



Arizona Department of Education

The Audit Unit
1535 W. Jefferson St., Bin 19
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
602-364-4061

Average Daily Membership Audit Report Crane Elementary School District Fiscal Years 2015, 2016 and 2017

Report Number—19-06
August 23, 2018



**CONTACTING
THE AUDIT UNIT**

Melissa U. Muñoz, Audit Manager

Phone: (602) 542-8932

Email: Melissa.Munoz@azed.gov

Fax: (602) 364-2334

Mail: 1535 W. Jefferson St., Bin 19
Phoenix, AZ 85007-3209

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Arizona Department of Education—The Audit Unit
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State of Arizona
Department of Education



August 23, 2018

Laurie Doering, Superintendent
Crane Elementary School District
4250 W. 16th Street
Yuma, AZ 85364

Dear Superintendent Doering,

The Arizona Department of Education Audit Unit has conducted an audit of the Crane Elementary School District (District) Average Daily Membership (ADM) for Fiscal Years 2015, 2016 and 2017. The purpose of the audit was to address whether the District properly reported student enrollment, and to determine if it received the correct amount of Basic State Aid.

Auditors determined that the District failed to properly maintain some required documentation in student cumulative files. Auditors also tested instructional hours, enrollment data, SPED data, limiting and AOI data but found no material findings.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by the District's administration during the course of the audit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Melissa Moreno".

Melissa Moreno,
Chief Auditor

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Audit Unit has conducted an Average Daily Membership (ADM) audit of the Crane Elementary School District (District) pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) § 15-239. This audit focused on whether the District properly reported enrollment data to ADE and received the correct amount of Basic State Aid for Fiscal Years (FY) 2015 through 2017.

Average Daily Membership audits of district and charter holder funding—Pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-239, ADE may conduct ADM audits, which help ensure the appropriate distribution of Basic State Aid provided annually to school districts and charter schools. School districts and charter schools receive Basic State Aid based on several factors related to student enrollment and attendance. To receive funding, school districts and charter schools report enrollment and attendance data to ADE. ADE processes that data, determines payment amounts according to the relevant statutory funding formulas and distributes payments to schools up to twelve times each year.

The ADM audit process determines whether payments were correct or if an adjustment is needed. The audit process compares the school district's or charter school's information reported to ADE's student data system to information found on the original records kept at the school. If auditors find that the school district's or charter school's reported information does not match the original documentation, the audit will calculate and report the funding adjustment needed to the school district's or charter school's Basic State Aid. These funding adjustments can be positive or negative, depending upon the audit findings. The audit findings are written and compiled into a report that is then issued to the audited entity.

Superintendent's legal notice links the audit and appeals processes—In addition to the report, the audited entity receives The Notice of Audit Findings and Required Reimbursement (Notice) that details the audit findings and determination of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) regarding adjustments to be made to the school district or charter school pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-915. The audited entity may appeal the Superintendent's decision in the Notice.

Opportunity to appeal the audit—A.R.S. § 41-1092.03 provides the audited school district or charter school that disagrees with the Superintendent's decision in the Notice with the opportunity to file a formal appeal within thirty (30) days after the report was issued. If an appeal is filed, the school district or charter school and ADE may reach agreement in an informal settlement conference. If an agreement is not reached at the informal settlement conference, the appeal will be adjudicated by the Office of Administrative Hearings.

Funding adjustment process and timeframes—When the Notice is finally settled or adjudicated, if ADE has determined that a school district or charter school received an incorrect amount of Basic State Aid, A.R.S. § 15-915 directs that corrections to schools' funding be made in the current budget year. In case of hardship, schools may request that the Superintendent allow a correction to be made partly in the current budget year and partly in the following budget year.

In addition, ADE will adjust the District's budget capacity if required. ADE School Finance Memorandum 13-011 summarizes the budget capacity adjustment authorized by statute:

A.R.S. §15-915, as amended by Laws 2014, Chapter 357, Section 3, requires the superintendent of public instruction, when it is determined that state aid or budget limits have been calculated in error, within the prior 3 years, to make corrections to budget limits and state aid in the current year. (Hardship application may be approved by the superintendent). Effective for audits initiated during FY2015 and continuing in subsequent years, corrections for audit findings to both budget capacity and state aid (when applicable) will be made.

District information—The District, located in Yuma, Arizona, had 8 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and a public district school of choice during the fiscal years audited. Table 1 presents the District’s unaudited student, staffing and financial information for FY2015, FY2016 and FY2017.

