

Performance Audit of
LIBERTY COUNTY SCHOOL
DISTRICT

FINAL REPORT



July 27, 2022

RESSEL & ASSOCIATES, LLC

Overview of Performance Audit Findings

Liberty County School District
July 27, 2022

Overall, the District Partially Met Expectations in Four Areas and Did Not Meet Expectations in Two Areas Examined

Issue Area (Number of Subtasks Examined)	Overall Conclusion	Did the District Meet Subtask Expectations?		
		Yes	Partially	No
Economy, efficiency, or effectiveness of the program (7)	Did Not Meet	2	3	2
Structure or design of the program (2)	Partially Met	1	1	0
Alternative methods of providing program services or products (4)	Partially Met	2	2	0
Goals, objectives, and performance measures (3)	Did Not Meet	0	1	2
Accuracy or adequacy of public documents, reports, and requests prepared by the school district (5)	Partially Met	2	3	0
Compliance with appropriate policies, rules, and laws (5)	Partially Met	2	3	0
All Areas (26)		9	13	4

Results in Brief

In accordance with s. 212.055(11), F.S., and Government Auditing Standards, Ressel & Associates, LLC (Ressel) conducted a performance audit of the Liberty County School District programs within the administrative units that will receive funds through the referendum approved by Resolution adopted by the Liberty County School Board on August 10, 2021. These programs are Facilities Planning, Use, and Construction; and Technology Implementation and Upgrades. For each program, the performance audit included an examination of the issue areas identified below.

1. The economy, efficiency, or effectiveness of the program.
2. The structure or design of the program to accomplish its goals and objectives.
3. Alternative methods of providing program services or products.

4. Goals, objectives, and performance measures used by the program to monitor and report program accomplishments.
5. The accuracy or adequacy of public documents, reports, and requests prepared by the county or school district which relate to the program.
6. Compliance of the program with appropriate policies, rules, and laws.

Findings for each of the six issue areas were based on the extent to which the programs met expectations established by audit subtasks. Overall, the audit found that Liberty County School District partially met expectations in four areas and did not meet expectations in two areas. Of the 26 total subtasks, the audit determined that the District partially met 13, met 9, and did not meet 4.

A summary of audit findings by issue area is presented below. A more detailed overview of the findings can be found in the Executive Summary.

Findings by Issue Area _____

Economy, Efficiency, or Effectiveness of the Program

Overall, the Liberty County School District did not meet expectations in this area. Management reporting is limited and performance monitoring activities are primarily informal. No regular financial reports showing budget to actual data are being produced for the Board and the unassigned fund balance is dangerously low. Response to external audit findings and recommendations are strong for financial audits, but less rigorous in the competitive procurement and contracting arena. The internal monitoring structure of the District overall is hampered by a lack of management oversight and technical expertise in the competitive procurement and contract management functions. There are no specific performance evaluation criteria cost data used to evaluate the facilities and maintenance functions or information technology. Ressel recommends that the administration immediately establish documented competitive procurement and contract management procedures; begin providing detailed financial reports to the Board; develop strategies for improving the financial position of the district by increasing the unassigned general fund balance to safer levels and require regular reports showing performance and cost data districtwide and from the program areas under review.

The structure or design of the program to accomplish its goals and objectives

Overall, the Liberty County School District partially met expectations in this area. LCSD's central organization structure is properly aligned, minimizing overlaps and excess layers of management. LCSD has made efforts over the last two years to reduce staffing levels through attrition. Based on current overall student to staff ratios districtwide, the Ressel team concluded that a further reduction in staffing is needed to help build or maintain the fund balance. The organization of the program areas under review is generally appropriate, however, the

Maintenance and Transportation Department may be better aligned with other operational functions under the Assistant Superintendent. Staffing levels are reasonable in the program areas of maintenance, custodial, and technology. Ressel recommends conducting an analysis of staffing needs for 2022-23 to determine if additional staff reductions can be made. Ressel also recommends evaluating the organization structure to determine if the Maintenance and Transportation would be more effectively placed under the Assistant Superintendent to improve collaboration with and among other operational areas.

