Executive Governance Summary

STRIDE Academy, Charter School No. 4142

St. Cloud, Minnesota

For the year ended June 30, 2023

Abdo
Lighting the path forward

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December 6, 2023

Management and Board of Education
STRIDE Academy
Charter School No. 4142
St. Cloud, Minnesota

We have audited the financial statements of the governmental activities and each major fund of STRIDE Academy Charter School No. 4142 (the Academy), St. Cloud, Minnesota for the year ended June 30, 2023. Professional standards require that we provide you with information about our responsibilities under generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards,* as well as certain information related to the planned scope and timing of our audit. We have communicated such information in our letter to you dated December 6, 2023 Professional standards also require that we communicate to you the following information related to our audit.

Significant Audit Findings

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the Academy's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Academy's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Academy's internal control.

A *deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented or detected and corrected on a timely basis. A *significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified. We did identify a certain deficiency in internal control, described below as item 2023-001 that we consider to be a significant deficiency.

2023-001	**Authorized Bank Signatories**
Condition:	During our audit, we requested confirmations of authorized bank signatories from each bank where the Academy holds deposits. We discovered that the former Academy officials are still listed as a signor at the Academy's banks.
Criteria:	Internal controls should be in place to ensure that former employees and Board members do not have access to Academy bank accounts.
Cause:	Former contract accountant and board members were not removed as bank signors.
Effect:	The effectiveness of the internal control system relies on enforcement by management. The effect of deficiencies in internal controls can result in undetected errors or misappropriation of assets of the Academy.
Recommendation:	We recommend that the Academy remove former employees and Board members upon termination and confirm signors at each bank regularly to ensure that only current employees and Board members have authorization as signatories.
Management response:	The Academy agrees with finding and has removed former officials as signors at each bank. The Academy will continue to monitor signors as staff and Board member changes occur.

Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Charter School's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants, and noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit. Also, in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, we examined, on a test basis, evidence about the Charter School's compliance with the types of compliance requirements described in the "*U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Compliance Supplement"* applicable to each of its major Federal programs for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the Charter School's compliance with those requirements and for compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of its federal awards applicable to its federal programs. While our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion, it does not provide a legal determination on the Charter School's compliance with those requirements. The results of our tests disclosed one instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, *Government Auditing Standards* or Minnesota statues reported as finding 2023-002 below.

2023-002	**Time Period for Payment**
Condition:	During our audit procures, it came to our attention that the Academy had not made two payments within the timeframe set forth by State statutes.
Criteria:	Minnesota statute §471.425 requires the Academy to pay bills within 35 days from receipt. If the invoice is not paid within 35 days, interest at 1.50 percent per month is to be added to the amount due.
Cause:	While testing disbursements, we noted that one invoice indicated that timely payments had not been made. Specifically, the Charter had not paid the original invoice within 35 days set forth in State statute.
Effect:	The Academy is out of compliance with Minnesota statute.
Recommendation:	We recommend that the Academy continue to review current policies and procedures related to the accounts payable cycle. These policies and procedures should include payment terms that are outlined within State statutes. Implementing this recommendation will not result in any additional cost to the Academy.
Management Response:	The Academy staff members and the contracted accountant will work on getting invoices paid within the requirements noted above by communicating and reviewing the procedures currently in place.

Qualitative Aspects of Accounting Practices

Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. The significant accounting policies used by the Academy are described in Note 1 to the financial statements. No new accounting policies were adopted, and the application of existing policies were not changed during the year ended June 30, 2023. We noted no transactions entered into by the Academy during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. All significant transactions have been recognized in the financial statements in the proper period.

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected. The most sensitive estimates affecting the schedules were as follows:

- Management's estimate of depreciation is based on estimated useful lives of the assets. Depreciation is calculated using the straight-line method.

- Management estimates a portion of the receivable from the Department of Education on student numbers and past expenditures.

- Management's estimate of its portion of the Academy's net pension liabilities related to its proportionate share of TRA and PERA pensions (assets) are based on the Academy's contributions in relation to all contributions to each plan as a whole. The overall net pension liability for TRA and PERA are based on several factors including, but not limited to, anticipated retirement age for active employees, life expectancy, survivor life expectancy, and high-five salary.

