

Jasper-Troupsburg Central School District

Emergency Drills

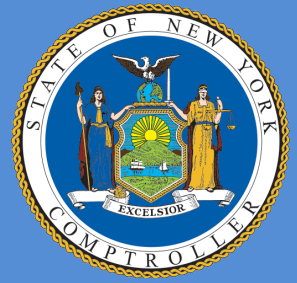
2025M-79 | October 2025

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Audit Results

Jasper-Troupsburg Central School District



Audit Objective

Audit Period

Did Jasper-Troupsburg Central School District (District) officials properly conduct and report emergency drills?

July 1, 2023 – June 24, 2025

Understanding the Audit Area

Emergency drills include instructional school building (building) evacuation and lockdown drills and emergency bus drills (bus drills). Evacuation drills practice emergency procedures, evacuation routes and evacuation sites. Evacuation is used in response to various building emergencies such as fire, gas leak, roof collapse or flooding. Lockdown drills practice the essential steps necessary to lockdown in an emergency. Bus drills are conducted to learn the location, use and operation of the emergency doors, fire extinguishers, first-aid equipment and windows as a means of escape from fire or accident. These drills provide staff and students with instructions and training to help respond appropriately in an emergency.

Responsibilities for the emergency drills are delegated to various District officials, as detailed in Appendix A's Profile section.

Audit Summary

District officials did not conduct all required drills or conduct all drills within the required time frames and officials could not support that they met all drill requirements. Officials also did not conduct all required bus drills, did not ensure all students participated in bus drills, did not file the required New York State Education Department (SED) annual certification for bus drills or properly notify parents or persons in parental relations (together "parents") of drills as required in 2024-25.

Without adequate emergency instruction and training, District officials cannot ensure that staff and students are prepared for emergencies. Additionally, without properly notifying parents in advance of building drills, parents may not have sufficient information to ask questions about procedures or be prepared to discuss the drills as necessary with their children. In addition, properly informing parents can also help to avoid any unnecessary panic that an actual emergency is occurring and assists parents in recognizing and contributing to being prepared for emergencies.

The report includes four recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the District's emergency drills operations. District officials generally agreed with our recommendations and their response is included in Appendix B.

We conducted this audit pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and the Office of the New York State Comptroller's (OSC) authority as set forth in Article 3 of New York State General Municipal Law (GML). Our methodology and standards are included in Appendix C.

The Board of Education (Board) has the responsibility to initiate corrective action. A written corrective action plan (CAP) that addresses the findings and recommendations in this report must be prepared and provided to our office within 90 days, pursuant to Section 35 of GML, Section 2116-a (3)(c) of the Education Law and Section 170.12 of the Regulations. To the extent practicable, implementation of the CAP must begin by the end of the next fiscal year. 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. The CAP should be posted on the District's website for public review.

Emergency Drills: Findings and Recommendations

School district officials are responsible for ensuring student safety and compliance with applicable laws and guidance. School district requirements for conducting and reporting emergency drills for buildings and buses are established through New York State Education Law (Education Law), the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education (Regulations) and New York State Fire Code (Fire Code).

During the regular school year, District officials must conduct a minimum of 12 evacuation and lockdown drills for each building and three bus drills for each bus to provide staff and students with the training necessary to be able to respond appropriately in an emergency. District officials should maintain adequate documentation to support compliance with all drill requirements. Furthermore, beginning in July 2024, District officials are required to notify parents of building emergency drills within one week of the scheduled drill.

More details on the criteria used in this report, as well as resources we make available to District officials that can help officials improve operations, are included in Appendix A.

