



Bowie Unified School District #14
Office of the Superintendent

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Where responsible, inquisitive learning begins...

March 26, 2021

Mrs. Lindsey Perry
Office of the Auditor General
2910 N. 44th Street, Suite 410
Phoenix, Arizona 85018

Dear Mrs. Perry,

The Bowie Unified School District respectfully submits its response to the performance audit report conducted for fiscal year 2018. The Bowie Unified School District would like to thank Mr. John Ward and his team for their support during the auditing process.

The District concurs with the findings and recommendations resulting from the audit. Bowie Unified School District continually strives to perform at the highest levels of academic and fiscal management.

If you have any questions about the District's response, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Wendy Conger, Superintendent

Wendy Conger, Superintendent

William Benning, Business Manager

Michael Myers, President

Jeff Goodman, Vice President

Ricardo Portugal, Member

John Klump, Member

Riley Klump, Member

Finding 1: District has taken some steps to improve its educational program, but high teacher turnover and noncompliance with State’s online instruction program requirements may have negatively impacted student achievement

District Response: The District agrees with the finding.
The District has already implemented the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: The District should continue to implement steps such as those it took in connection with its school improvement plan or others it deems effective to improve its educational program and student achievement.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The school district has a current school improvement plan that is submitted to the Arizona Department of Education. This plan involves all stakeholders and is regularly updated and reviewed. The District adopted the Beyond Textbooks curriculum. This will ensure teachers implement a uniform curriculum across all grade levels.

Recommendation 2: The District should develop and implement action steps to improve its teacher retention, including such steps as conducting teacher exit surveys and teacher satisfaction surveys to determine reasons teachers would continue working for the District and to address the reasons teachers leave the District.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District will conduct teacher exit surveys with the Superintendent. The District will conduct teacher satisfaction surveys annually.

Recommendation 3: The District should continue to work with SBE to ensure its online instruction program meets State accountability requirements.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District will continue to work with the State Board of Education to ensure its online instruction meets State accountability requirements. Bowie High School received its approval for Arizona Online Instruction in August of 2020. In addition, the District utilizes Edgenuity online curriculum which ensures highly qualified teachers (in Arizona) for all subjects.

Finding 2: District spent over \$255,800 more on administrative staff than peer districts— monies that it could have spent on instruction or other District priorities

District Response: The District agrees with the finding.
The District will implement the following recommendation.

Recommendation 4: The District should reduce its administrative spending by:

Recommendation 4a: Assessing its administrative staffing levels and determining how to reduce to levels similar to its peer districts’ averages.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District has implemented the following recommendation. The District has reduced its administrative staff by 1.0 FTE and will continue to explore administrative staffing reductions in order to maintain staffing levels in relation to peer districts.

Recommendation 4b: Assessing its administrative salary levels and determining how to reduce to levels that are similar to those of its peer districts' averages.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

In a prior year, the Superintendent resigned and the Board provided severance pay that was not included in the contract. The District no longer has the practice of paying severance payments that are not included in employee contracts. The District is now offering the business manager salary comparative to peer districts. In addition, the business manager is now required to be on site and work forty hours a week.

Finding 3: District spent more on plant operations than peer districts due to higher plant staffing and operating schools substantially below designed capacities, which resulted in inefficient spending of at least \$121,200

District Response: The District agrees with the finding.
The District will implement the following recommendations.

Recommendation 5: The District should eliminate inefficient plant operations spending by:

Recommendation 5a: Assessing its plant operations staffing levels and reducing to levels similar to its peer districts' averages.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District is continuing to assess plant operations staffing levels. The District has reduced the staffing levels by 1.0 FTE.

Recommendation 5b: Assessing its excess capacity and reducing it by closing space.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District will move forward with assessing and evaluating space that is not utilized.

Recommendation 6: The District should determine whether it really needs the space where repairs are needed before accepting and spending BRG monies to fix deficiencies.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The BRG monies are being spent on buildings that are being used. Bowie USD will continue to assess further BRG grants.

Finding 4: Some District food service practices likely diverted monies away from instruction or other District priorities

District Response: The District agrees with the finding.
The District will implement the following recommendations

Recommendation 7: The District should charge students correct meal prices based on their NSLP reimbursement category and accurately report to ADE the number of meals by price category that it serves.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District will ensure students are charged correct meal prices based on their NSLP reimbursement category. In addition, the meal counts will be accurately reported based on the appropriate category.

Recommendation 8: The District should have classroom teachers take morning counts of students intending to purchase lunch in the cafeteria each day and report these counts to cafeteria staff so they know how many meals to prepare or implement some other process that minimizes the number of wasted meals.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The teachers now take written counts in the morning, for breakfast and lunch, and provide this information to the Cafeteria staff. Cafeteria staff now prepare only the number of meals indicated from the teacher count.

Recommendation 9: The District should maximize its use of available USDA food allotments, determine whether it should increase available freezer space to accommodate additional USDA food, and obtain additional freezer space, as appropriate.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

Moving forward, the District will implement requesting its USDA food allotments. The District now has freezer storage capacity to accept these commodities. The District has space to request dry food allotment.

Recommendation 10: The District should charge full price for any second meals that it serves students.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District will ensure students are charged full price for second meals.

