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October 15, 2010

Debra Davenport, CPA
Auditor General
2910 North 44th Street, Suite 410
Phoenix AZ 85018

RE: Response to Pendergast Elementary School District FY10 Performance Audit.

Dear Ms. Davenport:

Pendergast ESD respectfully submits our written response to the performance audit conducted by the Auditor General for FY2009. The audit indicated one recommendation and you will find the response to the recommendation attached.

Having no recommendations in the district operations categories verifies our commitment to operating our district efficiently and our dedication to be effective stewards of the taxpayer dollars. We also would like to thank you for acknowledging in Finding 1 the efficiency of our transportation operations.

The District would like to extend our appreciation of the professionalism and courtesy extended by your staff during the audit process and their willingness to engage in worthwhile dialogue throughout the audit to ensure a complete understanding of our operations.

Respectfully,

Ron Richards, Ed. D
Superintendent

Attachment:

Finding 1: District's transportation program operates efficiently.

We appreciate your acknowledgment of our efforts to operate our Transportation Services efficiently. Since FY2009 we have continued our efforts to develop and implement ways to operate our transportation services at an even lower cost. This is reflected on our FY2010 Annual Financial report as it shows we reduced our spending over FY2009 by an additional \$54,000 and look to save more in FY2011 while maintaining the high standards we have established for the department.

Finding 2: Shift in classroom spending indicates possible supplanting

Recommendation: The district should ensure that CSF monies are used to supplement rather than supplant other monies spent on classroom instruction.

We agree with the recommendation that a district should always ensure that CSF monies are used to supplement and not supplant other monies spent on classroom instruction. We also agree that a shift in spending could possibly indicate supplanting although we disagree with any inference that the district supplanted CSF funds with other monies. The district has not and never will supplant CSF monies given to us by the taxpayers of the state. Since the district started receiving CSF in FY2002, we have always used the proceeds as allowed by and required by statute. Each year the district continued to increase the number of classroom sections as needed for student growth and have maintained our average class size below 27. Also, over the same time period, with the help of CSF monies, we were able to increase the average salary of our teachers by 48 percent.

The district also agrees that we did increase our spending in Instruction Support. Nevertheless this was not at the expense of classroom instruction rather it was a strategic plan to assist the classroom with enhanced teacher training specific to the needs of the classroom teacher and the use of master teachers, coaching the classroom teachers in the use of proven classroom teaching techniques. This plan has proven itself as reflected in the FY2010 academic achievement results that show we made substantial gains in our reading, writing and math scores.

In addition to our increased spending in Instruction Support, Pendergast also implemented the research based model called "Response to Intervention" (RtI) as a systems model to improve student achievement. The implementation was launched at the beginning of the FY2009 with the content of Reading being the first focus. Since that time, compared to

previous five years, Pendergast obtained its highest percentage at grade level targets on the Dynamic Indicator of Early Literacy Skills, (DIBELS) assessment. At the end of the FY2010, the District celebrated a 5% increase of students meeting their grade level target in Reading. In addition, significant reductions have taken place in both Intensive (significantly below level) and Strategic (below grade level) categories. Additionally, the district realized double digit growth on students passing AIMS Reading in grades 6th-7th. As a District, it is the first time since the federal government started tracking subgroups, that our ELL Sub-Group has made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in Reading. Overall, Pendergast celebrated a 6% increase of students passing or exceeding on the state AIMS test. However, during the same instructional period, the state realized a growth in Reading of just 2%