



OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE
KEITH FABER



**AREA COOPERATIVE COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM
MAHONING COUNTY
JUNE 30, 2023**

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Area Cooperative Computerized Educational Service System
Mahoning County
493 Bev Road, Unit 1
Boardman, Ohio 44512

To the Members of the Assembly and Board of Directors:

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinions

We have audited the cash-basis financial statements of the Area Cooperative Computerized Educational Service System, Mahoning County, Ohio (ACCESS), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise ACCESS's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective cash-basis financial position of the Area Cooperative Computerized Educational Service System, as of June 30, 2023, and the respective changes in cash-basis financial position thereof for the year then ended in accordance with the cash-basis of accounting described in Note 2.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are required to be independent of ACCESS, and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Emphasis of Matter – Accounting Basis

We draw attention to Note 2 of the financial statements, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial statements are prepared on the cash basis of accounting, which is a basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the cash basis of accounting described in Note 2, and for determining that the cash basis of accounting is an acceptable basis for preparation of the financial statements in the circumstances. Management is also responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about ACCESS's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*, we

- exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of ACCESS's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about ACCESS's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated January 25, 2024, on our consideration ACCESS's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of ACCESS's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering ACCESS's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.



Keith Faber
Auditor of State
Columbus, Ohio

January 25, 2024

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**AREA COOPERATIVE COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM
MAHONING COUNTY, OHIO**

STATEMENT OF NET POSITION - CASH BASIS
JUNE 30, 2023

Assets:

Current assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,538,937
Total assets	<u>1,538,937</u>

Net cash position:

Unrestricted	<u>1,538,937</u>
Total net cash position	<u><u>\$ 1,538,937</u></u>

SEE ACCOMPANYING NOTES TO THE CASH-BASIS FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**AREA COOPERATIVE COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM
MAHONING COUNTY, OHIO**

STATEMENT OF CASH RECEIPTS, CASH DISBURSEMENTS AND
CHANGES IN NET CASH POSITION
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

Operating cash receipts:	
Membership contributions	\$ 2,146,674
Other	12,244
Total operating cash receipts	<u>2,158,918</u>
Operating cash disbursements:	
Personal services	970,317
Employees' retirement and insurance	447,100
Purchased services	942,718
Materials and supplies	780,133
Other	53,263
Total operating cash disbursements	<u>3,193,531</u>
Operating income (loss)	<u>(1,034,613)</u>
Non-operating cash receipts (disbursements):	
Intergovernmental	1,586,743
Interest income	55,947
Capital outlay	(128,311)
Lease payments	(46,260)
Debt service:	
Principal retirement	(160,834)
Interest and fiscal charges	(3,811)
Total non-operating cash receipts (disbursements)	<u>1,303,474</u>
Change in net cash position	268,861
Net cash position at beginning of year	<u>1,270,076</u>
Net cash position at end of year	<u><u>\$ 1,538,937</u></u>

SEE ACCOMPANYING NOTES TO THE CASH-BASIS FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**AREA COOPERATIVE COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM
MAHONING COUNTY, OHIO**

**NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023**

NOTE 1 - DESCRIPTION OF THE ENTITY

Effective July 1, 2001, the Area Cooperative Computerized Educational Service System (“ACCESS”) reorganized pursuant to the provisions of Ohio Revised Code Chapter 167 as a regional council of governments that will allow ACCESS to provide services to other governmental agencies and other private persons and entities. ACCESS is directed by an Assembly, which acts as the Legislative Body, consisting of the Superintendent, or his/her designee, from each member School District. The Assembly appoints a Board of Directors, which acts as the Managerial Body, consisting of the Mahoning County and Columbiana County Educational Service Center Superintendents, two Superintendents, and one treasurer from each Mahoning County and Columbiana County member School District. ACCESS provides a shared computer site to develop and implement efficient and effective data processing services for its members.

ACCESS’s management believes these cash-basis financial statements present all activities for which ACCESS is financially accountable.

