

LIMITED PROCEDURES ENGAGEMENT

Portage Area School District Cambria County, Pennsylvania

February 2017



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. Eric A. Zelanko, Superintendent
Portage Area School District
84 Mountain Avenue
Portage, Pennsylvania 15946

Mr. Erik Thrower, Board President
Portage Area School District
84 Mountain Avenue
Portage, Pennsylvania 15946

Dear Mr. Zelanko and Mr. Thrower:

We conducted a Limited Procedures Engagement (LPE) of the Portage Area School District (District) to determine its compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, policies, and administrative procedures (relevant requirements). The LPE covers the period July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2015, except for any areas of compliance that may have required an alternative to this period. The engagement was conducted pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and The Fiscal Code (72 P.S. §§ 402 and 403), but was not conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

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

- Did the District have documented board policies and administrative procedures related to the following?
 - Internal controls
 - Budgeting practices
 - The Right-to-Know Law
 - The Sunshine Act
- Were the policies and procedures adequate and appropriate, and have they been properly implemented?
- Did the District comply with the relevant requirements in the Right-to-Know Law and the Sunshine Act?
- Did the District take appropriate corrective action to address the finding made in our prior audit?

Mr. Eric A. Zelanko
Mr. Erik Thrower
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Our engagement found that the District properly implemented policies and procedures for the areas mentioned above and complied, in all significant respects, with the relevant requirements.

We appreciate the District's cooperation during the conduct of the engagement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eugene A. DePasquale
Auditor General

February 22, 2017

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

Background Information

School Characteristics 2015-16 School Year ^A	
County	Cambria
Total Square Miles	26
Resident Population ^B	7,240
Number of School Buildings	2
Total Teachers	69
Total Full or Part-Time Support Staff	46
Total Administrators	5
Total Enrollment for Most Recent School Year	922
Intermediate Unit Number	8
District Vo-Tech School	Admiral Peary

A - Source: Information provided by the District administration and is unaudited.

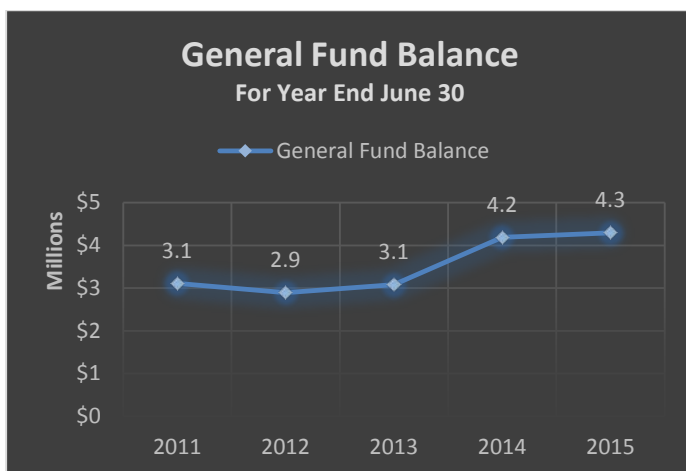
B - Source: United States Census
<http://www.census.gov/2010census>

Mission Statement^A

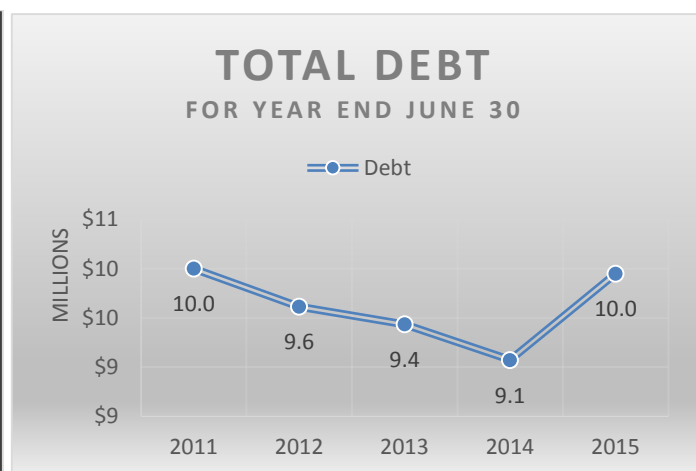
Portage Area School District, in cooperation with the community, will provide the opportunity for various learning experiences. This will be accomplished through a cooperative effort involving various resources.

Financial Information

The following pages contain financial information about the District obtained from annual financial data reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and available on PDE's public website. This information was not audited and is presented for **informational purposes only**.

