

Gadsden Elementary School District

District paid employees for time not worked, limited public access to some Board meetings and wasted \$65,000 on unnecessary travel, and lacked oversight of transportation program

Audit purpose

To assess the District's spending on administration, plant operations and maintenance, food service, and transportation and its compliance with certain State requirements.

Key findings

- The District paid hourly employees for time not worked without Board approval, including paying many of them over school breaks even when they did not work or submit time sheets.
- The District limited public access to some Board meetings by holding them in California, which may have violated State law and resulted in more than \$65,000 of public monies being wasted for unnecessary travel expenses.
- The District's inadequate oversight of its transportation program led to potential student safety risk, reporting errors resulting in overfunding, and increased risk of fuel and supplies misuse.

Key recommendations

The District should:

- Ensure that the Board is aware of and approves the number of paid holidays provided to hourly employees and ensure contracts contain all agreed-upon terms of employment.
- Stop holding Board meetings outside District boundaries, and consult with legal counsel to ensure its meetings comply with open meeting law and to determine and implement procedures to address potentially invalid District actions.
- Establish and implement policies and procedures to ensure bus driver certification requirements are met, school buses receive timely preventative maintenance, and miles and riders are accurately reported to the Arizona Department of Education for State funding purposes, and increase controls over its fuel and supplies.