



# Green Tech High Charter School

---

Payroll

2023M-157 | March 2024

# Contents

---

- Report Highlights . . . . . 1**
  
- Payroll. . . . . 2**
  - How Should School Officials Accurately Pay Salaries and Wages? . . 2
  - Officials Did Not Maintain Support for Salaries and Wages Paid . . . 2
  - What Do We Recommend? . . . . . 3
  
- Appendix A – Response From School Officials . . . . . 5**
  
- Appendix B – Audit Methodology and Standards . . . . . 6**
  
- Appendix C – Resources and Services. . . . . 8**

# Report Highlights

## Green Tech High Charter School

### Audit Objective

Determine whether Green Tech High Charter School (School) officials accurately paid employees' salaries and wages.

### Key Findings

Officials did not accurately pay salaries and wages to 10 of the 67 employees we reviewed and could not support payments made to 54 employees totaling \$41,626. Officials:

- Made payroll calculation errors totaling \$1,210 for 10 salaried employees.
- Did not maintain timesheets or payroll status change forms documenting approved pay rates to support \$7,220 in wages paid to three hourly employees we reviewed.
- Could not support approvals for miscellaneous payments totaling \$16,706 made to seven employees.
- Could not support class coverage payments totaling \$17,700 made to 44 employees.

### Key Recommendations

- Issue and maintain payroll status change forms and ensure timesheets are prepared and submitted for all hourly employees and class coverage payments.
- Provide training to class coverage coordinators and review and maintain supporting documentation for class coverage payments.

School officials generally agreed with our recommendations and indicated they planned to initiate corrective action.

### Audit Period

July 1, 2021 – May 31, 2023

### Background

The School is located in the City of Albany in Albany County and is governed by an elected eight-member Board of Trustees (Board) that is responsible for the general management and control of the School's financial and educational affairs.

A Board-appointed School Principal (Principal) is the chief executive officer and is responsible, along with other administrative staff, for day-to-day school management.

The Director of Finance is the chief accounting officer responsible for processing payroll and the Principal is responsible for reviewing, approving and certifying the payroll.

The School had two class coverage coordinators responsible for planning teacher coverage for classes and preparing support for and authorizing related payments during our audit period. One was responsible through February 28, 2023, and the other started March 1, 2023.

#### Quick Facts

Employees	66
Salaries/Wages Paid During the Audit Period	
2021-22	\$4,574,622
July 1, 2022 through May 30, 2023	\$4,017,471
Salaries/Wages Reviewed	\$894,520

# Payroll

---

## How Should School Officials Accurately Pay Salaries and Wages?

The School's fiscal policy requires the Board to establish the Principal's salary and the Principal should approve employee salaries and salary changes. Salary changes should be documented on a payroll status change form, with the employee's name, salary amount or hourly rate, effective date of change and authorizing signature. This form should be retained on file. All salary changes must be entered in the payroll system by the Director of Finance and reviewed by the Director of Operations, who should document his review of the salary changes entered.

All hourly employees and employees who cover classes for absent teachers are required to submit timesheets for hours worked. The Director of Finance should review timesheets for accuracy and the Principal should review and approve payrolls to ensure amounts are calculated using approved salaries and pay rates.

In addition, miscellaneous payments should be authorized in policies or through other formal board action and supported by documentation that proves the accuracy. For example, officials should maintain opt-out forms signed by employees and evidence of other health insurance coverage for health insurance opt-out payments, evidence of attendance at professional development events for professional development payments and class schedules for class coverage payments. Class coverage should be compensated based on the School-established guidelines, which define eligibility to receive compensation after three or five class periods, and authorized payments should be reviewed for accuracy.

## Officials Did Not Maintain Support for Salaries and Wages Paid

We reviewed salaries and wages totaling \$866,909 paid to 10 salaried employees during our audit period and \$27,611 paid to eight hourly employees for six pay periods.<sup>1</sup> During the 2021-22 fiscal year, the Director of Finance inaccurately paid all 10 salaried employees and could not provide support for \$7,220 paid to three hourly employees. The Director of Finance used incorrect pay rates to calculate amounts paid to salaried employees in the first and last pay periods of the fiscal year, resulting in errors totaling \$1,210. In addition, the Director of Finance was not able to provide timesheets documenting time worked and payroll status change forms documenting approved pay rates for hourly employees.

