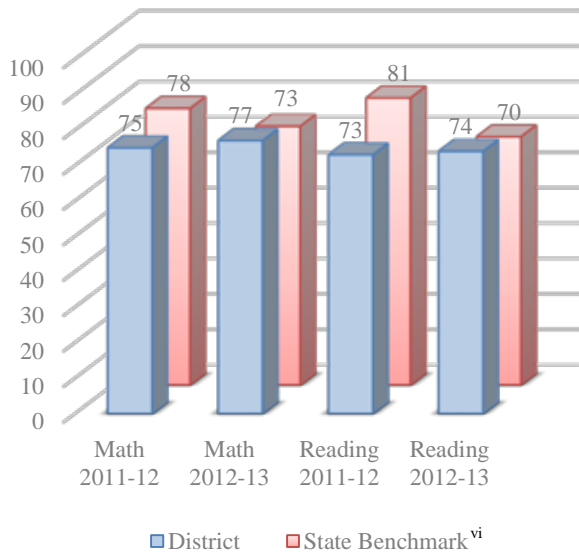
Select Expenditures for 2013-14 School Year





Academic Information

Percentage of District Students Who Scored "Proficient" or "Advanced" on 2011-12 and 2012-13 PSSA^{iv v}



**Individual Building SPP and PSSA Scores^{viii}
2012-13 School Year**

School Building	SPP Score	PSSA % School Proficient and Advanced in Math	PSSA % Statewide Benchmark Proficient and Advanced in Math	PSSA % School Proficient and Advanced in Reading	PSSA % Statewide Benchmark Proficient and Advanced in Reading	Federal Title I Designation (Reward, Priority, Focus, No Designation)^{ix}
Coudersport Area Junior Senior High School	77.7	74	73	83	70	No Designation
Coudersport Area Elementary School	76.6	80	73	65	70	No Designation

Findings and Observations

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

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the District released on May 6, 2013, resulted in one observation. As part of our current audit, we determined the status of corrective action taken by the District to implement our prior audit recommendations. We interviewed District personnel and performed audit procedures, as detailed in each status section below.

Auditor General Performance Audit Report Released in May 6, 2013

Observation: **Internal Control Weakness in Administrative Policy Regarding Bus Drivers' Qualifications**

Prior Observation Summary:

Our prior audit found that the District failed to implement recommendations made during our prior two audits regarding bus drivers' qualifications. The District did not have a policy in place to ensure that they are notified when a driver is charged with a serious crime not covered under Act 24 of 2011, which could affect their suitability to have direct contact with children.

Prior Recommendations:

We recommended that the District should:

Expand the policy adopting Act 24 of 2011 to include other serious crimes not listed in Section 111 of the Public School Code (PSC).

Current Status:

During our current audit, we determined that the transportation contractor developed a criminal charges procedure that states that the transportation contractor will notify the District in writing of charges brought against any driver the same day the contractor is made aware of any such infractions. We found that the District, in conjunction with their transportation contractor, did implement our prior recommendations.

Appendix: Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

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 (PDE), and other concerned entities.

Our audit, conducted under authority of Section 403 of The Fiscal Code,¹ is not a substitute for the local annual financial audit required by the PSC of 1949, as amended. We conducted our audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings 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.

Scope

Overall, our audit covered the period November 20, 2012 through May 28, 2015. In addition, the scope of each individual audit objective is detailed on the next page.

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 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.

The District's management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls² 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 material within the context of our audit objectives. We assessed whether those controls were properly designed and implemented. Any deficiencies in internal controls that were identified during the conduct of our audit and determined to be material within the context of our audit objectives are included in this report.

¹ 72 P.S. § 403

² 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; and compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

Objectives/Methodology

In order to properly plan our audit and to guide us in selecting objectives, we reviewed pertinent laws and regulations, board meeting minutes, academic performance data, financial reports, annual budgets, and new or amended policies and procedures. We also determined if the District had key personnel or software vendor changes since the prior audit.

Performance audits draw conclusions based on an evaluation of sufficient, appropriate evidence. Evidence is measured against criteria, such as laws, regulations, third-party studies, and best business practices. Our audit focused on the District's performance in the following areas:

- Ü Governance
- Ü Contracting
- Ü School Safety
- Ü Bus Driver Requirements

As we conducted our audit procedures, we sought to determine answers to the following questions, which served as our audit objectives:

