

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
AND
JEFFERSON COUNTY K-12,
A SOMERSET SCHOOL**



Sherrill F. Norman, CPA
Auditor General

Board Members and Superintendent

During the 2020-21 fiscal year, Eydie Tricquet served as Superintendent of the Jefferson County Schools from November 17, 2020, Marianne Arbulu served as Superintendent before that date, and the following individuals served as School Board Members:

	<u>District No.</u>
Gladys Roann-Watson, Vice Chair from 11-17-20	1
Sandra Saunders	2
Shirley Washington	3
Bill Brumfield, Chair through 11-16-20	4
Charles Boland, Chair from 11-17-20, Vice Chair through 11-16-20	5

Jefferson County K-12, A Somerset School, Board of Directors and Principal

In addition, during that fiscal year, Cory Oliver served as Principal of the Jefferson County K-12, A Somerset School and the following individuals served on the Board of Directors:

Todd German, Chair and Treasurer
Ana Diaz, Vice Chair
David Concepcion
Dr. Bernard Kimmel
Matthew Cox

The team leader was Stacy P. Boyd, and the audit was supervised by Maria G. Loar, CPA.

Please address inquiries regarding this report to Edward A. Waller, CPA, Audit Manager, by e-mail at tedwaller@aud.state.fl.us or by telephone at (850) 412-2887.

This report and other reports prepared by the Auditor General are available at:

FLAuditor.gov

Printed copies of our reports may be requested by contacting us at:

State of Florida Auditor General

Claude Pepper Building, Suite G74 · 111 West Madison Street · Tallahassee, FL 32399-1450 · (850) 412-2722

JEFFERSON COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD AND JEFFERSON COUNTY K-12, A SOMERSET SCHOOL

SUMMARY

This operational audit of the Jefferson County School District (District) and Jefferson County K-12, A Somerset School (Somerset School) focused on selected District and Somerset School processes and administrative activities and included a follow-up on findings noted in our report No. 2019-208. Our operational audit disclosed the following:

Finding 1: Required background screenings were not always performed for applicable instructional and noninstructional employees.

Finding 2: Contrary to State law and State Board of Education (SBE) rules, District mental health care plans and reports were not always timely and accurately submitted to the Florida Department of Education. In addition, the District did not provide evidence of the required mental health awareness personnel training.

Finding 3: District procedures did not always provide for timely reconciliations of bank account cash balances to the general ledger account balances and journal entries in the District general ledger.

Finding 4: As similarly noted in our report No. 2019-208, the District made certain untimely distributions to the Somerset School, which could hinder Somerset School's ability to timely pay employees, vendors, and others.

Finding 5: As similarly noted in our report No. 2019-208, the District needs to establish controls to ensure the accurate reporting of instructional contact hours for adult general education classes to the Florida Department of Education.

Finding 6: District tangible personal property procedures need improvement.

BACKGROUND

The Jefferson County School District (District) is part of the State system of public education under the general direction of the Florida Department of Education and is governed by State law and State Board of Education (SBE) rules. Geographic boundaries of the District correspond with those of Jefferson County. The governing body of the District is the Jefferson County District School Board (Board), which is composed of five elected members. The elected Superintendent of Schools is the Executive Officer of the Board.

The Board entered into an agreement with Somerset Academy, Inc. to conduct day-to-day operations of District schools through June 2022. Pursuant to the agreement, Somerset Academy, Inc. operates three separate charter schools: a charter elementary school, a charter middle school, and a charter high school.

The Jefferson County K-12, A Somerset School (Somerset School) is a combination of the three charter schools operated by Somerset Academy, Inc. at the Jefferson County Middle/High School location. The governing body of the Somerset School is the Somerset Academy, Inc. Board of Directors, which is

composed of five directors. During the 2020-21 fiscal year, the District sponsored the three charter schools and reported 703 unweighted full-time equivalent students for the schools.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1: Background Screenings

State law¹ and Board policies² require each person hired or contracted to serve in an instructional or noninstructional capacity who are permitted access on school grounds when students are present or who have direct contact with students to undergo a level 2 background screening³ at least once every 5 years. State law⁴ also requires personnel who are hired or contracted to fill positions in any charter school to undergo a background screening by filing a complete set of fingerprints with the district school board for the school district in which the charter school is located. Pursuant to State law, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) performs fingerprint searches associated with the background screenings and the FDLE maintains screening information in the FALCON system.

