

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT

LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2022



SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT

REPORT SUMMARY FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2022

BACKGROUND

Performance audits are used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization's operations. The objective of this performance audit is to provide management, the Smyrna School District Board of Education and the State of Delaware with information to improve performance, public accountability, and transparency.

The purpose of this performance audit is to determine whether the District's operations over the collection and spending of local school district property tax funds complied with relevant laws and regulations. Our performance audit addressed the following areas:

- The tax rate setting process
- Payments for services and supplies
- Employee compensation and payroll processing

The Auditor of Accounts is mandated by 29 Del. C., §2906(f) to perform annual audits of local school district tax funds. Under Delaware Code, school districts may levy and collect taxes for school purposes upon the assessed value of all taxable real estate in the district.

KEY INFORMATION AND FINDINGS

Performance audit testing of the rate-setting process revealed the District's management and Board of Education analyzed expected spending and set the FY 2022 tax rates to provide adequate revenues, as summarized here.

- The District's FY 2022 current expense tax rate was set by referendum in 2021.
- Revenues from the District's debt service and tuition tax rates were consistent with expenditures.
- The District's debt service reserve of \$1,261,847 as of June 30, 2022 complied with the State of Delaware requirements.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT QUICK FACTS

K-12 Schools

8

Students Served

6,000

Employees

700

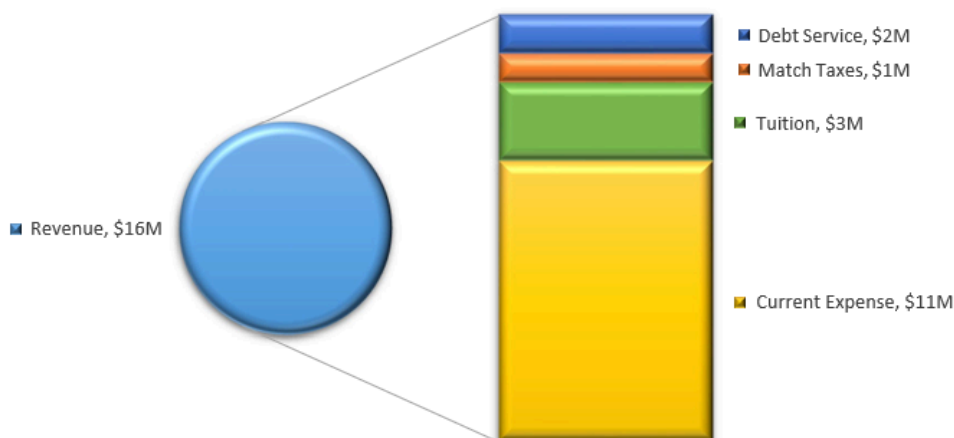


SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT SUMMARY FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2022

KEY INFORMATION AND FINDINGS CONTINUED

The District allocates the local property tax funds received by their intended purpose (current expense, debt service, tuition, and match taxes). We found that the allocation was consistent with the tax rates approved by the Board of Education. The four components of local school tax revenue allocations are summarized below:

**Local School Tax Revenue Allocation
(in \$ millions)**



Findings may involve deficiencies in internal control; noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements; or instances of fraud. Performance audit testing of the District's expenditures did not uncover fraud, waste or abuse. The audit relied on various sources of information and methods to obtain an understanding of and assess Local Funds' processes for the School District, including inquiry, document reviews, risk assessment, and identification and performance assessment of key controls.

Testing identified the following conditions that are reported as findings:

- District could not provide supporting documentation for pay change approvals.
- District payroll policies do not properly segregate responsibilities of the payroll function.
- District purchases of professional services did not follow state procurement laws.

The potential exposure to the State of the weaknesses in payroll internal controls, described above, is that they increase the risk of error and fraud occurring, and not being detected, in the payroll process. The potential exposure to the State of the weaknesses in the purchasing internal controls is that they increase the risk that the District would make purchases without first obtaining the best prices and terms.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
JUNE 30, 2022

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
TABLE OF CONTENTS
JUNE 30, 2022

	<u>Page No.</u>
Independent Auditor's Report	1
Performance Audit Overview	2
Background	2
District Specific Summary	5
Audit Objectives	5
Audit Scope	5
Audit Methodology and Results	6
Schedule of Findings and Recommendations	13
Conclusion	16
Corrective Action Plan	17



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Independent Auditor's Report

Dr. Susan P. Brown, Superintendent
Smyrna School District
82 Monrovia Avenue
Smyrna, Delaware 19977

Dear Dr. Brown:

We present the attached report which provides the results of our performance audit of the Smyrna School District's Local Funds' design and operation of internal controls and compliance with applicable State and District regulations and policies during the year ended June 30, 2022. The Office of Auditor of Accounts engaged Belfint, Lyons & Shuman, P.A. to conduct a Performance Audit of the Smyrna School District's Local Funds under OAOA Contract Number 22-CPA01_SDLOCALFUNDS.