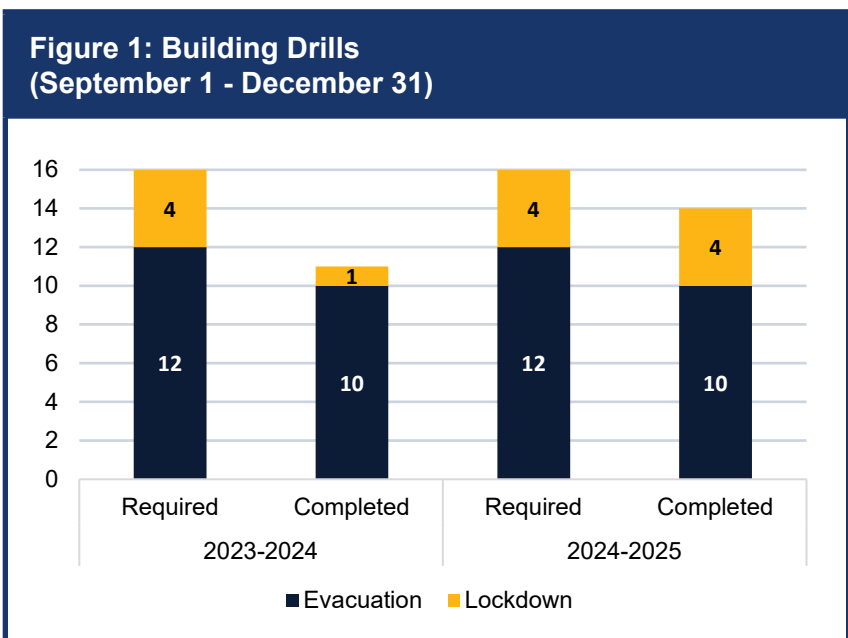
Finding 1 – District officials did not properly conduct and report all emergency drills.

District officials did not properly conduct and report all emergency drills for buildings or buses.

Although District officials conducted the 12 required evacuation and lockdown drills for both buildings during 2023-24 (24 total), they did not conduct all of the building drills within the required time frames. Of the 16 drills required each year by December 31, District officials did not conduct five by December 31, 2023 and two by December 31, 2024 (Figure 1). In addition, District officials did not conduct three of the four evacuation drills required within 10 days of the beginning of classes. Drills were not completed within the required time frames because both Principals were unaware of the requirements.

Additionally, District officials could not support that all building drill requirements were met. District officials' documentation did not support drills for:

- Secondary egress;



- Lunch periods, assemblies, or procedural instructions when drills were not conducted during lunch or assemblies; and
- Different times during the elementary school's day.

This occurred because District officials did not set up the record of completed drills to include all information necessary (e.g., the time of the drill) to document compliance with all building drill requirements. Although both Principals told us that evacuation drills included blocking hallways for secondary egress, that some drills were during lunch periods and that students and staff were informed of what to do during a drill that occurred during lunch or assembly, this was not documented.

District officials also did not properly notify parents for eight of the 16 drills that required notification; they did not send notifications for five drills, did not send two notifications within a week before the drill and improperly included the specific date of a drill in one notification (Figure 2). District officials did not provide adequate explanations for not sending appropriate notifications.

Furthermore, District officials did not conduct four of the 72 required bus drills (two in 2023-24 and two in 2024-25). Additionally, although bus drivers used the required SED forms, the bus drivers or District staff did not completely fill out the forms to support information for the conducted bus drills, including the drill's date. Therefore, we were unable to determine whether all bus drills were completed within the required time frames. In addition, District officials could not provide supporting documentation showing that all students participated in bus drills or were provided instruction covering the content of such drills, as required. The Transportation Supervisor told us that the bus drivers did not conduct verbal bus mini drills for trips or provide bus drills for students that did not ordinarily ride the bus because it is difficult finding bus drivers willing to conduct the drills. Finally, former District officials did not file the required annual SED filing for the 2023-24 school year, which certifies the dates bus drills were conducted.

Conducting these building and bus drills is essential to educate students on the safety aspects of buses and emergency procedures. Without adequate emergency instruction and training, District officials cannot ensure that staff and students are prepared for emergencies. Also, without properly notifying parents in advance of building drills, parents may not have sufficient information to ask questions about procedures or be prepared to discuss the drills as necessary with their children. In addition, properly informing parents can also help to avoid any unnecessary panic that an actual emergency is occurring and assists parents in recognizing and contributing to being prepared for emergencies.

