



Lewiston-Porter Central School District

IT Asset Management

S9-22-14 | March 2023

Contents

- Report Highlights 1**

- IT Asset Management 2**
 - How Should District Officials Inventory and Safeguard IT Assets? . . . 2
 - Officials Did Not Appropriately Inventory or Safeguard IT Assets . . . 3
 - What Do We Recommend? 7

- Appendix A – Response From District Officials 9**

- Appendix B – OSC Comments on the District’s Response14**

- Appendix C – Audit Methodology and Standards15**

- Appendix D – Resources and Services17**

Report Highlights

Lewiston-Porter Central School District

Audit Objective

Determine whether Lewiston-Porter Central School District (District) officials appropriately tracked, inventoried and safeguarded information technology (IT) assets acquired or in use during the audit period.

Key Findings

District officials did not appropriately track or inventory IT assets, maintain complete IT inventory records or establish adequate controls to safeguard IT assets. As a result, officials cannot assure taxpayers that money invested in IT assets has been appropriately spent or safeguarded.

We selected 72 IT assets to confirm their location and that they were inventoried, and 10 additional IT assets to confirm they were inventoried. We found 33 percent of the sampled assets were not properly accounted for. Specifically:

- Seventeen IT assets (11 Chromebooks and six Apple devices) with estimated total costs of \$5,820 based on recent purchases could not be located.
- Ten IT assets nine with a combined cost of approximately \$14,910 and one without a cost recorded) were not inventoried.

In addition, annual inventories were not conducted, new and unused IT equipment was not properly or securely stored, and officials did not adopt a comprehensive written policy for establishing and maintaining IT equipment inventory.

Key Recommendations

- Maintain complete, accurate and up-to-date inventory records.
- Perform annual and complete inventories.

District officials disagreed with certain aspects of our findings and recommendations. Appendix B includes our comments on issues raised in the District's response letter.

Background

The District serves the Towns of Lewiston and Porter in Niagara County.

An elected seven-member Board of Education (Board) is responsible for the general management of the District.

The Superintendent serves at the Board's direction and is responsible for day-to-day management.

The Director of Technology (Director) is responsible for overseeing the IT Department, including IT asset inventory management.

Quick Facts

District	
Enrollment	1,933
Staff	324
Approximate Cost of IT Assets Purchased or Leased in Our Audit Period	\$640,000

Audit Period

July 1, 2019 – March 31, 2022. We expanded our audit period through June 17, 2022 to observe inventory at the District.

IT Asset Management

School districts purchase a wide variety of IT equipment, such as interactive displays and desktop computers, as well as highly portable items, such as monitors, laptops and tablets. These assets can make up a significant portion of a district's IT asset inventory, in both value and number. School district officials are responsible for providing oversight to ensure that assets are protected from loss, inventory records are current, and assets can be easily located.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts acquired a significant number of IT assets to transition to remote and hybrid learning. This influx of new and often highly portable IT assets highlighted the importance of tracking and inventorying practices to ensure that taxpayer funds are appropriately spent and safeguarded.

How Should District Officials Inventory and Safeguard IT Assets?

A school board should adopt a comprehensive written policy that sets forth guidelines and procedures for establishing and maintaining IT asset inventory. Although some IT assets could be considered fixed assets, IT assets' portability and access to a district's network and/or confidential data poses a distinct risk of loss or misuse. Given this risk, school district officials should establish a separate, well-defined policy that includes guidance for school district officials to maintain detailed, up-to-date inventory records for all IT assets including:

- Adding new equipment to the inventory,
- Notifying the IT Department when equipment is reassigned, lost or stolen,
- Documenting and updating the inventory for equipment disposal, and
- Annually reviewing the physical inventory.

Inventory records should include a description of each item including the make, model and serial number; the name of the individual to whom the device is assigned, if applicable; the physical location of the asset; and relevant purchase or lease information including the initial cost, depreciation and acquisition date.

In addition, school district officials should verify the accuracy of IT asset inventory records through annual physical inventory counts. Devices should be periodically examined to assess their condition and to verify accurate location information in the inventory records. Maintaining complete and up-to-date IT asset inventory records also helps a school board develop and implement an effective IT equipment replacement plan. To safeguard IT assets from loss, theft or misuse, IT assets should be in a locked and secured area with environmental controls such as smoke detectors, fire alarms and extinguishers, and protection from water damage.