According to District personnel, the District Administrative Assistant is responsible for ensuring that the 3 noninstructional District employees and 78 instructional and 51 noninstructional employees at Somerset School undergo required background screenings at least once every 5 years. To accomplish this, the Administrative Assistant quarterly reviews the most recent screening dates in the FALCON system, identifies employees who are due to be screened, and initiates a background screening for those employees.

To determine whether the required background screenings had been timely performed for the 132 District and Somerset School employees, we requested for examination District records for 36 selected Somerset School employees and found that screenings had not been performed for 3 instructional and 2 noninstructional employees. Subsequent to our inquiry, in April 2021 background screenings were completed for the 5 employees and no unsuitable backgrounds were noted; however, as of that date, the screenings were 5 to 13 years late. In response to our inquiry, District personnel indicated that the FALCON system was not always reviewed timely to ensure that the required screenings were obtained.

Absent effective controls for monitoring required background screenings, there is an increased risk that the screenings will not be timely and individuals with unsuitable backgrounds may be allowed access to students.

Recommendation: The District should ensure that, at least once every 5 years, District and Somerset School employees obtain the required background screenings. In addition, the District should continue efforts to identify District and Somerset School employees who have not timely obtained the required background screenings, ensure the screening results are promptly evaluated, and make decisions, as necessary, based on the evaluations.

¹ Sections 1002.33(12)(g), 1012.32, 1012.465, and 1012.56(10), Florida Statutes.

² Board Policy 3.134, *Criminal Background and Employment*.

³ A level 2 background screening includes fingerprinting for Statewide criminal history records check through the FDLE and national criminal history records check through the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

⁴ Section 1012.32(2)(b), Florida Statutes.

Finding 2: Mental Health Care Services

State law⁵ requires the District to designate a school safety specialist to ensure that school personnel receive youth mental health awareness and assistance training. Pursuant to State law,⁶ the District received mental health assistance allocations totaling \$118,260 and \$123,628 for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal years, respectively, to establish or expand school-based mental health care services and related training. Beginning September 30, 2019, and annually thereafter, the District must submit to the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) a report on mental health care program outcomes and expenditures for the previous fiscal year.

SBE rules⁷ require the District to submit to the FDOE by December 1 of each year an implementation plan including the methods in which instruction will be delivered for each grade level, the professional qualifications of the instructor, and material description, and to post the plan on the District Web site. Additionally, SBE rules⁸ require the District to submit to the FDOE by July 1 of each year an annual report that verifies completion of youth mental and emotional health instruction for each grade level and includes the professional qualifications of the person delivering the instruction and a description of the materials and resources utilized to deliver the instruction. Failure to comply with SBE rule requirements may result in the imposition of sanctions in State law.⁹

Examination of Somerset School records and responses to our inquiries disclosed that the Somerset School expended the entire 2019-20 fiscal year mental health care program allocation for staff salaries, such as salaries for counselors and social workers. However, although the District timely submitted the required mental health care program report of outcomes and expenditures, no expenditures were reported for the 2019-20 fiscal year. District personnel indicated that they misunderstood that the District was required to report the expenditures and, therefore, did not obtain or report the Somerset School information.

Although we requested, neither District nor Somerset School records were provided to evidence the submission of the 2020-21 fiscal year mental health awareness and assistance instruction implementation plan or the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal year annual reports verifying the completion of youth mental and emotional health instruction. Additionally, while Somerset School personnel indicated that the 129 instructors received the required youth mental health awareness and assistance training, although we requested, neither District nor Somerset School records were provided to demonstrate that school personnel had completed the training as of June 30, 2021.

