

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
COUNTY OF ESSEX
AUDITORS' MANAGEMENT REPORT ON
ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS - FINANCIAL,
COMPLIANCE AND PERFORMANCE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
COUNTY OF ESSEX
AUDITORS' MANAGEMENT REPORT ON ADMINISTRATIVE
FINDINGS - FINANCIAL,
COMPLIANCE AND PERFORMANCE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023
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October 23, 2023

The Honorable President and Members
of the Board of Education
West Essex Regional School District
County of Essex, NJ

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of the Board of Education of the West Essex Regional School District in the County of Essex for the year ended June 30, 2023, and have issued our report thereon dated October 23, 2023.

As part of our audit, we performed procedures required by the New Jersey Department of Education, and the findings and results thereof are disclosed on the following pages, as listed in the accompanying table of contents. This letter does not affect our report dated October 23, 2023, on the financial statements of the Board.

We will review the status of the comments during our next audit engagement. We have already discussed these comments and suggestions with various management personnel, and we will be pleased to discuss them in further detail at your convenience, to perform any additional study of these matters, or to assist you in implementing the suggestions.

This report is intended for the information of the West Essex Regional School District's management and the New Jersey Department of Education. However, this report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited.

Nisivoccia LLP
NISIVOCCIA LLP

Man C Lee

Man C. Lee
Licensed Public School Accountant #2527
Certified Public Accountant

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS - FINANCIAL, COMPLIANCE
AND PERFORMANCE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

Scope of Audit

The audit covered the financial transactions of the Board Secretary/School Business Administrator and Treasurer of School Moneys, the activities of the Board of Education, the records of the various funds under the auspices of the Board of Education.

Administrative Practices and Procedures

Insurance

Multi-peril insurance coverage was carried in the amounts as detailed on Exhibit J-20, Insurance Schedule contained in the district's ACFR.

Officials in Office and Surety Bonds

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Michael Halik	Treasurer of School Monies	\$ 300,000
Melissa Kida	Business Administrator/Board Secretary	300,000

The District has Employee Dishonesty and Faithful Performance coverage through the School Alliance Insurance Fund as detailed on Exhibit J-20 of the ACFR.

P.L. 2020, c.44

Our audit procedures included an inquiry and subsequent review of health benefit data required per N.J.S.A. 18A:16-13.3 (Chapter 44) submitted for the year on audit. The Chapter 44 summary report was reviewed for reasonableness and timeliness.

The data submitted did include all health benefit plans offered by the school district or charter school.

The school district data certification was completed by the chief school administrator. The school district Chapter 44 data was submitted timely.

The data certification date does not reflect a submission date later than 60 days after the end of the enrollment period.

Tuition Charges

A comparison of tentative tuition charges and actual certified tuition charges was made. The actual costs were different than estimated costs. The Board made a proper adjustment to the billings to sending districts for the change in per pupil costs in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-3.1(f)3.

Financial Planning, Accounting and Reporting

Examination of Claims

An examination of claims paid on a test basis, during the period under review indicated overall compliance with respect to signatures, certification or supporting documentation.

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS - FINANCIAL, COMPLIANCE
AND PERFORMANCE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023
(Continued)

Financial Planning, Accounting and Reporting (Cont'd)

Payroll Account and Position Control Roster

The net salaries of employees of the Board were deposited in the Payroll Account. Employees' payroll deductions and employer's share of fringe benefits were deposited in the Payroll Agency Account. Salary withholdings were promptly remitted to the proper agencies, including current year health benefits withholding due to the general fund.

All payrolls were approved by the Superintendent and were certified by the President of the Board, the Board Secretary/Business Administrators and the Chief School Administrator.

The required certification (E-CERT1) of compliance with requirements for income tax on compensation of administrators (superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business administrator) to the NJ Department of Treasury was filed in a timely manner.

Reserve for Encumbrances and Accounts Payable

A review of outstanding issued purchase orders was made on a test basis as of June 30, for proper classification of orders as reserve for encumbrances and accounts payable.