Officials Did Not Appropriately Inventory or Safeguard IT Assets

Although the Board-adopted Inventories and Accounting of Fixed Assets Policy¹ (Policy) requirements provide direction for officials to track and inventory assets, the Board did not adopt a comprehensive written policy specifically for IT equipment inventory.

According to the Policy, fixed assets are generally, long-term (i.e., lasting more than one year), tangible resources intended to be continuously held or used and may include equipment. Based on this definition, most IT assets would be subject to the policy guidance.

The Policy states that inventory records, where possible, will contain:

- Date of acquisition,
- Description,
- Serial or other identification number,
- Funding source,
- Vendor/manufacturer,
- Cost or value,
- Location and use,
- Asset type,
- Condition and estimated useful life,
- Replacement cost,
- Current value,
- Salvage value,
- Sale price and disposal information, and
- Responsible official.

The Policy requires certain attributes to be recorded that do not necessarily aid in tracking and inventorying IT assets but are important for other operational needs. For example, cost, acquisition date or estimated useful life do not aid in tracking an asset but are useful for determining overall cost or age of assets, which in turn, could ensure appropriate insurance coverages are maintained and assist in planning for replacement of assets reaching the end of their useful life. Although the District's accounting records have the costs, acquisition date and vendor information for IT assets, this information is not easily compiled for inclusion in the District's IT asset inventory records and cannot easily aid in planning for future IT asset investments. Therefore, the cost and age of all IT assets currently in use by the District was undetermined at the conclusion of our fieldwork.

Inventory Records – The IT Department maintains the District's IT equipment inventory with five inventory lists: a Chromebooks list, a printers list, a tablets list, an interactive displays list and a Windows computers list. We reviewed all five of these inventory lists, and although we found they contained adequate information to sufficiently track the District's IT assets, we found a significant number of assets, including newly purchased assets, were not included on any inventory record.

¹ Policy 5620, adopted on June 18, 2019

For example, in our physical test of 72 IT assets, and an additional test of 10 IT assets identified during our walk-through and inspection of the District, we identified 10 assets (nine with a total purchase price of approximately \$14,910 and one without a recorded cost) that were not included on any of the IT Department's inventory lists. Specifically:

- One laser projector costing \$11,019 and one smart TV costing \$228 were not recorded on any inventory list. The Director told us he does not track these types of IT assets because they have so few in use at the District.
- Two printers (combined costs of \$742) purchased in February 2022 and installed in June 2022 were not recorded on the Printers inventory list. The Director told us that these two printers had yet to be added to the Printers inventory list.
- One laser printer (without a recorded cost) was not recorded on any inventory list. According to the Director, the printer was not recorded in the inventory records because the device was not yet in service.
- Five computers (\$584 each) received in May 2022 were not recorded on the Windows Computers inventory list. These five computers were part of a large group of newly purchased computers from Erie One Board of Cooperative Educational Services (Erie One BOCES) we observed in a secured storage room (Figure 1). The Director told us that newly purchased assets are recorded on an Erie One BOCES purchase list and will be transferred to the District's inventory lists once they are deployed. However, given the significant number of new assets and their individual costs, they should be immediately recorded in the District's records.

Additionally, we found that none of the five inventory lists contained most of the information required by the District's Policy (Figure 2). For example, none of the five lists contained the date of acquisition, funding source, cost information, condition and estimated useful life, replacement cost, current value, salvage value or disposal information, and the Printers list did not include serial or other identification numbers.

FIGURE 1

Newly-Purchased Computers Not Yet Added to Inventory Lists



FIGURE 2: Board-Required Inventory List Attributes

Inventory List	Acquisition Date	Description	Serial or Other ID Number	Funding Source	Vendor/Manufacturer	Cost or Value	Location & Use
Chromebooks	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Interactive Displays	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Printers	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓
Tablets	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Windows Computers	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓

Inventory List	Asset Type	Condition & Estimated Useful Life	Replacement Cost	Current Value	Salvage Value	Sale Price & Disposal Info	Responsible Official
Chromebooks	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓
Interactive Displays	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓
Printers	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓
Tablets	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓
Windows Computers	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓

The Director told us he was aware of the Policy but did not think it applied to IT assets and that the IT Department’s inventory lists, along with device management systems, were sufficient to properly track IT assets. However, the Policy specifically states that inventory records for all fixed assets, which would include IT assets, should be maintained.

