

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Newport School District Perry County, Pennsylvania

March 2016



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

Mr. Ryan Neuhard, Superintendent
Newport School District
420 Fickes Lane
Post Office Box 9
Newport, Pennsylvania 17074

Mr. Robert H. Folk, Jr., Board President
Newport School District
420 Fickes Lane
Post Office Box 9
Newport, Pennsylvania 17074

Dear Mr. Neuhard and Mr. Folk:

We have conducted a performance audit of the Newport School District (District) for the period July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015, except as otherwise stated. We evaluated the District's performance in the following areas as further described in the appendix of this report.

- Contracting
- School Safety
- Bus Driver Requirements
- Administrator Contract Buy-out

The audit was conducted pursuant to Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 72 P.S. § 403, and in accordance with the 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 objectives.

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

March 17, 2016

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

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Background Informationⁱ

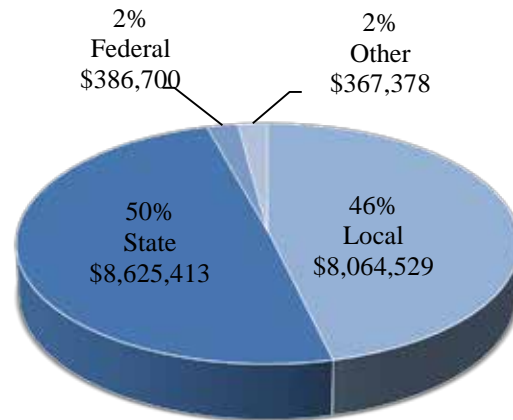
School Characteristics 2014-15 School Year ⁱⁱ	
County	Perry
Total Square Miles	73
Resident Population ⁱⁱⁱ	7,627
Number of School Buildings	2 ¹
Total Teachers	94
Total Full or Part-Time Support Staff	44
Total Administrators	6
Total Enrollment for Most Recent School Year	1,080
Intermediate Unit Number	15
District Vo-Tech School	Cumberland-Perry Area Vocational Technical School

Mission Statement

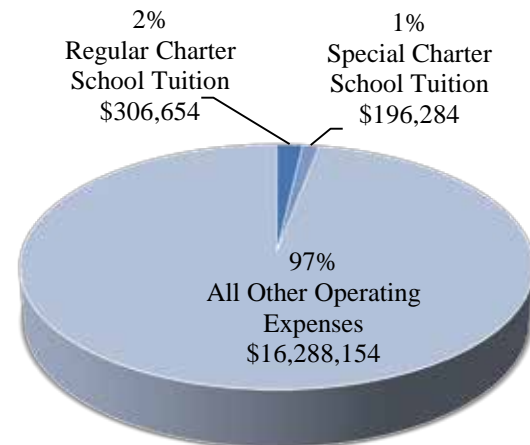
“The mission of the Newport School District is to educate students to be responsible, motivated citizens who will contribute to the betterment of the local and global community and become life-long learners, successfully coping with the changing world.”