- Ü Did the LEA's Board of School Directors (Board) and administration maintain best practices in overall organizational governance?
 - To address this objective, we surveyed the District's current Board, conducted in-depth interviews with the current Superintendent and his or her staff, reviewed board meeting books, policies and procedures, and reports used to inform the Board about student performance, progress in meeting student achievement goals, budgeting and financial position, and school violence data to determine if the Board was provided sufficient information for making informed decisions.
- Ü Did the District ensure that its material contracts were current and were properly obtained, approved, executed, and monitored?
 - To address this objective, we reviewed the District's procurement and contract monitoring policies and procedures. We obtained a list of contracts for goods and services that were in effect for the 2014-15 school year. We selected 4 out of 30 significant contracts for detailed testing. Testing included a review of the procurement documents to determine if the contract was procured in accordance with the PSC and District policies. We also reviewed documents to determine if the District properly monitored the selected contracts. Finally, we reviewed board meeting minutes and the Board's Statements of Financial Interest to determine if any board member had a conflict of interest in approving the selected contracts.
- Ü Did the District take appropriate actions to ensure it provided a safe school environment?
 - To address this objective, we reviewed a variety of documentation including, safety plans, training schedules, anti-bullying policies, and after action reports.

- Ü Did the District take appropriate corrective action to address findings and implement recommendations made in our prior audit?
 - To address this objective, we interviewed District administrators to determine what corrective action, if any, was taken to address prior audit recommendations. Where appropriate, we obtained documentary evidence and/or performed audit procedures to verify that corrective action was actually taken and those actions were sufficient to address the prior observation.

- Ü Did the District ensure that bus drivers transporting District students had the required driver's license, physical exam, training, background checks, and clearances as outline in applicable laws?³ Also, did the District have adequate written policies and procedures governing the hiring of new bus drivers?
 - To address this objective, we selected 5 of the 13 bus drivers hired by the District bus contractor, from July 1, 2013 to November 21, 2014, and reviewed documentation to ensure the District complied with the requirements related to bus drivers listed above. We also determined if the District had written policies and procedures governing the hiring of bus drivers and whether those procedures were sufficient to ensure compliance with bus driver hiring requirements.

³ 24 P.S. § 1-111, 23 Pa.C.S. § 6344(a.1), 24 P.S. § 2070.1a *et seq.*, 75 Pa.C.S §§ 1508.1 and 1509, and 22 *Pa. Code Chapter 8*.

Distribution List

This report was initially distributed to the Superintendent of the District, the Board of School Directors, and the following stakeholders:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf

Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Pedro A. Rivera

Secretary of Education
1010 Harristown Building #2
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126

The Honorable Timothy Reese

State Treasurer
Room 129 - Finance Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Mrs. Danielle Mariano

Director
Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Management
Pennsylvania Department of Education
4th Floor, 333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dr. David Wazeter

Research Manager
Pennsylvania State Education Association
400 North Third Street - Box 1724
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Mr. Lin Carpenter

Assistant Executive Director for Member Services
School Board and Management Services
Pennsylvania School Boards Association
P.O. Box 2042
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.

ⁱ Source: School district, PDE, and U.S. Census data.

ⁱⁱ Source: Information provided by the District administration.

ⁱⁱⁱ Source: United States Census <http://www.census.gov/2010census>

^{iv} PSSA stands for the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), which is composed of statewide, standardized tests administered by PDE to all public schools and the reporting associated with the results of those assessments. PSSA scores in the tables in this report reflect Reading and Math results for the “All Students” group for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years.

^v PSSA scores, which are Pennsylvania’s mandatory, statewide academic test scores, are issued by PDE. However, the PSSA scores issued by PDE are collected by an outside vendor, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC). The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General and KPMG issued a material weakness in internal controls over PDE’s compilation of this academic data in the Single Audit of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014, citing insufficient review procedures at PDE to ensure the accuracy of test score data received from DRC.

^{vi} In the 2011-12 school year, the state benchmarks reflect the Adequate Yearly Progress targets established under No Child Left Behind. In the 2012-13 school year, the state benchmarks reflect the statewide goals based on annual measurable objectives established by PDE.

^{vii} SPP stands for School Performance Profile, which is Pennsylvania’s new method for reporting academic performance scores for all public schools based on a scale from 0% to 100% implemented in the 2012-13 school year by PDE.

^{viii} *Ibid.* Additionally, federal Title I designations of Priority, Focus, Reward, and No Designation are new federal accountability designations issued by PDE to Title I schools only beginning in the 2012-13 school year. Priority schools are the lowest 5%, focus schools are the lowest 10%, and reward schools are the highest 5% of Title I schools. All Title I schools not falling into one of the aforementioned percentage groups are considered “No Designation” schools. The criteria used to calculate the percentage rates is determined on an annual basis by PDE.

^{ix} Title I Federal accountability designations for Title I schools originate from PDE and are determined based on the number of students at the school who receive free and/or reduced price lunches. School lunch data is accumulated in PDE’s CN-PEARS system, which is customized software developed jointly with an outside vendor, Colyar, Inc. The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General and KPMG issued a material deficiency in internal controls over the CN-PEARS system in the Single Audit of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014.