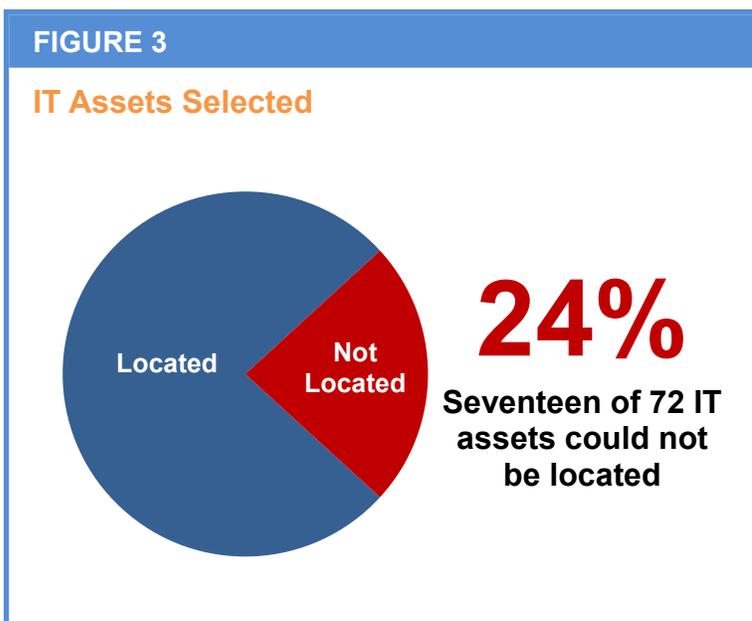
Annual Inventories – According to the Director, the IT Department staff update inventory records during annual summer IT cleaning practices of student devices and classrooms but was unable to provide supporting documentation for such practices. Had District officials added newly purchased IT assets to inventory lists when received, and conducted an annual inventory, the 10 assets in our testing should have been identified and subsequently added to the inventory records.

Safeguarding Assets – The Director could not locate 17 of the 72 assets we selected (24 percent) to physically confirm were in the District’s possession (Figure 3).

These assets included six Apple devices and 11 Chromebooks we selected as a sample from network reports.² We estimated the total costs of these assets to be approximately \$5,820 based on similar purchases made during our audit period.

The Director told us that these were older devices which could have been disposed of and should have been removed from their respective device management systems. We corroborated the Director’s assertion of the devices’ ages and found the devices’ warranty start or production dates ranged from June 2012 to August 2016 and based on those dates the device ages would have been between five and 10 years old at the time of our testing. However, there was no documentation to support that the devices were disposed and five devices had activity on the District’s network during our audit period.

Additionally, during our building walk-through and inspection of assets, we observed several dozen new and unused laptops in an unlocked storage room within the library, leaving them highly susceptible to loss, theft or misuse (Figure 4). Further, as previously noted, the Director told us that newly purchased assets are not



² See Appendix C for information on our sampling methodology.

recorded on inventory lists until they are deployed. Therefore, it is unlikely officials would be aware if any of these assets went missing.

The Director acknowledged the door should be kept locked.

The Director did not maintain detailed up-to-date inventory records, conduct adequate annual inventories, or ensure District assets were adequately safeguarded. As a result, District officials cannot be assured that IT assets are adequately accounted for and would be detected if lost, stolen, or misused. Further, complete, accurate, and up-to-date inventory records help District officials ensure that IT assets are properly insured, tracked through their life cycle and replaced as necessary. When inventory records are incomplete, and assets are not properly accounted for, District officials cannot ensure taxpayers that money invested in IT assets has been appropriately spent or safeguarded. Finally, IT system components should always be in a locked and secured area to further safeguard them from damage or loss.

What Do We Recommend?

The Board should:

1. Adopt a specific comprehensive written policy to appropriately track and inventory IT equipment. This policy should include guidance and processes for:
 - Maintaining detailed, up-to-date inventory records for all IT equipment,
 - Adding new equipment to the inventory,
 - Notifying the IT Department when equipment is reassigned, lost or stolen,
 - Documenting and updating the inventory for equipment disposal, and
 - Annually reviewing the physical inventory.
2. Require the Director to perform a physical inventory of all IT equipment, locate missing and unaccounted-for equipment and update inventory records accordingly.