The Director of Finance could not provide a reasonable explanation for not maintaining payroll status change forms. She told us that one employee was not required to submit timesheets because he works the same shift each week and notifies her when he is absent. However, when time worked and approved pay

---

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix B for information on our sampling methodology.

---

rates are not documented, there is an increased risk that employees could be paid for time not worked and/or at unauthorized pay rates.

In addition, officials lacked support showing approval of miscellaneous payments for class coverage, education assistance, health insurance opt outs, professional development, student loans and other stipends made to seven employees totaling \$16,706. As a result, we could not determine whether these payments were accurate or appropriate. The Director of Finance, Director of Operations and Interim Principal could not provide an explanation for the lack of supporting documentation.

We also reviewed class coverage payments totaling \$20,625 made to 53 employees during our audit period.<sup>2</sup> The class coverage coordinators could not provide supporting documentation for class coverage payments totaling \$17,700<sup>3</sup> (86 percent) made to 44 of the 53 employees reviewed. As a result, officials have no assurance that these payments were made to employees in accordance with eligibility requirements.

The former coverage coordinator told us he did not maintain any documentation because he was overwhelmed with his responsibilities and did not receive any training to perform his duties. The current coordinator told us he was new to the role, and he lacked sufficient supporting documentation because he did not receive any training, including guidance on the types of supporting documentation to maintain and how to verify eligibility. In addition, while there are School-established class coverage guidelines, officials did not establish procedures for the authorization and review of class coverage payments, and no one reviewed the class coverage coordinator's records.

Without adequate class coverage procedures and review of supporting documentation, officials cannot ensure that employees are being paid accurately.

## **What Do We Recommend?**

The Board should:

1. Update class coverage guidelines to include procedures for authorization and review of class coverage payments and records.

The Principal and Director of Finance should:

2. Issue and maintain payroll status change forms to document authorized salaries and pay rates and ensure accurate pay rates are used each pay period.

---

<sup>2</sup> This includes payments totaling \$1,200 made to four employees also included in our salaried employee reviews.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

- 
3. Ensure timesheets are prepared and submitted for all hourly employees and class coverage payments.
  4. Provide training to class coverage coordinators for properly assigning class coverage and authorizing payments in accordance with eligibility requirements.
  5. Review all the supporting documentation before processing class coverage payments to ensure payments are made based on School-established guidelines.

The class coordinator should:

6. Maintain supporting documentation for all class coverage payments.

# Appendix A: Response From School Officials

---



March 9, 2024

Gary G. Gifford, Chief of Municipal Audits  
Office of NYS Comptroller  
Division of Local Government and School Accountability  
One Broad Street  
Glens Falls, New York 12801-4396

Re: Green Tech High Charter School Response Letter  
Report of Examination No. 2023M-157 – Draft Audit Report

Mr. Gifford,

Green Tech Charter High School (“GTH”) received the above referenced Report of Examination (the “Report”), discussed the Report’s findings and recommendations contained therein with the auditors from the Comptroller’s Office, and is preparing a Corrective Action Plan (“CAP”) which will address the findings and recommendations in the Report.

The CAP will implement the recommendations in the Report and provide clarifying information regarding specific statements contained elsewhere in the Report. Additionally, GTH is working to implement the recommendations by updating GTH’s fiscal policies and employee handbook as necessary.

We appreciate the opportunity to have discussed the draft findings of the Comptroller’s office with its representatives and will submit the CAP in accordance with the schedule provided.

Very truly yours,

*Kelly L. Sweeney*  
**Director of Finance**  
Green Tech Charter School  
99 Slingerland Street  
Albany, NY 12202  
518-694-3400 Main  
518-281-7201 (c)

Cc: James Whyte, GTH Principal  
Dona Bulluck, President, GTH Board of Directors

## Appendix B: Audit Methodology and Standards

---

We conducted this audit pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article 3 of the New York State General Municipal Law. We obtained an understanding of internal controls that we deemed significant within the context of the audit objective and assessed those controls. Information related to the scope of our work on internal controls, as well as the work performed in our audit procedures to achieve the audit objective and obtain valid audit evidence, included the following:

