DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Internal Audit

Grounds and Athletic Fields Operations Audit

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Date: November 11, 2026

To: Board of Trustees
Stephanie S. Elizalde, Ed.D., Superintendent

From: Robert Rubel, MBA, CPA, CIA, CISA
Chief Internal Audit Officer

Subject: Grounds and Athletic Fields Operations Audit

Executive Summary

The Dallas Independent School District (District) Office of Internal Audit (OIA) has completed the Grounds and Athletic Fields Operations Audit.

The audit evaluated the effectiveness of grounds maintenance activities, playground safety corrective actions, equipment and asset management, employee safety practices, maintenance documentation, and management oversight. The audit focused on whether operational activities are appropriately documented, identified hazards are addressed timely, and established procedures support safe and reliable maintenance services across district properties.

Overall, processes are in place to effectively manage grounds and athletic fields operations.

Background

The Grounds and Athletic Fields Department is responsible for maintaining District grounds, landscaped areas, playground grounds, athletic fields, and other assigned District properties.

These operations support the appearance, usability, safety, and general condition of District facilities. Effective maintenance practices require appropriate scheduling, documented inspections, reliable equipment, established operating procedures, hazard identification, and management oversight.

Given the Department’s District-wide responsibilities, consistent maintenance practices and effective operational risk management are important to protect students, employees, visitors, district property, and the continued availability of outdoor facilities.

Scope

The audit covered the department's operational activities during the audit period from January through July 2026. Certain other matters or transactions outside that period were reviewed to understand and verify information during the audit period.

Objective

The purpose of this audit was to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, consistency, and safety of Grounds and Athletic Fields Department operations. The audit was intended to determine whether maintenance activities are appropriately scheduled and completed, equipment and vehicles are

properly maintained, grounds and athletic fields are inspected for potential hazards, and operational risks are identified, reported, escalated and corrected in a timely manner.

Methodology

Auditors used a risk-based approach to evaluate maintenance operations, equipment controls, workplace safety, documentation, and management oversight.

Detailed procedures are noted below:

1. Grounds Maintenance Operations – To determine if activities are planned, scheduled, performed, inspected, and documented in accordance with applicable district requirements and established maintenance standards, auditors performed the following:

    - Reviewed applicable documentation such as:
        - 73 school campus visits to conduct physical inspections
        - Grounds maintenance policies and procedures.
        - Maintenance calendars and work orders.
        - Site inspection checklists.
        - Equipment inventories and maintenance logs.
        - Vehicle and equipment operating records.
        - Injury incident records.

    No observations were noted.

2. Safety, Risk Management, and Corrective Action – To determine if hazards associated with grounds maintenance, equipment operation, and other operational activities are identified, documented, escalated and corrected, auditors performed the following:

    - OIA conducted inspections at selected school campuses, playground grounds, equipment storage locations, and other assigned district properties.

    - Observed the condition of grounds, playing surfaces, storage areas, and other operational features within the audit scope.

    - Documented the location, nature, and supporting evidence for any observed condition requiring management attention.

    - Available safety documentation and selected operational areas were reviewed to determine whether safety incidents were identified, reported, and corrected in accordance with applicable procedures. We also reviewed employee safety training and safety documentation and supporting records.

    No observations were noted.

3. Equipment and Asset Management – To determine if mowers, tractors, vehicles, and other operational assets are appropriately maintained, inspected, utilized, and safeguarded, auditors performed the following:

    - Selected equipment and vehicles for physical verification and review of maintenance

records.

- Determined whether equipment was identifiable, in serviceable condition, subject to required maintenance, and supported by appropriate inspection and repair documentation.

No observations were noted.

4. Scheduling and Work Order Management – To determine if maintenance schedules, work orders, inspection records, and corrective maintenance requests provide reliable evidence of assigned work and completion, auditors performed the following:

   - A risk-based sample of maintenance requests and work orders was used to assess whether:
     - Requests were documented appropriately.
     - Work was assigned and scheduled.
     - Completion was recorded.
     - Required inspections or verification are performed.
     - Identified deficiencies are corrected.
     - Recurring problems received appropriate follow-up.

   No observations were noted.

Primary criteria used for this audit were:

1) CL (Legal) - Building, Grounds, and Maintenance Management, date issued November, 12, 2025
2) CLB (Legal) - Buildings, Grounds, and Equipment Management: Maintenance, date issued November 12, 2025
3) CM (Local) - Equipment and Supplies Management, date issued June 14, 1993
4) 2025-2026 Operations Information Guide
5) Grounds Mowing Standards, undated
6) Operation Services Safety Manual, dated 2017
7) Grounds Standard Training, dated Spring 2026

Positive Observations and Department Strengths

The Office of Internal Audit recognizes the following positive aspects of the Grounds and Athletic Fields Department's operations based on the audit procedures performed:

1. Established Operational and Safety Framework: The department has well-established maintenance procedures, maintenance schedules, work orders, equipment maintenance records, and safety documentation. These operational processes provide a framework to support grounds maintenance, equipment management, and safety oversight across district properties.

2. Robust Maintenance operation: We were able to inspect 73 campuses in conjunction with another campus inspection and obtained a large sample size. Only a small number of issues were identified. We commend the grounds maintenance operations for their quality work.

3. Collaborative nature of Fleet Services and Grounds Maintenance: Fleet Services provides

regular maintenance in the field where grounds personnel are working. Since the service interval on the mowers is every 100 hours, the down time to drop off mowers for service would be extensive. This on-site service saves considerable down time for grounds, allows them to continue working during the busy season, and should be considered best practice.

Conclusion

Overall, processes are in place to effectively manage grounds and athletic fields operations. Based on the scope of the audit and the procedures performed, no observations requiring corrective action were identified and no recommendations were made.

We would like to thank Grounds and Maintenance for their cooperation and assistance with this audit.

The audit was conducted in conformance with the Institute of Internal Auditors' *Global Internal Audit Standards.* Those standards require OIA to plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, reliable, and relevant evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives. OIA believes the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Respectfully submitted,

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