- Allocations of gross wages and payroll benefits are approved by the School Board within the Academy's budget and are derived from each employee's estimated time to be spent servicing the respective function of the Academy. These allocations are also used in allocating accrued compensated absences payable.

We evaluated the key factors and assumptions used to develop depreciation and the state receivable in determining that it is reasonable in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole. The disclosures in the financial statements are neutral, consistent, and clear. Certain financial statement disclosures are particularly sensitive because of their significance to financial statement users.

Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit

We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing our audit.

Corrected and Uncorrected Misstatements

Professional standards require us to accumulate all known and likely misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. Management has corrected all such misstatements. In addition, none of the misstatements detected as a result of audit procedures and corrected by management were material, either individually or in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Disagreements with Management

For purposes of this letter, professional standards define a disagreement with management as a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditor's report. We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.

Management Representations

We have requested certain representations from management that are included in the management representations letter dated December 6, 2023.

Management Consultations with Other Independent Accountants

In some cases, management may decide to consult with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters, similar to obtaining a "second opinion" on certain situations. If a consultation involves application of an accounting principle to the Academy's financial statements or a determination of the type of auditor's opinion that may be expressed on those statements, our professional standards require the consulting accountant to check with us to determine that the consultant has all the relevant facts. To our knowledge, there were no such consultations with other accountants.

Other Matters

We applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information (RSI) (Management's Discussion and Analysis, the Schedules of Employer's Share of the Net Pension Liability, and the Schedules of Employer's Contributions), which is information that supplements the basic financial statements. Our procedures consisted of inquiries of management regarding the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We did not audit the RSI and do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the RSI.

We were engaged to report on the supplementary information (individual fund schedule and table, and the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards) which accompany the financial statements but are not RSI. With respect to this supplementary information, we made certain inquiries of management and evaluated the form, content, and methods of preparing the information to determine that the information complies with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the method of preparing it has not changed from the prior period, and the information is appropriate and complete in relation to our audit of the financial statements. We compared and reconciled the supplementary information to the underlying accounting records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves.

We were not engaged to report on the introductory section, which accompanies the financial statements but is not RSI. We did not audit or perform other procedures on this other information, and we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on it.

Other Audit Findings or Issues

We generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, with management prior to retention as the Academy's auditors. However, these discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship and our responses were not a condition to our retention.

Future Accounting Standard Changes

The following Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statements have been issued and may have an impact on future Academy financial statements: (1)

GASB Statement No. 100 – *Accounting Changes and Error Corrections – an amendment of GASB Statement No. 62*

Summary

The primary objective of this Statement is to enhance accounting and financial reporting requirements for accounting changes and error corrections to provide more understandable, reliable, relevant, consistent, and comparable information for making decisions or assessing accountability.

This Statement defines *accounting changes* as changes in accounting principles, changes in accounting estimates, and changes to or within the financial reporting entity and describes the transactions or other events that constitute those changes. As part of those descriptions, for (1) certain changes in accounting principles and (2) certain changes in accounting estimates that result from a change in measurement methodology, a new principle or methodology should be justified on the basis that it is preferable to the principle or methodology used before the change. That preferability should be based on the qualitative characteristics of financial reporting—understandability, reliability, relevance, timeliness, consistency, and comparability. This Statement also addresses corrections of errors in previously issued financial statements.

This Statement prescribes the accounting and financial reporting for (1) each type of accounting change and (2) error corrections. This Statement requires that (a) changes in accounting principles and error corrections be reported retroactively by restating prior periods, (b) changes to or within the financial reporting entity be reported by adjusting beginning balances of the current period, and (c) changes in accounting estimates be reported prospectively by recognizing the change in the current period. The requirements of this Statement for changes in accounting principles apply to the implementation of a new pronouncement in absence of specific transition provisions in the new pronouncement. This Statement also requires that the aggregate amount of adjustments to and restatements of beginning net position, fund balance, or fund net position, as applicable, be displayed by reporting unit in the financial statements.