In response to our inquiries, District personnel indicated that they relied on Somerset School to provide training to school personnel and to properly complete and submit the reports and plan related to mental health care services. Absent timely and accurate mental health care plan and report submissions and documented youth mental health awareness and assistance training, the District cannot demonstrate compliance with State law and SBE rules, which may subject the District to statutory sanctions. Timely

⁵ Section 1012.584, Florida Statutes.

⁶ Section 1011.62(16), Florida Statutes.

⁷ SBE Rule 6A-1.094124(7), Florida Administrative Code.

⁸ SBE Rule 6A-1.094124(1), Florida Administrative Code.

⁹ Section 1008.32, Florida Statutes.

and accurate submitted plans and reports help the FDOE monitor mental health care strategies and results on a Statewide basis, and documented training enhances public awareness of District efforts to provide essential educational services. In addition, without the required training, a mental health services need may not be timely identified and appropriately met.

Recommendation: The District should establish procedures to require and ensure that all school personnel receive youth mental health awareness and assistance training, and that mental health plans and reports are accurately and timely submitted to FDOE.

Follow-up to Management's Response

Management's response indicates that the requirement for District mental health care plans and reports to be submitted to the Florida Department of Education and required school personnel training was met by Somerset, their Web site provides all the required information currently required, and faculty and staff are provided annual initial and updated training. However, although we requested, District records were not provided to demonstrate that the required mental health plans and reports were submitted or that personnel completed the required training. Consequently, the finding stands as presented.

Finding 3: Bank Account Reconciliations and Journal Entries

State law¹⁰ requires each school district to establish and maintain internal controls designed to, among other things, detect fraud, ensure reliability of financial records and reports, and safeguard assets. Effective internal controls require that reconciliations of bank account balances to general ledger control accounts be performed on a timely, routine basis (e.g., monthly) with reconciling items properly identified, thoroughly investigated, adequately documented, and resolved. In addition, effective internal controls ensure that journal entries are promptly recorded to accurately reflect account transactions and balances in the general ledger.

As part of our audit, we examined District documentation and accounting records and noted that bank account reconciliations were not always timely completed and journal entries were not always promptly recorded. Specifically:

- During the 2020-21 fiscal year, the District maintained three bank accounts and the Board contracted with a certified public accountant (CPA) to either prepare or review monthly bank reconciliations. However, the reconciliations for the bank account used for vendor payments were not timely completed for the months of November 2020 through March 2021 until May 2021 (i.e., 1 to 6 months after the respective month end).
- The District Administrative Assistant is responsible for timely recording journal entries in the District general ledger, which are approved by the CPA. Throughout the 2020-21 fiscal year, the District received monthly distributions of revenues totaling \$6.5 million from Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) and Workforce Development State revenues and local revenue sales tax and made monthly expenditure distributions totaling \$5.2 million to Somerset School; however, the journal entries were not recorded in the District general ledger until May 2021.

In response to our inquiries, District personnel indicated that the delayed bank account reconciliations occurred because of transitions in the Superintendent position and that they had no explanation as to

¹⁰ Section 1010.01(5), Florida Statutes.

why the CPA did not timely prepare or review the bank reconciliations or why the District Administrative Assistant did not promptly record the journal entries.

Absent effective procedures for timely preparing and reviewing bank account reconciliations and recording journal entries, there is an increased risk that any cash transaction errors or fraud that may occur will not be timely detected, general ledger financial information will be unreliable throughout the fiscal year, and the Board's ability to effectively monitor the District's financial position will be diminished.

Recommendation: The District should ensure that reconciliations of bank account balances to the general ledger account balances are timely performed on a routine basis with reconciling items promptly identified, thoroughly investigated, adequately documented, and promptly resolved. In addition, District procedures should be enhanced to ensure that journal entries are promptly recorded in the general ledger.

Finding 4: District Funding Distributions to the Charter School

The District is required, pursuant to the Board-approved agreement for the Somerset School, to distribute all FEFP funds¹¹ and any applicable capital outlay or operating millage levied by the District, such as property tax revenue, to Somerset within 5 business days of the receipt of the funds. Pursuant to that agreement, the District made distributions totaling \$6.5 million to Somerset School from July 2020 through March 2021.