As discussed further in Note 2.B., these financial statements are presented on a cash basis of accounting. This cash basis of accounting differs from accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP). Generally accepted accounting principles include all relevant Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) pronouncements, which have been applied to the extent they are applicable to the cash basis of accounting. Following are the more significant of ACCESS’s accounting policies.

NOTE 2 - SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

A. Basis of Accounting

ACCESS’s basic financial statements consist of a statement of net position - cash basis and statement of cash receipts, cash disbursements and changes in net cash position.

B. Basis of Presentation

ACCESS’s financial statements are prepared using the cash basis of accounting. Except for modifications having substantial support, receipts are recorded in ACCESS’s financial records and reported in the financial statements when cash is received rather than when earned and disbursements are recorded when cash is paid rather than when a liability is incurred. Any such modifications made by ACCESS are described in the appropriate section in this note.

As a result of the use of this cash basis of accounting, certain assets and their related revenues (such as accounts receivable and revenue for billed or provided services not yet collected), liabilities and their related expenses (such as accounts payable and expenses for goods or services received, but not yet paid, and accrued expenses and liabilities), and deferred inflows and outflows of resources are not recorded in these financial statements.

Enterprise accounting is used to account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises where the intent is that the costs (expenses) of providing goods or services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through user charges or where it has been decided that periodic determination of revenues earned, expenses incurred, and/or net income is appropriate for capital maintenance, public policy, management control, accountability or other purposes.

Operating cash receipts are those receipts that are generated directly from the primary activity of ACCESS. Operating cash disbursements are necessary costs incurred to provide the service that is the primary activity of ACCESS. All cash receipts and disbursements not meeting this definition are reported as non-operating.

**AREA COOPERATIVE COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM
MAHONING COUNTY, OHIO**

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

NOTE 2 - SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (Continued)

C. Cash and Cash Equivalents

To improve cash management, all cash received by ACCESS is pooled in centralized bank accounts. Monies are maintained in these accounts or temporarily used to purchase short-term investments. For presentation on the financial statements, investments of the cash management pool and investments with an original maturity of three months or less at the time they are purchased are considered to be cash equivalents. Investments with an initial maturity of more than three months that are not purchased from the pool are reported as investments.

During fiscal year 2023, ACCESS invested in STAR Ohio. STAR Ohio (the State Treasury Asset Reserve of Ohio), is an investment pool managed by the State Treasurer's Office which allows governments within the State to pool their funds for investment purposes. STAR Ohio is not registered with the SEC as an investment company, but has adopted Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), Statement No. 79, "Certain External Investment Pools and Pool Participants." ACCESS measures their investment in STAR Ohio at the net asset value (NAV) per share provided by STAR Ohio. The NAV per share is calculated on an amortized cost basis that provides an NAV per share that approximates fair value.

There are no limitations or restrictions on any participant withdrawals due to redemption notice periods, liquidity fees, or redemption gates. However, 24 hours notice in advance of all deposits and withdrawals exceeding \$100 million is encouraged. STAR Ohio reserves the right to limit the transaction to \$250 million, requiring the excess amount to be transacted the following business day(s), but only to the \$250 million limit. All accounts of the participant will be combined for these purposes.

D. Budgetary Process

ACCESS is not bound by the budgetary laws prescribed by the Ohio Revised Code. ACCESS does pass an annual budget for the fiscal year. Modifications to the budget are approved by the Board when necessary.

E. Inventory and Prepaid Items

ACCESS reports disbursements for inventory and prepaid items when paid. These items are not reflected as assets in the accompanying financial statements.

F. Capital Assets

Acquisitions of property, plant and equipment are recorded as disbursements when paid. These items are not reflected as assets on the accompanying cash-basis financial statements.

G. Unpaid Vacation and Sick Leave

Employees are entitled to cash payments for unused vacation in certain circumstances, such as upon leaving employment, and unused sick leave upon retirement. Unpaid vacation and sick leave are not reflected as liabilities under the basis of accounting used by ACCESS.

