



**Office of the Washington State Auditor**  
**Pat McCarthy**

**Accountability Audit Report**

**Bellingham School District No. 501**

**Whatcom County**

**For the period September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016**

**Published March 27, 2017**

**Report No. 1018738**





**Office of the Washington State Auditor**  
**Pat McCarthy**

March 27, 2017

Board of Directors  
Bellingham School District No. 501  
Bellingham, Washington

**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 District 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 District'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,

Pat McCarthy  
State Auditor  
Olympia, WA

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## AUDIT SUMMARY

### Results in brief

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

### About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of Bellingham School District No. 501 from September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016.

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 District'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:

- Career and Technical Education enrollment
- Transportation apportionment
- Associated Student Body
- Financial condition
- Key inventory

## RELATED REPORTS

### Financial

Our opinion on the District's financial statements and compliance with federal grant program requirements is provided in a separate report, which includes the District's financial statements. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

### Federal grant programs

We evaluated internal controls and tested compliance with the federal program requirements, as applicable, for the District's major federal program, which is listed in the Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs section of the separate financial statement and single audit report. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

### Other reports

We have conducted a separate audit to examine the District's compliance with Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) requirements. That separate report also includes the status of findings contained in the prior year audit report relating to the District's compliance with ALE requirements. That report is available on our website, <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch>.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Bellingham School District No. 501 provides public school services to students in kindergarten through 12th grade in Whatcom County. The District serves approximately 11,000 students at four high schools, four middle schools and 14 elementary schools.

An elected, five-member Board of Directors governs the District. Board Members serve staggered, four-year terms. The Board appoints a Superintendent to oversee the District's daily operations as well as its 700 certificated and 600 classified employees. For the 2016 fiscal year, the District's general fund expenditures were approximately \$130 million.

### Contact information related to this report

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*Information current as of report publish date.*

### Audit history

You can find current and past audit reports for Bellingham School District No. 501 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.

Contact information for the State Auditor's Office	
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