As part of our audit procedures, we examined District records supporting 17 selected FEFP and 9 selected property tax payments made to Somerset School and noted 9 late payments totaling \$3.8 million. Specifically, 4 FEFP payments totaling \$782,517 were paid 4 to 9 business days late and 5 property tax payments totaling \$3.1 million were paid 19 to 37 business days late, an average of 18 business days late. In response to our inquiry, District personnel indicated that the late payments occurred mainly due to new personnel learning the process for making accurate payment amounts.

Absent timely funding distributions for the District's three charter schools, the ability of Somerset School to timely pay employees, vendors, and others for those schools could be hindered. A similar finding was noted in our report No. 2019-208.

Recommendation: The District should strengthen procedures to ensure funds are timely distributed to Somerset School.

Finding 5: Adult General Education Classes

State law¹² defines adult general education, in part, as comprehensive instructional programs designed to improve the employability of the State's workforce. The District received State funding for adult general education, and General Appropriations Act¹³ proviso language required each school district to report

¹¹ School districts receive State funding through the FEFP to serve pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade students.

¹² Section 1004.02(3), Florida Statutes.

¹³ Chapter 2020-111, Laws of Florida, Specific Appropriation 126.

enrollment for adult general education programs in accordance with FDOE instructional hours reporting procedures.¹⁴

State Board of Education (SBE) rules¹⁵ require the District to collect and maintain student enrollment and attendance information based on minimum enrollment requirements for funding and mandatory withdrawal procedures for students for non-attendance. A minimum enrollment threshold of 12 hours of attendance for each program must be met before a student can be counted for funding purposes. Instructional contact hours are reported up to and including the last date of attendance but should not include any instructional contact hours reported for any period beyond the last date of actual attendance.

According to District personnel, the District had instructional contact hours for the Fall 2020 Term that should have been reported, but the District did not maintain records to identify instructional contact hours or report those hours to the FDOE. Although we requested, District personnel could not provide an estimate of the number of unreported instructional contact hours for that term. In response to our inquiry, District personnel indicated that, due to complications from the COVID-19 pandemic and frequent turnover of adult general education instructors, the hours were not accounted for or reported.

Since adult general education funding is based, in part, on enrollment data reported to the FDOE, it is important that the District report the data. Similar findings were also noted in our report Nos. 2019-208 and 2016-169. As discussed in our report No. 2019-208, the District should have reported a net total of 1,395 instructional contact hours for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

Recommendation: The District should establish controls to ensure that instructional contact hours for adult general education classes are accurately reported to the FDOE. In addition, the District should contact the FDOE regarding the unreported instructional contact hours for the Fall 2020 Term and take appropriate actions based on FDOE input.

Finding 6: Tangible Personal Property

State law¹⁶ and Department of Financial Services (DFS) rules¹⁷ require the District to maintain adequate records of tangible personal property (TPP)¹⁸ and to ensure that a complete physical inventory of all property is taken annually. Similarly, Board policies¹⁹ require the Superintendent, or her designee, to perform an inventory of all property annually after the end of the fiscal year. Upon completion of a physical inventory, the inventory results are to be compared with the individual property record and any noted differences are to be investigated and corrected. Any property items not located must be promptly reported to the property custodian to cause a thorough investigation to be made. If the investigation determines that an item was stolen, the District is required to file a report with the appropriate law enforcement agency describing the missing item and the circumstances surrounding the disappearance.

¹⁴ The FDOE Technical Assistance Paper, *Adult General Education Instructional Hours Reporting Procedures*, Dated September 2020.

¹⁵ SBE Rule 6A-10.0381(5), Florida Administrative Code.

¹⁶ Section 274.02, Florida Statutes.

¹⁷ DFS Rules, Chapter 69I-73, Florida Administrative Code.

¹⁸ Property is defined in Section 274.02(1), Florida Statutes, as fixtures and other tangible personal property of a nonconsumable nature.

¹⁹ Board Policy 6.122, *Property Responsibility and Accountability*.