H. Employer Contributions to Cost-Sharing Pension Plans

ACCESS recognizes the disbursement for employer contributions to cost-sharing pension plans when they are paid. As described in Note 7 and Note 8, the employer contributions include portions for pension benefits and for postemployment health care benefits.

**AREA COOPERATIVE COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM
MAHONING COUNTY, OHIO**

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

NOTE 2 - SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES - (Continued)

For purposes of measuring the net pension liability, information about the fiduciary net position of the pension plans and additions to/deductions from their fiduciary net position have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by the pension systems. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of employee contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. The pension systems report investments at fair value.

I. Net Cash Position

Net cash position is reported as restricted when there are limitations imposed on their use through external restrictions imposed by creditors, grantors or laws or regulations of other governments. ACCESS had no restricted net cash position at fiscal year-end.

J. Intergovernmental Revenue

Intergovernmental grants and entitlements are recognized as non-operating receipts in the accounting period in which the money is received. ACCESS received \$391,184 and \$1,195,559 in State and Federal grants, respectively, in fiscal year 2023.

K. Leases

ACCESS is the lessee in various leases for equipment under noncancelable leases. Lease payables are not reflected under ACCESS's cash basis of accounting. Lease disbursements are recognized when they are paid.

L. Long-Term Obligations

ACCESS's cash basis financial statements do not report liabilities for bonds and other long-term obligations. Proceeds of debt are reported when cash is received and principal and interest payments are reported when paid. Since recording a capital asset (including the intangible right to use) when entering into a lease is not the result of a cash transaction, neither a receipt nor a disbursement is reported at inception. Lease payments are reported when paid.

NOTE 3 - DEPOSITS AND INVESTMENTS

State statutes classify monies held by ACCESS into three categories.

Active deposits are public deposits necessary to meet current demands on the treasury. Such monies must be maintained either as cash in ACCESS's treasury, in commercial accounts payable or withdrawable on demand, including negotiable order of withdrawal (NOW) accounts, or in money market deposit accounts.

Inactive deposits are public deposits that the Board of Directors has identified as not required for use within the current five year period of designation of depositories. Inactive deposits must either be evidenced by certificates of deposit maturing not later than the end of the current period of designation of depositories, or by savings or deposit accounts including, but not limited to, passbook accounts.

Interim deposits are deposits of interim monies. Interim monies are those monies which are not needed for immediate use, but which will be needed before the end of the current period of designation of depositories. Interim deposits must be evidenced by time certificates of deposit maturing not more than one year from the date of deposit or by savings or deposit accounts including passbook accounts.

**AREA COOPERATIVE COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM
MAHONING COUNTY, OHIO**

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

NOTE 3 - DEPOSITS AND INVESTMENTS - (Continued)

Interim monies may be deposited or invested in the following securities:

1. United States Treasury Notes, Bills, Bonds, or any other obligation or security issued by the United States Treasury or any other obligation guaranteed as to principal and interest by the United States;
2. Bonds, notes, debentures, or any other obligations or securities issued by any federal government agency or instrumentality, including, but not limited to, the Federal National Mortgage Association, Federal Home Loan Bank, Federal Farm Credit Bank, Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, Government National Mortgage Association, and Student Loan Marketing Association. All federal agency securities shall be direct issuances of federal government agencies or instrumentalities;
3. Written repurchase agreements in the securities listed above provided that the fair value of the securities subject to the repurchase agreement must exceed the principal value of the agreement by at least two percent and be marked to market daily, and that the term of the agreement must not exceed thirty days;
4. Bonds and other obligations of the State of Ohio, and with certain limitations including a requirement for maturity within ten years from the date of settlement, bonds and other obligations of political subdivisions of the State of Ohio, if training requirements have been met;
5. Time certificates of deposit or savings or deposit accounts including, but not limited to, passbook accounts;
6. No-load money market mutual funds consisting exclusively of obligations described in items (1) and (2) above and repurchase agreements secured by such obligations, provided that investments in securities described in this division are made only through eligible institutions;
7. The State Treasury Asset Reserve of Ohio (STAR Ohio); and,
8. Certain bankers' acceptances (for a period not to exceed one hundred eighty days) and commercial paper notes (for a period not to exceed two hundred seventy days) in an amount not to exceed 40 percent of the interim monies available for investment at any one time if training requirements have been met.