The Office of Auditor of Accounts is authorized under 29 Del. C., §2906(f) to perform post-audits of local school district tax funds' budget and expenditures. The Smyrna School District's management is responsible for the design and operation of internal controls over Local Funds and compliance with the applicable Delaware Code sections.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* as 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.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Smyrna School District, the Delaware Department of Education, and the Office of Auditor of Accounts, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties. Under 29 Del. C. §10002(o), this report is a matter of public record, and its distribution is not limited. This report, as required by statute, will be provided to the Office of the Governor, General Assembly, Office of the Controller General, Office of the Attorney General and Office of Management and Budget.

Belfint, Lyons & Shuman, P.A.

March 27, 2024
Wilmington, Delaware

cc: Lydia E. York - State Auditor
Christina Hudson - Director of Finance

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT
JUNE 30, 2022

PERFORMANCE AUDIT OVERVIEW

Performance audits are audits that provide findings or conclusions based on an evaluation of sufficient, appropriate evidence against criteria. Performance audits provide objective analysis to assist management and those charged with governance and oversight in using the information to improve program performance and operations, reduce costs, facilitate decision making by parties with responsibility to oversee or initiate corrective action, and contribute to public accountability.

BACKGROUND

Overview - Any Delaware School District may, in addition to the amounts apportioned to it by the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) or appropriated to it by the General Assembly, levy and collect additional taxes for school purposes upon the assessed value of all taxable real estate in the district except real estate exempt from taxation per 14 Del. C., §1902 and 14 Del. C., §2601. The purpose of this performance audit is to determine whether internal controls over the collection and use of these real estate tax funds were designed and operated in accordance with Delaware law and District policy. For purposes of this report, real estate taxes levied for school purposes are referred to as “Local Funds.” Although there are other types of Local Funds, they are not included in the scope of our performance audit.

Laws and Regulations - The school district’s authority to levy taxes is governed by 14 Del. C., Ch. 19 for nonvocational districts and by 14 Del. C., Ch. 26 for vocational districts. The legislative provisions and other policies relevant to local school taxes are summarized below. There are four categories of local school taxes: current expense, debt service, tuition, and match taxes summarized as follows:

Current Expense - Current expense tax rates are levied for general operation expenses incurred by the school district. Rate increases are approved via voter referendum. Vocational school districts do not require a referendum to increase their current expense rate as the rate is established by 14 Del. C., §2601.

Brandywine, Christina, Colonial, and Red Clay Consolidated School Districts share an additional current expense rate for the former New Castle County School District, which remains a school district for tax purposes only. These four districts were created pursuant to a 1981 federal court order to reorganize the New Castle County School District per 14 Del. C., §1028(k). The shared current expense rate is the rate that was in effect in 1981, and the collections are pooled and distributed by the DOE to the four districts based on unit counts in accordance with 14 Del. C., §1925.

Debt Service - Debt service tax rates are levied to cover the local share of the principal and interest payments on bonds funding major capital projects, which per Delaware Administrative Code Section 401 *Major Capital Improvement Program*, are projects costing \$1,000,000 or more. The local share of major capital projects is between 20% and 40% of the total cost per 29 Del. C., §7503(b) with the remaining balance financed by the State

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

BACKGROUND - CONTINUED

Laws and Regulations - Continued

Debt Service - Continued - of Delaware. The project must be approved by the DOE and bond issuances are authorized via voter referendum. Per 14 Del. C., §2116 and §2118(a), with a passing referendum, districts are authorized to levy a debt service tax sufficient to fund the local share of annual principal and interest payments plus 10% for expected delinquencies.

Vocational schools do not require a referendum to increase their debt service rate. Per 29 Del. C., §7503(b), the bond authorization act in which the project is included authorizes the vocational district to levy taxes sufficient to cover the local share of principal and interest bond payments.

