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AUDITOR GENERAL

STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

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July 21, 2010

Members of the Arizona Legislature

The Honorable Janice K. Brewer, Governor

Governing Board
Chandler Unified School District

Dr. Camille Casteel, Superintendent
Chandler Unified School District

Transmitted herewith is a report of the Auditor General, a review of Chandler Unified School District's Structured English Immersion and Compensatory Instruction budget requests. This review was prepared pursuant to and under the authority vested in the Auditor General by Arizona Revised Statutes §15-756.12.

My staff and I will be pleased to discuss or clarify items in the report.

This report will be released to the public on July 22, 2010.

Sincerely,

Debbie Davenport
Auditor General

DD:bl
Enclosure



ELL Review

Summary

Chandler USD's Structured English Immersion (SEI) and Compensatory Instruction (CI) budget requests were supported by district records.

The District spent its FY 2009 SEI monies primarily on teacher salaries and related benefits to provide English language development instruction to ELL students. In March 2009, the Arizona Department of Education monitored the District's SEI program and found it in compliance with the SEI model prescribed by the Arizona ELL Task Force.

Chandler USD spent its FY 2009 CI monies to provide before- and after-school classes for ELL students in grades 1 through 6.



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English Language Learner programs, costs, and funding

The Office of the Auditor General has conducted a review of the Chandler USD's Structured English Immersion and Compensatory Instruction budget requests pursuant to A.R.S. §15-756.12. Auditors reviewed these budget requests to determine whether district records supported them. In accordance with statute, Chandler USD was selected for review because its SEI program was monitored by the Arizona Department of Education. The District is located primarily in the City of Chandler in southeast Maricopa County, and serves students in kindergarten through 12th grade. In fiscal year 2009, Chandler USD identified 2,107 of its 35,423 students as English Language Learners.

Background

English Language Learners are students whose native language is not English and who are not currently able to perform ordinary classroom work in English. ELL students are identified through a state-adopted language proficiency test. School districts are required to administer this test to students if the primary language spoken at home is other than English, and then retest annually those students identified as ELL. School districts must then report the test results to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE).

Levels of English Language Proficiency:

Pre-emergent—Student does not understand enough language to perform in English.

Emergent—Student understands and can speak a few isolated English words.

Basic—Student may understand slower speech, and speak, read, and write simple words and phrases, but often makes mistakes.

Intermediate—Student can understand familiar topics and is somewhat fluent in English, but has difficulty with academic conversations.

Proficient—Student can read and understand texts and conversations at a normal speed, and can speak and write fluently with minor errors.

Source: Arizona Department of Education.

By reporting their numbers of ELL students, districts are eligible for additional monies for ELL programs through the State's school funding formula (known as ELL Group B Weight monies) and the federal Title III program. In addition, school districts may submit budget requests to ADE for monies to implement SEI and CI programs. SEI provides English language development during the normal school day, while CI provides English instruction outside of the normal school day in

programs such as after-school tutoring and summer school. However, if a district's Group B Weight monies are sufficient to cover the incremental costs of its SEI program, no additional SEI monies are awarded through the budget request process.

Fiscal year 2009 SEI program

FY 2009 SEI budget request provided \$1.65 million primarily for teachers—The District's fiscal year 2009 ADE-approved SEI budget request was about \$1.65 million. These monies, along with Group B Weight monies, provided for 44.4 incremental teachers, instructional materials, and teacher training costs.

Incremental costs are the costs, as defined by the ELL Task Force, that are associated with an SEI program and that are in addition to the normal costs of conducting programs for English proficient students.

SEI program in compliance with model requirements—In March 2009, ADE monitored the District's SEI program and found it to be in compliance with the ELL Task Force model. Figure 1 provides an overview of the model requirements for Arizona school districts. During the monitoring reviews, ADE determines if districts are complying with the model requirements such as providing 4 hours of English language development (ELD) instruction in appropriate groupings, implementing proper time allocations of the language development components, and ensuring required teacher qualifications.

