

SENECA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BUTLER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

JANUARY 2011

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

Mr. Robert J. Hill, Jr., Board President
Seneca Valley School District
124 Seneca School Road
Harmony, Pennsylvania 16037

Dear Governor Corbett and Mr. Hill:

We conducted a performance audit of the Seneca Valley School District (SVSD) to determine its compliance with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements and administrative procedures. Our audit covered the period March 31, 2009 through May 5, 2010, except as otherwise indicated in the report. Additionally, compliance specific to state subsidy and reimbursements was determined for the school years ended June 30, 2008 and June 30, 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 SVSD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures.

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

Sincerely,

/s/

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

January 21, 2011

cc: **SENECA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT** Board Members



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Executive Summary

Audit Work

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

Our audit scope covered the period March 31, 2009 through May 5, 2010, 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 2007-08 and 2006-07.

District Background

The SVSD encompasses approximately 95 square miles. According to 2000 federal census data, it serves a resident population of 41,967. According to District officials, in school year 2007-08 the SVSD provided basic educational services to 7,575 pupils through the employment of 596 teachers, 271 full-time and part-time support personnel, and 29 administrators. Lastly, the SVSD received more than \$24.3 million in state funding in school year 2007-08.

Audit Conclusion and Results

Our audit found that the SVSD complied, in all significant respects, with applicable state laws, regulations, contracts, grant requirements, and administrative procedures. For the audited period, our audit of the SVSD resulted in no findings or observations.

Status of Prior Audit Findings and

Observations. With regard to the status of our prior audit recommendations to the SVSD from an audit we conducted of the 2005-06 and 2004-05 school years, we found the SVSD had not implemented all of our recommendations pertaining to unmonitored vendor system access and logical access control weaknesses (see page 7).



Audit Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

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 March 31, 2009 through May 5, 2010.

Regarding state subsidy and reimbursements, our audit covered school years 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 SVSD'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:

- ✓ Were professional employees certified for the positions they held?
- ✓ Is the District's pupil transportation department, including any contracted vendors, 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 observation and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our observation and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

SVSD 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 and pupil transportation.

Our audit examined the following:

- Records pertaining to pupil transportation, bus driver qualifications, professional employee certification, and financial stability.
- Items such as Board meeting minutes.

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

Lastly, to determine the status of our audit recommendations made in a prior audit report released on October 8, 2009, we reviewed the SVSD's response to DE dated January 18, 2010. We then performed additional audit procedures targeting the previously reported matters.

Findings and Observations

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

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the Seneca Valley School District (SVSD) for the school years 2005-06 and 2004-05 resulted in one reported 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 SVSD Board’s written response provided to the Department of Education (DE), performed audit procedures, and questioned District personnel regarding the prior finding and observation. As shown below, we found that the SVSD did not implement all recommendations related to unmonitored vendor system access and logical control weaknesses.

<i>School Years 2005-06 and 2004-05 Auditor General Performance Audit Report</i>		
<i>Prior Recommendations</i>	<i>Implementation Status</i>	
<p><i><u>I. Observation:</u></i> <i><u>Unmonitored Vendor System Access and Logical Access Control Weaknesses</u></i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain or prepare if necessary, a fully executed contract with the software vendor to provide student accounting applications and related information technology (IT) services. 2. Develop and maintain written IT security policies and procedures to control the activities of the vendor. 3. Implement a security policy and system parameter settings to require all users, including the vendor, to change their passwords on a regular basis, (i.e., every 30 days). To use passwords that are a minimum length of eight characters and include alpha, numeric, and special characters and to maintain a password history (i.e., 	<p>Background:</p> <p>The District uses software purchased from an outside vendor for its critical student accounting application (membership and attendance). The software vendor has remote access into the District’s network servers.</p> <p>During our prior audit we determined that a risk existed that unauthorized changes to the District’s data could occur and not be detected because the District was unable to provide supporting evidence that they were adequately monitoring all vendor activity in their system.</p>	<p>Current Status:</p> <p>Our current audit found that the District implemented all of our recommendations except recommendation 3.</p> <p>In its response to DE, the board stated that recommendation would be implemented beginning with the 2010-11 school year. This intention was confirmed by District personnel during our current audit. We will follow-up on the implementation during our next audit of the District.</p>

<p>approximately ten passwords.</p> <p>4. Require the vendor to assign unique userIDs and passwords to vendor employees authorized to access the District system. Further, obtain a list of vendor employees with remote access to its data and ensure the changes to the data are made only by authorized vendor representatives.</p> <p>5. Only allow access to the system 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 the vendor's changes.</p> <p>6. Require administrative personnel to store back-up documentation in a secure, off-site location.</p> <p>7. Develop necessary written reconciliation procedures performed that would allow District personnel to detect significant changes in membership/attendance data, by District personnel, vendor employees or others.</p> <p>8. Ensure through the vendor that encryption is utilized for its remote connection.</p>		
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Distribution List

This report was initially distributed to the superintendent of the school district, the board members, our website address at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us, and the following:

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