The District is required to maintain debt service reserve, within a range of at least four months to no more than 110% of the following fiscal year's debt service payments based on the following opinions issued by the State of Delaware Attorney General:

- Attorney General Opinion 89-I017 from 1989 stated that, per the DOE, a sufficient reserve is at least four months of the following fiscal year's debt service payments.
- Attorney General Opinion 1W-024 from 1975 stated that a reserve is considered excessive when it is greater than 110% of total debt expenditures in the following year as districts' powers to levy taxes for debt service are limited per 14 Del. C., §2116 and §2118(a) to principal and interest and 10% for delinquencies.

Tuition - Tuition tax rates are levied to cover educational expenses for in-district and out-of-district placements of students in special programs and schools. The rate is set annually by the school board based on anticipated needs in the district and does not require a voter referendum. Per 14 Del. C., §2601(b), vocational school districts are not authorized to levy tuition taxes.

Match - Match funds provide a local match to State appropriations where required or allowed by law. Examples of Match programs include technology, minor capital improvements (MCIs), extra time, reading and math resource teachers, student success block grant and opportunity fund.

Technology - These funds are intended to support the purchase and replacement of technology, technology maintenance through personnel or services, professional learning, or other technology needs intended to improve the school district. The FY 1999 Bond and Capital Improvements Act authorized appropriations for education technology and authorized school districts to indefinitely levy up to one half of the rate required to meet the district's match. Technology match taxes are currently set by a DOE memo issued in December 1998.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

BACKGROUND - CONTINUED

Laws and Regulations - Continued

Match - Continued

Minor Capital Improvements - Per Delaware Administrative Code 405, *Minor Capital Improvement Program*, minor capital pertains to projects costing less than \$1,000,000, intended to keep assets in their original condition. The maximum local share for minor capital expenditures is 40% per 29 Del. C., §7528(b). The State of Delaware provides the remaining balance up to a maximum dollar amount which is included in the Delaware Capital Budget annually.

Extra Time and Reading Resource and Math Resource Teachers - In accordance with 14 Del. C., §1902(b), the State of Delaware FY 2022 Operating Budget Epilogue Sec. 357 authorizes school districts to levy a local match for Extra Time as well as Reading Resource Teachers and Mathematics Resource Teachers which were originally established by the following:

- Per the State of Delaware FY 2008 Operating Budget Epilogue, the extra time appropriation is intended for additional instruction for low achieving students and school districts were encouraged to match on a 70% state and 30% local basis.
- Per the State of Delaware FY 2010 Operating Budget Epilogue, the reading and math resource teacher appropriations are intended to fund state salaries for resource teachers in each school and districts were encouraged to match on a 70% state and 30% local basis.

Student Success Block Grant - The State of Delaware FY 2022 Operating Budget Epilogue Sec. 366 authorizes school districts to assess a local match for costs relating to the Student Success Block Grant appropriations, which are intended for reading assistance in grades K-4.

Opportunity Fund - The State of Delaware FY 2022 Operating Budget Epilogue Sec. 363 authorizes school districts to assess a local match for costs associated with Opportunity Fund appropriations intended to enhance services and provide additional supports to English Learner and low-income students, as well as be used for mental health services and/or for additional reading supports for grades K-5. Per a June 2019 DOE Memo, schools are allowed to match on a 70% state and 30% local basis.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

BACKGROUND - CONTINUED

Capitation - Districts may also levy a school capitation tax on all persons 18 years of age and older, determined by the board, provided that such school capitation tax is approved by the voters of the district in the same manner as required for the levy of taxes on the assessed value of real estate, per 14 Del. C., §1912.

DISTRICT SPECIFIC SUMMARY

The Smyrna School District, located in Kent and New Castle County, operates Pre-K to 12 schools with over 6,000 students. The Smyrna School District employs over 700 employees to educate and support its students. Smyrna has four elementary schools, two intermediate schools, one middle school, and one traditional comprehensive high school. The Smyrna School District Board of Education is the governing body of the District. The School Board includes five elected members who serve four-year terms. For the purposes of this report, the Smyrna School District is referred to as the “School District” or “District.”