Alternative methods of providing services or Products

Overall, the Liberty County School District partially met expectations in this area. LCSD has defaulted to hiring external expertise for professional services and other technical areas requiring specialized expertise. No formal analysis of the costs and benefits is being conducted to assess whether additional staff could reduce overall costs while maintaining or improving the quality of services. A notable exception was the analysis done to determine whether to relocate or rebuild the JROTC building, the result of which was a cost savings of \$950,000 based on the alternative approach for relocation. Ressel recommends creating a uniform process for justifying both contract services and the creation of new positions, which examines the full cost and benefits for both options. Ressel further recommends evaluating whether additional maintenance staff should be hired and as opportunities arise in the technology arena, conduct a formal analysis to determine if an alternative delivery method is feasible and efficient. Relating to future projects, Ressel recommends that LCSD consider contracting for the temporary services of an expert with construction management and accounting expertise to assist the District with future major construction, renovation, and repair projects.

Goals, objectives, and performance measures used by the program to monitor and report program accomplishments

Overall, the Liberty County School District did not meet expectations in this area. LCSD's districtwide planning efforts are in progress but few program plans and goals are in use to evaluate performance. Performance is informally measured through work order systems and the absence of crisis. With the exception of the technology function, there are few internal control mechanisms in place to ensure the achievement of formal or informal program goals and objectives. There is no Facility Plan or Technology Plan and only a limited number of informal goals or needs lists. Ressel recommends revising the Strategic Plan to include timelines, measurable outcomes, and linkages to the District's budget; developing performance measures, and systems for tracking the efficiency of the maintenance and facilities functions and regularly reporting performance to leadership and the Board; and once a comprehensive Technology Plan is developed, creating key technology-related strategies and performance measures to assess program cost and performance and lead to sustainable funding for the future.

The accuracy or adequacy of public documents, reports, and requests prepared by the school district which relate to the program

Overall, the Liberty County School District partially met expectations in this area. LCSD has financial and non-financial information systems that provide useful, timely and accurate information for management purposes. Of the limited number of reports prepared by the program areas under review the Ressel team found them to be accurate and complete. The District has made the website more accessible by the public and there is a limited amount of data available for public review on the Technology webpage and on the Board site. The public can request data through the Open Records process, however there are no administrative procedures

to guide that process. In addition, some, but not all of the performance and cost data are made available on the website in compliance with the Financial Transparency Act. Ressel recommends that the District schedule training and consultation on Skyward for the new Finance Director and key leaders to determine how the District can maximize the system capabilities and evaluate the continued use of the email-based work order system for maintenance. Further, Ressel recommends that the District immediately take steps to comply with Fiscal Transparency requirements found in s. 1011.035, *Florida Statutes*.

Compliance of the program with appropriate policies, rules, and laws

Overall, the Liberty County School District partially met expectations in this area. The general compliance and control environment districtwide is strong in most areas, but additional expertise and oversight of the facility construction and contract management functions is needed. The District is in compliance in all material aspects with the Surtax provisions including the proposed use of funds. Ressel recommends the creation of administrative procedures and the identification of staff development needs for key administrators involved in facility maintenance and construction management activities. In addition, Ressel recommends that LCSD implement a tighter control system that at a minimum includes review of competitive bid and contract documents by outside counsel as well as the establishment of checklists relating to the documentation required for all construction-related services to ensure and validate compliance.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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The objective of the audit was to fulfill the requirements of s. 212.055(11), *Florida Statutes*. This statute requires that Florida school districts, with a referendum on the discretionary sales surtax held after March 23, 2018, undergo a performance audit conducted of the program areas associated with the proposed sales surtax adoption. For the Liberty County School District, the program areas under review include the District administrative unit(s) related to:

- facility construction, reconstruction, renovation, remodeling, land acquisition and improvement, retrofitting, and
- the purchase of technology equipment, hardware and software for the school District.

