

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Somerset County Technology Center Somerset County, Pennsylvania

January 2015



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Mrs. Dorothy Gindlesperger
Joint Operating Committee Chairperson
Somerset County Technology Center
281 Technology Drive
Somerset, Pennsylvania 15501

Dear Governor Wolf and Mrs. Gindlesperger:

We conducted a performance audit of the Somerset County Technology Center (Center) to determine its compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures (relevant requirements). Our audit covered the period April 7, 2011 through October 28, 2014, except as otherwise indicated in the report. Additionally, compliance specific to state subsidies and reimbursements was determined for the school years ended June 30, 2011 and June 30, 2012. 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 Center complied, in all significant respects, with relevant requirements.

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

Sincerely,

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

Eugene A. DePasquale
Auditor General

January 22, 2015

cc: **SOMERSET COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER** Joint Operating Committee Members

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Executive Summary

Audit Work

The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General conducted a performance audit of the Somerset County Technology Center (Center) in Somerset County. Our audit sought to answer certain questions regarding the Center's compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

Our audit scope covered the period April 7, 2011 through October 28, 2014, 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 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years.

Center Background

According to Center officials, in the 2011-12 school year the Center provided educational services to 298 secondary pupils and 53 post-secondary pupils through the employment of nineteen (19) teachers, 24 full-time and part-time support personnel, and three (3) administrators. A joint operating committee (JOC), which is comprised of nine (9) members from the following school districts, directs the operation, administration, and management of the Center:

Berlin Brothersvalley
Meyersdale Area
North Star
Rockwood Area
Salisbury-Elk Lick
Shade-Central City
Shanksville-Stonycreek

Somerset Area
Turkeyfoot Valley Area

The JOC members are appointed by the individual school boards at the December meeting, each to serve a three-year term. The Center received \$716,464 in state funding in the 2011-12 school year.

Audit Conclusion and Results

Our audit found that the Center 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. There were no findings or observations in our prior audit report.

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 April 7, 2011 through October 28, 2014, except for the verification of professional employee certification, which was performed for the period July 1, 2014 through September 17, 2014.

Regarding state subsidies and reimbursements, our audit covered the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years.

While all LEAs 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 Center'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:

- ✓ Were professional employees certified for the positions they held?
- ✓ Did the Center 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?
- ✓ Did the Center take appropriate steps to ensure school safety?

- ✓ Did the Center have a properly executed and updated Memorandum of Understanding with local law enforcement?
- ✓ Were votes made by the Center’s Joint Operating Committee free from apparent conflicts of interest?

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, 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 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 Center’s management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Center 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 Center’s internal controls, including any information technology controls, as they relate to the Center’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 controls 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, and comparative financial information.

Our audit examined the following:

- Records pertaining to pupil membership, professional employee certification, state ethics compliance, and financial stability.
- Items such as board meeting minutes and policies and procedures.

Additionally, we interviewed select administrators and support personnel associated with the Center’s operations.

Findings and Observations

For the audited period, our audit of the Somerset County Technology Center resulted in no findings or observations.

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the Somerset County Technology Center resulted in no findings or observations.

Distribution List

This report was initially distributed to the Director of the Center, the Joint Operating Committee, our website at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us, and the following stakeholders:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Pedro Rivera
Acting Secretary of Education
1010 Harristown Building #2
333 Market Street
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The Honorable Robert M. McCord
State Treasurer
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Ms. Lori Graham
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This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@auditorgen.state.pa.us.