Finding 5: District did not generate revenues to cover costs for community preschool program and swimming pool use, and entered an inequitable cost-sharing agreement and paid for inaccurate charges, resulting in the loss of thousands of dollars

District Response: The District agrees with the finding.
The District agrees with the finding and will implement the recommendations.

Recommendation 11: The District should determine whether it should continue offering community preschool and, if it does, charge student tuition or obtain grants or donations that cover the costs of operating the program.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District is evaluating whether or not to continue offering the community preschool. This will be brought to the school board's attention in May 2021.

Recommendation 12: The District should determine whether it should continue to operate a community pool during the summer and, if it does, operate it in a self-supporting manner by implementing options such as charging entrance fees, collecting donations, or partnering with the Town of Bowie to cover the costs of the pool's summer operation.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The pool has not been open since the summer of 2018. The pool is on the school board agenda for April 2021 as an action/discussion item to close the pool permanently.

Recommendation 13: The District should thoroughly oversee all IGAs it enters with other school districts by ensuring the agreements are equitable to the District, that it is not inequitably paying costs associated with the IGAs, and that it is receiving any payments or equipment it is due upon termination of such agreements.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

Legal counsel now reviews all IGAs to ensure they are equitable to the District. Upon termination of an IGA, the District will ensure that the agreements are fulfilled, including any money or equipment owed. The District will work with Legal Counsel to enforce the terms of the IGA.

Recommendation 14: The District should have its Governing Board decide whether to work with its attorney to determine if the District can still collect monies or sports equipment due to it from the termination of the sports program IGA with the other district.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The Governing Board will work with the attorney to determine if monies or sports equipment is due.

Recommendation 15: The District should require other districts that are charging it for services to provide detailed invoices with explanations of charges.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District will require other districts to provide detailed invoices with explanations of charges.

Recommendation 16: The District should track services it receives in connection with its IGAs, and compare them to invoices for accuracy prior to paying the invoices.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

Anyone who provides a service to the District is now required to not only check in with the office but also sign a log book with their name, date, and service provided

Finding 6: District's lack of compliance with important requirements and standards put public monies and sensitive information at an increased risk of errors, fraud, and unauthorized access.

District Response: The District agrees with the finding.

The District agrees with the finding and will implement the recommendations

Recommendation 17: The District should separate responsibilities over payroll processing among more than 1 employee so that no employee is responsible for preparing, authorizing, and distributing payments without an independent or supervisory review.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District now has a Business Procedures Manual that was approved by the board in July 2020. It is now being followed by the District staff. The Business Procedures Manual follows the USFR.

Recommendation 18: The District should separate responsibilities over credit cards among more than 1 employee so that no employee can make purchases, record the purchases in the District's accounting system, reconcile purchase receipts to credit card statements, and issue payments to the credit card companies without another employee's independent review and approval.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The Business Procedures Manual outlines the responsibilities and procedures to be followed by the staff.

Recommendation 19: The District should pay credit card balances in full each billing cycle and make timely payments to avoid late fees and finance charges.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District will ensure the credit cards are paid in a timely manner to avoid late fees and finance charges.

Recommendation 20: The District should implement additional procedures to help ensure employees follow required purchasing procedures, including additional training or penalties for repeat offenses, among other options.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

These procedures are outlined in the Business Procedure Manual

Recommendation 21: The District should ensure that athletic event ticket sellers accurately record the tickets they sold and total cash they collected and have another employee independently review this documentation to verify that all cash collected and deposited accurately reflects the number of tickets sold.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District no longer provides athletic events on its campus.

Recommendation 22: The District should implement additional procedures to help ensure that employees who collect cash deposit it at the business office within 1 day of collection, as required by District policy. Additional procedures may include additional staff training or penalties for repeat offenses, among other options.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The procedures regarding the collection of cash deposits is covered in the Business Procedure Manual

Recommendation 23: The District should classify all transactions in accordance with the Uniform Chart of Accounts for school districts to ensure it accurately reports its spending.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The Business Manager will ensure that all transactions are recorded in accordance with the Uniform Chart of Accounts.

Recommendation 24: The District should accurately record and report to ADE, for transportation funding purposes, the miles it drove in connection with its student transportation program, as well as the actual number of eligible students it transported.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District will use an Excel worksheet to tabulate transportation route miles and eligible students to accurately record and report to ADE

Recommendation 25: The District should limit accounting system users' access to only those functions needed to perform their job duties.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District will review users' accounting system access to ensure that users only have access to the functions that are needed to perform the job duty; the District, with the help of an outside consultant, will review the appropriateness of user access.

Recommendation 26: The District should remove administrator-level access to its accounting system from any employee in its business office and provide that access instead to an employee or authorized person outside of the business office, such as an IT administrator or employee.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District has now ensured that the IT Director is the only employee with administrator-level access.

Recommendation 27: The District should implement and enforce SIS password requirements that meet credible industry standards.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

The District is working with the SIS vendor to ensure the password requirements meet credible industry standards.

Recommendation 28: The District should implement additional procedures to ensure that terminated employees have their SIS and accounting system access promptly removed to reduce the risk of unauthorized access.

District Response: The District agrees with the recommendation and will implement the recommendation.

This is outlined in the termination section of the Business Procedures manual, the District is now required to use an Employee Separation Checklist for anyone leaving the District.