Protection of ACCESS's deposits is provided by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), by eligible securities pledged by the financial institution as security for repayment, or by the financial institutions participation in the Ohio Pooled Collateral System (OCPS), a collateral pool of eligible securities deposited with a qualified trustee and pledge to the Treasurer of State to secure the repayment of all public monies deposited in the financial institution.

Investments in stripped principal or interest obligations, reverse repurchase agreements and derivatives are prohibited. The issuance of taxable notes for the purpose of arbitrage, the use of leverage and short selling are also prohibited. An investment must mature within five years from the date of purchase unless matched to a specific obligation or debt of ACCESS and must be purchased with the expectation that it will be held to maturity. Investments may only be made through specified dealers and institutions. Payment for investments may be made only upon delivery of the securities representing the investments to the Treasurer or, if the securities are not represented by a certificate, upon receipt of confirmation of transfer from the custodian.

A. Deposits with Financial Institutions

At June 30, 2023, the carrying amount of deposits was \$1,538,937. Based on the criteria described in GASB Statement No. 40, "Deposits and Investment Risk Disclosures", as of June 30, 2023, \$499,915 of ACCESS's bank balance of \$1,437,400 was covered by the FDIC and \$937,485 was exposed to custodial risk as discussed below.

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MAHONING COUNTY, OHIO**

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

NOTE 3 - DEPOSITS AND INVESTMENTS - (Continued)

Custodial credit risk is the risk that, in the event of bank failure, ACCESS’s deposits may not be returned. ACCESS has no deposit policy for custodial risk beyond the requirements of State statute. Ohio law requires that deposits either be insured or protected by: (1) eligible securities pledged to ACCESS and deposited with a qualified trustee by the financial institution as security for repayment whose market value at all times shall be at least 105 percent of the deposits being secured; or (2) participation in the Ohio Pooled Collateral System (OPCS), a collateral pool of eligible securities deposited with a qualified trustee and pledged to the Treasurer of State to secure the repayment of all public monies deposited in the financial institution. OPCS requires the total market value of the securities pledged to be 102 percent of the deposits being secured or a rate set by the Treasurer of State.

B. Investments

As of June 30, 2023, ACCESS had the following investments:

Measurement/ Investment Type	Measurement Value
Amortized cost:	
STAR Ohio	\$ 226,744

The weighted average maturity of investments is approximately 35 days.

Credit Risk: Standard & Poor’s has assigned STAR Ohio an AAAm money market rating. Ohio law requires that STAR Ohio maintain the highest rating provided by at least one nationally recognized standard rating service. The District’s investment policy does not specifically address credit risk beyond requiring the District to only invest in securities authorized by State statute.

NOTE 4 - LEASES

ACCESS has entered into lease agreements for the right to use copiers and other equipment. Payments are made from member contributions. Total lease payments in fiscal year 2023 amounted to \$46,260. Future lease payments are as follows:

Fiscal Year	Amount
2024	\$ 45,161
2025	45,161
2026	2,300
Total	\$ 92,622

NOTE 5 - RISK MANAGEMENT

A. Property and Liability

ACCESS has obtained insurance coverage through the Schools of Ohio Risk Sharing Authority (SORSA) for the following risks:

- Comprehensive
- General liability and casualty
- Errors and omissions

**AREA COOPERATIVE COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM
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NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

NOTE 5 - RISK MANAGEMENT (Continued)

Settled claims have not exceeded this coverage in any of the past three years, and there has been no significant reduction in coverage from the prior fiscal year.