The objectives of the audit are to evaluate the program areas identified in the Surtax Resolution based on the following Research Tasks:

1. The economy, efficiency, or effectiveness of the program
2. The structure or design of the program to accomplish its goals and objectives
3. Alternative methods of providing services or products
4. Goals, objectives, and performance measures used by the program to monitor and report program accomplishments
5. The accuracy or adequacy of public documents, reports, and requests prepared by the school District, which relate to the program
6. Compliance of the program with appropriate policies, rules, and laws

Below is a summary of the results found in each Research Task with summary information regarding the program areas under review. Only key recommendations are provided in this section. Chapters 1 to 6 of the main report contain more detailed information and a complete list of all recommendations.

RESEARCH TASK 1 – THE ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY, OR EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM.

Finding Summary: Overall, the Liberty County School District Did Not Meet Task 1.

Of the seven (7) subtasks associated with Research Task 1, Ressel & Associates concluded that the District met standards on two subtasks, partially met standards on three subtasks, and did not meet standards on the remaining two subtasks. Overall, Ressel and Associates found that management reporting is limited, performance monitoring activities are primarily informal and response to external audit findings and recommendations are strong for financial audits, but less rigorous in the competitive procurement and contracting arena. The internal monitoring structure of the District overall is hampered by a lack of management oversight and technical expertise in the competitive procurement and contract management functions.

Subtask 1.1 Management Reports - Review any management reports/data that program administrators use on a regular basis and determine whether this information is adequate to monitor program performance and cost. **Did Not Meet**

- **Districtwide** –Regular financial reports showing the budget to actual expenditures to date are not provided to the Board on a regular basis, as required by Section 6A-1.008 Financial Statements of the Florida Administrative Code.
- **Facilities and Technology** – No reports are provided to leadership or the Board that are adequate to monitor program performance or cost.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Immediately begin providing financial reports showing budget to actual data to the Board providing them with sufficient detail to allow the Board to reasonably assess the District's financial performance.*
- *Prepare management reports for the School Board based on specified performance related criteria.*

Subtask 1.2 Performance Evaluation Criteria - Determine whether the program is periodically evaluated using performance information and other reasonable criteria to assess program performance and cost. **Did Not Meet**

- **Districtwide** – There is a lack of any type of program level performance evaluation criteria that is regularly tracked and monitored at the leadership and Board level.
- **Facilities** – There are no specific performance evaluation criteria to evaluate the facilities and maintenance functions. LCSD tracks deferred maintenance needs but does not consider this a measure of performance.
- **Technology** - The Think HelpDesk application provides an efficient mechanism for reporting and tracking performance as it relates to IT-related workorders, however other metrics that would be useful on a more global level have not been established.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Follow-through with the Strategic Planning process and establish performance evaluation criteria with which to assess program performance and cost.*
- *Develop performance evaluation criteria for the facilities and maintenance function, including measures to hold external contractors accountable*
- *Identify critical performance criteria that will provide the department and leadership information relating to the overall performance of the program.*

Subtask 1.3 Findings and Recommendations - Review findings and recommendations included in any relevant internal or external reports on program performance and cost. **Meets** (Reports provided as requested)

Subtask 1.4 Reasonable and Timely Action - Determine whether program administrators have taken reasonable and timely actions to address any deficiencies in program performance and/or cost identified in management reports/data, periodic program evaluations, audits, etc. **Partially Meets**

- **Districtwide** – External Financial and Federal Single Audits performed by the Auditor General over the last three fiscal years were generally unmodified and the response to correct identified weaknesses were reasonable and timely.
- **Facilities** – The October 2021 Operational Audit identified weaknesses relating to one or more procurement and contract management practices that have not been adequately addressed to mitigate the noted deficiencies.
- **Technology** – The Ressel team identified no findings or recommendations relating to technology.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations relating to the weaknesses identified in the Operational Audit are addressed under Task 1.7 Competitive Procurement.