At June 30, 2020, the District reported \$279,134 in TPP (which includes furniture, fixtures, and equipment; motor vehicles; and audio visual materials and computer software). However, as of October 2021, an annual physical inventory had not been completed since January 2018. In response to our inquiries, District personnel indicated that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the District was shut down for most of the 2019-20 fiscal year and summer 2020, and the District did not perform a physical inventory. Given the District’s significant investment in TPP, it is important that the TPP be effectively safeguarded and managed. Absent the conduct of appropriate annual physical inventory procedures, the District cannot demonstrate compliance with State law and DFS rules and there is an increased risk that any loss or theft of District property will not be timely detected, reported to the appropriate parties, and reflected in District accounting records.

Recommendation: The District should enhance procedures to document that an annual physical inventory of TPP is timely performed, documented, and any differences are thoroughly investigated. After thorough investigation, District personnel should timely report any items not located to the property custodian and, as applicable, to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

PRIOR AUDIT FOLLOW-UP

The District and Somerset School had taken corrective actions for findings included in our report No. 2019-208 except as noted in Findings 4 and 5 that were Findings 5 and 2 in that report as shown in Table 1.

Findings Also Noted in Previous Audit Reports

Finding	2017-18 Fiscal Year Operational Audit Report No. 2019-208, Finding	2014-15 Fiscal Year Financial Audit Report, No. 2016-169, Finding
4	5	Not Applicable
5	2	5

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The Auditor General conducts operational audits of governmental entities to provide the Legislature, Florida’s citizens, public entity management, and other stakeholders unbiased, timely, and relevant information for use in promoting government accountability and stewardship and improving government operations.

We conducted this operational audit from March 2021 through October 2021 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

This operational audit focused on selected District and Somerset School processes and administrative activities, including, but not limited to, District information technology resources and related controls, charter school monitoring, school safety, fiscal transparency, compensation and other expenses, and other processes and administrative activities. For those areas, our audit objectives were to:

- Evaluate District and Somerset School management's performance in establishing and maintaining internal controls, including controls designed to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse, and in administering assigned responsibilities in accordance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other guidelines.
- Examine District and Somerset School internal controls designed and placed in operation to promote and encourage the achievement of management's control objectives in the categories of compliance, economic and efficient operations, reliability of records and reports, and safeguarding of assets, and identify weaknesses in those controls.
- Determine whether management had taken corrective actions for applicable findings included in our report No. 2019-208.
- Identify statutory and fiscal changes that may be recommended to the Legislature pursuant to Section 11.45(7)(h), Florida Statutes.

This audit was designed to identify, for those areas included within the scope of the audit, weaknesses in District and Somerset School management's internal controls significant to our audit objectives; instances of noncompliance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other guidelines; and instances of inefficient or ineffective operational policies, procedures, or practices. The focus of this audit was to identify problems so that they may be corrected in such a way as to improve government accountability and efficiency and the stewardship of management. Professional judgment has been used in determining significance and audit risk and in selecting the particular transactions, legal compliance matters, records, and controls considered.

As described in more detail below, for those programs, activities, and functions included within the scope of our audit, our audit work included, but was not limited to, communicating to District and Somerset School management and those charged with governance over the District and Somerset School the scope, objectives, timing, overall methodology, and reporting of our audit; obtaining an understanding of the program, activity, or function; identifying and evaluating internal controls significant to our audit objectives; exercising professional judgment in considering significance and audit risk in the design and execution of the research, interviews, tests, analyses, and other procedures included in the audit methodology; obtaining reasonable assurance of the overall sufficiency and appropriateness of the evidence gathered in support of our audit findings and conclusions; and reporting on the results of the audit as required by governing laws and auditing standards.

Our audit included transactions, as well as events and conditions, occurring during the 2020-21 fiscal year audit period, and selected District and Somerset School actions taken prior and subsequent thereto. Unless otherwise indicated in this report, these records and transactions were not selected with the intent of statistically projecting the results, although we have presented for perspective, where practicable, information concerning relevant population value or size and quantifications relative to the items selected for examination.

An audit by its nature does not include a review of all records and actions of District and Somerset School management, staff, and vendors, and as a consequence, cannot be relied upon to identify all instances of noncompliance, fraud, waste, abuse, or inefficiency.

