
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

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News for Immediate Release

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Auditor General DeFoor Releases Performance Audit of Philadelphia Charter School Office

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Timothy L. DeFoor today released a performance audit of the School District of Philadelphia’s Charter School Office which found it was following state law, Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) guidance and its own policies and procedures when reviewing new charter school applications, renewing existing charter school applications and annually monitoring charter schools.

“There is a lot of good news to share,” Auditor General DeFoor said. “My job is to look at how tax dollars are being spent and determine if the systems created to use them are working. In this case, while the system is working, there are things that can be done better.

In the audit, which covered the period of July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2023, the auditors made recommendations for process improvements, including:

- Bringing in external reviewers to bring a fresh set of eyes to review the charter school framework;
- Including charter schools’ responses in the publicly available annual monitoring and renewal reports; and
- Conducting admission lottery audits more frequently.

“During our review, we noted a charter school, Franklin Towne Charter High School, allegedly conducted its admissions lottery to exclude certain city zip codes made up of predominately minority households,” Auditor General DeFoor said. “The Charter School Office investigated and found the school to be in violation of the state charter school law and its own charter. Evaluating a charter school’s admission process as part of the annual monitoring would quickly identify these situations and lead to a remedy sooner.”

The audit team also reviewed the findings from the prior audit released in 2016 and found them all to be resolved.

The School District of Philadelphia’s Charter School Office oversees brick and mortar schools within the district. The Board of Education approves new applications for schools. No new charters were approved during the audit period.

Under the DeFoor Administration, the Department of Auditor General has transformed its auditing process involving school systems. The Department uses its performance audit bureau to audit school

entities to maximize resources, use the best auditing practices available and provide taxpayers with the information they need to hold government accountable.

A copy of the audit is available on www.PaAuditor.gov. Review other [recent audits](#), [sign up to be notified](#) when new audits are released and learn more about the Department of the Auditor General online at www.PaAuditor.gov.

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