



Washington State Auditor's Office

Independence • Respect • Integrity

Accountability Audit Report

Department of Early Learning

For the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014

Published June 29, 2015

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Washington State Auditor's Office

June 29, 2015

Bette Hyde, Director
Department of Early Learning

Report on Accountability

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The State Auditor's Office takes seriously our role of providing state and local governments with assurance and accountability as the independent auditor of public accounts. In this way, we strive to help government work better, cost less, deliver higher value and earn greater public trust.

Independent audits provide essential accountability and transparency for Department operations. This information is valuable to management, the governing body and public stakeholders when assessing the government's stewardship of public resources.

The attached comprises our report on the Department's compliance and safeguarding of public resources. Our independent audit report describes the overall results and conclusions for areas we examined. We appreciate the opportunity to work with your staff and we value your cooperation during the audit.

Sincerely,

JAN M. JUTTE, CPA, CGFM
ACTING STATE AUDITOR
OLYMPIA, WA

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AUDIT SUMMARY

Results in brief

In most areas we audited, Department operations complied with applicable requirements and provided adequate safeguarding of public resources. The Department also complied with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures in the areas we examined.

However, we noted certain matters that we communicated to Department management in a letter dated June 23, 2015, related to purchase card use. We appreciate the Department's commitment to resolving those matters.

About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of the Department of Early Learning from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014.

Management is responsible for ensuring compliance and adequate safeguarding of public resources from fraud, loss or abuse. This includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls relevant to these objectives.

Our audit involved performing procedures to obtain evidence about the Department's uses of public resources, compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters.

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 fraud, loss, abuse, or noncompliance. The following areas were examined during this audit period:

- Contracts and agreements
- Purchase cards

RELATED REPORTS

Financial

We perform an annual audit of the statewide basic financial statements, as required by state law (RCW 43.09.310). Our opinion on these financial statements is included in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) prepared by and available from the Office of Financial Management.

The CAFR reflects the financial activities of all funds, organizations, institutions, agencies, departments and offices that are part of the state's reporting entity. That report is issued by the Office of Financial Management in December of each year and can be found at www.ofm.wa.gov.

A summary of the audit for the period ending June 30, 2014 can be found at: <http://www.sao.wa.gov/resources/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>.

Federal programs

In accordance with the Single Audit Act, we annually audit major federal programs administered by the state of Washington. Rather than perform a single audit of each agency, we audit the state as a whole. The results of that audit are published in a report issued by the Office of Financial Management in March of each year.

A summary of the audit for the period ending June 30, 2014 can be found at: <http://www.sao.wa.gov/resources/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>

Special investigations

During the current audit period, the State Auditor's Office issued a report in March 2015 pursuant to the State Employee Whistleblower Act (Chapter 42.40 RCW). That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Early Learning was established by the state Legislature on July 2, 2006, to provide critical services to young children. The Department's mission is to build partnerships to coordinate, consolidate and integrate child care and early learning so that parents and professionals have information and support that enables children to succeed in school and life. The Department's headquarters is located in Olympia with 16 additional offices located throughout the state. The Governor appoints the Department's Director who oversees a staff of approximately 250 employees. Among the Department's responsibilities are:

- To oversee approximately 20,874 licensed child care enrollment slots in Washington.
- To monitor approximately 6,000 licensed center and family home child care programs for safety and health.
- To fund the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, the state's preschool program for low-income and at-risk children.
- To set policy for the Working Connections Child Care program, which provides child care subsidies to low income families.

Statute also directs the Department to participate in a nongovernmental public-private partnership, improve parent education and support, carry out quality improvement activities, standardize a variety of administrative functions and coordinate with the K-12 system and advisory organizations. The Department's operating budget for the 2013-2015 biennium was \$482.65 million, of which \$316.4 million was federally funded.

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Information current as of report publish date.

Audit history

You can find current and past audit reports for the Department of Early Learning at <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

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 to achieve our vision of government that works for citizens, by helping governments work better, cost less, deliver higher value, and earn greater public trust.

In fulfilling our mission to hold state and local governments accountable for the use of public resources, we also hold ourselves accountable by continually improving our audit quality and operational efficiency and developing highly engaged and committed employees.

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.

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 as well as [fraud](#), state [whistleblower](#) and [citizen hotline](#) investigations.

The results of our work are widely distributed through a variety of reports, which are available on our [website](#) and through our free, electronic [subscription](#) service.

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

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