

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Turkeyfoot Valley Area School District Somerset County, Pennsylvania

October 2016



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen
www.PaAuditor.gov

EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Jeffrey S. Malaspino, Superintendent
Turkeyfoot Valley Area School District
172 Turkeyfoot Road
Confluence, Pennsylvania 15424

Mr. Michael Diehl, Board President
Turkeyfoot Valley Area School District
172 Turkeyfoot Road
Confluence, Pennsylvania 15424

Dear Mr. Malaspino and Mr. Diehl:

We have conducted a performance audit of the Turkeyfoot Valley Area School District (District) for the period July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015, except as otherwise indicated in the audit scope, objective, and methodology section of the report. We evaluated the District's performance in the following areas as further described in the appendix of this report:

- ✓ Hiring Practices
- ✓ Professional Certification
- ✓ Bus Driver Requirements
- ✓ School Safety

The audit was conducted pursuant to Section 402 and 403 of The Fiscal Code (72 P.S. §§ 402 and 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

October 20, 2016

cc: **TURKEYFOOT VALLEY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT** Board of School Directors

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Background Information

School Characteristics 2015-16 School Year ^A	
County	Somerset
Total Square Miles	102.6
Resident Population^B	2,785
Number of School Buildings	1
Total Teachers	34
Total Full or Part-Time Support Staff	33
Total Administrators	4
Total Enrollment for Most Recent School Year	397
Intermediate Unit Number	8
District Vo-Tech School	Somerset County Technology Center

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

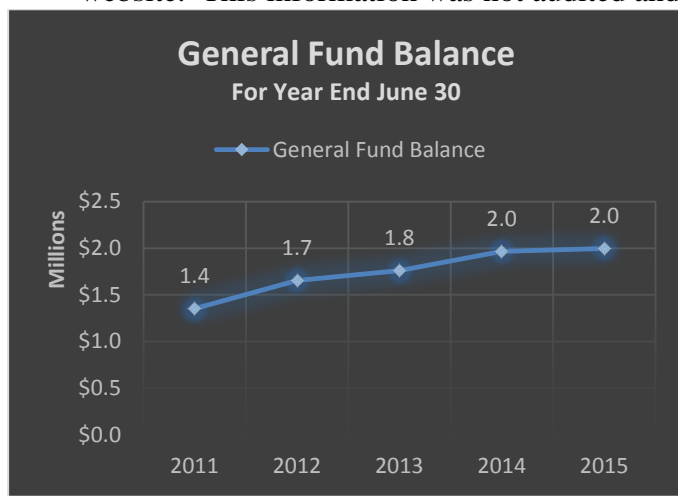
B - Source: United States Census
<http://www.census.gov/2010census>

Mission Statement^A

“The mission of the Turkeyfoot Valley Area School District is to afford each student an opportunity to develop both the ability to acquire broad-based knowledge in reading, writing and arithmetic enabling the student to make intelligent, appropriate educational and career decisions; and also to provide each student with the skills necessary to become productive contributors in their community and environment.”