Figure 2: Notifications to Parents



Recommendations

The Superintendent of Schools (Superintendent) should ensure District officials:

1. Properly conduct and document emergency drills.
2. Amend the building drill documents to capture all building drill requirements to ensure compliance.
3. Send appropriate parental notifications.
4. Certify and file required reports to SED that bus drills were conducted.

Appendix A: Profile, Criteria and Resources

Profile

The District operates two buildings with approximately 400 students – an elementary school and a high school – each with a Principal responsible for conducting drills within their building. The Transportation Supervisor is generally responsible for transportation services, including bus drills. The Superintendent serves as the Chief Emergency Officer and is responsible for ensuring required emergency drills are conducted at both buildings. The Business Official is also the Director of Transportation and is responsible for completing and filing certain required SED reports.

The District's boundaries include parts of the Towns of Cameron, Canisteo, Jasper, Rathbone, Troupsburg and Woodhull in Steuben County. The elected seven-member Board is responsible for the District's general management including emergency preparedness.

The Business Official started in September 2024 and the Superintendent started in December 2024.

Criteria – Emergency Drills

School district officials should conduct emergency drills as required and should maintain adequate documentation to support compliance with all drill requirements.

Education Law 807 and Regulations Section 155.17 require that school district officials conduct at least eight evacuation drills and four lockdown drills with students each school year, with six evacuations drills and two lockdown drills occurring between September 1 and December 31. Also, Fire Code requires that the first evacuation drill occurs within 10 days of the beginning of classes. In addition, four evacuation drills must use the fire escapes on buildings where fire escapes are provided or use an identified secondary egress, such as through different corridors, hallways, stairways, and exit doors. All building drills are to be conducted on different dates at different times during the school day. School district officials must also provide students and staff with procedural instructions for evacuation and lockdown drills during the lunch period or assemblies, if drills are not completed during these times. Beginning in July 2024, school district officials are required to provide parents notification of all building drills within one week before the drill. The notification should include the type of drill and general time frame, but not include specific dates and times.

Education Law Section 3623 and Regulations Section 156.3 require a minimum of three emergency drills conducted on each bus during the school year, with the first conducted during the first seven days of school, the second between November 1 and December 31 and the third between March 1 and April 30. The bus drills must be conducted in accordance with the SED form. In addition, Regulations Section 156.3 also requires that students who do not participate in bus drills be provided with classroom instruction covering the content of such drills. The Regulations also state that verbal bus mini drills

should be conducted for students prior to the beginning of every sports or activity trip and that school district officials must certify on the annual report to SED that the school district has complied with all requirements addressed in Regulations Section 156.3.

Additional Resources

Our website can be used to search for audits, resources, publications and training for officials: <https://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government>.

Appendix B: Response From District Officials

JASPER-TROUPSBURG CENTRAL SCHOOL

HOME OF THE WILDCATS

Board of Education
Jodi VanGorden, *President*
Chad Groff, *Vice-President*
Dylan Price
Laura Eggleston
Jason Ives
Melissa Miles
Cameron M. Bullock

Jason R. Oliver
Superintendent of Schools

Adam R. Button
School Business Official

Kerry S. Davis
High School Principal

Brian J. McCaffrey
Elementary School Principal

Troy Terry, District Clerk

Jane Hall, Curriculum and
Instruction

October 8, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

District officials appreciate the time and effort the Office of the State Comptroller devoted to reviewing Jasper-Troupsburg Central School District's emergency drill procedures. The safety and security of our students and staff remain our highest priority, and we view this audit as an opportunity to further strengthen our emergency preparedness practices.

