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Department of Education
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Penns Grove-Carneys Point Regional School District

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New Jersey K to 12 Education

Collaborative Monitoring Report
May 2024

District: Penns Grove-Carneys Point Regional School District
County: Salem
Dates Monitored: February 20, 21, 22 and 23, 2024
Case Number: CM-06-24

Funding Sources:

Program	Funding Award
Title I, Part A	1,113,495
Title I SIA	48,975
Title II, Part A	116,637
Title III	73,701
Title III Immigrant	0
Title IV, Part A	75,725
IDEA Part B, Basic and Preschool	976,726
ARP ESSER (includes all subgrants)	9,017,223
Perkins V	0
Total Funds	11,422,482

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Background

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other Federal education laws require local education agencies (LEAs - school districts and charter schools) to provide programs and services to schools within their local jurisdiction. The provision of these programs and services is based on the pertinent authorizing statutes specified in each of the Federal education laws.

The laws further require that state education agencies, in this case, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) to monitor the implementation and execution of Federal programs by the subrecipients. The monitors thereby determine whether the funds are being properly used by the district for their intended purposes and achieving the overall objectives of the funding initiatives.

Introduction

The NJDOE visited the Penns Grove-Carneys Point Regional School District (PGCP or district) virtually, except where noted, to monitor the district's use of Federal funds. The NJDOE also examined related program plans, as applicable, to determine whether the district's programs are meeting the intended purposes and objectives, as specified in the current year's applications and authorizing statutes.

The goal of the monitoring is to determine whether the funds were spent in accordance with the requirements of each program, Federal and state laws, and applicable regulations. The monitoring of PGCP included staff interviews, as well as the review of documents and records related to the requirements of these programs:

- Title I, Part A (Title I);
- Title I SIA;
- Title II, Part A (Title II-A);
- Title III, Part A (Title III);
- Title IV, Part A (Title IV-A);
- IDEA Part B - Basic and Preschool; and
- American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER and applicable subgrants.

The scope of work performed included the review of records and documentation which included:

- accounting records
- annual audits
- board of education (board) meeting minutes
- grant applications program plans and needs assessments
- grant awards
- payroll records

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- purchase orders

The scope of work included interviews with appropriate district staff regarding the administration of the aforementioned programs/grants. In addition, a sampling of computing devices and equipment purchased with Federal funds was selected and physically examined without exception.

The grants and programs reviewed included Title I, Title I SIA, Title II-A, Title III, Title IV-A, IDEA Basic and IDEA Preschool from July 1, 2023 through January 12, 2024. In addition, ARP ESSER and all applicable subgrants were reviewed from commencement of the related project periods through January 12, 2024. A sampling of purchase orders and/or salaries and wages was selected from each program and reviewed for examination.

General Overview of Uses of Federal Funds

Title I, Part A Projects

The purpose of the Title I is to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps.

PGCP is using its FY 2024 Title I funds to implement schoolwide programs in its Title I funded schools. Title I, Part A funds are used to pay the salaries and benefits of basic skills teachers to supplement the instruction of low-performing students, instructional materials and supplies, extended learning programs, professional development, parent and family engagement activities, and consultation services to support the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS).

Title I SIA Projects

The School Improvement Award (SIA) is allocated to districts with schools identified as needing comprehensive support and improvement (CSI/CII), targeted support and improvement (TSI), or additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI). SIA exclusively supports evidence-based practices, as defined by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which demonstrate a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes, as reflected in studies with strong, moderate, or promising evidence of effectiveness.

PGCP receives SIA funds for two schools designated as CSI based on indicators outlined in the NJDOE's ESSA Plan. These funds are used for instructional resources to support evidence-based interventions in English Language Arts and Mathematics, including Achieve 3000, Read 180, Edmentum Online for Math, and Lexia Core5.

Title II-A Projects

The purpose of Title II-A is to:

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1. increase student achievement consistent with the challenging State academic standards;
2. improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals and other school leaders;
3. increase the number of teachers, principals and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and
4. provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals and other school leaders.