Financial Information

Revenue by Source for 2013-14 School Year

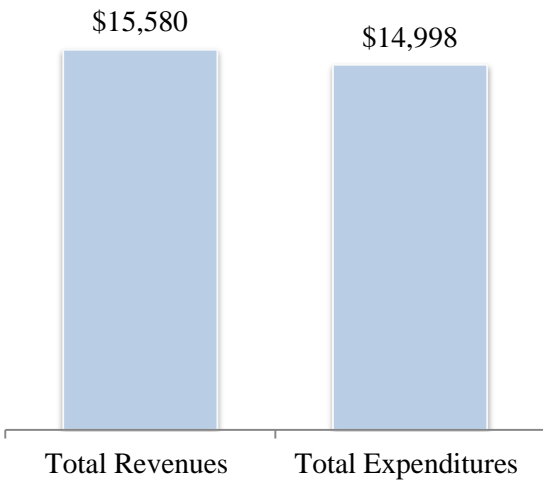


Select Expenditures for 2013-14 School Year



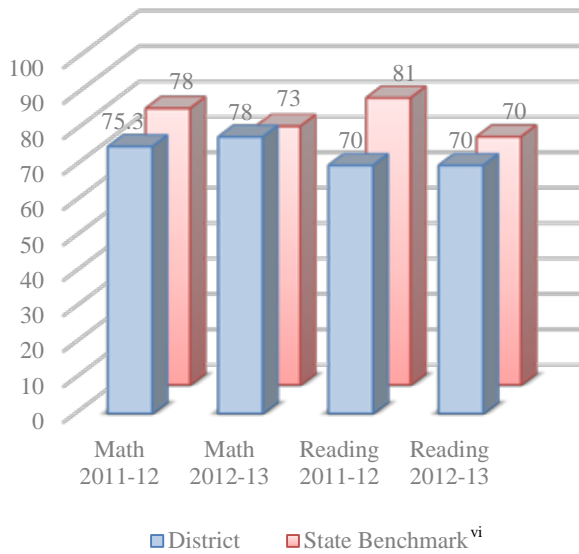
¹ The middle and high school is one building. However, when the SPP scores are provided on page 3, the scores were broken out into two buildings.

**Dollars Per Student
2013-14 School Year**



Academic Information

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



District's 2012-13 SPP Score^{vii}

A	B	C	D	F
90-100	80-89.9	70-79.9	60-69.9	<60
▲	▲	■	▼	▼



**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 of 73% Above or Below	PSSA % School Proficient and Advanced in Reading	PSSA % Statewide Benchmark of 70% Above or Below	Federal Title I Designation (Reward, Priority, Focus, No Designation)^{ix}
Newport Elementary School	71.8	80	7	67	3	No Designation
Newport Middle School	77.8	79	6	72	2	Reward
Newport High School	86.2	76	3	82	12	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 April 24, 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 reviewed the District's written response provided to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), interviewed District personnel, and performed audit procedures as detailed in each status section below.

Auditor General Performance Audit Report Released on April 24, 2013

Prior Observation: **Memorandum of Understanding Not Updated Timely**

Prior Observation
Summary:

Our prior audit of the District found that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the District and the local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over school property was not re-executed within two years as required by the Public School Code (PSC).

Prior
Recommendations:

We recommended that the District should:

1. In consultation with the District's solicitor, continue to review, update, and re-execute the current MOU between the District and the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over school property.
2. In consultation with the District's solicitor, review new requirements for MOUs and other school safety areas under the PSC to ensure compliance with amended safe schools provisions enacted November 17, 2010.
3. Adopt an official board policy requiring the District's administration to biennially update and re-execute all MOUs with local law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction over school property and file a copy with PDE's Office of Safe Schools on a biennial basis as required by law.

Current Status:

The District implemented recommendations 1 and 2 and took partial corrective action on recommendation 3. The District's Board Policy #225 has not been updated since August 16, 2004, to address the requirement that the MOU needs to be re-executed biennially. However, the District's MOU with its local law enforcement agency did contain language requiring the MOU to be re-executed every two years. As a result, it was determined that the District took sufficient corrective action to address the prior observation's 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, PDE, and other concerned entities.

Our audit, conducted under authority of Section 403 of The Fiscal Code,² 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 July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015. In addition, the scope of each individual audit objective is detailed on the next page.

The District's management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls³ 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, 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.

² 72 P.S. § 403.

³ 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 efficiency and effectiveness in the following areas:

- Contracting
- School Safety
- Bus Driver Requirements
- Administrator Contract Buy-out

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

- ü Did the District ensure that its significant contracts were current and were properly obtained, approved, executed, and monitored?
 - o 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, although we did not perform procedures to determine the completeness of the list. We haphazardly selected 3 out of the 21 contracts that we considered to be significant (based on the total contract amount exceeding \$10,000) 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 of School Director'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 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 contain adequate termination provisions?
 - o To address this objective, we reviewed the contracts, board meeting minutes, and payroll records for the only District contracted administrator who left the District during the period July 1, 2012 through October 14, 2015.

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, risk and vulnerability assessments, and anti-bullying policies.

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?⁴ Also, did the District have adequate written policies and procedures governing the hiring of new bus drivers?

- To address this objective, we selected five of the ten bus drivers hired by the District's bus contractors, between July 1, 2012 through October 4, 2015, and reviewed documentation to ensure the District complied with bus driver's requirements. We also determined if the District had written policies and procedures governing the hiring of bus drivers and if those procedures were sufficient to ensure compliance with bus driver hiring requirements.

⁴ 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 significant 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 significant 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.