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives established for the performance audit of the School District were:

Objective 1: School District internal controls over the expenditure of Local Funds were designed and operated in accordance with the requirements of the *Delaware Code*, State of Delaware *Administrative Code*, State of Delaware *Budget and Accounting Policy Manual (BAM)*, School District Accounting Policies, and the School District Budget (the requirements).

Objective 2: School District internal controls over the receipt of Local Funds were designed and operated in accordance with the requirements.

Objective 3: School District real estate taxes were approved and calculated in accordance with the requirements.

Objective 4: School District tuition tax funds are calculated and spent in accordance with the requirements.

AUDIT SCOPE

The period covered by the Performance Audit was July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. We sampled and examined transactions from the populations of expenditures and receipts of Local Funds for the period from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. In sampling these transactions, we relied on documentation provided by the School District, the DOE and the State of Delaware’s financial accounting and human resources systems.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

AUDIT METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

To address the audit objectives of this performance audit, we performed the following procedures:

- A. Planning Phase: The audit relied on various sources of information and methods to properly plan the audit and to obtain an understanding of and assess Local Funds' processes for the School District, including the following:
1. Reviewed the applicable sections of the *Delaware Code*, State of Delaware *Administrative Code*, *BAM*, School District Accounting Policies, and the School District Budget to gain an understanding of the legal and policy requirements governing Local Funds.
 2. Inquired about whether there were any findings and recommendations in reports resulting from previous audits that relate to the objectives of this audit and whether the recommendations have been implemented.
 3. Reviewed the Board of Education's meeting minutes for the audit period.
 4. Identified and reviewed contracts, agreements, and other important documents.
 5. Performed risk assessment procedures such as:
 - a. Obtained and documented an understanding of the School District and its environment and identified risks.
 - b. Completed engagement team discussions, including discussions about the possibility of error or fraud involving Local Funds.
 - c. Made inquiries of management and others about risks (including fraud risks, related-party transactions, unusual transactions, and compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements.)
 - d. Obtained and documented an understanding of the School District's internal control system over Local Funds by performing walkthroughs.
 6. Identified key internal controls over the District's Local Funds for testing.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

AUDIT METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS - CONTINUED

B. Performance Assessment: Based on the information gathered, we developed the following risk-based approach to assess the design and operation of internal controls over Local Funds with respect to the audit objectives:

1. To assess the design and operation of disbursement internal controls, we sampled and tested transactions from the population of expenditures from Local Funds and Local Tuition Tax funds to determine that transactions were properly documented, authorized and properly recorded; that products and services were received, and that the transaction complied with State and District requirements.
2. To assess the design and operation of procurement internal controls, we analyzed disbursements to vendors made from the District's State, Local and Federal Funds' (excluding purchases made using State-wide contracts, those entered into by the Office of Management and Budget's, Government Support Services Division). Our analysis included all District funding (local, state and federal) because the procurement requirements apply regardless of funding source. We analyzed procurements as follows:
 - a. Cumulative expenditures by purchase order, to test whether the cumulative amounts may have exceeded the applicable procurement thresholds.
 - b. Vendors receiving payments under multiple purchase orders to test whether multiple purchase orders for similar products or services may have exceeded the applicable procurement thresholds.
 - c. Vendors receiving direct claim payments (purchases without purchase orders) to test whether multiple payments for similar products or services may have exceeded the applicable procurement thresholds.
 - d. Payments made via Purchasing Cards to test whether single payments (or multiple payments for similar products or services) may have exceeded the applicable procurement thresholds.
 - e. Payments to Single Payment Suppliers (suppliers that are paid only once) to test whether payments may have exceeded the applicable procurement thresholds.

In addition, we selected the following types of vendor transactions for testing:

- a. A random sample of vendor transactions with cumulative purchase amounts meeting or exceeding the State and District procurement thresholds.
- b. A judgmental sample of unusual or higher risk vendor transactions.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

AUDIT METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS - CONTINUED

3. To assess the design and operation of payroll internal controls, we sampled and tested transactions from a population of current year payroll change events, affecting local funds' payroll expenditures for the following:
 - a. Employees' annual salary increases agreed to published and approved salary tables.
 - b. Changes to payroll, other than annual salary increases, agreed to supporting documentation and were properly approved.
 - c. Management's reconciliation, review, and approval of bi-weekly payrolls.
4. To assess the design and operation of internal controls over the approval and calculation of real estate taxes, including tuition tax:
 - a. Compared taxes levied per official tax warrants to supporting rate calculations, budgets, and amounts authorized by referendum, relevant legislation (including tax revenue reserve limits) and District approval.
 - b. Analyzed tax revenue reserves at the beginning and end of the fiscal year, as applicable.
 - c. Verified local tax fund receipts were properly recorded to the related tax appropriation based on the official tax warrant.