The Director should:

3. Review and comply with applicable District policies.
4. Ensure District inventory records include the detail necessary to adequately track and locate an IT asset and that asset records minimally include the make, model and serial number; the name of the individual

to whom the device is assigned, if applicable; the physical location of the asset; and relevant purchase or lease information including the initial cost, depreciation and acquisition date.

5. Update inventory records to track the assets not currently in District records.
6. Develop a single, master inventory list that includes all IT assets regardless of asset type or location.
7. Perform a complete, annual physical inventory and compare the results to the inventory records. Take appropriate action to follow up on any discrepancies.
8. Ensure that District personnel keep IT asset storage areas locked and secured.

Appendix A: Response From District Officials



Lewiston-Porter Central School District

One Purpose, Your Pathway, Our Promise.

Paul J. Casseri
Superintendent of Schools

January 9, 2023

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
NYS Office of the State Comptroller
Division of Local Government & School Accountability

Dear [REDACTED],

Please find enclosed the 2022 OSC IT Audit Response. I would like to thank you for assisting the district to identify areas that need improvement and I appreciate the opportunity to be able to respond to the audit findings.

Please feel free to reach out to my office 716-286-7266 if you should have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Casseri,
Superintendent of Schools

Enclosure: 2022 OSC IT Audit Response

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Lewiston-Porter Central School District

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Paul J. Casseri
Superintendent of Schools

2022 OSC IT Audit Response

The Lewiston-Porter Central School District would like to thank the Office of the State Comptroller for helping us to identify areas that are in need of improvement. We will ensure that all of the recommendations that were put forth in this document are implemented. Several of the recommended changes were initiated prior to the audit process and are continuing to make progress.

There are several areas of this report upon which the District would like to clarify and expand. The District's greatest concern is the stated audit time frame established by the OSC was July 1, 2019 through June 17, 2022. All of the items that this report claims were not able to be located were purchased outside of this timeframe as far back as 2012. They were only discovered because they remained on our device management lists but had been removed from our inventory lists.

Inventory Records (pages 5-6)

The district maintains purchasing records as well as various methods of tracking technology resources including spreadsheets, device management systems, and database systems such as [REDACTED]. **In paragraph 4 on page 5 the auditor corroborates this as they state: "we found they contained adequate information to sufficiently track the District's IT assets..."**

Prior to the start of this audit, the district already took steps to acquire a new comprehensive asset management system that will greatly improve our record keeping as recommended by this audit report. For this reason, the district acknowledges that it will improve its inventory practices and consolidate that information into one location that would contain all the information that is stated in the board policy.

To be clear, **every item that is listed in this report has a record.** While the report cites 10 resources that it identifies as not having any inventory records, the area of improvement appears to be that the records need to be consolidated and more detailed. Consolidation of records is not the same as not having inventory records.

- The first two items referenced on page 5 were the laser projector and smart TV. The district did produce financial records for both these items. **They were also both located in the district in the exact locations where they were supposed to be installed.**
- **The three printers referenced in the report were located in the locations where they were supposed to be installed.** Again, financial information for the devices was produced for the auditor. In this instance they were newly acquired/installed devices that

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See
Note 1
Page 14

See
Note 2
Page 14



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Superintendent of Schools

were not yet added to our printer management system. We will continue to be meticulous and timely with this record keeping.

- The five computers referenced at the top of page 6 were just delivered to the district. They were scheduled to be installed over the summer. The computers were all purchased through Erie 1 BOCES. Every computer was scanned and a detailed inventory list was sent to the district prior to arrival. Since the district received this detailed inventory, it was not deemed necessary to unwrap, scan, and re-wrap the devices before deployment. **As the report states, they were kept in a secured location and every single computer could easily be accounted for using the information provided by our partners at Erie 1 BOCES.** We will however, follow the recommendations put forth by this report and add newly acquired equipment to our own inventory list as soon as received.

In response to the findings and recommendations on page 7, the district has and will continue to implement those improvements. **All of the required information that is listed in the charts was maintained** but in separate locations and on separate lists. It would be best practice to consolidate this information. As referenced earlier, the district has recently transitioned to a new asset management system that will accomplish this consolidation.