PGCP uses their Title II-A funds to provide in-service training for school personnel and promote high-quality instruction and instructional leadership. Programs to teach children with disabilities and English learners are implemented with Title II-A funding as well.

Title III Projects

The purposes of the Title III, Part A and Title III, Immigrant program include the following:

1. help ensure that multilingual learners (MLs), including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency and develop high levels of academic achievement in English;
2. assist all English learners, including immigrant children and youth, to achieve high levels in academic subjects so that all MLs can meet the same challenging, State academic standards that all children are expected to meet;
3. assist teachers (including preschool teachers), principals and other school leaders, State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools in establishing, implementing, and sustaining effective language instruction educational programs designed to assist in teaching MLs, including immigrant children and youth;
4. assist teachers (including preschool teachers), principals and other school leaders, State educational agencies, and local educational agencies to develop and enhance their capacity to provide effective instructional programs designed to prepare MLs, including immigrant children and youth, to enter all English instructional settings; and
5. promote parental, family, and community participation in language instruction educational programs for the parents, families, and communities of MLs.

Note: The term multilingual learner is synonymous with “English learner” or “English language learner.” Sources which are cited from the United States Department of Education may still reference the use of the term English learner or EL. The NJDOE recognizes that multilingual learners may enter New Jersey’s schools with a level of proficiency in a world language other than English. The NJDOE will use “Multilingual Learner” and “ML,” respectively, to shift to asset-based language and honor a student’s primary language.

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In FY 2024, the district used its Title III funds for the following:

1. enhancing effective language instruction educational programs;
2. salaries for bilingual aides to support student learning;
3. professional development;
4. an ESL/Bilingual resource team to support parent meetings;
5. materials;
6. supplies; and
7. technology.

Title III Immigrant Projects

The purposes of the Title III Immigrant program include:

1. family literacy, parent and family outreach, and training activities designed to assist parents and families to become active participants in the education of their children;
2. recruitment of, and support for, personnel, including teachers and paraprofessionals who have been specifically trained, or are being trained, to provide services to immigrant children and youth;
3. provision of tutorials, mentoring, and academic or career counseling for immigrant children and youth;
4. identification, development, and acquisition of curricular materials, educational software, and technologies to be used in the program carried out with awarded funds;
5. basic instructional services that are directly attributable to the presence of immigrant children and youth in the local educational agency involved, including the payment of costs of providing additional classroom supplies, costs of transportation, or such other costs as are directly attributable to such additional basic instructional services;
6. other instructional services that are designed to assist immigrant children and youth to achieve in elementary schools and secondary schools in the United States, such as programs of introduction to the educational system and civics education; and
7. activities, coordinated with community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, private sector entities, or other entities with expertise in working with immigrants, to assist parents and families of immigrant children and youth by offering comprehensive community services.

In FY 2024, the district did not receive a Title III, Immigrant allocation. However, the district did have Title III, Immigrant carryover funds of \$7,459 which are budgeted for instructional supplies.

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Title IV-A Projects

The purpose of Title IV-A is to improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of LEAs to:

1. provide all students with access to a well-rounded education;
2. improve school conditions for student learning; and
3. improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.

PGCP uses its Title IV-A funds primarily for accelerated learning programs and college career guidance and counseling. Programs for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) are also implemented with Title IV-A funds.

IDEA

The purpose of the IDEA grant is to provide federal entitlement funds to assist with the excess costs of providing special education and related services to students with disabilities. The FY 2024 IDEA Basic funds are being used to reduce district tuition costs for students receiving special education services in approved private schools for students with disabilities. Additional IDEA funds are being used to pay a board-certified behavioral analyst and instructional support assistants for special education students. Preschool funds are being used to purchase and upgrade classroom materials and supplies.

