

Washington State Auditor's Office
Special Report – Alternative Learning Experience

Kennewick School District No. 17
Benton County

Audit Period
September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013

Report No. 1012266

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July 24, 2014



Washington State Auditor
Troy Kelley

Independence • Respect • Integrity



Washington State Auditor Troy Kelley

July 24, 2014

Board of Directors
Kennewick School District No. 17
Kennewick, Washington

Report on Alternative Learning Experience

We appreciate the opportunity to work in cooperation with your District to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role to advocate for government accountability and transparency and to promote positive change.

Please find attached our report on Kennewick School District No. 17's compliance with alternative learning experience enrollment reporting rules. Thank you for working with us to ensure efficient and effective use of public resources.

Sincerely,

TROY KELLEY
STATE AUDITOR

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Benton County
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Audit Summary

Kennewick School District No. 17 Benton County September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013

ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) programs are a form of basic K-12 public school education in Washington State. While students in traditional basic education attend classes on campus and have face-to-face contact with teachers and other staff, ALE students may spend most, or even all, of their time outside of a regular classroom setting.

Districts may build Internet-based educational programs that enroll students from anywhere in the state. Beside Internet programs, ALE can be accomplished through a contract between a student and district instructors, or through a parent-partner program in which parents participate in the design and teaching of the student's courses. These programs are different from homeschooling in that students remain part of the public school system and districts claiming funding are responsible for supervision, monitoring, assessing and evaluating the student's education.

Districts may count ALE students for funding when they report enrollment to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). In order to claim ALE students for funding ALE programs must satisfy the office of superintendent of public instruction's requirement for courses of study leading to a high school diploma. Districts must: prepare detailed plans for each student; maintain regular contact with students; and evaluate student progress on a monthly basis. Districts must also keep detailed records to show they have met all of these requirements. In 2012 and 2013 the ALE funding provided by OSPI was reduced to 80 percent or 90 percent of the traditional basic education allocation rate based on student-instructor contact time.

ABOUT THE AUDIT

In 2013 the state Legislature passed ESSB 5946, requiring districts to receive biennial audits of their ALE courses. This report contains the results of our independent audit of ALE enrollment at Kennewick School District No. 17 from September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013.

We evaluated internal controls and performed audit procedures on the ALE activities of the District. We also determined whether the District complied with state laws and regulations over ALE enrollment.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity or area. Instead, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of noncompliance.

During the period under review, the District operated two ALE programs, which accounted for 1.7 percent of its total basic enrollment:

- Mid Columbia is a parent-partnership program serving students in grades K-12. The program has been offered in the District for approximately 12 years. The nonresident students represent 25.3 percent of students reported for funding. The program reported 96.3 percent of students at the 90 percent basic education allocation (BEA) funding rate.
- Legacy Online is an online program serving students in grades nine through 12. The program has operated for seven years and nonresident students represent 2.8 percent of students reported for funding. The program reported 47.2 percent of students at the 90 percent basic education allocation (BEA) funding rate.

RESULTS

The District complied with state laws and regulations regarding ALE enrollment. For the year ending August 31, 2013, the District received approximately \$83.1 million in combined enrollment and staff mix funding; approximately \$1.3 million of this was related to its ALE programs.

Mid Columbia – The program reported 215.01 average annual full-time equivalents (AAFTE). Our audit tested a sample of seven students and found adequate supporting documentation for all students tested. The program correctly reported students at 90 percent or 80 percent funding based on documented contact time.

Legacy Online – The program reported 53.06 average annual full-time equivalents (AAFTE). Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the District's compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters, with regard to its ALE program. We found that controls are adequate to assure compliance.

Description of the District

Kennewick School District No. 17 Benton County September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Kennewick School District No. 17 provides education and related services to approximately 16,000 preschool through 12th grade students in Benton County. The District has 13 elementary schools, four middle schools, one alternative high school and three high schools.

An elected, five-member Board of Directors governs the District. The Board appoints a Superintendent to oversee the District's daily operations as well as its approximately 1,600 employees. For the year ending August 31, 2013, the District operated on an annual general fund budget of \$152.5 million.

DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

Address: Kennewick School District No. 17
1000 W. Fourth Avenue
Kennewick, WA 99336

Phone: (509) 222-7673

Website: www.ksd.org

AUDIT HISTORY

You can find current and past audit reports for the District on our website, www.sao.wa.gov.



ABOUT THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

The State Auditor's Office is established in the state's Constitution and is part of the executive branch of state government. The State Auditor is elected by the citizens of Washington and serves four-year terms.

We work with our audit clients and citizens as an advocate for government accountability. As an elected agency, the State Auditor's Office has the independence necessary to objectively perform audits and investigations. Our audits are designed to comply with professional standards as well as to satisfy the requirements of federal, state, and local laws.

The State Auditor's Office employees are located around the state to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

Our audits look at financial information and compliance with state, federal and local laws on the part of all local governments, including schools, and all state agencies, including institutions of higher education. In addition, we conduct performance audits of state agencies and local governments and fraud, whistleblower and citizen hotline investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our Web site and through our free, electronic subscription service.

We take our role as partners in accountability seriously. We provide training and technical assistance to governments and have an extensive quality assurance program.

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Deputy Director of Communications
Public Records Officer
Main number
Toll-free Citizen Hotline

Troy Kelley
Doug Cochran
Chuck Pfeil, CPA
Kelly Collins, CPA
Jan M. Jutte, CPA, CGFM
Sadie Armijo
Mark Rapozo, CPA
Lou Adams, CPA
Barb Hinton
Thomas Shapley
Mary Leider
(360) 902-0370
(866) 902-3900

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