

IX.B

Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

To Be Proposed:
October 4, 2023

Resolved, that the State Board of Education adopts the Annual Audit Plan for the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this fourth day of October Two Thousand Twenty-three.

Signed: _____
Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary
State Board of Education

**Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Donald F. Harris Jr., Chairperson
State Board of Education Finance, Audit and Budget Committee

DATE: October 4, 2023

SUBJECT: Office of Internal Audit (OIA) Annual Audit Plan
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

Attached is the OIA Annual Audit Plan for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. The audit coverage is designed to provide assurances that: operations are being conducted economically and efficiently; desired program results are being achieved; and the Department is in compliance with significant laws and regulations. Attachment 1, page 9, of the Plan contains the audit areas suggested for completion during fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. The Annual Audit Plan continues to focus on the priority areas including Federal/State Single Audit, Special Projects, Charter and Magnet Schools and Educational Cost Sharing Grants. The remaining portions of the Plan contain background information.

The OIA appreciates the continued support of the Board, the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee members, the Commissioner, Department management and staff in performing our function.

Prepared by: Gloria McCree
Director of Internal Audit
Office of Internal Audit

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN

SCHEDULE OF AUDIT PROJECTS

Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

DRAFT

PREPARED BY
THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT
AUGUST 2023

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ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Internal Audit (OIA), within the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), reports directly to the State Board of Education (Board) through the Board's Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee (Committee). The Director of the OIA reports administratively to the Commissioner of Education (Commissioner). In addition to the Director (Vacant), two Associate Accounts Examiners, one Accounts Examiner (Vacant) and an Administrative Assistant (Vacant) staff the office.

The 2023-2024 Plan is based on the available work hours of the Director, two Associate Accounts Examiners and the Accounts Examiner. The Department is working on filling the Director, Accounts Examiner and Administrative Assistant positions. Given the small size of OIA, any staff reduction has a significant impact on the Annual Audit Plan (Plan). OIA will focus on the audit areas impacted by statutes and will continuously prioritize its work so that any important areas, which are not impacted by statutes, may be audited. OIA will also coordinate audit activities with the Auditors of Public Accounts (APA) and with external Certified Public Accountants (CPAs). This will ensure adequate audit coverage to the more important or risky areas within CSDE and will limit or eliminate duplicative work.

AUDIT POLICY

THE CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING
AUDIT POLICY ON MAY 7, 2008:

It is the policy of the State Board of Education to maintain an Office of Internal Audit that is effective, independent, and objective. Such office will be appropriately resourced and adequately staffed with highly competent individuals, to assist the State Board of Education through its Finance, Audit and Budget Committee, and the State Department of Education's management in the effective discharge of their fiduciary and administrative responsibilities.

INTERNAL AUDIT MISSION, RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS

The Board adopted the following mission statement for OIA:

The mission of the Office of Internal Audit is to assist the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education's management in identifying, avoiding and, when necessary, mitigating risks.

In support of this mission statement, OIA audits all aspects of CSDE's multi-billion-dollar operation and the Office of Early Childhood (OEC); specifically, OIA:

- reviews and evaluates the soundness, adequacy and application of accounting, financial and operating controls and procedures, and the cost effectiveness of such controls;
- determines the extent of compliance with established statutes, regulations, policies, plans and procedures;
- audits accounts and financial transactions, including performing forensic analyses;
- ascertains the extent to which assets were properly accounted for and safeguarded from losses of all kinds;
- determines the reliability of management data developed within the organization and by relevant outside agencies;
- evaluates the quality and completeness with which management performed assigned responsibilities;
- recommends improvements in the operations and the use of resources;
- assesses the adequacy and effectiveness and security of information processing systems; and
- coordinates work with external CPA firms and the APA to provide assurance to the Board, departmental managers, and state and federal regulators that resources are being used efficiently, effectively and in compliance with applicable statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures.

ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the previously noted responsibilities and functions, the Committee established the following procedure concerning the Plan:

The Manager shall, prepare and submit to the Board's Finance, Audit and Budget Committee an Annual Audit Plan for the next fiscal year. Upon approval of the Plan by the Committee and the Board, a copy of said Plan shall be furnished to the Department's management.