Classification of Expenditures – General and Administrative

The coding of expenditures was tested for proper classification in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-8.2 as part of our test of transactions of randomly selected expenditure items. We also reviewed the coding of all expenditures included in our compliance and single audit testing procedures. In addition to randomly selecting a test sample, our sample selection specifically targeted administrative coding classifications to determine overall reliability and compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.2(f). Overall compliance was noted.

Board Secretary's Records

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements of the Board, we considered the condition of the Board Secretary's records for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements and not to provide specific assurance on the condition of the records. Based on these procedures, we have no comments.

Treasurer's Records

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements of the Board, we considered the condition of the Treasurer's records for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements and not to provide specific assurance on the condition of the records. Based on these procedures, we have no comments.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The E.S.E.A financial exhibits are contained herein within the Special Revenue Section of the District's ACFR. This section of the ACFR documents the financial position pertaining to projects under Title I and Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended and reauthorized.

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS - FINANCIAL, COMPLIANCE
AND PERFORMANCE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023
(Continued)

Financial Planning, Accounting and Reporting (Cont'd)

Other Special Federal and/or State Projects

The financial exhibits are contained within the Special Revenue Section of the ACFR. This section of the ACFR documents the financial position pertaining to the aforementioned special projects.

The District's Special Projects were approved as listed on Schedule A and Schedule B located in the ACFR.

Our audit of the federal and state funds on a test basis indicated that obligations and expenditures were incurred during the fiscal year or project period for which the project was approved.

T.P.A.F. Reimbursement

Our audit procedures included a test of the biweekly reimbursements filed with the Department of Education for district employees who are members of the Teachers Pension and Annuity Fund. No exceptions were noted.

T.P.A.F. Reimbursement to the State for Federal Salary Expenditures

The T.P.A.F. Reimbursement to the State for Federal Salary Expenditures was remitted to the State of New Jersey prior to the required deadline of October 1, 2023. The reimbursement form was reviewed and no exceptions were noted.

Travel Expense and Reimbursement Policy

Travel regulations require each District to adopt a formal policy and procedure pertaining to travel and expense reimbursement for its employees and board members. The regulations include requirements for the District to establish a maximum travel amount for the year and to ensure that the maximum amount is not exceeded. The regulations also require that all travel must be preapproved by the Board of Education and Superintendent and that a brief report detailing the key issues addressed at the travel event must be submitted after the travel event has occurred. Overall compliance was noted.

School Purchasing Programs

Contracts and Agreements Requiring Advertisement for Bids

N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 states:

- a. "When the cost or price of any contract awarded by the purchasing agent in the aggregate, does not exceed in a contract year the total sum of \$17,500, the contract may be awarded by a purchasing agent when so authorized by resolution of the Board of Education without public advertising for bids and bidding therefore, except that the Board of Education may adopt a resolution to set a lower threshold for the receipt of public bids or the solicitation of competitive quotations. If the purchasing agent is qualified pursuant to subsection b. of section 9 of P.L.1971, c. 198 the Board of Education may establish that the bid threshold may be up to \$25,000. Such authorization may be granted for each contract or by a general delegation of the power to negotiate and award such contracts pursuant to this section.

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS - FINANCIAL, COMPLIANCE
AND PERFORMANCE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023
(Continued)

School Purchasing Programs (Cont'd)

Contracts and Agreements Requiring Advertisement for Bids (Cont'd)

- b. Commencing in the fifth year after the year in which P.L.1999, c. 440 takes effect and every five years thereafter, the Governor, in consultation with the Department of Treasury, shall adjust the threshold amount and the higher threshold amount which the Board of Education is permitted to establish as set forth in subsection a. of this section or the threshold amount resulting from any adjustment under this subsection, in direct proportion to the rise or fall of the index rate as that term is defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-2, and shall round the adjustment to the nearest \$1,000. The Governor shall notify all local school districts of the adjustment no later than June 1 of every fifth year. The adjustment shall become effective on July 1 of the year in which it is made"

N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4 states, "Every contract for the provision or performance of any goods or services the cost of which in the aggregate exceeds the bid threshold, shall be awarded only by resolution of the Board of Education to the lowest responsible bidder after public advertising for bids and bidding therefore, except as is provided otherwise in this chapter or specifically by any other law"

The bid thresholds in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-2 and 18A:18A-3(a) are \$44,000 (with a Qualified Purchasing Agent) and \$32,000 (without a Qualified Purchasing Agent), respectively. The law regulating bidding for public school student transportation contracts under N.J.S.A. 18A:39-3 is \$20,200 for 2022-2023.

