

District's response necessitates clarifications

A.R.S. §41-1279.03(A)(9) requires school districts to provide a written response indicating whether they agree with our findings and plan to implement the recommendations. Consistent with this requirement, the District has provided its response to the audit report, which is presented on the following pages. However, the District has included certain statements in its response that necessitate the following clarifications.

District mischaracterizes Finding 6, which found it lacked processes to consistently collect and validate key outcome data, and it does not specify how it will implement the recommendations in a different manner

In its response, the District disagrees with Finding 6, and it mischaracterizes the finding as being a difference of opinion about the definition of outcome data rather than the need to ensure that the data it uses to demonstrate its central and satellite CTE programs' effectiveness in preparing students for high-need occupations is accurate, valid, and complete.

The District's response states:

"The district collects and validates key outcome data used to assess CTE program effectiveness but uses a different, more inclusive, definition of outcome data than the definition used in this finding. Other items collected include ADE Technical Skills Assessment scores, certifications earned, annual program evaluation results, and student and parent climate surveys. However, data collection was not always consistently collected, validated, and documented."

Additionally, the District indicates that it will implement the finding's 2 recommendations, but in a different manner from how they are written.

Auditor General's comments

The District's assertion that it uses a more inclusive definition of outcome data than was used in the audit is misleading. As reported in Finding 6, our work focuses on industry certifications and job placements because State and federal agencies and recommended practices have emphasized the importance of these metrics for assessing CTE programs' effectiveness. However, we also asked the District multiple times throughout the audit to provide documentation supporting other program outcome data it collected to assess its CTE programs' effectiveness and the District did not do so.

Additionally, despite the District's disagreement with Finding 6, its explanation acknowledges that it did not consistently collect, validate, and document outcome data, which is consistent with what we found and reported in the audit finding. As reported in Finding 6, we identified numerous deficiencies in the District's processes for collecting, validating, and reporting program outcome data that resulted in the District's inability to demonstrate whether and/or to what extent its central

and satellite CTE programs were successful in preparing students for high-need occupations. Accordingly, we accurately reported that the District lacked processes to consistently collect and validate key outcome data used to assess its CTE programs' effectiveness.

Finally, the District's responses to recommendations 18 and 19 indicate it plans to implement these recommendations in a different manner. However, the District's explanations do not clearly indicate how its plans differ from the recommendations. The District is required to collect certain program outcome data, including postgraduation jobs obtained and industry certifications earned, in accordance with the State and federal requirements cited in the audit report. Regardless of what other outcome measures it deems important for measuring CTE programs' success, the District is responsible for implementing processes to consistently collect, validate, use, and report outcome data on its CTE programs' effectiveness in meeting their statutory purpose.