Objective 1 - School District internal controls over the expenditure of Local Funds were designed and operated in accordance with the requirements.

Results - We found the design of the key internal controls over the expenditure of Local Funds, including payroll, non-payroll and debt service, was in accordance with the requirements, for the period from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, except for the deficiencies in the design of internal controls over the review and approval of payroll expenditures reported in Finding Number1 in the *Schedule of Findings and Recommendations*.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

AUDIT METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS - CONTINUED

Objective 1 - Continued

Results - Continued

Non-Payroll Expenditures - To assess the operation of the internal controls over non-payroll expenditures of Local Funds, we selected a random sample of 40 disbursement transactions (excluding transactions from tuition Local Funds tested in Objective 4). Our review of the selected transactions determined that the purchases both complied with State and District requirements and that the transactions were properly approved by the District as evidenced by approval on invoices and receipts, as well as in the First State Financials (FSF), the Delaware State accounting system.

Procurement - To assess the District's compliance with both State and District procurement requirements, we analyzed the District's total FY 2022 disbursement population and, using a risk-based approach, we selected the following samples:

- A haphazardly selected sample of the lesser of 25 or 10% of vendors (four vendors were selected) with purchases exceeding the \$10,000 procurement threshold per the *BAM* (this is the lowest threshold that requires competitive purchasing).
- A judgmentally selected sample of three vendors with multiple purchase orders.
- A haphazardly selected sample of 10% of vendors (two vendors were selected) with purchases without purchase orders, exceeding the \$10,000 procurement threshold.
- There were no procurement card purchases made by the District exceeding the \$10,000 procurement threshold and, therefore, a sample was not selected for testing.
- There were no single-payment vendor purchases made by the District exceeding the \$10,000 procurement threshold and, therefore, a sample was not selected for testing.

We examined documentation for each of the transactions selected. Except for the condition identified in Finding Number 2 in the *Schedule of Findings and Recommendations*, we found the purchasing process for goods and services purchased was in compliance with State and District procurement requirements.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

AUDIT METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS - CONTINUED

Objective 1 - Continued

Results - Continued

Payroll Expenditures - To assess the operation of the internal controls over payroll expenditures from Local Funds, we selected a random sample of 40 Local Funds pay rate changes processed during the fiscal year, other than annual salary increases. Our examination of the transactions determined that the transactions were properly supported; however, management's review and approval of 31 of 40 transactions examined was not properly documented and retained. Refer to Finding Number 1 in the *Schedule of Findings and Recommendations* for details of the deficiencies identified and related recommendations.

To test the employees' annual increases, we selected a random sample of 10 annual step increases and agreed each employee's salary profile in the State's payroll system, Payroll and Human Resource Statewide Technology (PHRST), to the District's approved FY 2022 salary schedules.

We reviewed evidence of the District's bi-weekly payroll reconciliation and approval process for a random sample of four bi-weekly payroll cycles and determined that authorized personnel at the District performed and maintained evidence of a review of bi-weekly payroll expenditures.

Debt Service Expenditures - We examined the requirement that the District maintain its debt service reserve within a range of at least four months and no more than 110% of the following fiscal year's debt service payments. We also compared budget to actual debt service expenditures, at the District level, during our analysis of debt service real estate tax rate calculations in Objective 3. Because the payment of debt service is managed and initiated statewide by the State of Delaware Department of Finance, it is outside of the scope of this performance audit, and we did not assess the design or operation of internal controls over debt service expenditures.

Objective 2 - School District internal controls over the receipt of Local Funds were designed and operated in accordance with the requirements.

Results - We obtained the New Castle and Kent County Reports of Local Property Tax Collections, recalculated the District's distribution of its receipts among the four categories of local taxes and determined that the District accurately distributed the receipts based on the official warrant and code requirements.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

AUDIT METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS - CONTINUED

Objective 3 - School District real estate taxes were approved and calculated in accordance with the requirements.

