

Office of Comptroller General
School District Expenditure Transparency Methodology

Objective

The objective of this document is to provide the methodology for school districts to comply with the financial transparency requirements of Section 1.43 of Part I.B of the Appropriations Act of 2009 (Act No. 23 of 2009). This legislation directs school districts to post monthly to their websites searchable expenditure data for public viewing and downloading. It also directs the Office of the Comptroller General to distribute to the districts a methodology for compliance. Due to the severe fiscal constraints on districts and state agencies, implementation of this transparency methodology must be effected in a manner that uses existing resources and does not incur additional expenses. This methodology was developed by this office in consultation with the Department of Education and is based on the experiences of school districts and other local government units with which this office has worked in posting expenditure data on their websites.

Process

Each school district should develop a process to extract all expenditures from its general ledger accounting system in excess of \$100 (excluding compensation paid to individual employees or information that can be used to identify individual employees) and create a detailed “check register” report consisting of at least the following data elements for each expenditure:

- Date of Expenditure
- Name of Payee/Vendor
- General Description of the Expenditure (Possibly an account description from the chart of accounts. If codes or acronyms are used, an explanation of each must be provided.)
- Expenditure Amount.

It may also include data elements such as:

- Check Number
- General Ledger Account Number
- Invoice Number
- Vendor Number.

The data could be exported (extracted) from the school district accounting system using existing software so that an Adobe Acrobat “PDF” file can be created for the report. It is possible that the data could be exported into a text file, Excel file, Word

Office of Comptroller General
School District Expenditure Transparency Methodology

document, or directly into a “PDF” file. If it is exported into a text file, Excel file, or Word document, then it could in turn be used to build the Adobe “PDF” file to be posted monthly on the district website.

With respect to credit card transactions, Act No. 23 requires districts to scan and post each monthly statement on all credit cards maintained by the district, including those issued to employees and officers, with the account numbers redacted.

Posting Periods

The school districts should post this expenditure information (including credit card transactions) on a monthly basis. The month-end report should be posted to the website as soon as possible after each monthly closing.

Website

Once the monthly report is prepared, each school district should post the Adobe Acrobat “PDF” file on the school district website to make it available for public viewing and downloading. Each month a new file should be made available and the previous files retained as separate files so that a minimum of three years of files will be accumulated on the website. The timeframe for your initially posting this information to the district’s website is between April 1 and April 30, 2010. Please notify R. J. Shealy of this office, whose contact information is listed below, when your website goes live so that we can list your district as in compliance with the legislation and provide a link from our Comptroller General’s website to your district’s website.

Assistance

If you need additional information or have questions on this methodology, please contact R. J. Shealy at this office. His phone number is 803-734-2538, and his e-mail is RJShealy@cg.sc.gov.

Office of Comptroller General
School District Expenditure Transparency Methodology

Examples

The following websites can be used as examples of acceptable expenditure reports.

For Check Register:

<http://acpass.andersoncountysc.org/reports/1100127.PDF>

For Credit Card Report:

<http://www.andersoncountysc.org/BUDGETREPORTS/CreditCards/1109/1109.pdf>