This Statement requires disclosure in notes to financial statements of descriptive information about accounting changes and error corrections, such as their nature. In addition, information about the quantitative effects on beginning balances of each accounting change and error correction should be disclosed by reporting unit in a tabular format to reconcile beginning balances as previously reported to beginning balances as restated.

Furthermore, this Statement addresses how information that is affected by a change in accounting principle or error correction should be presented in required supplementary information (RSI) and supplementary information (SI). For periods that are earlier than those included in the basic financial statements, information presented in RSI or SI should be restated for error corrections, if practicable, but not for changes in accounting principles.

Effective Date and Transition

The requirements of this Statement are effective for accounting changes and error corrections made in fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2023, and all reporting periods thereafter. Earlier application is encouraged.

How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting

The requirements of this Statement will improve the clarity of the accounting and financial reporting requirements for accounting changes and error corrections, which will result in greater consistency in application in practice. In turn, more understandable, reliable, relevant, consistent, and comparable information will be provided to financial statement users for making decisions or assessing accountability. In addition, the display and note disclosure requirements will result in more consistent, decision useful, understandable, and comprehensive information for users about accounting changes and error corrections.

GASB Statement No. 101 – *Compensated Absences*

Summary

The objective of this Statement is to better meet the information needs of financial statement users by updating the recognition and measurement guidance for compensated absences. That objective is achieved by aligning the recognition and measurement guidance under a unified model and by amending certain previously required disclosures.

This Statement requires that liabilities for compensated absences be recognized for (1) leave that has not been used and (2) leave that has been used but not yet paid in cash or settled through noncash means. A liability should be recognized for leave that has not been used if (a) the leave is attributable to services already rendered, (b) the leave accumulates, and (c) the leave is more likely than not to be used for time off or otherwise paid in cash or settled through noncash means. Leave is attributable to services already rendered when an employee has performed the services required to earn the leave. Leave that accumulates is carried forward from the reporting period in which it is earned to a future reporting period during which it may be used for time off or otherwise paid or settled. In estimating the leave that is more likely than not to be used or otherwise paid or settled, a government should consider relevant factors such as employment policies related to compensated absences and historical information about the use or payment of compensated absences. However, leave that is more likely than not to be settled through conversion to defined benefit postemployment benefits should not be included in a liability for compensated absences.

This Statement requires that a liability for certain types of compensated absences—including parental leave, military leave, and jury duty leave—not be recognized until the leave commences. This Statement also requires that a liability for specific types of compensated absences not be recognized until the leave is used.

This Statement also establishes guidance for measuring a liability for leave that has not been used, generally using an employee's pay rate as of the date of the financial statements. A liability for leave that has been used but not yet paid or settled should be measured at the amount of the cash payment or noncash settlement to be made. Certain salary-related payments that are directly and incrementally associated with payments for leave also should be included in the measurement of the liabilities.

With respect to financial statements prepared using the current financial resources measurement focus, this Statement requires that expenditures be recognized for the amount that normally would be liquidated with expendable available financial resources.

Effective Date and Transition

The requirements of this Statement are effective for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2023, and all reporting periods thereafter. Earlier application is encouraged.

How the Changes in This Statement Will Improve Accounting and Financial Reporting

The unified recognition and measurement model in this Statement will result in a liability for compensated absences that more appropriately reflects when a government incurs an obligation. In addition, the model can be applied consistently to any type of compensated absence and will eliminate potential comparability issues between governments that offer different types of leave.

The model also will result in a more robust estimate of the amount of compensated absences that a government will pay or settle, which will enhance the relevance and reliability of information about the liability for compensated absences

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Restriction on Use

This communication is intended solely for the information and use of the Members of the Board of Education, management, and the Minnesota Department of Education, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Our audit would not necessarily disclose all weaknesses in the system because it was based on selected tests of the accounting records and related data. The comments and recommendations in the report are purely constructive in nature and should be read in this context.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss any of the items contained in this letter, please feel free to contact us at your convenience. We wish to thank you for the opportunity to be of service and for the courtesy and cooperation extended to us by your staff.

Abdo

Abdo
Minneapolis, Minnesota
December 6, 2023