Results - To determine if real estate taxes were approved and calculated in accordance with the requirements, we obtained the official tax warrant for FY 2022 and concluded the following:

- The District's current expense rate was supported by a referendum passed in March 2021.
- The District assesses a local match tax for the following: Minor Capital Improvement, Technology, Reading and Math Resource Teachers, Extra Time, Student Success Block Grant, and Opportunity Fund. We found the District's match tax rates were consistent with relevant legislation and guidance.
- We compared debt service tax collections based on the debt service rate to principal and interest schedules for FY 2022 and FY 2023 and determined that the rate was sufficient to cover debt services expenditures in FY 2022 and provide the District with a reserve equal to 52% of FY 2023 debt payments as summarized below. District debt service reserves held as of June 30, 2022, were within the range set by the State of Delaware Attorney General.

July 1, 2021 Debt Service Reserve Balance	\$ 1,638,965
FY 2022 Debt Service Activity	
Receipts	1,663,954
Transfers In	356,272
Expenditures	<u>(2,397,343)</u>
June 30, 2022 Debt Service Reserve Balance	<u>\$ 1,261,847</u>
Budgeted FY 2023 Debt Service	<u>\$ 2,414,938</u>
Reserve to Expected Future Payments Ratio	<u>52%</u>

We accumulated information from the following sources to meet this audit objective: The FY 2022 Debt Service Tax Collections and FY 2022 Debt Service Reserves were obtained from the June 30, 2022 Daily Validity Report (Document Direct Report DGL060), which is a daily report on the status of appropriations. The FY 2022 and FY 2023 Debt Service Principal and Interest were obtained from debt service schedules presented in the District's FY 2022 Final Budget and FY 2023 Preliminary Budget, respectively.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL FUNDS PERFORMANCE AUDIT - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

AUDIT METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS - CONTINUED

Objective 3 - Continued

Results - Continued

- We compared actual tuition tax expenditures and funds transferred out to special programs and other districts to both actual revenues and budgeted expenditures and determined that the rate appeared to be sufficient to meet the District's obligations. Actual expenditures and revenues were obtained from the June 30, 2022 Daily Validity Report and budgeted expenditures from the District's FY 2022 Final Budget.

Objective 4 - School District tuition tax funds are calculated and spent in accordance with the requirements.

Results - We examined eight individually significant, and a random sample of six other disbursement transactions from tuition tax funds and determined that the purchases both complied with State and District requirements and that the transactions were properly approved by the District as evidenced by approval on invoices and receipts, as well as in FSF. We also examined the District's compliance with State and District procurement requirements in conjunction with procedures performed over nontuition Local Funds. Results are reported in Objective 1. Refer to Finding Number 2 in the *Schedule of Findings and Recommendations* for details of the deficiencies identified and related recommendations.

We examined payroll expenditures made from tuition tax funds in conjunction with the procedures performed over nontuition payroll expenditures. Results are reported in Objective 1. Refer to Finding Number 1 in the *Schedule of Findings and Recommendations* for details of the deficiencies identified and related recommendations.

We examined tuition tax fund calculations in conjunction with procedures performed over the nontuition Local Funds. Results are reported in Objective 3.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
JUNE 30, 2022

Finding Number 1 - Supporting Documentation for Pay Change Approval

Condition: We found the following deficiencies in the operation of the District's payroll controls:

- The District did not provide evidence of management's review and approval of pay rate transactions for 24 of 40 transactions selected for testing.
- The documentation provided by the District didn't clearly identify who prepared and who reviewed the sampled pay rate transactions, as a result we could not determine if required segregation of duties was being maintained.

Criteria: The District's Internal Control Procedures document includes the following:

- The payroll staff enters all data in PHRST. This would include changes for new hires, employment status, education, pay and benefits. Changes are initiated based upon information received from the Personnel Office or the employee and reviewed by the Finance Director.
- The District indicated pay rate transactions are entered as comments in an internal payroll database it maintains, and the Finance Director or Finance Supervisor reviews the changes in that database.

Cause: The District does not retain supporting documentation showing the Director of Finance's review of transactions prior to entry into PHRST as required by the District's Internal Control Procedure documents.

Effect: Due to the lack of documentation, it cannot be determined if required review procedures were performed or adequate segregation of duty controls were maintained.

Recommendation: We recommend that the District ensure that contemporaneous documentation of the preparation, review and approval of changes be created and maintained.