SORSA is a non-profit, member owned consortium, organized as an insurance purchasing pool for school districts and related agencies in Ohio. SORSA's business affairs are conducted by a nine-member Board of directors consisting of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and five delegates. SORSA was created to provide joint self-insurance coverage and to assist members to prevent and reduce losses and injuries to the members' property and person. It is intended to provide liability and property insurance at reduced premiums for the participants. ACCESS pays an annual premium to SORSA for the insurance coverages selected and retains no financial interest in SORSA.

B. Employee Medical Benefits

ACCESS participates in the Stark County Schools Council of Governments (Council) to provide employee medical/surgical, dental and prescription drug benefits. The Council is a shared risk pool created pursuant to State statute for the purpose of administering health care benefits. The Council is governed by an assembly which consists of one representative from each participating member. The assembly elects officers for one year terms to serve on the Board of Directors. The assembly exercises control over the operation of the Council. All Council revenues are generated from charges for services received from the participating members, based on the established premiums for the insurance plans. Each member reserves the right to terminate the plan in whole or in part, at any time. If it is terminated, no further contributions will be made, but the benefits under the insurance contract shall be paid in accordance with the terms of the contract.

NOTE 6 - DEBT

The changes in long-term debt obligations during fiscal year 2023 were as follows:

	Balance 06/30/22	Additions	Reductions	Balance 06/30/23	Due Within One Year
Notes Payable - Financed Purchase	\$ 160,834	\$ -	\$ (160,834)	\$ -	\$ -
Total	<u>\$ 160,834</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ (160,834)</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

During fiscal year 2016, ACCESS entered into a note payable agreement with Huntington Public Capital Corporation to finance the purchase of computer hardware and related equipment to upgrade ACCESS's fiber optics network. ACCESS pays this obligation from member contributions.

NOTE 7 - DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN

Plan Description - School Employees Retirement System (SERS)

Plan Description – ACCESS's non-teaching employees participate in SERS, a cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by SERS. SERS provides retirement, disability and survivor benefits, annual cost-of-living adjustments, and death benefits to plan members and beneficiaries. Authority to establish and amend benefits is provided by Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3309. SERS issues a publicly available, stand-alone financial report that includes financial statements, required supplementary information and detailed information about SERS' fiduciary net position. That report can be obtained by visiting the SERS website at www.ohsers.org under Employers/Audit Resources.

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NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

NOTE 7 - DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN - (Continued)

Age and service requirements for retirement are as follows:

	Eligible to Retire on or before August 1, 2017 *	Eligible to Retire after August 1, 2017
Full benefits	Any age with 30 years of service credit	Age 67 with 10 years of service credit; or Age 57 with 30 years of service credit
Actuarially reduced benefits	Age 60 with 5 years of service credit; or Age 55 with 25 years of service credit	Age 62 with 10 years of service credit; or Age 60 with 25 years of service credit

* Members with 25 years of service credit as of August 1, 2017 will be included in this plan.

Annual retirement benefits are calculated based on final average salary multiplied by a percentage that varies based on years of service; 2.2% for the first thirty years of service and 2.5% for years of service credit over 30. Final average salary is the average of the highest three years of salary.

An individual whose benefit effective date is before April 1, 2018, is eligible for a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on the first anniversary date of the benefit. Beginning April 1, 2018, new benefit recipients must wait until the fourth anniversary of their benefit for COLA eligibility. The COLA is added each year to the base benefit amount on the anniversary date of the benefit. A three-year COLA suspension was in effect for all benefit recipients for the years 2018, 2019, and 2020. Upon resumption of the COLA, it will be indexed to the percentage increase in the CPI-W, not to exceed 2.5% and with a floor of 0%. In 2022, the Board of Trustees approved a 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for eligible retirees and beneficiaries in 2023.

Funding Policy - Plan members are required to contribute 10.00% of their annual covered salary and ACCESS is required to contribute 14.00% of annual covered payroll. The contribution requirements of plan members and employers are established and may be amended by the SERS' Retirement Board up to statutory maximum amounts of 10.00% for plan members and 14.00% for employers. The Retirement Board, acting with the advice of the actuary, allocates the employer contribution rate among four of the System's funds (Pension Trust Fund, Death Benefit Fund, Medicare B Fund, and Health Care Fund). For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023, the allocation to pension, death benefits, and Medicare B was 14.00%. For fiscal year 2023, the Retirement Board did not allocate any employer contribution to the Health Care Fund.

