

Gila Institute for Technology

District did not collect all required student outcome data to help assess whether its career and technical education (CTE) programs were effective in preparing students for high-need occupations and did not follow best practices regarding its unspent fund balance

Audit purpose

To determine if the District was meeting its statutory purpose to prepare students for high-need occupations, spending State monies appropriately, and following best practices.

Key findings

- The District is a career and technical education district that offers CTE courses to high school students within its boundaries.
- The District is responsible for preparing students for high-need occupations and collecting key student outcome data to assess program effectiveness, but it was not collecting all the required data.
- Absent this key data, the District cannot demonstrate that the \$2.1 million (FY 2019) it spent on its programs was effective.
- The District accumulated \$2.93 million in its unspent fund balance by the end of FY 2020 but did not have a policy regarding the purpose of this fund balance or the amount it should maintain.
- Best practices recommend that the District establish an unspent fund balance policy to help ensure public transparency and accountability.
- This unspent fund balance could be used to meet students' equipment needs that some member districts identified.

Key recommendations

The District should:

- Collect complete and reliable postgraduation employment and industry certification data for all its CTE students and analyze this data to evaluate how effectively its programs are preparing students for high-need occupations.
- Accurately report this data to the Arizona Department of Education when required.
- Follow best practices to develop and implement a formal policy for the level of fund balance it will maintain and for what purpose, and work with its member districts to determine if this balance could be used to purchase needed equipment.