The Board of Education has the responsibility of determining whether the expenditures in any category will exceed the statutory thresholds within the contract year. Where question arises as to whether any contract or agreement might result in violation of the statute, the Attorney's opinion should be sought before a commitment is made.

Inasmuch as the system of records did not provide for an accumulation of payments for categories for the performance of any work or the furnishing or hiring of any materials or supplies, the results of such an accumulation could not reasonably be ascertained. Disbursements were reviewed, however, to determine whether any clear-cut violations existed. No exceptions were noted.

The results of our examination indicated that no individual payments, contracts, or agreements were made "for the performance of any work or the furnishing or hiring of any materials or supplies", in excess of the statutory thresholds where there had been no advertising for bids in accordance with the provision of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4, amended.

Resolutions were adopted authorizing the awarding of contracts or agreements for "Professional Services" per N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5.

The system of records did not provide for an accumulation of purchases for which the school board used contracts entered into by the State Department of Purchase and Property pursuant to Ch. 114, P.L. 1977, therefore, the extent of such purchases could not reasonably be ascertained.

School Food Service

The District does not participate in the Child Nutrition Program and therefore received no federal or state support.

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS - FINANCIAL, COMPLIANCE
AND PERFORMANCE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023
(Continued)

Student Body Activities

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements of the Board, we considered the condition of the Student Activities records for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements and not to provide specific assurance on the condition of the records. Based on these procedures, we have no comments.

Application for State School Aid

Our audit procedures included a test of information reported in the October 15, 2022 Application for State School Aid (A.S.S.A.) for on-roll, private schools for the disabled, low income students and bilingual education. We also performed a review of the District procedures related to its completion. The information on the A.S.S.A. was compared to the District workpapers with no exceptions. The information that was included on the workpapers was verified on a test basis with no exceptions. The results of our procedures are presented in the Schedule of Audited Enrollments.

The District maintained workpapers on the prescribed State forms or their equivalent.

The District's written procedures for the recording of student enrollment data appear to be adequate.

Pupil Transportation

Our audit procedures included a test of on-roll status reported on the 2022-2023 District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS). The information that was included on the DRTRS was verified to the DRTRS Eligibility Summary Report without exception. The results of our procedures are presented in the Schedule of Audited Enrollments.

Our procedures also included a review of transportation related contracts and purchases. Based on our review, the District complied with proper bidding procedures and award of contracts. No exceptions were noted in our review of transportation related purchases of goods and services.

Testing for Lead of All Drinking Water in Educational Facilities

The District did submit the annual Statement of Assurance to the NJ Department of Education, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-12.4(g).

Capital Assets

Finding 2023-001:

Our audit procedures included a review of the District's capital asset listing. Based on our review, the listing does not contain certain additions and deletions. As the District reflected these additions and deletions in its financial statements and is working with the capital asset appraisal company in order to rectify the issues, a formal recommendation is not deemed necessary at this time.

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS - FINANCIAL, COMPLIANCE
AND PERFORMANCE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023
(Continued)

Management Suggestions

COVID-19 Federal Funding

It is likely that the District will undergo some review of its COVID-19 federal funding if only at a desk review level by state and/or federal agencies. We strongly suggest that the District ensures that these funds are utilized in accordance with the applicable federal requirements especially with respect to procurement. Additionally, we strongly suggest that the District ensures that these funds are accounted for in the state account numbers designated by the NJ Department of Education and that any applicable Board policies are current with respect to federal grant requirements.

Reconciling Food Service Management Contractor's Operating Statement with District Records

It is suggested that the District reconcile the revenue and expenses per the Food Service Management Contractor's Operating Statement with the District's records on a monthly basis.

Status of Prior Year Findings/Recommendations

There were no prior year recommendations.

