

Pelham Union Free School District
Risk Assessment Update Report
June 20, 2024



Risk Assessment Update Report

To the Board of Education and Audit Committee
Pelham Union Free School District
Pelham, New York

We have performed the annual risk assessment update of the Pelham Union Free School District (District) as required by Chapter 263 of the Laws of New York, 2005 and as per our agreement of July 1, 2023.

This engagement is in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the applicable standards contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Audit* issued by the Institute for Internal Auditors. We have also considered the guidelines promulgated by the New York State Education Department in connection with such risk assessments.

Specifically, we performed the following:

- Reviewed our understanding of the critical business processes of the District.
- Identified the key risks based on our understanding of these business processes.
- Identified the stated controls that are currently in place to address those risks.

These procedures were accomplished by interviewing District management, accounting, and other departmental personnel to determine the flow of accounting information and controls placed in operation. The scope of our engagement did not include testing the operating effectiveness of such controls.

Our procedures were not designed to express an opinion on the internal controls of the District, and we do not express such an opinion. Additionally, because of inherent limitations of any internal control, errors or fraud may occur and not be prevented or detected by internal controls. Also, projections of an evaluation of the accounting system and controls to future periods are subject to the risk that procedures may become inadequate because of changed conditions.

We would like to express our appreciation for the cooperation and assistance that we received from the District's administration and other employees during our engagement, especially the Business Office personnel.

This report is intended solely for the use and information of the Board of Education (Board), Audit Committee, and the management of the District, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Cullen & Danowski, LLP
June 20, 2024

PELHAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Introduction

June 20, 2024

Chapter 263 of the Laws of New York, 2005 requires most districts to create an internal audit function. The creation of this function requires districts to engage either a qualified audit firm or individual to make an initial risk assessment of the design of the district's internal controls; annually update this assessment; and periodically test these controls for operational effectiveness and efficiency. This report addresses the second requirement, which is an annual risk assessment update.

Internal controls are the checks and balances over the various processes or functions that comprise the operations of a district. As previously mentioned, we have identified the following key processes to be considered in the risk assessment update (Note: each one of the key processes is comprised of sub-functions.)

- Governance and planning
- Accounting and reporting
- Revenue and cash management
- Payroll and related benefits
- Purchasing and related expenditures
- Facilities and equipment
- Student services
- Student related data
- Information technology

One key element in any internal control system is the concept of **segregation of duties**. This concept ensures that one person cannot execute a transaction without at least one other individual checking his or her work. Of course, where segregation of duties is not feasible, the district can employ compensating controls.

Nevertheless, there are some important concepts that should be understood when reviewing internal controls. These concepts are:

- An internal control system is designed to provide reasonable but not absolute assurance in safeguarding the assets of the district.
- The concept of reasonable assurance recognizes that the cost of the internal control should not exceed the benefits derived.
- There are inherent limitations that should be recognized in considering the potential effectiveness of any internal control system, e.g., errors can result from misunderstanding of instructions, mistakes of judgment, carelessness, or other personal factors. More importantly, it is **collusion** that poses the greatest threat to any internal control system. If two employees collude in order to circumvent the controls set up by the district, they could perpetrate a fraud.

The initial risk assessment required the internal auditor to obtain an understanding of both the inherent and control risks associated with the various functions within the District. The risk assessment update requires the internal auditor to identify the changes in procedures, policies, personnel, and systems that may have an impact on these risks and possibly alter the initial risk assessment's level of control risk.

Control risk measures the adequacy of internal controls designed to mitigate the inherent risk within the process. In this engagement, we have assessed the control risk based upon our interview process. The testing of the controls, which is performed during the detailed testwork, could support the lowering of the prior control risk assessment associated with individual processes and sub-functions.

PELHAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Introduction (Continued)

June 20, 2024

We have organized this report into the following four sections:

The first section is a risk assessment table. In this table, we identify the processes or functions that we have reviewed. This table includes our assessment of the control risk associated with each process. There are two control risk columns to reflect the prior year risk assessment level and the current year risk assessment level based on the results of the risk assessment update as well as the detailed testwork performed for selected processes. **Since the testing of controls has not been done for all processes, it is important to note that this table should not be viewed as the final assessment of the District's control environment.** The Risk Assessment Table also includes our suggestions for processes to be tested during the coming year. However, the decision of which processes to review in detail is at the discretion of the Audit Committee.