ARP ESSER

The purpose of ARP ESSER funding is to assist LEAs in preparing for and responding to the impact of COVID-19 on educators, students, and families. Additional uses of funds include, but are not limited to:

1. hiring new staff and avoiding layoffs; and
2. addressing learning loss through summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs.

PGCP uses its ARP ESSER funds primarily for heating, ventilation and air conditioning upgrades at multiple schools and related architectural fees; facilities plans; educational technology, such as Chromebooks and Promethean Boards, including accessories; upgrading security systems; stipends for afterschool programs; compensation for substitutes; and an outdoor learning and activity space.

ARP subgrant funds are being used for the coaching and professional development of district staff. Subgrant funds are also budgeted for stipends for summer project-based learning

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programs for students; experiential learning opportunities for students in afterschool and summer programs; and an online health wellness program.

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

The Detailed Findings and Recommendations are disaggregated into the following sections:

1. Multiple Grants Section – findings necessitating the reversal of charges for multiple grants due to the lack of adequate supporting documentation.
2. Grant Specific Programmatic and Fiscal Section – findings directly attributable to the Federal awards covered during the monitoring. The programmatic findings precede the fiscal findings unless otherwise denoted by an asterisk (*).
3. Administrative Section – crosscutting administrative findings may be found in this section.

Multiple Grants Section

There are no findings which warrant mention in this section.

Grant Specific Programmatic and Fiscal Section

Title I, Part A

Finding 1:

The district did not provide school-level Title I parent and family engagement policies for all its Title I schools. Additionally, the district did not provide evidence that parents/families are engaged in the development process. Pursuant to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), parents/families have a right to be involved in the development of the written parent and family engagement policies for the LEA and each school.

Citation(s):

ESEA §1116(a)(2) Parent and Family Engagement: Written Policy and ESEA §1116(b) Parent and Family Engagement: School Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Required Action(s):

As part of the submission of its corrective action plan (CAP) to the Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance (OFAC), the district must provide copies of each school's parent and family engagement policy and evidence of engaging parents in the development and review of the policies (e.g., meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, minutes) via the Collaborative Federal Monitoring (CFM) Homeroom Application.

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Recommended Action(s):

The district should provide technical assistance to its schools in the development of school-level parent and family engagement policies and ensure that its schools work with their stakeholder groups to develop the policies and review them annually.

Finding 2:

The district's 2023-2024 school-parent compact outlined the responsibilities of the parents and the school only. The compact did not include the roles and responsibilities of the students. The exclusion of the students' roles and responsibilities did not offer all parties an opportunity to understand their role in the shared responsibilities for student academic achievement.

Citation(s):

ESEA §1116(d) Parent and Family Engagement: Shared Responsibilities for High Student Academic Achievement

Required Action(s):

The district must include the roles and responsibilities for the school, parent, and student in the school-parent compact. The district must provide a copy of its revised school-parent compact as part of the submission of its CAP.

Finding 3:

The district did not provide documented evidence that the Parents Right-to-Know letter was distributed to parents at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year. Pursuant to ESEA legislation, all LEAs are required to notify parents at the beginning of each school year of their 'Right-to-Know' the professional qualifications of their children's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. Parents may request, and the district will provide information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including at a minimum, the following:

1. Whether the student's teacher—
 - a. has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
 - b. is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
 - c. is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher; and
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Citation(s):

ESEA §1112(e)(1)(A) Parents Right to Know: Information for Parents

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Required Action(s):

At the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, the district must develop and distribute a dated, Title I, Part A Parents Right-to-Know letter, on school letterhead, to inform parents of their right to request information about the qualifications of their children's teachers. The Parents Right-to-Know letter must meet the following requirements:

1. issued in English and other languages that represent the school community;
2. issued in an understandable format; and
3. issued in a timely manner.

The district must develop policies and procedures to ensure the Parents Right-to-Know letter is distributed annually, at the beginning of each school year. These policies and procedures must be submitted as part of the district's CAP.