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
APPLICATION FOR STATE SCHOOL AID SUMMARY
SCHEDULE OF AUDITED ENROLLMENTS
ENROLLMENT AS OF OCTOBER 15, 2022

	2023-24 Application for State School Aid				Sample for Verification					
	Reported on		Reported on		Sample		Verified per		Errors per	
	A.S.S.A. On Roll		Workpapers On Roll		Selected from Workpapers		Registers On Roll		Registers On Roll	
	Full	Shared	Full	Shared	Full	Shared	Full	Shared	Full	Shared
Grade Seven	282		282		282		282			
Grade Eight	225		225		225		225			
Grade Nine	217		217		217		217			
Grade Ten	233		233		233		233			
Grade Eleven	218		218		218		218			
Grade Twelve	225		225		225		225			
Subtotal	1,400		1,400		1,400		1,400			
Special Education:										
Middle School	92		92		10		10			
High School	146	4	146	4	14		14			
Subtotal	238	4	238	4	24		24			
Totals	1,638	4	1,638	4	1,424	-0-	1,424	-0-	-0-	-0-
Percentage Error			0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	0.00%

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHEDULE OF AUDITED ENROLLMENTS
APPLICATION FOR STATE SCHOOL AID SUMMARY
ENROLLMENT AS OF OCTOBER 15, 2022

	Private Schools for Disabled			
	Reported on ASSA as Private Schools	Sample for Verification	Sample Verified	Sample Errors
Special Education:				
Middle School	8	2	2	
High School	24	4	4	
Totals	32	6	6	-0-
Percentage Error				0.00%

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHEDULE OF AUDITED ENROLLMENT
APPLICATION FOR STATE SCHOOL AID SUMMARY
ENROLLMENT AS OF OCTOBER 15, 2022

	Resident Low Income			Sample for Verification		
	Reported on ASSA as Low Income	Reported on Workpapers as Low Income	Errors	Sample Selected from Workpapers	Verified to Application and Register	Sample Errors
Grade Seven	6	6		1	1	
Grade Eight	4	4				
Grade Nine	4	4		1	1	
Grade Ten	4	4		1	1	
Grade Eleven	2	2		1	1	
Grade Twelve	2	2		1	1	
Subtotal	<u>22</u>	<u>22</u>		<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	
Special Education:						
Middle School	2	2		1	1	
High School	9	9		1	1	
Subtotal	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	
Totals	<u>33</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>-0-</u>
Percentage Error			<u>0.00%</u>			<u>0.00%</u>

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
APPLICATION FOR STATE SCHOOL AID SUMMARY
SCHEDULE OF AUDITED ENROLLMENTS
ENROLLMENT AS OF OCTOBER 15, 2022

	Resident LEP Not Low Income					
	Reported on A.S.S.A. as LEP Not Low Income	Reported on Workpapers as LEP Not Low Income	Errors	Sample Selected from Workpapers	Verified to Test Scores and Register	Sample Errors
Grade Seven	2	2		1	1	
Grade Eight	2	2				
Grade Nine	2	2		1	1	
Grade Ten	1	1		1	1	
Grade Eleven	1	1				
Grade Twelve	2	2				
Subtotal	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>		<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	
Special Ed - Elementary						
Totals	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>-0-</u>
Percentage Error			<u>0.00%</u>			<u>0.00%</u>

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHEDULE OF AUDITED ENROLLMENT
APPLICATION FOR STATE SCHOOL AID SUMMARY
ENROLLMENT AS OF OCTOBER 15, 2022

	Transportation					
	<u>Reported on DRTRS by DOE</u>	<u>Reported on DRTRS by District</u>	<u>Errors</u>	<u>Tested</u>	<u>Verified</u>	<u>Errors</u>
Regular - Public Schools	881	881		15	15	
Regular - Special Education	138	138		3	3	
Transported - Non Public	2	2		1	1	
AIL Non- Public	179	179		4	4	
Special Needs - Public	1	1		1	1	
Special Needs - Private	23	23		1	1	
Totals	<u>1,224</u>	<u>1,224</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>-0-</u>
Percentage Error			<u>0.00%</u>			<u>0.00%</u>