ACCESS's contractually required contribution to SERS was \$139,677 for fiscal year 2023.

NOTE 8 - DEFINED BENEFIT OPEB PLAN

Plan Description - School Employees Retirement System (SERS)

Health Care Plan Description - ACCESS contributes to the SERS Health Care Fund, administered by SERS for non-certificated retirees and their beneficiaries. For GASB 75 purposes, this plan is considered a cost-sharing other postemployment benefit (OPEB) plan. SERS' Health Care Plan provides healthcare benefits to eligible individuals receiving retirement, disability, and survivor benefits, and to their eligible dependents. Members who retire after June 1, 1986, need 10 years of service credit, exclusive of most types of purchased credit, to qualify to participate in SERS' health care coverage. In addition to age and service retirees, disability benefit recipients and beneficiaries who are receiving monthly benefits due to the death of a member or retiree, are eligible for SERS' health care coverage. Most retirees and dependents choosing SERS' health care coverage are over the age of 65 and therefore enrolled in a fully insured Medicare Advantage plan; however, SERS maintains a traditional, self-insured preferred provider organization for its non-Medicare retiree population. For both groups, SERS offers a self-insured prescription drug program. Health care is a benefit that is permitted, not mandated, by statute. The financial report of the Plan is included in the SERS Annual Comprehensive Financial Report which can be obtained on SERS' website at www.ohsers.org under Employers/Audit Resources.

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MAHONING COUNTY, OHIO**

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

NOTE 8 - DEFINED BENEFIT OPEB PLAN - (Continued)

Access to health care for retirees and beneficiaries is permitted in accordance with Section 3309 of the Ohio Revised Code. The Health Care Fund was established and is administered in accordance with Internal Revenue Code Section 105(e). SERS' Retirement Board reserves the right to change or discontinue any health plan or program. Active employee members do not contribute to the Health Care Plan. The SERS Retirement Board established the rules for the premiums paid by the retirees for health care coverage for themselves and their dependents or for their surviving beneficiaries. Premiums vary depending on the plan selected, qualified years of service, Medicare eligibility, and retirement status.

Funding Policy - State statute permits SERS to fund the health care benefits through employer contributions. Each year, after the allocation for statutorily required pensions and benefits, the Retirement Board may allocate the remainder of the employer contribution of 14% of covered payroll to the Health Care Fund in accordance with the funding policy. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023, SERS did not allocate any employer contributions to post-employment health care. An additional health care surcharge on employers is collected for employees earning less than an actuarially determined minimum compensation amount, pro-rated if less than a full year of service credit was earned. For fiscal year 2023, this amount was \$25,000. Statutes provide that no employer shall pay a health care surcharge greater than 2% of that employer's SERS-covered payroll; nor may SERS collect in aggregate more than 1.5% of the total statewide SERS-covered payroll for the health care surcharge.

The surcharge added to the allocated portion of the 14% employer contribution rate is the total amount assigned to the Health Care Fund. ACCESS's contractually required contribution to SERS was \$125 for fiscal year 2023.

NOTE 9 - CONTINGENCIES

- A. ACCESS receives financial assistance from federal and state agencies in the form of grants. The disbursement of funds received under these programs generally requires compliance with terms and conditions specified in the grant agreements and are subject to audit by the grantor agencies. Any disallowed claims resulting from such audits could become a liability of ACCESS. However, in the opinion of management, any such disallowed claims will not have a material effect on the financial position of ACCESS.
- B. Management believes there are no pending claims or lawsuits that could have a significant adverse effect on the financial position of ACCESS.