View of Responsible District Officials and Planned Corrective Actions: Refer to the Corrective Action Plan section.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

Finding Number 2 - Purchases Did Not Comply with State Purchasing and Procurement Requirements

Condition: We found that the District purchased \$554,058 in professional services for its alternative school programs from a vendor during FY 2022 without completing the formal bid procedures required by the State Code and the *BAM*.

Context: The vendor was selected by the District in 2018 under a critical-needs waiver. The District has continued using the same vendor for these services since 2018 without subjecting the contract to a procurement process. The District considered the vendor to be a sole-source for these services; however, we were not provided with sole-source documentation for the contract period under audit. (A memo from the Superintendent approving the sole-source procurement was prepared for the fiscal year 2024 contract.)

Criteria: School Districts must adhere to the procurement and purchasing requirements of the *BAM* and 29 Del. C. Ch. 69. The District's policy BUS P130 Procurement, revised as of September 1, 2021, indicates that the District follows the procurement thresholds for formal bidding set by the Contracting and Purchasing Advisory Council (CPAC), which are defined in the *BAM*.

The following requirements are applicable to professional services purchases:

- 29 Del. C., §6902(20) defines Professional Services as services which generally require specialized education, training or knowledge, and involve intellectual skills.
- Through August 31, 2022, Chapter 5 *Procurement*, Section 5.3.3, *Professional Services Thresholds* of the *BAM*, required a formal request for proposal (RFP) for professional service purchases that are \$50,000 and over on a contract-by-contract basis.
- Chapter 5 *Procurement*, Section 5.4, *Exceptions to Bid Laws* of the *BAM*, provides that work may be contracted without competitive bidding in emergency situations, but that exemption does not extend beyond the emergency situation. The *BAM* also allows work to be contracted without competitive bidding in cases where there is only one sole source for a required contract. However, in such situations, there must be a written determination by the District for the sole-source procurement in the contract file. A copy of this written determination is to be sent to GSS with the contract documents so that GSS can publish it on its central portal.

Cause: The District relied on a critical needs' waiver, prepared in 2018 to conclude that a critical need and sole-source situation existed during fiscal year 2022. The State Code and the *BAM* require that the conditions be re-evaluated and revisited for a new contract. The Office of Management and Budget's best practices state that contracts should not extend for more than five years.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - CONTINUED
JUNE 30, 2022

Finding Number 2 - Purchases Did Not Comply with State Purchasing and Procurement Requirements - Continued

Effect: The District procured these services without documenting that the services were only available from one source.

Recommendation: We recommend that the District implement procedures to properly evaluate purchases for compliance with formal procurement requirements. We also recommend that the District fully document its procurement decisions.

View of Responsible District Officials and Planned Corrective Actions: Refer to the Corrective Action Plan section.

SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT
CONCLUSION
JUNE 30, 2022

Based on the work performed in connection with this performance audit, we concluded the following:

Objective 1 - Except for the conditions noted in Findings Number 1 and 2 in the *Schedule of Findings and Recommendations*, the School District's internal controls over the expenditure of Local Funds were designed and operated in accordance with the requirements.

Objective 2 - The School District's internal controls over the receipt of Local Funds were designed and operated in accordance with the requirements.

Objective 3 - The School District's real estate taxes were approved and calculated in accordance with the requirements.

Objective 4 - The School District's tuition tax funds were calculated and spent in accordance with the requirements.



SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Christina Hudson
Finance Director

March 27, 2024

Belfint Lyons & Shuman, P.A.
1011 Centre Road, Suite 310
Wilmington, DE 19805

This letter serves as response to the findings identified in the FY 2022 Local Funds Performance Audit for the Smyrna School District.

Finding Number 1 - Supporting Documentation for Pay Change Approval

The District acknowledges the preparation and approval for the pay change process has not been completely and consistently documented. In reviewing the internal process, for each payroll change form, the individual that prepares the form and the individual that approves the form will be identified. This update to the process will more clearly identify that the change has been created and approved and that there is adequate segregation of duties.

Finding Number 2 - Purchases Did Not Comply with State Purchasing and Procurement Requirements

The District acknowledges there should have been documentation approving the use of a sole source vendor for professional services in FY 2022. Subsequently, the District recognized this oversight and, as mentioned in the discussion, documented the use of a sole source vendor for the FY 2024 contract period.

Sincerely,

Christina Hudson
Finance Director

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