In conducting our audit, we:

- Reviewed applicable laws, rules, Board policies, District procedures, and other guidelines, and interviewed District and Somerset School personnel to obtain an understanding of applicable processes and administrative activities.
- Reviewed Board information technology (IT) policies and District procedures to determine whether the policies and procedures addressed certain important IT control functions, such as security, systems development and maintenance, network configuration management, system backups, and disaster recovery.
- Evaluated Somerset School procedures for protecting the sensitive personal information of students, including social security numbers. Specifically, from the population of 9 employees who had access to sensitive personal student information, we examined the access privileges of those employees to evaluate the appropriateness and necessity of the access privileges based on the employee's assigned job responsibilities.
- Examined District records to determine whether the District properly calculated and withheld the administrative fee for the provision of administrative and educational services to the three charter schools from the funding for those charter schools in accordance with Section 1002.33(20)(a), and (17)(b), Florida Statutes.
- Examined the District Web site to determine whether the 2020-21 fiscal year proposed, tentative, and official budgets were prominently posted pursuant to Section 1011.035(2), Florida Statutes. In addition, we determined whether the District Web site contained the required graphical representations, for each public school within the District and for the District, of summary financial efficiency data and fiscal trend information for the previous 3 years, and a link to the Web-based fiscal transparency tool developed by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE).
- From the population of expenditures totaling \$912,028 during July 2020 through March 2021 from ad valorem tax levy proceeds, Public Education Capital Outlay funds, and other restricted capital project funds, examined District procedures to determine compliance with the restrictions imposed on the use of these resources, such as compliance with Section 1011.71(2), Florida Statutes.
- Reviewed District procedures and requested for examination District records supporting the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal year physical inventories of tangible personal property items to determine whether the annual inventories had been properly conducted.
- Examined District records to determine whether the Board had adopted appropriate school safety policies and implemented procedures to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of students and compliance with Sections 1006.07, 1006.12, 1006.13, 1011.62(15) and (16), and 1012.584, Florida Statutes.
- Examined District records to determine whether the Board had adopted appropriate mental health awareness policies and implemented procedures to promote the health, safety, and welfare of students and ensure compliance with Sections 1011.62(16) and 1012.584, Florida Statutes, and State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.094124, Florida Administrative Code.
- From the population of \$16,238 total workforce education program funds expenditures for the period July 2020 through March 2021, examined District records supporting 15 selected expenditures totaling \$14,536 to determine whether the District used the funds for authorized purposes (i.e., not used to support K-12 programs or District K-12 administrative costs).
- Requested District records for examination to determine whether the District reported the adult general education instructional contact hours in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.0381, Florida Administrative Code.
- Examined District records supporting teacher salary increase allocation payments totaling \$116,163 to 53 Somerset School teachers and the required reports submitted to the FDOE (salary distribution plan and expenditure report) to determine whether the District submitted applicable reports to the FDOE and used the funds in compliance with Section 1011.62(18), Florida Statutes.

- Examined District and Somerset records for the period July 2020 through April 2021 for 36 Somerset School employees and 1 contractor worker selected from the population of 132 employees (3 District and 129 Somerset School) and 1 contractor worker to assess whether individuals who had direct contact with students were subjected to the required fingerprinting and background screening.
- Examined Board policies, Somerset School procedures, and related records for volunteers for the audit period to determine whether the District searched prospective volunteers' names against the Dru Sjodin National Sexual Offender Public Web site maintained by the United States Department of Justice, as required by Section 943.04351, Florida Statutes.
- From the compensation payments totaling \$310,974 to 9 District employees and Board members during the period July 2020 through March 2021, examined District records supporting compensation payments totaling \$157,717 to 3 selected employees to determine the accuracy of the rate of pay.
- Determined whether non-compensation expenditures were reasonable, correctly recorded, adequately documented, for a valid District purpose, properly authorized and approved, and in compliance with applicable State laws, rules, contract terms and Board policies. Specifically, from the population of non-compensation expenditures totaling \$6.6 million during the period July 2020 through March 2021, we examined documentation supporting:
 - 8 selected payments totaling \$23,754 for general expenditures.
 - 26 expenditures totaling \$6.5 million made to Somerset School.
- For the three bank accounts, examined District records supporting the 24 monthly bank account reconciliations to the District general ledger for the period November 2020 through June 2021 to determine whether the reconciliations were timely and properly completed.
- Evaluated District procedures for recording revenues in the District accounting records and procedures for recording expenditures made for the District charter schools in the District accounting records.
- Reviewed the District's 5-year facilities work plan for the audit period and determined whether the District maintained records that supported the information reported in the plan and whether adequate procedures were in place to ensure it was properly developed and implemented.
- Communicated on an interim basis with applicable officials to ensure the timely resolution of issues involving controls and noncompliance.
- Performed various other auditing procedures, including analytical procedures, as necessary, to accomplish the objectives of the audit.
- Prepared and submitted for management response the findings and recommendations that are included in this report and which describe the matters requiring corrective actions. Management's response is included in this report under the heading **MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE**.