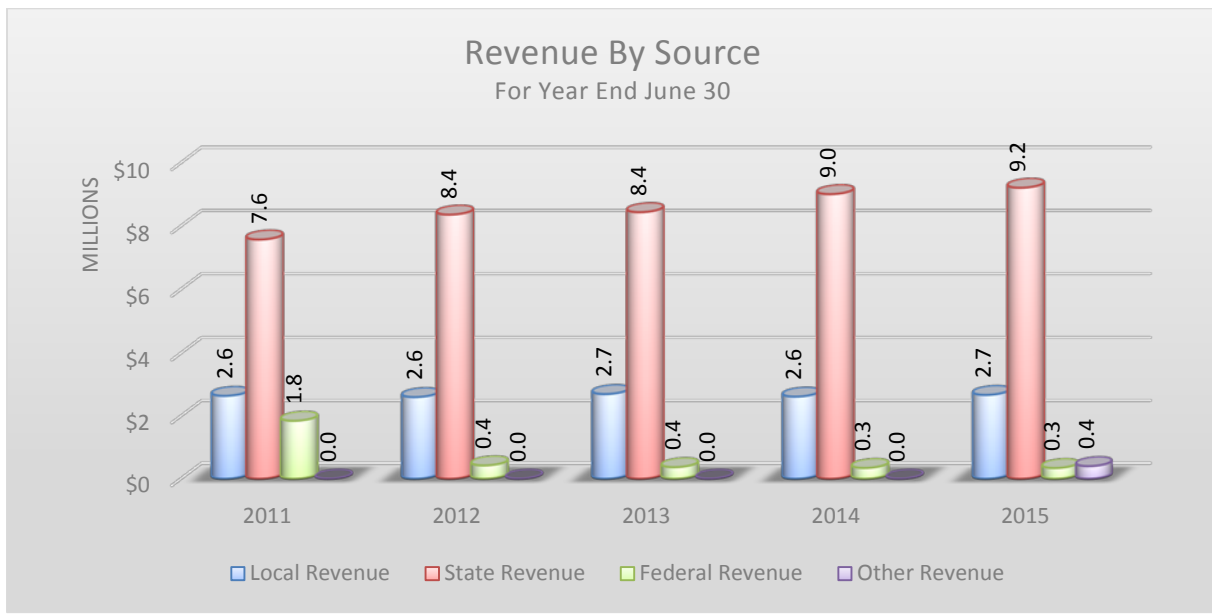
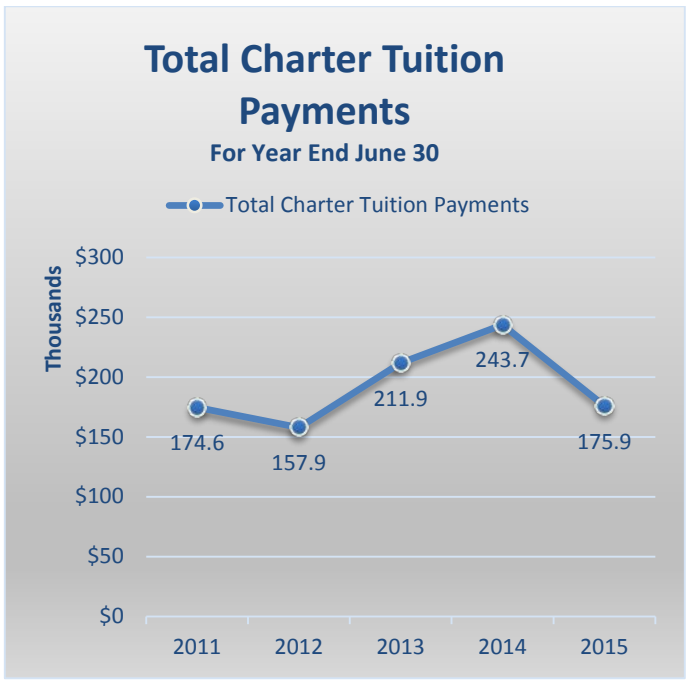
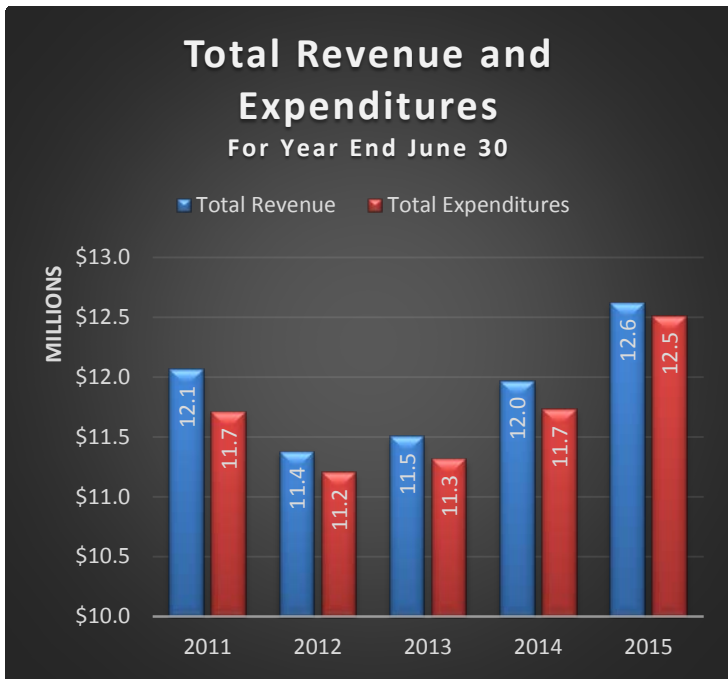