Fiscal year 2009 SEI monies spent for purposes approved in the budget request—The District spent approximately \$1.6 million of its approved budget request on teacher salaries and benefits to provide language development instruction to ELL students through a combination of SEI classrooms and ILLPs, depending on the number of ELL students. When sufficient numbers of ELL students existed in schools and grade bands, 4 hours of ELD instruction was provided in self-contained classrooms. When ELL students were too few to be provided with self-contained SEI instruction, ILLPs were prepared for these students and they received 2 hours of ELD in small group instruction from an SEI resource teacher and 2 hours of ELD in mainstream classes. The District also spent about \$50,000 on costs related to training its teachers to implement the ELL Task Force model.

Figure 1: Structured English Immersion Model Requirements

- **English language development (ELD) components**—Students receive 4 hours of ELD instruction daily in the following instructional areas: oral English and conversation, grammar, reading, writing, and vocabulary.
- **Grouping requirements**—ELL students are placed into SEI classrooms according to ELL proficiency level in class sizes not exceeding the non-ELL average class size in the district. In addition, the following maximum class sizes apply:
 - Pre-Emergent and Emergent—23
 - Basic and Intermediate—28
- **Teacher qualifications**—All teachers in SEI classrooms must be highly qualified and have an SEI, English as a Second Language, or Bilingual endorsement. Additionally, SEI teachers at the middle school and high school level must be highly qualified in English or language arts.
- **Individual Language Learner Plans (ILLP)**—Schools with 20 or fewer ELL students within a three-grade span may choose to create ILLPs for those students. These students may be placed in classrooms with English-proficient students. The ILLPs should detail how each individual student will receive the 4 hours of ELD instruction in this setting.

Source: *Structured English Immersion Models of the Arizona English Language Learners Task Force-5/14/08* and *Arizona Department of Education Guidance on ILLP 8/2008*.

Fiscal year 2010 SEI program

Fiscal year 2010 SEI budget request is supported—Chandler USD's fiscal year 2010 SEI budget request is supported by district records. Its records adequately support the number of ELL students, proficiency levels, and average class sizes used to determine the District's SEI budget. The request was approved by ADE in February 2009 and, along with Group B Weight monies, includes salaries and benefits for 33.1 incremental teachers, teacher training costs, and instructional materials. The District's budget request indicates it will continue to provide language development through a combination of SEI classes and ILLPs.

Approved SEI Budget Fiscal Year 2010

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Costs: | |
| Incremental teacher salaries | \$1,488,408 |
| Incremental teacher benefits | 372,102 |
| Textbooks, instructional aids, and assessments | 3,248 |
| Transportation for itinerant teachers | 0 |
| Travel expenses for training—administrators | 0 |
| Travel expenses for training—teachers | 0 |
| Teacher stipends for training time outside of regular school days | 6,500 |
| Classroom substitutes | 5,098 |
| Other expenses | <u>900</u> |
| Total incremental costs | 1,876,256 |
| State and local offsets: | |
| ELL "Group B Weight" | <u>1,227,928</u> |
| Net budget request | <u><u>\$648,328</u></u> |

Fiscal year 2009 CI program

CI budget request is supported—For fiscal year 2009, Chandler USD requested and was approved by ADE for a CI budget of \$75,000 to provide extended-day classes from October through May for ELL students. Based on district projections of program participation, optimal class sizes, program schedule, and estimated hourly salaries, auditors determined that the District's budget request was supported.

The District requested monies to provide before- and after-school English language development instruction for ELL students in grades 1 through 6 at six schools. The request was to offer classes for 1 hour per day, 3 to 4 days per week for 21 weeks, between October 2008 and May 2009 and to pay 35 highly qualified teachers \$20 per hour of instruction, plus related benefits. Instruction was to focus on reading, listening, and speaking objectives using a computer-based ELD curriculum.

Fiscal year 2009 CI monies were spent for purposes requested—The District spent \$15,326 of its fiscal year 2009 CI budget offering extended-day classes for ELL students in grades 1 through 6. The monies were spent on teacher salaries and related benefits. The CI programs began in November 2008 and were offered for 15 weeks at 4 schools and 22 weeks at 1 school. District records indicate 20 teachers provided instruction to about 90 students in the program. According to district officials, less money was spent than projected because fewer students participated in the CI program than initially estimated.

Unspent CI monies remain with the District and offset future budget requests.



**Chandler Unified
School District**

A copy of the full report is available at:

www.azauditor.gov

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ELL REVIEW

July 2010