Table 1

**Crane Elementary School District
Total Students, Revenues and Expenditures
FY2015, FY2016 and FY2017
(Unaudited)**

	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
Students Enrolled	6,371	6,395	6,318
Number of Teachers	290	305	296
Revenue			
Local	\$ 6,043,779	\$ 6,297,768	\$ 6,297,955
County	\$ 1,124,132	\$ 1,072,273	\$ 1,048,866
State	\$ 26,791,571	\$ 29,334,328	\$ 28,824,946
Federal	\$ 6,909,745	\$ 7,549,084	\$ 8,423,719
Total Revenues	<u>\$ 40,869,227</u>	<u>\$ 44,253,453</u>	<u>\$ 44,595,487</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 40,931,436</u>	<u>\$ 43,814,496</u>	<u>\$ 43,755,254</u>

Source: Annual Report of the Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction for FY2015, FY2016 and FY2017.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The audit focused on whether the District accurately reported its data to ADE and received the correct amount of Basic State Aid in accordance with statutes, the Uniform System of Financial Records (USFR) and its own policies and procedures for FY2015, FY2016 and FY2017.

To conduct this audit, auditors used a variety of methods, including examining District and ADE records to review 2,058 of 20,449 students over the three fiscal years audited. Auditors also reviewed state statutes and District policies and procedures, and interviewed District management and staff. Specifically:

- **Enrollment data** – Auditors reviewed student schedules, enrollment dates, and attendance data to determine if the enrollment data reported to ADE was correct. Auditors compared the entry and exit dates to determine if an adjustment was necessary. Auditors also reviewed absences to ensure that they were reported correctly, and made adjustments if they were needed.
- **Residency documentation** – Auditors reviewed residency documentation to ensure that they maintained required supporting residency documentation. Auditors identified files that did not contain all the residency documentation that was required to be kept in them by statute and ADE guidelines.
- **AOI data** – Auditors compared the Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) data that was reported to ADE to the AOI data from the District. Auditors reviewed instructional time reported as well as the full or part time status that was reported for each student. Auditors identified no material discrepancies.
- **Instructional hours** – Auditors reviewed the bell schedules and calendars for the District for FY2015, FY2016 and FY2017. The total instructional hours offered for each grade met the minimum required by statute for each of the three fiscal years audited. No findings were identified for this area.
- **SPED data** – Auditors determined whether an adjusted student had also been funded for a special education (SPED) category. No findings were identified for this area.
- **Limiting**—Auditors reviewed the total ADM for each enrolled student to ensure that they were appropriately limited by ADE’s system. No findings were identified for this area.

The Audit Unit expresses its appreciation to the District’s administration and staff members for their cooperation and assistance during the course of the audit.

FINDING 1: THE DISTRICT DID NOT PROPERLY MAINTAIN SOME STUDENT RECORDS AS REQUIRED BY STATUTE AND GUIDELINE

Auditors determined that the District failed to properly maintain residency documentation for some students as required by statute and ADE guidelines. The District did not properly maintain required documentation in some of its student cumulative files. In the future, the District should properly maintain these documents to ensure compliance with statute and ADE guidelines.

The District did not properly maintain student file documentation

Auditors determined that the District failed to maintain residency documentation for some students as required by statute and ADE guidelines. According to A.R.S. § 15-802 and the ADE Arizona Residency Guideline, school districts and charter schools are required to maintain verifiable documentation of Arizona residency in the student’s cumulative file. This documentation must be provided each time a student enrolls in a school district or charter school, and reaffirmed during the annual registration process. The ADE Arizona Residency Guideline identifies an approved list of documentation options a parent or legal guardian may provide to the school district or charter school to meet these requirements.

The District did not maintain the proper documentation required by statute and ADE’s residency guideline. Of the 120 students sampled, 52 of the student files did not have the proper residency documentation obtained at the time of enrollment or reaffirmed during the annual registration process as the ADE Arizona Residency Guideline requires. In addition, six students did not have a document from the approved list provided on the ADE Arizona Residency Documentation Form. Table 2 lists the student file documentation maintained by the District for FY2015, FY2016 and FY2017.

Table 2

**Crane Elementary School District
Residency Documentation
FY2015, FY2016 and FY2017**

	Total Sampled	Missing Residency Documentation	Unapproved Documentation
FY2015	40	17	2
FY2016	40	14	3
FY2017	40	21	1
Total	<u>120</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>6</u>

Source: Auditor analysis of District records for FY2015, FY2016 and FY2017.

In the future, the District must ensure that it complies with statute by collecting and maintaining in each student's cumulative file copies of verifiable residency and documentation as required by law.

Recommendation:

1. The District must comply with statute and collect and maintain in each student's cumulative file copies of verifiable residency documentation as required by law.