Note: General Fund Balance is comprised of the District's Committed, Assigned and Unassigned Fund Balances.



Note: Total Debt is comprised of Short-Term Borrowing, General Obligation Bonds, Authority Building Obligations, Other Long-Term Debt, Other Post-Employment Benefits and Compensated Absences.

Financial Information Continued



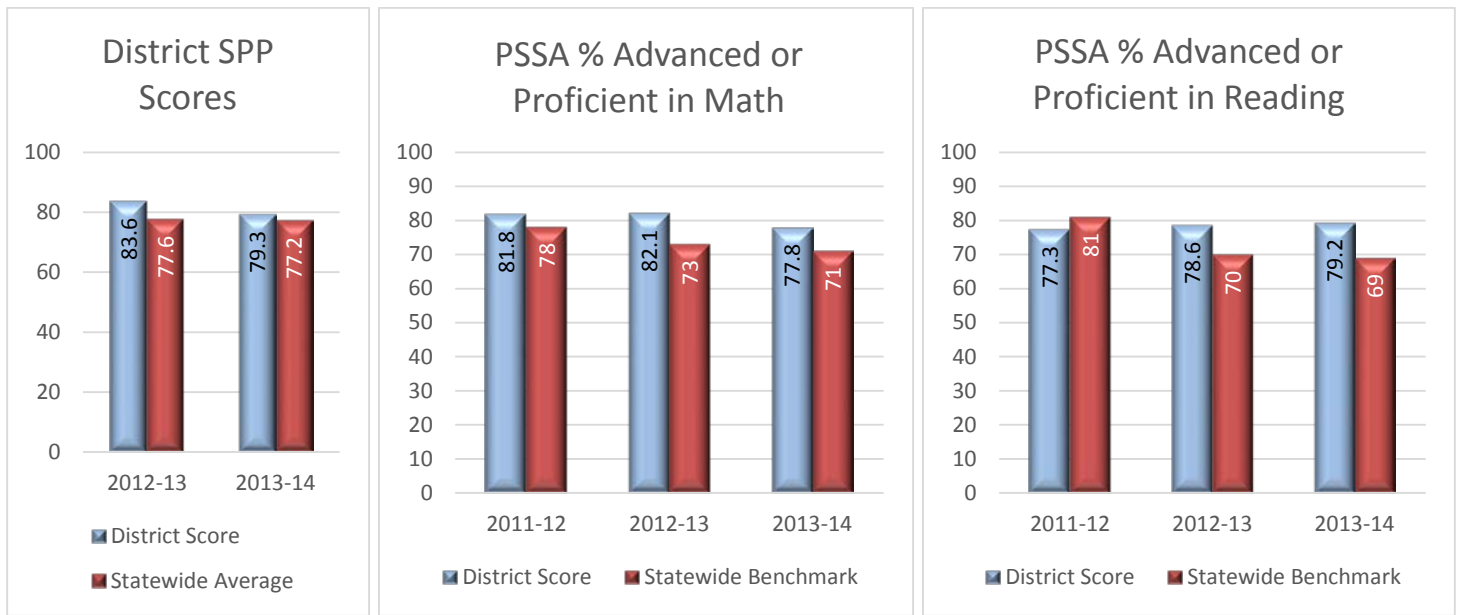
Academic Information

The following table and charts consist of School Performance Profile (SPP) scores and Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) results for the entire District obtained from PDE's data files.¹ These scores are presented in the District's audit report for **informational purposes only**, and they were not audited by our Department.

SPP benchmarks represent the statewide average of all district school buildings in the Commonwealth.² PSSA benchmarks and goals are determined by PDE each school year and apply to all public school entities.³ District SPP and PSSA scores were calculated using an average of all of the individual school buildings within the District. Scores below SPP statewide averages and PSSA benchmarks/goals are presented in red.

