



Office of the Washington State Auditor
Pat McCarthy

Accountability Audit Report
Highline School District No. 401

For the period September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019

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

June 18, 2020

Board of Directors
Highline School District No. 401
Burien, Washington

Report on Accountability

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you to promote accountability, integrity and openness in government. The Office of the Washington State Auditor 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.

Attached is our independent audit report on the District's compliance with applicable requirements and safeguarding of public resources for the 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

Americans with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, we will make this document available in alternative formats. For more information, please contact our Office at (564) 999-0950, TDD Relay at (800) 833-6388, or email our webmaster at webmaster@sao.wa.gov.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Audit Results.....	4
Related Reports.....	5
Information about the District.....	6
About the State Auditor's Office.....	7

AUDIT RESULTS

Results in brief

This report describes the overall results and conclusions for the areas we examined. In those selected areas, District operations complied, in all material respects, with applicable state laws, regulations, and its own policies, and provided adequate controls over the safeguarding of public resources.

In keeping with general auditing practices, we do not examine every transaction, activity, policy, internal control, or area. As a result, no information is provided on the areas that were not examined.

About the audit

This report contains the results of our independent accountability audit of Highline School District No. 401 from September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019.

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.

This audit was conducted under the authority of RCW 43.09.260, which requires the Office of the State Auditor to examine the financial affairs of all local governments. Our audit involved obtaining evidence about the District's use of public resources, compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures, and internal controls over such matters. The procedures performed were based on our assessment of risks in the areas we examined.

Based on our risk assessment for the year ended August 31, 2019, the areas examined were those representing the highest risk of fraud, loss, abuse, or noncompliance. We examined the following areas during this audit period:

- Establishment of local revenue and expenditure accounts
- Use of restricted funds – professional learning
- Accounts payable – associated student body, electronic funds transfers
- Cash receipting
- Procurement – public works and purchases
- Open public meetings – documentation of minutes, executive sessions and special meetings
- Financial condition and fiscal sustainability
- Payroll – FTE allocation testing

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 are 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>.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Highline School District No. 401 serves a 43.8 square mile area including the cities of Burien, Normandy Park, SeaTac and portions of the City of Des Moines and unincorporated King County. The District serves approximately 18,000 students in preschool through 12th grade and operates four comprehensive high schools, five smaller learning community high schools, five middle schools, 18 elementary schools, one vocational skills center, one aviation focused high school, an outdoor camp, and a learning center.

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 2,700 employees. For fiscal year 2019, the District's general fund revenue was approximately \$314.6 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 Highline School District No. 401 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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