Annual Inventories (Page 7)

At the end of each summer student devices are checked even though many go home with students over the summer. Those that stay in school are securely stored in classrooms or each school's respective library. In this way, we are able to identify any missing or damaged mobile devices.

Throughout the summer, each computer and their components (printers, projectors, displays, etc.) are individually addressed by an IT professional for software loading purposes or general hookup. During this process, computer names, locations, and physical condition are assessed.

Memos are sent to staff and, in some cases, parents that outline procedures in relation to our summer process. There are also some records maintained in our managed service portal related to these summer activities. The district has already implemented and will maintain clearer and more deliberate records about the annual inventory process.

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See
Note 3
Page 14



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Superintendent of Schools

Safeguarding Assets (p. 8)

This report identifies 17 devices that “could not [be] locate[d].” For the record, these devices were not selected randomly; they were selected “judgmentally” by the listed last known check-in time of the device. This means that **this audit is disproportionately reporting on total devices. It is important to note these devices that fell outside of the OSC’s established audit period. The fact is that 100% of randomly selected devices selected from within the audit period were located and accounted for.**

The 17 devices referenced here were purchased as far back as 2012. All of these devices are beyond functional use. They include iPads that can no longer be updated to current security or operating system requirements. The referenced Chromebooks are also aged to the point where they could not receive required security and operating system updates. **We believe the dollar amount that is assigned to these devices is also misleading. These devices are worth \$0 to any school district as they are old and incompatible with current requirements for software or security.**

While these items were listed in our device management systems, we can say with a high degree of confidence that these items have been recycled due to their age as well as the fact that they do not show up in our inventory sheets. Inventory for iPads is tracked using [REDACTED]. Inventory for Chromebooks is tracked using [REDACTED]. The items in question were removed from those inventory lists which indicates that they were recycled. **In paragraph 3 on page 8, the report notes: “We corroborated the Director’s assertion of the devices’ ages and found the devices’ warranty start or production dates ranged from June 2012 to August 2016 and based on those dates the device ages would have been between five and ten years old at the time of our testing.”**

While we strive to scan and record every single device that is recycled or disposed of, there are however instances when serial numbers and/or barcodes are removed or unavailable for recording. This can happen due to general wear and tear over a five to six year user experience with students.

It’s important to note that 100% of the devices during the established OCS audit period were accounted for. Additionally, it is worth stating that the district has recycled thousands of devices since 2015, and the audit only found 17 unaccounted for when using a judgemental (not random) selection. Therefore, we will continue to adhere to and improve our meticulous process when sending devices out for disposal. We will ensure our inventory records are kept as accurate as possible as recommended by the audit report.

See
Note 1
Page 14

See
Note 1
Page 14

See
Note 4
Page 14

See
Note 5
Page 14

See
Note 5
Page 14

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In paragraph 4 on page 8, the report asserts that we left unused laptops in an unlocked room and that they would be highly susceptible to loss. To provide more context to this situation, the devices were located in a storage room connected to the rear of the library. To get to this room, one would have to enter through two separate sets of doors. Furthermore, there are always two staff members assigned to this area. It is possible that one or both of them had stepped out of the room at the moment of OSC inspection but it **is misleading to say these devices are not safeguarded. This entire area and the entire building are monitored with an advanced security camera system. Furthermore, all of those devices are tagged and scanned to maintain record of exactly how many devices there are and to whom they are assigned. They are also pre-enrolled in our [REDACTED] which would allow us to track any of the devices the moment they are used.**

In conclusion we found that this report makes some valuable recommendations that we will continue to implement. We hope that our response to the audit explains and expands upon areas of the audit that the district found to be an incomplete representation of the district's overall IT asset management process. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the audit findings.

See
Note 6
Page 14

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Appendix B: OSC Comments on the District's Response

Note 1.

The audit objective included IT assets “acquired or in use during the audit period.” The Director provided the inventory list that identified IT assets in use during the audit period.

Note 2.

Financial records, including purchase orders or invoices, are not equivalent to inventory records because they do not aid in tracking assets or conducting periodic inventory checks. Additionally, the audit notes 10 assets were not recorded on the IT Department's inventory lists. The report does not dispute the location of the assets.

Note 3.

The five IT inventory lists provided to us did not include all attributes required by the Board's Inventories and Accounting of Fixed Assets Policy.

Note 4.