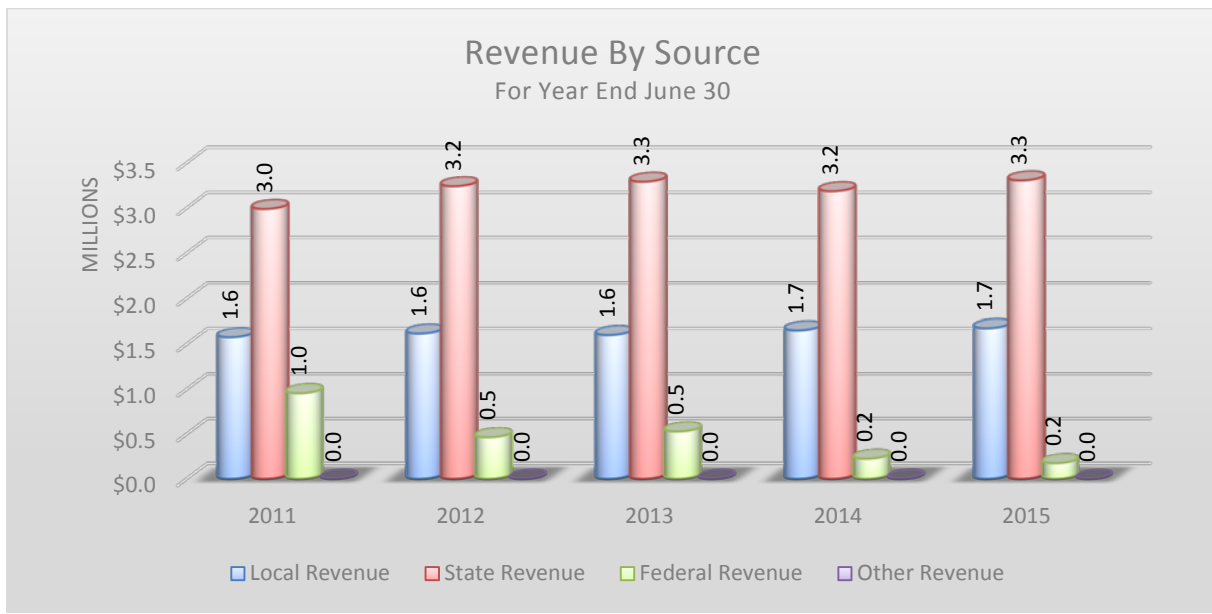
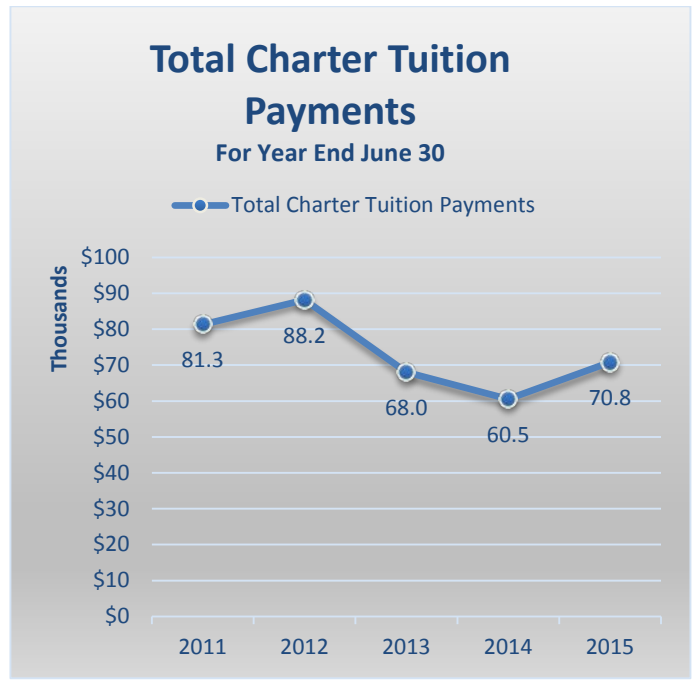
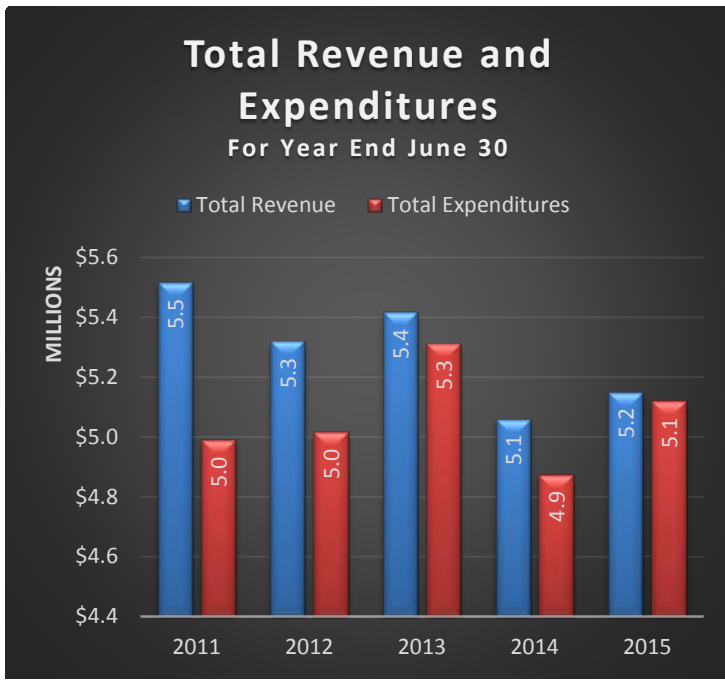
Financial Information

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**.