We agree with the audit findings and are committed to implementing the recommendations provided. The District has already taken steps to enhance its safety program, including revising documentation practices, improving parent notifications, and ensuring that all required building and bus drills are conducted and reported within the established timelines.

In addition to these measures, the District engaged nationally recognized school safety expert [REDACTED] during the 2024-25 school year to conduct comprehensive vulnerability and safety assessments at both district buildings. Following his assessment and presentation to staff, multiple improvements were implemented to enhance school safety and align with best practices in emergency preparedness.

The Superintendent, Building Principals, and Director of Transportation will continue to monitor compliance and maintain the necessary records to verify completion of all required drills and reports. The District will also ensure timely submission of annual certifications to the New York State Education Department. The Board of Education and administration appreciate the Comptroller's guidance and remain fully committed to fostering a culture of safety, preparedness, and continuous improvement across the Jasper-Troupsburg Central School District.

Sincerely,

Jason Oliver
Superintendent

Jodi VanGorden
Board of Education President

High School Building
2661 State Route 248
Greenwood, NY 14839
607-792-3690

District Office
2661 State Route 248
Greenwood, NY 14839
607-792-3675

Elementary School Building
908 State Route 36
Troupsburg, NY 14885
607-525-6301

Appendix C: Audit Methodology and Standards

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 interviewed District officials and employees and reviewed written policies to gain an understanding of the District's emergency drill procedures and determined whether District officials filed the 2023-24 SED annual report certifying bus drill completion.
- We reviewed the emergency drill logs for both buildings for 2023-24 and 2024-25 (through March 31, 2025) to determine whether emergency drills were properly conducted and reported, and documentation was maintained to support compliance with Education Law, Regulations and Fire Code.
- We determined whether District officials sent notifications to parents for building drills conducted from July 31, 2024 through March 31, 2025 within the required time frame and whether the notifications' content was appropriate.
- We reviewed the list of District buses and routes to determine the number of required bus drills for 2023-24 and 2024-25. We then reviewed the completed bus drill forms for 2023-24 and 2024-25 (fall, winter and spring bus drills) to determine whether all required drills were properly conducted.

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.

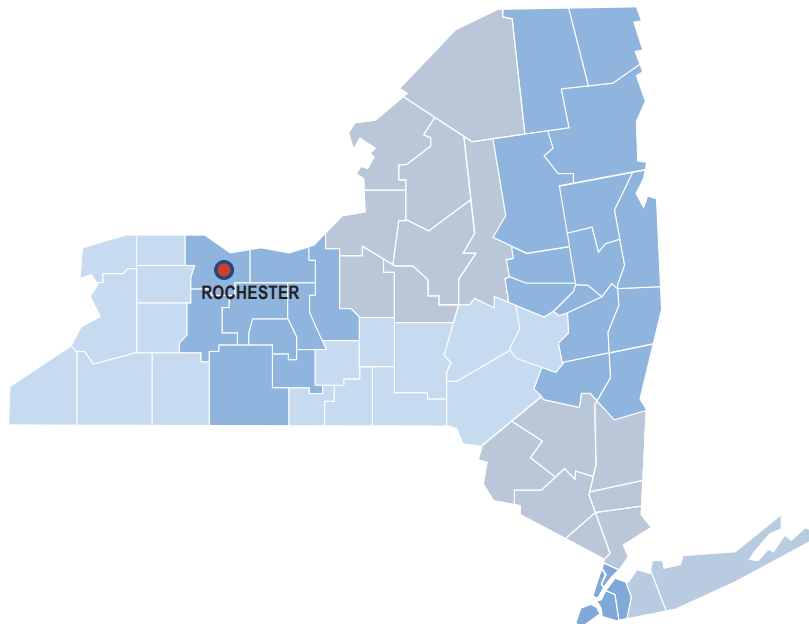
Contact

ROCHESTER REGIONAL OFFICE – Stephanie Howes, Chief of Municipal Audits

The Powers Building • 16 West Main Street – Suite 522 • Rochester, New York 14614-1608

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