As stated in our report, the estimated cost was determined using similar asset purchases made during the audit period. A replacement cost would be based on vendor pricing at the time of replacement, not based on an asset's book value or worth.

Note 5.

Although officials provided two disposal lists dated June 2018 and April 2022, neither of these lists supported the disposal of the 17 assets in our report. In addition, five of the 17 devices had network activity during our audit period, indicating they were not disposed.

Note 6.

Although these systems may aid District officials in recovering lost or stolen assets, they do not prevent assets from being taken and do not individually or collectively reduce the risk of loss or theft from unsecured areas.

Appendix C: Audit Methodology and Standards

We conducted this audit pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article 3 of the New York State General Municipal Law. To achieve the audit objective and obtain valid audit evidence, our audit procedures included the following:

- We selected the District for audit from a list of school districts (excluding NYC schools) with enrollment greater than 300 and not currently in the OSC audit process at the time of selection. We classified school districts into four groups by enrollment and, using a random number generator, selected Districts from these groups. The list was broken out by geographic region for an even representation of school districts across the State for this multi-unit audit.
- We interviewed District officials and reviewed District policies and Board minutes to gain an understanding of IT asset management.
- We reviewed all District IT Department asset records provided by the District to determine if the records contained sufficient information to identify IT assets.
- We selected a sample of 47 IT asset purchases, 10 from District invoices and 37 from the installment purchase agreements with the Erie One BOCES. For 10 direct District purchases, we obtained a list of all invoices relating to accounts to which IT asset purchases are charged. We selected the largest invoice(s) from each IT vendor and selected IT assets over \$175. For 37 assets acquired through Erie One BOCES, we obtained a listing of all devices supplied by Erie One BOCES and selected between one and five devices from each installment purchase agreement. We reviewed purchase orders, invoices, and/or packing slips and District inventory records to determine if assets were added to the inventory record and physically located in the District.
- We selected a sample of 14 Chromebooks and 11 Apple devices from device management reports to determine if the devices were located in the District. We judgmentally selected one or two devices for each year based on the devices' last activity date, ranging from February 2015 to July 2021.
- We performed a walk-through of District facilities and judgmentally selected 10 assets to determine whether the assets were accurately recorded on the inventory record. During our visual inspection of District IT assets, we assessed the general condition of their locations for the potential risk of damage or loss.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS). 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 objective.

We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

Unless otherwise indicated in this report, samples for testing were selected based on professional judgment, as it was not the intent to project the results onto the entire population. Where applicable, information is presented concerning the value and/or size of the relevant population and the sample selected for examination.

The Board has the responsibility to initiate corrective action. A written corrective action plan (CAP) that addresses the findings and recommendations in this report must be prepared and provided to our office within 90 days, pursuant to Section 35 of General Municipal Law, Section 2116-a (3)(c) of New York State Education Law and Section 170.12 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. To the extent practicable, implementation of the CAP must begin by the end of the next fiscal year. For more information on preparing and filing your CAP, please refer to our brochure, *Responding to an OSC Audit Report*, which you received with the draft audit report. The CAP should be posted on the District's website for public review.

Appendix D: Resources and Services

Regional Office Directory

www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/pdf/regional-directory.pdf

Cost-Saving Ideas – Resources, advice and assistance on cost-saving ideas

www.osc.state.ny.us/local-government/publications

Fiscal Stress Monitoring – Resources for local government officials experiencing fiscal problems

www.osc.state.ny.us/local-government/fiscal-monitoring

Local Government Management Guides – Series of publications that include technical information and suggested practices for local government management

www.osc.state.ny.us/local-government/publications

Planning and Budgeting Guides – Resources for developing multiyear financial, capital, strategic and other plans

www.osc.state.ny.us/local-government/resources/planning-resources

Protecting Sensitive Data and Other Local Government Assets – A non-technical cybersecurity guide for local government leaders

www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/publications/pdf/cyber-security-guide.pdf

Required Reporting – Information and resources for reports and forms that are filed with the Office of the State Comptroller

www.osc.state.ny.us/local-government/required-reporting

Research Reports/Publications – Reports on major policy issues facing local governments and State policy-makers

www.osc.state.ny.us/local-government/publications

Training – Resources for local government officials on in-person and online training opportunities on a wide range of topics

www.osc.state.ny.us/local-government/academy

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