Finding 4:

The district did not provide evidence that it distributed the military "opt-out" notification form for the current school year. LEAs are required to distribute this document at the beginning of the school year, so parents or adult students can make timely and informed decisions.

Citation(s):

ESEA §8528 Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students and Student Recruiting Information

Required Action(s):

The district must ensure that parents and students, as applicable, are notified of these military requirements and given the opportunity to exercise the "opt-out" option using the form located on the NJDOE's Title I, Part A webpage: [Parent and Family Engagement \(state.nj.us\)](https://parentandfamilyengagement.state.nj.us)

Finding 5:

The district's use of Title I funds totaling \$135.00 via purchase order (PO) #402740 for a student of the month award breakfast is an unallowable cost. Student awards, gifts, or incentives are not an allowable expense under Title I.

Pursuant to the Uniform Grant Guidance, charges to Federal awards must be, among other things, necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the Federal award. The use of Title I funds for this purposes is inconsistent with this Federal cost principle and therefore, is unallowable. Local funds should be utilized for expenditures of this nature.

Citation(s):

Uniform Grant Guidance, 2 C.F.R. §§200.403 Factors affecting allowability of costs and 200.405 Allocability of costs

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Required Action(s):

The district is required to provide copies of accounting records showing the reallocation of the PO identified for \$135.00 from Title I to Fund 11 or Fund 15. Since the district already claimed reimbursement for this expenditure, the district must reduce the sum of actual expenditures claimed on a subsequent reimbursement request (RR) by \$135.00 and furnish copies of the RR supporting documentation evidencing this offset. Any costs incurred for the same reasons following the CFM visit must also be reallocated. The required documents must be submitted to OFAC through the CFM Homeroom Application within thirty (30) days from the date of this report of examination (ROE).

Title I SIA

The review of the district's 2023-2024 Title I SIA programs yielded no programmatic findings. The fiscal review of these programs resulted in findings which are addressed more broadly in the Administrative Section.

Title II-A

The review of the district's 2023-2024 Title II-A programs yielded no programmatic findings. The fiscal review of these programs resulted in findings which are addressed more broadly in the Administrative Section.

Title III

The review of the district's 2023-2024 Title III programs yielded no programmatic findings. The fiscal review of these programs resulted in findings which are addressed more broadly in the Administrative Section.

Title III Immigrant

Finding 1:

In FY 2024, the district had a carryover allocation of \$7,459. The district's immigrant count was not accurately calculated based on the definition provided in NJ Standards Measurement and Resource for Teaching (NJSMART) for immigrant status. A total of three students who were erroneously included in the count of immigrant students. Specifically, one student was included in the 2021-2022 immigrant student count and two students were included in the 2023-2024 count.

Citation(s):

ESEA §3115(e) Immigrant Funds

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Required Action(s):

The district must remit a check in the amount \$69.99 for the additional Title III Immigrant allocation received for FY 2021-2022 based on its inaccurate immigrant student count. The district is required to make the check payable to the Treasurer, State of New Jersey and send it to OFAC within thirty (30) days from the date of this ROE. Additionally, the district must reduce its total Title III Immigrant budget appropriations of carryover funds by \$213.94 and submit evidence of this budgetary adjustment.

Also, as part of the CAP, the district must:

1. ensure the student information system vendor has a filter to identify students who have been born in the United States and its territories; and
2. provide training to data entry staff to properly report in NJSMART which students meet the Federal immigrant definition.

Recommended Action(s):

To ensure the quality of data submitted to report students identified as immigrant children and youth, the LEA should provide training for all program and data entry staff who support immigrant students, including training on the definition of Immigrant as defined in the NJSMART [SID handbook](#), p. 111.

In addition, the district must ensure that all expenses charged to the Immigrant account are allowable and distinct from Title III, Part A. Title III Immigrant monies adhere to the supplement, not supplant requirement.

Title IV-A

The review of the district's 2023-2024 Title IV-A programs yielded no programmatic or fiscal findings.