Subtask 1.5 Program Performance - Evaluate program performance and cost based on reasonable measures, including best practices. **Partially Meets.**

- **Districtwide** –The Unassigned fund balance for the District has fallen below 5 percent, which is dangerously low.
- **Facilities** –The Ressel team found the function is reactive in its approach to maintenance which has resulted in the District operating in a continual crisis mode, which in turn has resulted in higher costs per student than its peers.
- **Technology** – LCSD has outpaced its peers in in per pupil expenditures for Instructional and Administrative Technology over the last five years in an effort to improve technology districtwide and has pursued E-Rate funds to improve the technology infrastructure for the District. Recent changes in State funding for information technology, however, have seriously impacted the District’s ability to meet the growing technology needs in the future.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Take immediate action to increase the General Fund Unrestricted Fund Balance to safer operating levels.*
- *Incorporate a preventative maintenance component into the Facilities and Maintenance function.*
- *1-13: Strategically analyze technology spending patterns and evaluate how available dollars can and should be allocated for maximum efficiency.*

Subtask 1.6 Case Studies of Past Projects - Evaluate the cost, timing, and quality of current program efforts based on a reasonably sized sample of projects to determine whether they were of reasonable cost and completed well, on time, and within budget. **Meets.**

- **Districtwide** – Case Studies of two major construction projects provided evidence that LCSD’s construction management process has resulted in projects coming in on time and within budget; however, reliance on external expertise without sufficient oversight was identified as a cause for concern. Choosing the more challenging option to relocate the JROTC Building rather than raze an existing building allowed \$950,000 of special facilities funding to be used as part of the new high school.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Associated recommendations relating to competitive procurement and contract oversight are addressed in related sections of this report.

Subtask 1.7 Competitive Procurement - Determine whether the District has established written policies and procedures to take maximum advantage of competitive procurement, volume discounts, and special pricing agreements. **Partially Meets.**

- **Districtwide** – LCSD’s competitive procurement framework is strong in terms of policy but lacks the structure and procedures to ensure that goods and services are procured in a cost effective and compliant manner. Four of the six findings in the Auditor General’s Operational Audit relate to insufficient contract oversight and more specifically District oversight of the Construction Manager; although the new High School project is complete, the District remains ill-equipped to provide the level of contract oversight expertise needed for future large projects. Documentation and approval requirements related to single source contracting are not always followed.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Create administrative purchasing procedures that detail the specific thresholds and required processes at each level, as well as the processes to follow in Skyward, the documentation required to support each purchase, the receiving processes and the processes for requesting or authorizing payment of invoices.*

- *Assign the Assistant Superintendent the responsibilities for ensuring that all purchases are compliant with Board policy and administrative procedures. When appropriate, solicit a review by the Board attorney.*
- *Contract for the services of a qualified individual to act in the role of construction auditor/manager to ensure that the District receives the high-quality goods and services negotiated in large construction or renovation contracts.*
- *Ensure that single source procurements are well documented and signed off on by the Superintendent and the Board*

RESEARCH TASK 2 – PROGRAM DESIGN AND STRUCTURE

Finding Summary: Overall, the Liberty County School District Partially Meets Task 2.

Of the two (2) subtasks associated with Research Task 2, Ressel & Associates concluded that the District met standards on one subtask and partially met standards one subtask. Overall, Ressel and Associates found that LCSD's central organization structure is properly aligned, minimizing overlaps and excess layers of management. Based on overall student to staff ratios districtwide, the Ressel team further concluded that an analysis of districtwide staffing needs for 2022-23 is needed to determine if additional staff reductions can be made. The organization of the program areas under review are generally appropriate, however, the Maintenance and Transportation Department may be better aligned with other operational functions under the Assistant Superintendent. Staffing levels are reasonable in the program areas of maintenance, custodial, and technology.

