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Yonkers school district cited in audit report

BY ERNIE GARCIA • ELGARCIA@LOHUD.COM • FEBRUARY 7, 2011

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YONKERS — A new audit for the 2009-10 school year faults [school officials](#) for financial-control weaknesses and inadequate staffing.

Bonadio & Co., the district's auditor, found five significant deficiencies in internal controls over [financial reporting](#) in the Yonkers Public Schools and reported to government agencies a sixth deficiency in the certification of payrolls involving federal funds.

The auditors also found that Yonkers lacks enough staff "with proper experience and competence to oversee authorization and reporting of the school district's [financial](#) transactions."

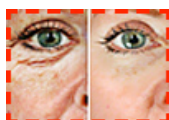
The report is dated Dec. 30 and the district recently posted it on its website.

None of the auditors' findings were redacted, as has been the case in previous audits.

Besides difficulty in producing timely and accurate financial reports, the auditors faulted school officials for inadequate accounting and weak controls over accounts payable, [purchasing](#) and payroll.

The purchasing and payroll weaknesses were also cited in the auditors' report on the 2008-09 school year.

In response, school officials said they would reorganize their finance department, review access rights in their payroll department to prevent unauthorized changes and develop quarterly accounting and accounts payable reports.



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They also told auditors that they began weekly confirmations of purchasing.

School spokeswoman Maura Lamoreaux noted that the audit did not cite any "material weaknesses" — the most serious deficiencies. She also said that the district will complete its purchasing- and payroll-control tightening by July 1, 2012.

Among expenses the [school district](#) incurred in 2009-10, which ended with the elimination of 416 positions to close a \$48 million budget gap for 2010-11, was an average 6 percent raise for teachers and administrators.

Pat Puleo, president of the Yonkers Federation of Teachers, said that teachers got a 3 percent raise under their contract, which ends on June 30.

Lamoreaux said the 6 percent average was due to raises plus steps, a type of longevity increase.

She wrote that, last year, schools Superintendent Bernard Pierorazio unsuccessfully asked the district's unions to forego raises in order to save \$16.5 million and the positions terminated in June.

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