Districtwide SPP and PSSA Scores

District	SPP Scores		PSSA % Advanced or Proficient in Math			PSSA % Advanced or Proficient in Reading		
	2012-13	2013-14	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
<i>Statewide Benchmark</i>	77.6	77.2	78	73	71	81	70	69
<i>Portage Area SD</i>	83.6	79.3	81.8	82.1	77.8	77.3	78.6	79.2
<i>SPP Grade⁴</i>	B	C						



¹ PDE is the sole source of academic data presented in this report. All academic data was obtained from PDE's publically available website.

² Statewide averages for SPP scores were calculated based on all district school buildings throughout the Commonwealth, excluding charter and cyber charter schools.

³ PSSA benchmarks apply to all district school buildings, charters, and cyber charters. 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 and 2013-14 school years, the state benchmarks reflect the statewide goals based on annual measurable objectives established by PDE.

⁴ The following letter grades are based on a 0-100 point system: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), F (59 or below).

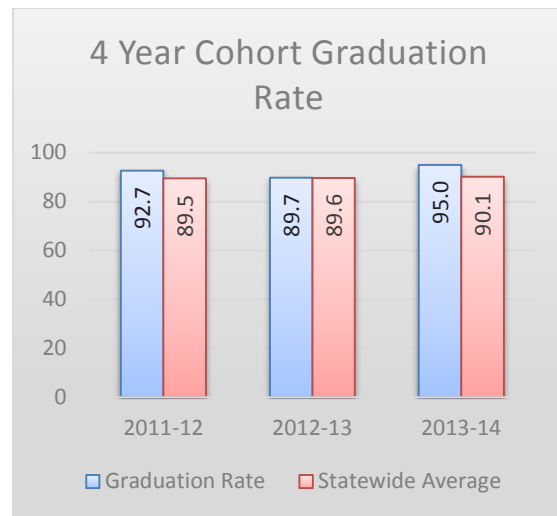
Individual School Building SPP and PSSA Scores

The following table consists of SPP scores and PSSA results for each of the District’s school buildings. Any blanks in PSSA data means that PDE did not publish a score for that school for that particular year.⁵

School Name	SPP Scores		PSSA % Advanced or Proficient in Math			PSSA % Advanced or Proficient in Reading		
	2012-13	2013-14	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
<i>Statewide Benchmark</i>	<i>77.6</i>	<i>77.2</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>Portage Area EL School</i>	<i>79.7</i>	<i>83.3</i>	<i>84.9</i>	<i>78.6</i>	<i>81.4</i>	<i>72.8</i>	<i>73.2</i>	<i>75.6</i>
<i>Portage Area JSHS</i>	<i>87.5</i>	<i>75.3</i>	<i>78.6</i>	<i>85.5</i>	<i>74.3</i>	<i>81.7</i>	<i>84.0</i>	<i>82.9</i>

4 Year Cohort Graduation Rates

The cohort graduation rates are a calculation of the percentage of students who have graduated with a regular high school diploma within a designated number of years since the student first entered high school. The rate is determined for a cohort of students who have all entered high school for the first time during the same school year.⁶



⁵ PDE’s data does not provide any further information regarding the reason a score was not published.

⁶ <http://www.education.pa.gov/Data-and-Statistics/Pages/Cohort-Graduation-Rate-.aspx>.

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the District released on January 3, 2014, resulted in one finding, as shown below. As part of our current engagement, 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 on January 3, 2014

Prior Finding: **Failure to Develop New Memorandums of Understanding with Local Law Enforcement Agencies**

Prior Finding Summary: During our prior audit, we found the District failed to enter into a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the District and all local law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction over school property.

Prior Recommendations: Our prior audit finding recommended the District should:

1. Develop a MOU between the District and all local law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction over school property pursuant to the terms prescribed by the Public School Code (PSC).
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, with an effective date of February 15, 2011.
3. Adopt a board policy requiring the District's administration to develop a MOU with all local law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction over school property, biennially update and re-execute each MOU, and file a copy with PDE's Office of Safe Schools on a biennial basis.
4. In consultation with the District's solicitor, continue to review, update, and re-execute the current MOUs between the District and all local law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction over school property.

Current Status: During our current review, we found the District implemented all of our prior recommendations, and the District now has a current MOU, which was signed on August 3, 2015.

Distribution List

This letter 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 Joe Torsella

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
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Dr. David Wazeter

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

Mr. Nathan Mains

Executive Director
Pennsylvania School Boards Association
400 Bent Creek Boulevard
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

This letter is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the letter 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.