¹ 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



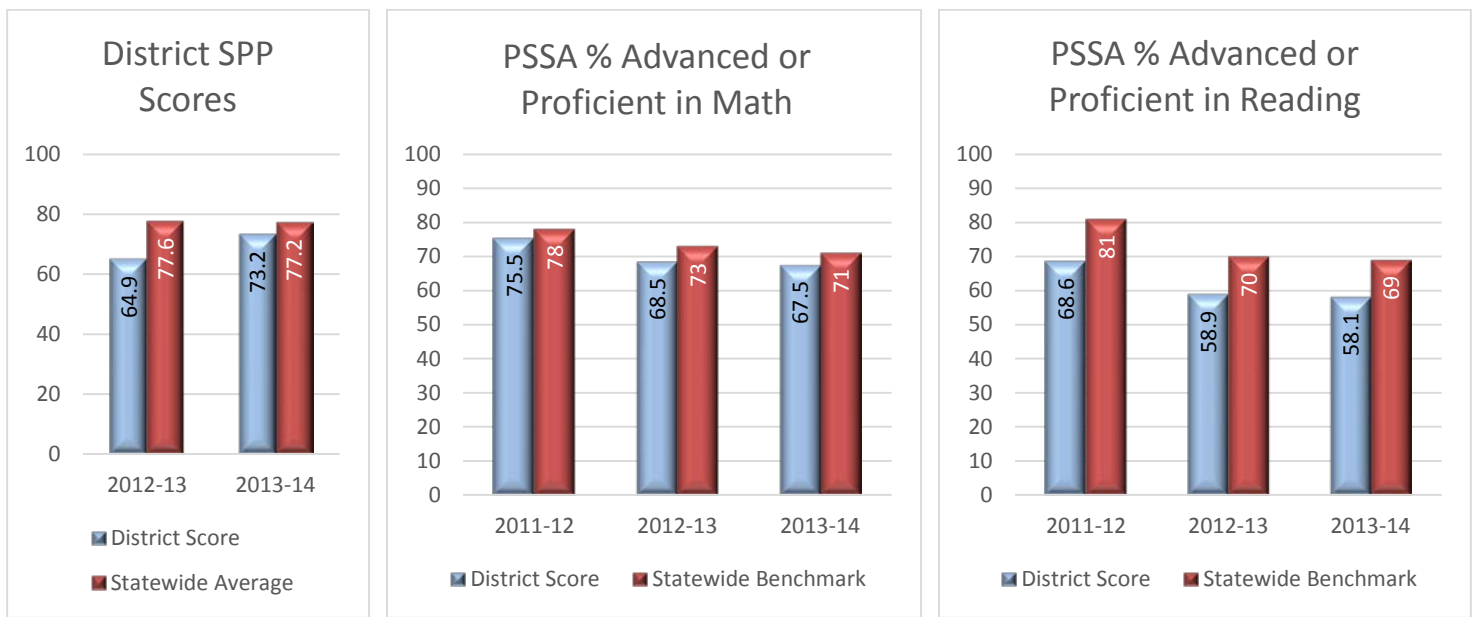
Academic Information

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.² 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.³ PSSA benchmarks and goals are determined by PDE each school year and apply to all public school entities.⁴ 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>Turkeyfoot Valley Area SD</i>	64.9	73.2	75.5	68.5	67.5	68.6	58.9	58.1
<i>SPP Grade⁵</i>	D	C						



² PDE is the sole source of academic data presented in this report. All academic data was obtained from PDE's publically available website.

³ Statewide averages for SPP scores were calculated based on all district school buildings throughout the Commonwealth, excluding charter and cyber charter schools.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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).

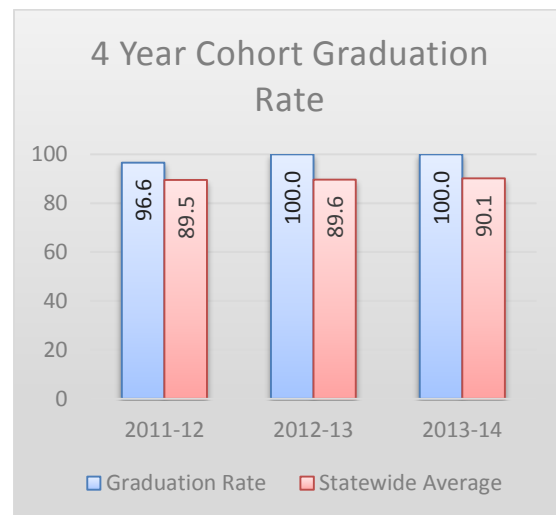
Individual School Building SPP and PSSA Scores

The following table consists of SPP scores and PSSA results for each of the District's school buildings.⁶ Any blanks in PSSA data means that PDE did not publish a score for that school for that particular year.⁷

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
Statewide Benchmark	77.6	77.2	78	73	71	81	70	69
<i>Turkeyfoot Valley Area Elementary School</i>	65.6	75.1	95.5	79.7	69.2	71.9	62.9	51.7
<i>Turkeyfoot Valley Area Junior Senior High School</i>	64.2	71.3	55.4	57.3	65.8	65.2	55.0	64.6

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.⁸



⁶ The District's elementary and junior senior high schools are all located in one building.