The second section includes the current observations and recommendations based on new findings identified during this risk assessment update. These are categorized based upon the areas of our audit program similar to the prior risk assessment report and these findings have been considered in the assessment of the level of control risk.

The third section contains the current status of the observations and recommendations that are still open for areas of potential improvement in the District's internal controls or operations included in the following reports:

<i>Report Type</i>	<i>Issue Date</i>	<i>Area(s)</i>
Risk Assessment	April 10, 2023	District Wide
Detailed Testing ***	April 10, 2023	Purchasing, Payroll, and Bank Reconciliations***

*** Note: there were no recommendations in this Detailed Testing Report.

These results have been considered in the assessment of the level of control risk.

The fourth section contains the observations and recommendations included in the prior risk assessment and/or agreed-upon procedures reports that are now considered closed. The fact that these items have been implemented or resolved was considered in the assessment of the level of control risk.

Some of the recommendations may require a reassignment of duties and/or an addition to Business Office personnel. However, any enhancement of controls should be done after a careful cost-benefit analysis.

Corrective Action Plan

Commissioner of Education Regulation §170.12(e)(4) requires that a corrective action plan (CAP), approved by the Board, must be filed within 90 days of issuance with the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

The District should submit the CAP along with the respective Internal Audit Report via the NYSED portal system.

PELHAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Risk Assessment Table

June 20, 2024

(L=Low, M=Moderate, H=High)

<u>Business Process</u>	*Date of	Control Risk						Proposed
Area	Detail Testing	Prior Year			Current Year			Detail Testing
Governance and Planning								
Governance Environment	(1)		M			M		
Control Environment			M			M		
Strategic Planning		L				L		
Budget Development			M			M		
Budget Administration			M			M		
Accounting and Reporting								
Assessing Financial Condition			M			M		
Financial Accounting and Reporting			M			M		
Auditing		L				L		
Financial Oversight			M			M		
Fund Balance Management			M			M		
Revenue and Cash Management								
Real Property Tax			M			M		
State Aid			M			M		
Medicaid			M			M		
Out of District Tuition			M			M		
Use of Facilities		L				L		
Donations			M			M		
Collection & Posting of Receipts	01/28/19	L				L		
Cash Management			M			M		
Investment Management			M			M		
Petty Cash		L				L		
Bank Reconciliations	04/10/23	L				L		
Grants and Special Education		L				L		
General Processing/Monitoring	06/01/22	L				L		
Grant Application	06/01/22	L				L		
Allowable Costs	06/01/22	L				L		
Cash Management	06/01/22	L				L		
Reporting and Monitoring	06/01/22	L				L		
Compliance	06/01/22	L				L		
Payroll, HR and Related Benefits								
Payments to Employees	02/19/18	L				L		
Allocation of Expenditures	02/19/18	L				L		
Payroll Withholdings	04/10/23		M			M		
General Employee Administration			M			M		✓
Employee Benefit Administration	12/22/20	L				L		
Employee Attendance	05/05/20		M			M		
Hiring/Separation of Employees			M			M		✓

* Indicates the issuance date of a detailed testing report for that area.

(1) Cullen & Danowski, LLP reviewed written procedures in the business, human resources and special education offices with a memorandum issued on June 19, 2024.

PELHAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Risk Assessment Table (Continued)
June 20, 2024

(L=Low, M=Moderate, H=High)

<u>Business Process</u>	*Date of	Control Risk						Proposed Detail Testing
Area	Detail Testing	Prior Year			Current Year			
Purchasing and Related Expenditures								
PO System (2)	04/10/23	L			L			
Payments Outside PO System	05/05/20	L			L			
Purchasing Process	05/05/20	L			L			
Allocation of Expenditures	05/05/20	L			L			
Payment Processing	05/05/20	L			L			
Travel and Conferences			M			M		
Credit Cards		L			L			
Facilities								
Facilities Maintenance	12/14/15		M			M		
Construction Planning	12/14/15		M			M		
Construction Monitoring	12/14/15		M			M		
Construction Completion	12/14/15		M			M		
Fixed Assets								
Acquisition and Disposal	11/14/14		M			M		
Inventory	11/14/14		M			M		
School Environment								
Safety and Security			M			M		
Student Transportation								
Fleet Maintenance			M			M		
Risk Management			M			M		
Personnel Compliance			M			M		
Facilities Maintenance and Security			M			M		
Food Service								
Federal and State Reimbursement			M			M		
Sales Cycle and System			M			M		
Inventory and Purchases			M			M		
Eligibility Verification			M			M		
Extraclassroom Activity Fund								
General	01/28/19		M			M		
Cash and Cash Receipts	01/28/19		M			M		
Expenditures and Purchasing	01/28/19		M			M		
Inventories	01/28/19		M			M		
Student Related Data								
Tracking Student Attendance			M			M		
Student Performance Data			M			M		
Information System								
Governance	12/22/20		M			M		
Network Security	12/22/20		M			M		
Financial Application Security	12/22/20		M			M		
Other Application Security	12/22/20		M			M		
Disaster Recovery	03/24/17	L			L			
Financial Operations	03/24/17	L			L			

* Indicates the issuance date of a detailed testing report for that area.