Subtask 2-1- Organization Structure - Review program organizational structure to ensure the program has clearly defined units, minimizes overlapping functions and excessive administrative layers, and has lines of authority that minimize administrative costs. **Meets**

- **Districtwide** – The overall central organization is organized into clearly defined units with a minimum of overlapping functions or layers. The Ressel team concluded that having the Safety and Security Specialist report directly to the Superintendent and increasing the monitoring of legal services would be appropriate. The Ressel team also found that job shadowing of the Finance Director was an effective method for ensuring the continuity of financial services upon her retirement.
- **Facilities** - The facilities and maintenance function is clearly defined in the organization, but the Director of Transportation and Maintenance is the only operational function that does not report to the Assistant Superintendent.
- **Technology** - Information Technology is organized under the Director of Instruction, has clearly defined units with no identified overlapping functions or excess administrative layers.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Modify the central office structure of the Liberty County School District and have the Safety and Security Specialist report directly to the Superintendent.*
- *Assign one central office administrator to be responsible for overseeing legal services, providing coordination with and among the three attorneys, and monitoring legal expenses.*

Subtask 2-2 - Staffing Levels - *Assess the reasonableness of current program staffing levels given the nature of the services provided and program workload. Partially Meets.*

- **Districtwide** – Although efforts have been made over the last two years to reduce staffing levels through attrition, the current staffing levels on a per pupil basis indicate a need for better allocation formulas and an annual review of the allocations.
- **Facilities** - LCSD’s Maintenance team is efficiently maintaining the District’s 398,589 net square feet of facilities. LCSD’s custodial staff are effectively and efficiently maintaining 28,500 square feet of facilities, which exceeds industry standards.
- **Technology** - The five-member Technology Team effectively supports 1,800 devices in the schools as well as devices housed at the central office and the campuses.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Continue effort to reduce staffing level by conducting an analysis of staffing needs for 2022-23 to determine if additional staff reductions can be made.*
- *Evaluate the organization structure to determine if the Maintenance and Transportation would be more effectively placed under the Assistant Superintendent to improve collaboration with and among other operational areas.*

RESEARCH TASK 3 – ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY METHODS

Finding Summary: Overall, the Liberty County School District Partially Meets Task 3.

Of the four (4) subtasks associated with Research Task 3, Ressel & Associates concluded that the District met standards on two subtasks and partially met standards on two subtasks. Overall, Ressel and Associates found that LCSD has defaulted to hiring external expertise for professional services and other technical areas requiring specialized expertise. No formal analysis of the costs and benefits is being conducted to assess whether additional staff could reduce overall costs while maintaining or improving the quality of services. A notable exception was the analysis done to determine whether to relocate or rebuild the JROTC building, the result of which was a cost savings of \$950,000 based on the alternative approach for relocation.

Subtask 3.1-Feasibility of Alternative Methods - Determine whether program administrators have formally evaluated existing inhouse services and activities to assess the feasibility of alternative methods of providing services, such as outside contracting and privatization, and determine the reasonableness of their conclusions. **Partially Meets.**

- **Districtwide** - LCSD has made use of contract services, outsourcing and other alternative delivery methods throughout the District; however, program administrators have not formally evaluated existing inhouse services and activities to assess the feasibility of alternative methods of providing services. LCSD has been a member of the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium (PAEC) for decades and believes services are cost effective due to the economies of scale that can be achieved through the partnership with other districts.
- **Facilities** - The District has not evaluated the feasibility of increasing the number of general maintenance staff while decreasing the amount of contracted work.
- **Technology** - The Ressel team found no evidence that formal feasibility studies had been conducted to determine what, if any, of the services provided in house could be outsourced to a private provider in a cost-effective manner.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Create a uniform process for justifying both contract services and the creation of new positions, which examines the full cost and benefits for both options.*
- *Conduct an analysis to evaluate the annual expenditures for maintenance-related contracted services that could have been performed in house had there been sufficient staff to determine if another position should be added.*
- *As opportunities arise in the technology arena, conduct a formal analysis to determine if an alternative delivery method is feasible and efficient.*

Subtask 3.2- Cost/Benefit Assessment - Determine whether program administrators have assessed any contracted and/or privatized services to verify effectiveness and cost savings achieved and determine the reasonableness of their conclusions; **Meets.**

- **Districtwide** - The Ressel team identified no examples where a cost-benefit assessment was applied to obtain central administrative services.
- **Facilities** - Detailed in Case Study 2 in Chapter 1, the District evaluated the cost to relocate the existing JROTC building to the new Liberty County High School site, and the cost to construct a new JROTC building at the campus. Based on that analysis, the decision was made to relocate the facility, saving \$950,000 in the process.
- **Technology** - As part of the services paid for with E-Rate funding, LCSD has agreements with Cloud59 Networks which includes MIBS and IaaS and was able to roll the current network less agreement into this plan.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Ressel & Associates made no recommendation under this subtask.