IDEA

The review of the district's 2023-2024 IDEA programs yielded no findings. The fiscal review of these programs resulted in findings which are addressed more broadly in the Administrative Section.

ARP ESSER and Applicable Subgrants

ARP Summer Learning

Finding 1:

The district expended ARP Evidence-Based Summer Learning and Enrichment subgrant (ARP Summer Learning) funds in the amount of \$1,724.67 for the acquisition of ten (10) Biology textbooks via PO #302355 in September 2023. The district, however, was unable to provide an

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explanation and documentation evidencing a connection between the textbooks and its summer programs.

Pursuant to the Uniform Grant Guidance, charges to Federal awards must be, among other things, necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the Federal award. The use of Title I funds for this purpose is inconsistent with this Federal cost principle and therefore, is unallowable. Local funds should be utilized for expenditures of this nature.

Citation(s):

Uniform Grant Guidance, 2 C.F.R. §§200.403 Factors affecting allowability of costs and 200.405 Allocability of costs

Required Action(s):

The district is required to provide copies of accounting records showing the reallocation of the PO identified for \$1,724.67 from the ARP Summer Learning subgrant to Fund 11 or Fund 15. In the event that the district has already claimed reimbursement for this expenditure, the district must reduce the sum of actual expenditures claimed on a subsequent RR by \$1,724.67 and furnish copies of the RR supporting documentation evidencing this offset. The required documents must be submitted to OFAC through the CFM Homeroom Application within thirty (30) days from the date of this ROE.

Finding 2:

The district appropriated ARP Summer Learning funds totaling \$27,000.00 under line item 100-100 in which no funds were previously budgeted, without filing an amendment application.

Citation(s):

EDGAR, 34 C.F.R. §76.700 Compliance with the U.S. Constitution, statutes, regulations, stated institutional policies and regulations and [ESSER I, II, and III Funding – Grant Specific Information](#)

Required Action(s):

The district must correct its accounting records for this subgrant to reflect appropriations of \$27,000 and \$0 under line items 200-100 and 100-100, respectively, in a manner consistent with its NJDOE approved budget. Alternatively, the district is required to file an American Rescue Plan Consolidated amendment application to obtain approval for the use of ARP Summer Learning funds in the previously unopened line item, 200-100, before June 14, 2024. The district must submit revised accounting records or evidence that an amendment application was filed to OFAC within thirty (30) days from the date of this ROE.

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Administrative Section

Finding 1:

The district submitted board policies and Standard Operating Procedures for examination which address certain Uniform Grant Guidance provisions. A number of the policies provided lack reference to applicable UGG citations or need to be updated (e.g., debarment and suspension) due to the revision of UGG. The board policy for conflicts of interest did not mention the disclosure of such potential conflicts in writing to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) or NJDOE in accordance with applicable USDE policy.

Copies of certain board policies and the requisite *written procedures* to implement such policies, however, were not provided for review as requested. Examples include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- determining the allowability of costs in accordance with Federal cost principles and the terms and conditions of the Federal award; and
- the mandatory disclosure of all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud (pertinent information relating to fraud follows), bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award.

Pursuant to ESEA legislation, each recipient of a grant or subgrant under ESEA must display, in a public place, the hotline contact information of the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Education (USDEOIG) so that any individual who observes, detects, or suspects improper use of taxpayer funds can easily report such improper use.

Federal guidance relating to the prevention of fraud is accessible from [USDEOIG Brochures](#); scroll past multiple tables to the Brochures, Flyers & Posters (Download Free) section. Use this link, [For K–12: Preventing Fraud and Corruption in Federal Education \(2021\)](#), to access a video training presentation.