(2) Review of supporting documentation for purchases.

PELHAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Risk Assessment Update Report
June 20, 2024

CURRENT OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

None noted.

STATUS OF PRIOR OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (OPEN ITEMS)

PURCHASING AND STAFF ATTENDANCE
(Recommendations from the AUP Report dated May 5, 2020)

Recommendations related to staff attendance:

1. **Use of AESOP** - We recommended the District consider how to efficiently utilize AESOP and departmental calendars to help ensure all benefit time used is ultimately recorded in nVision. This should include a reconciliation at the schools and departments prior to submission to the Personnel office so that the full complete package is provided to Personnel.

Risk Assessment Update February 2021

Due to the impact of the Covid shutdown, the expansion of AESOP has not been considered.

Risk Assessment Update January 2022 and December 2022

This had not been implemented.

Risk Assessment Update December 2023

We note that this has not been implemented due to staffing challenges. Our understanding is that as part of the administrative re-organization, this issue will be re-examined during the 2024-25 year.

2. **Use of Timepiece** - We recommended that the District consider how to utilize the functionality of Timepiece to record partial days off.

Risk Assessment Update February 2021

The implementation of Timepiece was delayed due to the impact of Covid. The District is currently starting a "beta" project to determine how best to implement.

Risk Assessment Update January 2022 and December 2022

The District is currently in the process of implementing this recommendation.

Risk Assessment Update December 2023

We note that this has not been implemented due to staffing challenges. Our understanding is that as part of the administrative re-organization, this issue will be re-examined during the 2024-25 year.

PELHAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Risk Assessment Update Report (Continued)
June 20, 2024

3. **Manual Adjustment** - We recommended that the District consider a procedure in which manual adjustments for time awarded and regular time absence recording is reviewed by a second clerk. Criteria should be set regarding the frequency and timing of these reviews.

Risk Assessment Update February 2021 and December 2022

This had not been implemented.

Risk Assessment Update December 2023

We note that this has not been implemented due to staffing challenges. Our understanding is that as part of the administrative re-organization, this issue will be re-examined during the 2024-25 year.

STATUS OF PRIOR OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (CLOSED ITEMS)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

FROM THE DETAILED TESTING REPORT DATED JUNE 1, 2022

STAC Filings - We recommend that the District establish procedures to ensure employees that are being charged to a grant are not being used in the STAC calculations for high-cost students.

Risk Assessment Update December 2022

Due to the workload and the transition within the department this recommendation has not been addressed. Our understanding is that this will be reviewed during this fiscal year.

Risk Assessment Update December 2023 (This item is now closed)

We found that the Special Education Department is aware of this requirement and has not claimed state aid on costs covered by grants.

Calculation of STAC forms - Modify the STAC worksheet used to compute salary and benefit costs by ensuring that the calculation used for Social Security costs takes into account the wage base limit (e.g. \$147,000 in 2022; \$142,800 in 2021; \$137,700 in 2020; and \$132,900 in 2019).

Risk Assessment Update December 2022

Due to workload and the transition within the department, this recommendation has not been addressed. Our understanding is that this will be reviewed this fiscal year.

PELHAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Risk Assessment Update Report (Continued)
June 20, 2024

Risk Assessment Update December 2023 (This item is now closed)

We found that the District has changed consultants related to the STAC process and has reviewed the calculations of costs included in the STAC forms.

Written Procedures - We recommend that the District develop formal written procedures for the tasks performed by the employees with duties related to Special Education and Grant administration.

Risk Assessment Update December 2022

Due to workload and the transition within the Special Education Department the recommendations related to our review of Special Education have not been addressed. Our understanding is that these will be addressed this fiscal year.

Risk Assessment Update December 2023 (This item is now closed)

As of December 2023, the Special Education Department has begun to develop written procedures and will work towards substantial progress by the 2024-25 year.