AUTHORITY

Section 11.45, Florida Statutes, requires that the Auditor General conduct an operational audit of each school district on a periodic basis. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 11.45, Florida Statutes, I have directed that this report be prepared to present the results of our operational audit.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sherrill F. Norman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Sherrill F. Norman, CPA
Auditor General

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE

Jefferson County School District

Eydie Tricquet, Superintendent

1490 W. Washington Street

Monticello, FL 32344

www.jeffersonschoolsdistrict.org

To Whom It May Concern:

Below are the responses from Jefferson County School District (JCSD) to the 6 Findings from the 2020-2021 Operational Audit (Please be reminded that JCSD has a limited staff (3 full time employees) to fulfill all the required duties of a school system.):

Finding 1: Required background screenings were not always performed for applicable instructional and noninstructional employees.

This finding has been corrected by setting a monthly schedule to submit background screenings and to purge list of inactive employees.

Finding 2: Contrary to State law and State Board of Education (SBE) rules, District mental health care plans and reports were not always timely and accurately submitted to the Florida Department of Education. In addition, the district did not provide evidence of the required mental health awareness personnel training.

This requirement is met by Somerset Jefferson Schools, and I have made a request for documentation including sign-in sheets and agendas. Their website provides all the information required by statute(s). Faculty and staff are provided annual initial and updated training in mental health awareness in June 2021. Please be reminded, that currently we do not have control of the school or any decision-making power.

Finding 3: District procedures did not always provide for timely reconciliations of bank account cash balances to the general ledger account balances and journal entries in the district general ledger.

This has been corrected by timely submitting the bank statements to the Financial Officer. I would also like to note at this time we are a staff of 2 with a contracted Finance Officer.

Finding 4: As similarly noted in our report No. 2019-208, the District made certain untimely distributions to the Somerset School, which could hinder Somerset School's ability to timely pay employees, vendors, and others.

Currently, we are working on making sure deposits are timely. Some delays are due to the amount of daily transfer limits of \$600,000 which cause several days of transfer to be made when the amount is larger than the minimum.

BOARD MEMBERS

District 1
Gladys Roann-Watson

District 2
Sandra Saunders

District 3
Shirley Washington

District 4
Bill Brumfield

District 5
Charles Boland

Jefferson County School District

Eydie Tricquet, Superintendent
1490 W. Washington Street
Monticello, FL 32344
www.jeffersonschooldistrict.org

Finding 5: As similarly noted in our report No. 2019-208, the District needs to establish controls to ensure the accurate reporting of instructional contact hours for adult general education classes to the Florida Department of Education.

This has been corrected by the addition of a full-time adult education coordinator who is responsible for the attendance and testing records. Each semester beginning with January 2021, JCSD has met the reporting requirements.

Finding 6: District tangible personal property procedures need improvement.

This is being corrected by working with our contracted Finance Officer.

Sincerely,



Eydie Tricquet
Superintendent
Jefferson County Schools
1490 W. Washington Street
Monticello, FL 32344

BOARD MEMBERS

District 1
Gladys Roann-Watson

District 2
Sandra Saunders

District 3
Shirley Washington

District 4
Bill Brumfield

District 5
Charles Boland