Citation(s):

ESEA §9203 Preventing Improper Use of Taxpayer Funds; Uniform Grant Guidance, 2 C.F.R. §200.214 Suspension and debarment, 2 C.F.R. §§200.302(b)(6)-(7) Financial management and 2 C.F.R. §§200.400 – 200.476 Subpart E - Cost Principles; and §200.113 Mandatory disclosures

Required Action(s):

The district must develop, revise, adopt and implement board policies and written procedures which address the requirements of the Uniform Grant Guidance, and include relevant citations and references to current legislation, where appropriate. The district may opt to utilize a vendor for the preparation and revision of the requisite board policies and procedures.

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Finding 2:

On a few occasions, the district failed to issue a purchase order prior to goods being purchased or services being rendered (confirming order). State regulations require that a *properly executed* purchase order be issued *prior* to the purchase of goods or the rendering of services.

Citation(s):

Uniform Grant Guidance, 2 C.F.R. §200.302(b)(4) Financial management and N.J.S.A. 18A:18A(2)(v) Definitions “Purchase Order”

Required Action(s):

Purchase orders should be issued to all vendors prior to goods or services being provided.

Finding 3:

A number of purchase orders were examined during the monitoring with dollar amounts equal to or greater than \$25,000.00. Such purchase orders meet one of a number of definitions of a covered transaction in 2 C.F.R. §180.220. Before entering into covered transactions, these regulations require the district to determine whether the vendor is not debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs or activities. The covered transactions tested lacked any indication that verifications of this nature are being performed. Verifications may be accomplished by:

1. checking the System for Award Management (SAM) Exclusions maintained by the General Services Administration and available at [SAM.gov | Home](https://sam.gov);
2. collecting a certification from the entity; or
3. adding a clause or condition to the covered transaction with that entity (2 C.F.R. section 180.300).

Copies of written evidence demonstrating performance of the requisite verifications must be maintained. In addition to items 1 and 2 above, other examples of evidence include printouts of search results from SAM, imprints from an ink stamp, or Avery labels affixed to purchase orders memorializing performance of this verification.

Citation(s):

Uniform Grant Guidance, 2 C.F.R. §200.214 Suspension and debarment

Required Action(s):

The district is required to implement procedures to confirm vendors are neither debarred, nor suspended prior to entering into purchase orders or contracts equal to or in excess of \$25,000.00. In addition, the district must maintain written records evidencing performance of these verifications on file for monitoring and audit purposes.

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Finding 4:

A number of purchase order voucher packets were selected and examined during monitoring. The district was unable to provide evidence that bids were obtained for various purchase orders (POs). Examples include PO numbers 302383 and 402153. These POs exceeded the threshold necessitating bids or quotes in accordance with:

1. the New Jersey Public School Contracts Law (PSCL) and district policy; or
2. procurement standards under Uniform Grant Guidance.

When the Federal and State legislation and regulations governing procurement are in conflict, the most restrictive prevails. Federal procurement standards do not include all exemptions allowed under the PSCL, specifically, professional services.

Citation(s):

Uniform Grant Guidance, 2 C.F.R. §§200.317 - 327 Procurement Standards and N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-37(a) Award of purchases, contracts, or agreements

Required Action(s):

The district must adhere to the PSCL or applicable provisions of the Uniform Grant Guidance, whichever is most restrictive, when obtaining goods and services.

Finding 5:

The district is not submitting reimbursement requests for one or more Federal awards on a monthly basis.

Citation(s):

Uniform Grant Guidance, 2 C.F.R. §200.305 Federal Payment, [Office of Grants Management, General Federal Entitlement Grant Guidance](#) and [Policies and Procedures for Reimbursement of Federal and Other Grant Expenditures](#)

Required Action(s):

The district is required to submit reimbursement requests on a monthly basis. In addition, the district is responsible for maintaining supporting documentation for seven (7) years and for making it available to the NJDOE, the U.S. Department of Education, and/or their authorized representatives upon request.

The NJDOE thanks you for your time and cooperation during the monitoring visit and looks forward to a successful resolution of every finding and implementation of all required actions and recommendations contained in this report.

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa D. McCormick via phone at (609) 376-3608 or via email at lisa.mccormick@doe.nj.gov.