Subtask 3.3 - Service Delivery Changes - Determine whether program administrators have made changes to service delivery methods when their evaluations/assessments found that such changes would reduce program cost without significantly affecting the quality of services.

Partially Meets.

- **Districtwide** - The District uses PAEC for many districtwide systems and support functions. The Ressel team identified no other examples where alternative methods were instrumental in affecting service delivery changes at the central administrative level.
- **Facilities** – As noted above, the decision to cut the JROTC building in half and relocate it to the new High School site saved money. The decision saved money and required a shift in the methodology laid out in the original plan.
- **Technology** - The Ressel team found no instances where technology administrators made changes to service delivery methods when their evaluations/assessments found that such changes would reduce program cost without significantly affecting the quality of services.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Ressel & Associates made no recommendation under this subtask.

Subtask 3.4 Additional Opportunities - Identify possible opportunities for alternative service delivery methods that have the potential to reduce program costs without significantly affecting the quality of services, based on a review of similar programs in peer school Districts (e.g., other school Districts, etc.). **Meets.**

- **Districtwide** - The Ressel team identified no additional opportunities for alternative delivery methods at the central administration level.
- **Facilities** - LCSD lacks the expertise and time required to conduct professional construction project oversight; with future large projects LCSD could benefit from temporary contracted services for professional expertise to ensure appropriate materials are being used, billings are based on actual work performed and the like.
- **Technology** - The Ressel team identified no additional opportunities for changes in technology-related delivery methods.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Consider contracting for the temporary services of an expert with construction management and accounting expertise to assist the District with future major construction, renovation, and repair projects.*

RESEARCH TASK 4 – GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES**Finding Summary: Overall, the Liberty County School District Did Not Meet Task 4.**

Of the three (3) subtasks associated with Research Task 4, Ressel & Associates concluded that the District partially met standards on one subtask and did not meet standards on two subtasks. Overall, Ressel and Associates found LCSD's districtwide planning efforts are in progress but few program plans and goals are in use to evaluate performance. Performance is informally measured through work order systems and the absence of crisis. With the exception of the technology function, there are few internal control mechanisms in place to ensure the achievement of formal or informal program goals and objectives.

Subtask 4.1 - Program Goals and Objectives - Review program goals and objectives to determine whether they are clearly stated, measurable, can be achieved within budget, and are consistent with the District's strategic plan. Did Not Meet.

- **Districtwide** - The 2022–24 Strategic Plan adopted by the School Board on April 12, 2022, provides the basis by which future program goals and objectives can be evaluated; however senior staff, principals, Board members, and community representatives were not included in the creation of the Plan.
- **Facilities** - The Department prepares and submits the required FLDOE plans but has not used the State plans to establish goals or guide formal planning efforts and has no other formal program goals and objectives.
- **Technology** - Since the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) exempted districts from submitting a Digital Classrooms Plan to the Florida Department of Education, LCSD discontinued the practice of preparing a Digital Classroom Plan and currently has no long or short-range plans for Technology or performance measures to assess the effectiveness of student initiatives or progress toward goals.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Augment the 2022-24 Strategic Plan with the input and approval of the Board and involvement of District employees and community representatives.*
- *Define the maintenance and facility-related departmental goals, align the projects in the list to the goals to advance those goals and develop strategies and timelines for implementation.*

- *Create and implement a Technology Plan that expands the goals stated above to more broadly address the primary functions of the department and will allow the District's technology functions to mature educationally and administratively.*

Subtask 4.2 - Performance Measures - *Assess the measures, if any, the District uses to evaluate program performance and determine if they are sufficient to assess program progress toward meeting its stated goals and objectives. **Did Not Meet.***