NOTE 10 - CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES

For fiscal year 2023, ACCESS has implemented GASB Statement No. 91, "Conduit Debt Obligations", GASB Statement No. 94, "Public-Private and Public-Public Partnerships and Availability Payment Arrangements", GASB Statement No. 96, "Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements", certain questions and answers of GASB Implementation Guide 2021-1 and certain paragraphs of GASB Statement No. 99, "Omnibus 2022".

GASB Statement No. 91 provides a single method of reporting conduit debt obligations by issuers and eliminate diversity in practice associated with (1) commitments extended by issuers, (2) arrangements associated with conduit debt obligations, and (3) related note disclosures. This Statement achieves those objectives by clarifying the existing definition of a conduit debt obligation; establishing that a conduit debt obligation is not a liability of the issuer; establishing standards for accounting and financial reporting of additional commitments and voluntary commitments extended by issuers and arrangements associated with conduit debt obligations; and improving required note disclosures. The implementation of GASB Statement No. 91 did not have an effect on the financial statements of ACCESS.

**AREA COOPERATIVE COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM
MAHONING COUNTY, OHIO**

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

NOTE 10 - CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES - (Continued)

GASB Statement No. 94 is to improve financial reporting by addressing issues related to public-private and public partnership arrangements (PPPs). As used in this Statement, a PPP is an arrangement in which a government (the transferor) contracts with an operator (a governmental or nongovernmental entity) to provide public services by conveying control of the right to operate or use a nonfinancial asset, such as infrastructure or other capital asset (the underlying PPP asset), for a period of time in an exchange or exchange-like transaction. The implementation of GASB Statement No. 94 did not have an effect on the financial statements of ACCESS.

GASB Statement No. 96 provides guidance on the accounting and financial reporting for subscription-based information technology arrangements (SBITAs) for government end users (governments). This Statement (1) defines a SBITA; (2) establishes that a SBITA results in a right-to-use subscription asset—an intangible asset—and a corresponding subscription liability; (3) provides the capitalization criteria for outlays other than subscription payments, including implementation costs of a SBITA; and (4) requires note disclosures regarding a SBITA. To the extent relevant, the standards for SBITAs are based on the standards established in Statement No. 87, Leases, as amended. The notes to the basic financial statements include the disclosure requirements under the Statement.

GASB Implementation Guide 2021-1 provides clarification on issues related to previously established GASB guidance. The implementation of GASB Implementation Guide 2021-1 did not have an effect on the financial statements of ACCESS.

GASB Statement No. 99 to enhance comparability in accounting and financial reporting and to improve the consistency of authoritative literature by addressing (1) practice issues that have been identified during implementation and application of certain GASB Statements and (2) accounting and financial reporting for financial guarantees. The implementation of GASB Statement No. 99 did not have an effect on the financial statements of ACCESS.

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER
FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS
REQUIRED BY GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS**

Area Cooperative Computerized Educational Service System
Mahoning County
493 Bev Road, Unit 1
Boardman, Ohio 44512

To the Members of the Assembly and Board of Directors:

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (*Government Auditing Standards*), the financial statements of the Area Cooperative Computerized Educational Service System, Mahoning County (ACCESS), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise ACCESS's basic financial statements and have issued our report thereon dated January 25, 2024, wherein we noted ACCESS uses a special purpose framework other than generally accepted accounting principles.

Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered ACCESS'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 opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of ACCESS's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of ACCESS'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 ACCESS'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 or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether ACCESS's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, 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 and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Purpose of This Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of ACCESS's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering ACCESS's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.



Keith Faber
Auditor of State
Columbus, Ohio

January 25, 2024

OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



AREA COOPERATIVE COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM COUNCIL

MAHONING COUNTY

AUDITOR OF STATE OF OHIO CERTIFICATION

This is a true and correct copy of the report, which is required to be filed pursuant to Section 117.26, Revised Code, and which is filed in the Office of the Ohio Auditor of State in Columbus, Ohio.



Certified for Release 2/13/2024

88 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614-466-4514 or 800-282-0370

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at
www.ohioauditor.gov