- We reviewed the School's bylaws, charter, personnel and payroll-related policies, Board meeting minutes, annual budgets, payroll status change forms, payroll registers, timesheets, absence requests, class coverage assignment emails, teacher schedules and class coverage charts, and interviewed School officials to gain an understanding of the current payroll process, procedures and support for payments.
- Of the 66 salaried employees paid during the 2021-22 fiscal year we used our professional judgment to select 10 employees who were paid \$824,096. We selected four employees involved in the payroll process, two administrators and four teachers based on salaries and responsibilities. For the selected employees, we obtained payroll status change forms and supporting documentation for miscellaneous pay. We compared amounts paid to payroll status change forms to determine whether salaries paid agreed to approved salaries. We also reviewed supporting documentation for miscellaneous pay to determine whether amounts paid were accurate and supported. We reviewed the same information for one pay period in fiscal year 2022-23 for the same 10 employees who were paid \$42,813. We selected a pay period in November 2022 to determine whether the amounts paid were authorized. We documented differences and followed up with officials.
- Of the 49 pay periods during our audit period, we used our professional judgment to select six pay periods to review amounts paid to all eight hourly employees totaling \$27,611. We selected pay periods in different months throughout the audit period. For the selected payrolls and employees, we compared hourly pay rates to payroll change forms to determine whether pay rates were accurate, and we recalculated payments based on approved pay rates and hours worked documented on timesheets to determine whether hourly employees were paid accurately.
- Of the 34 pay periods in which the School made class coverage payments totaling \$49,075, we used our professional judgment to select eight pay periods to review class coverage payments totaling \$20,625 (42 percent). We selected pay periods spread throughout our audit period and included three pay periods after March 1, 2023 because the class coverage management responsibility changed to a new employee. For the selected



---

class coverage payments, we reviewed supporting documentation to determine whether payments were accurate, in accordance with eligibility requirements and reviewed.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

Unless otherwise indicated in this report, samples for testing were selected based on professional judgment, as it was not the intent to project the results onto the entire population. Where applicable, information is presented concerning the value and/or size of the relevant population and the sample selected for examination.

The Board has the responsibility to initiate corrective action. We encourage the Board to prepare a written corrective action plan (CAP) that addresses the recommendations in this report and forward it to our office within 90 days. For more information on preparing and filing your CAP, please refer to our brochure, *Responding to an OSC Audit Report*, which you received with the draft audit report. We encourage the Board to make the CAP available for public review.

## Appendix C: Resources and Services

---

### **Regional Office Directory**

[www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/pdf/regional-directory.pdf](http://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/pdf/regional-directory.pdf)

**Cost-Saving Ideas** – Resources, advice and assistance on cost-saving ideas

[www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/publications](http://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/publications)

**Fiscal Stress Monitoring** – Resources for local government officials experiencing fiscal problems

[www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/fiscal-monitoring](http://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/fiscal-monitoring)

**Local Government Management Guides** – Series of publications that include technical information and suggested practices for local government management

[www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/publications](http://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/publications)

**Planning and Budgeting Guides** – Resources for developing multiyear financial, capital, strategic and other plans

[www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/resources/planning-resources](http://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/resources/planning-resources)

**Protecting Sensitive Data and Other Local Government Assets** – A non-technical cybersecurity guide for local government leaders

[www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/publications/pdf/cyber-security-guide.pdf](http://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/publications/pdf/cyber-security-guide.pdf)

**Required Reporting** – Information and resources for reports and forms that are filed with the Office of the State Comptroller

[www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/required-reporting](http://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/required-reporting)

**Research Reports/Publications** – Reports on major policy issues facing local governments and State policy-makers

[www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/publications](http://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/publications)

**Training** – Resources for local government officials on in-person and online training opportunities on a wide range of topics

[www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/academy](http://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/academy)

## Contact

Office of the New York State Comptroller  
Division of Local Government and School Accountability  
110 State Street, 12th Floor, Albany, New York 12236

Tel: (518) 474-4037 • Fax: (518) 486-6479 • Email: [localgov@osc.ny.gov](mailto:localgov@osc.ny.gov)

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government>

Local Government and School Accountability Help Line: (866) 321-8503

**GLENS FALLS REGIONAL OFFICE** – Gary G. Gifford, Chief of Municipal Audits

One Broad Street Plaza • Glens Falls, New York 12801-4396

Tel (518) 793-0057 • Fax (518) 793-5797 • Email: [Muni-GlensFalls@osc.ny.gov](mailto:Muni-GlensFalls@osc.ny.gov)

Serving: Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington counties

[osc.ny.gov](https://www.osc.ny.gov)