	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Recalculated</u>
Average Mileage - Regular Including Grade PK Students	4.8	4.8
Average Mileage - Regular Excluding Grade PK Students	4.8	4.8
Average Mileage - Special Education with Special Needs	12.2	12.2

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
EXCESS SURPLUS CALCULATION
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

EXCESS SURPLUS CALCULATION

REGULAR DISTRICT

SECTION 1

A. 2% Calculation of Excess Surplus

2022-23 Total General Fund Expenditures per the ACFR, Ex. C-1	\$ 49,950,396	(B)
Increased by:		
Transfer from Capital Outlay to Capital Projects Fund	\$ -0-	(B1a)
Transfer from Capital Reserve to Capital Projects Fund	\$ -0-	(B1b)
Decreased by:		
On-Behalf TPAF Pension and Social Security	\$ 8,884,590	(B2a)
Assets Acquired Under Leases and Financed Purchases	\$ 47,450	(B2b)
Adjusted 22-23 General Fund Expenditures [(B)+(B1's)-(B2's)]	<u>\$ 41,018,356</u>	(B3)
2% of Adjusted 2022-23 General Fund Expenditures [(B3) times .02]	<u>\$ 820,367</u>	(B4)
Enter Greater of (B4) or \$250,000	<u>\$ 820,367</u>	(B5)
Increased by: Allowable Adjustment	<u>\$ 869,148</u>	(K)
Maximum Unassigned Fund Balance [(B5)+(K)]		<u>\$ 1,689,515</u> (M)

SECTION 2

Total General Fund - Fund Balances @ 6/30/23 (Per ACFR Budgetary Comparison Schedule C-1)	\$ 22,133,560	(C)
Decreased by:		
Year End Encumbrances	\$ 434,824	(C1)
Legally Restricted - Designated for Subsequent Year's Expenditures	\$ -0-	(C2)
Legally Restricted - Excess Surplus - Designated for Subsequent Year's Expenditures	\$ 500,000	(C3)
Other Restricted/Reserved Fund Balances	\$ 19,009,221	(C4)
Assigned - Designated for Subsequent Year's Expenditures	\$ -0-	(C5)
Total Unassigned Fund Balance [(C)-(C1)-(C2)-(C3)-(C4)-(C5)]		<u>\$ 2,189,515</u> (U1)

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
EXCESS SURPLUS CALCULATION
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023
(Continued)

SECTION 3

Restricted Fund Balance - Excess Surplus [(U2)-(M)] IF NEGATIVE, ENTER -0- \$ 500,000 (E)

Recapitulation of Excess Surplus as of June 30, 2023

Restricted Excess Surplus - Designated for Subsequent Year's Expenditures \$ 500,000 (C3)

Restricted Excess Surplus [(E)] \$ 500,000 (E)

Total [(C3)+(E)+(F)] \$ 1,000,000 (D)

Detail of Allowable Adjustments

Impact Aid \$ -0- (H)

Sale and Lease Back \$ -0- (I)

Extraordinary Aid \$ 813,300 (J1)

Additional Nonpublic School Transportation Aid \$ 55,848 (J2)

Total Adjustments ((H)+(I)+(J1)+(J2)) \$ 869,148 (K)

Detail of Other Restricted Fund Balance

Statutory restrictions:

Approved unspent separate proposal \$ -0-

Sale/lease-back reserve \$ -0-

Capital reserve \$17,590,449

Maintenance reserve \$ 981,826

Emergency reserve \$ -0-

Unemployment Compensation \$ 436,946

Tuition reserve \$ -0-

Other state/governmental mandated reserve \$ -0-

Other Restricted Fund Balance not noted above \$ -0-

Total Other Restricted Fund Balance \$19,009,221 (C4)

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

It is recommended that:

1. Administrative Practices and Procedures
None
2. Financial Planning, Accounting and Reporting
None
3. School Purchasing Program
None
4. School Food Service
None
5. Student Body Activities
None
6. Application for State School Aid
None
7. Pupil Transportation
None
8. Facilities and Capital Assets
None.
9. Status of Prior Year Findings/Recommendations
There were no prior year recommendations.