To fulfill the responsibilities and functions assigned to OIA by the Board, it is essential that audit resources be applied, at planned intervals, to key functions of CSDE that have been identified as critical for an effective and efficient operation. It is also important that the Plan allow for the flexibility needed to address issues that were not evident during this planning phase. The Plan may be adjusted if risks are identified that must be addressed or concerns are expressed by the Board, Committee, management, or other parties during the fiscal year. By this approach, the Board, the Committee, the Commissioner, and CSDE management have input into and receive assurance that critical organizational issues are being reviewed. Any significant changes to the Plan will be discussed with the Committee prior to the performance of audit work.

This document identifies projects that are required by statute, experience, and a general understanding of the needs of the Department. It was prepared in consultation with the Commissioner and CSDE management. Also, the Plan was developed giving recognition to audit activity performed by Federal, State and outside CPAs and the APA and is designed to avoid duplication of effort and ensure adequate coverage of areas of risk.

The Plan continues to focus on examinations of the financial records and reports of entities outside the CSDE, primarily local school districts that receive grant payments from CSDE. The grant related audits are performed because of statutory requirements. These audits are performed by OIA staff or by external CPA firms. Audits performed by external CPA firms are reviewed by OIA and appropriate steps are performed by OIA to follow up on audit activity as deemed necessary. Additionally, OIA may request external CPA firms to conduct audits in which case OIA may prepare the specific steps of the audit program, monitor the status of the audit work, review the CPA's reports, and follow up on areas of concern.

The key areas of audit activity during fiscal year 2023-2024 are discussed on the following pages. The number of staff days required by area is detailed in Attachment 1.

ANNUAL AUDIT ACTIVITY

STATUTORILY MANDATED AND HIGH PRIORITY AUDIT ACTIVITY

Audit activity will be continuously prioritized with any statutorily mandated and high priority activity being given attention.

FEDERAL AND STATE SINGLE AUDIT

Audit issues associated with grantee performance as identified through the Federal and State Single Audit process are reviewed and resolved. This audit activity occurs throughout the year and is particularly important given CSDE must maintain full compliance with the Federal Single Audit requirements to avoid sanctions or discontinuance of federal awards. OIA spends considerable time during a given year completing work associated with the Federal and State Single Audits for CSDE and on behalf of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC).

Federal Single Audit

As a pass-through entity for federal awards, CSDE has defined responsibilities under 2 CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance). Our responsibilities include advising CSDE and OEC program management and grantees of federal awards of the requirements under the Uniform Guidance. OIA must inform the grantees of their responsibility to have audits performed in accordance with the Uniform Guidance. Most audit reports are due from the external CPA firms by December 31. Once the reports are received, OIA will review them for compliance with Uniform Guidance provisions. OIA will also ensure resolution of audit findings or questioned costs through the issuance of management decisions as deemed necessary.

State Single Audit

The State Office of Policy and Management (OPM) is the cognizant agency for municipalities and non-profit organizations under the State Single Audit Act. OPM has assigned to CSDE the cognizant agency responsibilities for regional school districts, regional educational service centers and charter schools. OIA performs certain monitoring and advisory activities to meet CSDE's cognizant agency responsibilities over these entities. In addition, OIA has the responsibility to address audit findings involving state financial assistance provided by CSDE and OEC to municipalities, non-profits and the entities that are contained in reports issued under the State Single Audit Act. These findings include such issues as questioned costs, program compliance, and internal control weaknesses.

OIA, in cooperation with CSDE and OEC program management, develops program compliance supplements to be included in the State's Compliance Supplement per the State of Connecticut Single Audit Act.

EDUCATION COST SHARING (ECS) GRANT

C.G.S. Sections 10-261a through 10-262 provide for education equalization aid to cities and towns. The audit objective for the Education Cost Sharing Grant (ECS) is to verify the ECS calculation, coordinate, and resolve issues involving CPA audits of Education Financial System (EFS) Data, Public School Information System (PSIS) Data and related forms that are based upon an agreed-upon procedures package developed and issued by OIA. Audit effort in this area is expended on an ongoing basis throughout the year and is relied upon by the APA in fulfilling their role under C.G.S. 10-260a. This grant program amounted to over \$2.1 billion in 2022-2023. The complexity of the grant calculation, the amount of money involved and the focused public attention on this grant warrant priority attention. Resolution of issues will result in a revised ECS calculation for 2022-2023 that will be audited in the Spring of 2024.