⁷ PDE's data does not provide any further information regarding the reason a score was not published.

⁸ <http://www.education.pa.gov/Data-and-Statistics/Pages/Cohort-Graduation-Rate-.aspx#.V1BFCdTD-JA>.

Finding(s)

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

Status of Prior Audit Findings and Observations

Our prior audit of the District, released on April 3, 2013, resulted in two findings as shown below. 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 PDE, interviewed District personnel, and performed audit procedures as detailed in each status section below.

Auditor General Performance Audit Report Released on April 3, 2013

Prior Finding No. 1: Failure to Have All School Bus Drivers' Qualifications on File

Prior Finding Summary: Our prior audit of the District's school bus drivers' qualifications for the 2011-12 school year found that not all records were on file at the time of audit. Additionally, the documentation had not been provided to the District by the contractor as specified in the transportation contract.

Prior Recommendations: We recommended that the District should:

1. Ensure that the District's transportation manager reviews each driver's qualifications prior to that person transporting students.
2. Maintain files, separate from the transportation contractor, to ensure that the District's files are up-to-date and complete.
3. Obtain board approval of bus routes and bus drivers prior to transporting students.

Current Status: We found that the District has implemented all of the recommendations and has controls in place to oversee all District drivers' qualifications.

Prior Finding No. 2: Certification Deficiency

Prior Finding Summary: Our prior audit of the District's professional employees' certification for the period April 1, 2009 through February 29, 2012, found one teacher held a position for the first semester of the 2011-12 school year with improper certification for the assignment. PDE confirmed the deficiency, and the District was subject to a \$327 subsidy forfeiture for the 2011-12 school year.

Prior Recommendations: We recommended that the District should:

1. Take corrective action to comply with certification regulations.
2. Develop internal controls to ensure individuals are properly certified for the positions to which they are assigned.

We also recommended that PDE should:

3. Adjust the District's allocations to recover the subsidy forfeiture of \$327 resulting from the deficiency.

Current Status:

During our current audit, we reviewed the cited teacher's certification and found that she obtained the required certification.

On December 26, 2013, PDE adjusted the District's allocations to recover the subsidy forfeiture of \$327.

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 402 and 403 of The Fiscal Code,⁹ is not a substitute for the local annual financial 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. 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 controls¹⁰ to provide reasonable assurance that the District is in compliance with certain relevant state laws, regulations, contracts, 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.

⁹ 72 P.S. §§ 402 and 403.

¹⁰ 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, 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, new or amended policies and procedures, and the independent audit report of the District's basic financial statements for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2011 through June 30, 2015. 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:

- ✓ Hiring Practices
- ✓ Professional Certification
- ✓ Bus Driver Requirements
- ✓ School Safety

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

- ✓ Did the District follow the Public School Code and best practices when hiring new staff?
 - To address this objective, we obtained and reviewed the District's hiring policies and procedures. We reviewed documentation for the three employees hired by the District during the period May 1, 2016 through August 31, 2016, to determine if the District complied with the Public School Code, District policies and procedures, and best practices in hiring new employees. Our review of this objective did not disclose any reportable issues.
- ✓ Did the District hire professional personnel that had valid certificates, and were those individuals working in the area that was appropriate for certificate held?
 - To address this objective, we randomly selected 5 of the 24 professionals who are not permanently certified or who become permanently certified since our previous audit. We ensured that teachers and administrators selected had professional personnel's certificates that were valid and all assignments matched the grade level and subject matter of the certificate. Our review of this objective did not disclose any reportable issues.
- ✓ 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?¹¹ Also, did the District have adequate written policies and procedures governing the hiring of new bus drivers?

- To address this objective, we randomly selected 5 of the 16 bus drivers hired since the prior audit by the District transportation contractor during the time period January 1, 2012 through June 30, 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. Our review of this objective did not disclose any reportable issues.

- ✓ Did the District take appropriate actions to ensure it provided a safe school environment?¹²
 - To address this objective, we reviewed a variety of documentation including, safety plans, training schedules, anti-bullying policies, and after action reports. We conducted interviews to follow-up on the status of the prior safety report. Due to the sensitive nature of school safety, the results of our review of this objective area are not described in our audit report. The results of our review of school safety are shared with the District officials and, if deemed necessary, PDE.

¹¹ 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*.

¹² 24 P.S. § 13-1301-A *et seq.*

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. Nathan Mains

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

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.