The audit of the 2023-2024 Fixed (preliminary) ECS Entitlements will be completed in October 2023. The Plan includes time for OIA to coordinate and resolve issues identified by outside CPA firms concerning agreed-upon procedures audits of Education Financial System Data and PSIS Data. These reports are the source documents for the ECS grants.

CHARTER AND MAGNET SCHOOLS

Work is performed to enhance financial accountability over charter and magnet schools and to recommend improvements to their internal controls.

During fiscal year 2023-2024, OIA will provide the Turnaround Office with financial analysis, advice, and audit services as necessary. This will include attending site visits for charter renewals, the objective of which is to review school fundamentals and evaluate the financial viability and management controls over financial matters. Currently eight site visits are scheduled for the fiscal year 2023-2024.

In addition, when requested by the Turnaround Office, OIA will review charter management organization contracts to provide feedback in general business practices, enhancements to internal control and financial accountability.

Legislation also requires an audit of one randomly selected state charter and one regional educational service center operated magnet school by a CPA firm selected by the

Commissioner. OIA will work with the Turnaround Office and the Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships to recommend potential CPA firms and ensure these audits are conducted. Lastly, OIA will work with these offices to update financial reporting requirements to meet statutory requirements and improve program accountability.

GRANT FORMS REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The objective of the forms review and analysis is to ensure accuracy of grant calculations for existing and new grant calculation forms. New and revised grant forms are forwarded on a regular schedule each year to OIA from the Bureau of Fiscal Services. OIA will analyze and review legislative changes for impacts on grant forms throughout the year. OIA will evaluate these grant forms for compliance with statutory authority, clarity in wording, and accuracy of the formula for grant calculation.

APA LIAISON ACTIVITY, ADMINISTRATION AND SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

This project area includes liaison activity with the APA, administration, and system maintenance.

CONSULTANT SUPPORT/ON-SITE MONITORING

Federal Titles I, II, III and 21st Century Community grant on-site monitoring reviews will be conducted on selected Local Education Agencies (LEA). As requested by CSDE program managers, OIA will support these activities by reviewing the financial aspects of the grant, which will allow the program managers to focus on the programmatic aspects of their reviews. This work is in addition to desk reviews that will be performed.

OTHER AUDIT ACTIVITY

The following audit areas are not required by statute but are still very important and warrant attention due to the risk associated with failing to review these areas. After ensuring that the statutorily mandated and high priority work is being completed, OIA will address the following areas based on available hours and on an assessment of risk.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

OIA performs special projects in response to specific concerns communicated by the Committee, Commissioner, CSDE and OEC management, various superintendents, and other parties, including whistleblowers. Over the last few years, OIA has received several requests for this type of work, most of which was not known during the planning cycle.

OIA has spent considerable time in investigating and conducting these reviews due to the complexity and the problems associated with the processes audited.

MISCELLANEOUS AUDIT REVIEWS AND ACTIVITY

This audit category includes but is not limited to the following:

- Responding to LEA, CPA, and federal auditor questions
- Acting as liaison with CPA firms
- Providing financial and operational guidance as needed
- Preparing agreed upon procedures and provision of data to CPAs conducting Magnet School Transportation audits and other audit activity
- Completing Open Choice Transportation reviews

ATTACHMENT 1
 AUDIT DESCRIPTION
 FY 2023-2024

	Budgeted Staff Days	Project Summary (page)
Federal and State Single Audit Issues	160	5
Education Cost Sharing Grants	80	6
Charter Schools/Magnet Schools	100	6
Grant Forms Review and Analysis	40	7
APA Liaison Activity, Administration and System Maintenance	70	7
Consultant Support/On-site Monitoring Reviews	90	7
Special Projects	155	7
Miscellaneous Audit Reviews and Activity	<u>82</u>	8
Total	777	