- **Districtwide** - LCSD's Strategic Plan does not contain strategies or clearly measurable criteria or key performance indicators by which to regularly evaluate progress or the effectiveness of the program areas under review.
- **Facilities** - The Department does not have performance measures, and the only system with the potential for measuring staff performance is an email-based work order system with limited capabilities.
- **Technology** - The Technology Coordinator has a wealth of information available that could be used to measure performance, but that information is not regularly reported or used by leadership for that purpose.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Revise the Strategic Plan to include a timelines, measurable outcomes, and linkages to the District's budget.*
- *Develop performance measures, and systems for tracking the efficiency of the maintenance and facilities functions and regularly report performance to leadership and the Board.*
- *Once a comprehensive Technology Plan is developed, create key technology-related strategies and performance measures to assess program cost and performance and lead to sustainable funding for the future.*

Subtask 4.3 - Internal Controls - *Evaluate internal controls, including policies and procedures, to determine whether they provide reasonable assurance that program goals and objectives will be met. **Partially Meets.***

- **Districtwide** - Because the goals and objectives are still being finalized and there are no metrics used to monitor performance, the District has not yet established an internal control system to provide reasonable assurance that program goals and objectives will be met.
- **Facilities** - The Department has a facilities and maintenance procedures manual that is not currently in use and has no other internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that program goals and objectives will be met.

- **Technology** - The Technology Department has policies, procedures and systems in place that provide reasonable assurance in most cases that systems will continue to operate as intended and the user environment is controlled.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Establish a reporting format and schedule for the continual review of progress and updating of the Strategic Plan.*
- *Once the maintenance team has conducted a full review of Board policy relating to facilities, amend the existing procedures manual to reflect actual practice with cross references to appropriate board policies.*

RESEARCH TASK 5 – REPORTING ACCURACY AND ADEQUACY

Finding Summary: Overall, the Liberty County School District Partially Meets Task 5.

Of the five (5) subtasks associated with Research Task 5, Ressel & Associates concluded that the District met standards on two subtasks, partially met standards on three subtasks. Overall, Ressel and Associates found LCSD has financial and non-financial information systems that provide useful, timely and accurate information for management purposes. Of the limited number of reports prepared by the program areas under review the Ressel team found them to be accurate and complete. The District has made the website more accessible by the public and there is limited amount of data available for public review on the Technology webpage and on the Board site. The public can request data through the Open Records process, however there are no administrative procedures to guide that process. In addition, some, but not all of the performance and cost data are made available on the website in compliance with the Financial Transparency Act.

Subtask 5.1 - Information Systems - *Assess whether the program has financial and non-financial information systems that provide useful, timely, and accurate information to the public. Partially Meets.*

- **Districtwide** – Districtwide, there are many financial and non-financial information systems in use, however few are used to provide information to the public. Although the Skyward system is the primary enterprise resource system for the District, the District has not taken advantage of some of the system capabilities, including the ability to reduce manual processes and produce user friendly reports.
- **Facilities** - The only information system regularly used by Maintenance and Transportation is an email-based work order system that is incapable of providing useful, timely, and accurate information to the public; the capabilities of Skyward for producing relevant facility related operational costs and analytics are not being fully utilized.

- **Technology** - The Technology Department uses a number of information systems that effectively support the IT programs in the District.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Schedule training and consultation on Skyward for the new CFO and key leaders to determine how the District can maximize the system capabilities.*
- *Evaluate the continued use of the email-based work order system and explore the capabilities of Skyward to expand transparency to the public about the maintenance of the District's assets.*

Subtask 5.2 - Internal and External Reports - Review available documents, including relevant internal and external reports, that evaluate the accuracy or adequacy of public documents, reports, and requests prepared by the District related to the program. **Meets.**

- **Districtwide** - No reports were found that evaluate the accuracy or adequacy of public documents, reports, and requests prepared by the District related to the program.
- **Facilities** - Facilities and Maintenance prepares only a limited number of reports required by FLDOE and no instances were found indicating that the reports were inaccurate or incomplete.
- **Technology** - Although many of the systems above are not being currently used to produce formal reports, the capability to access a significant amount of data exists. Some data was provided to the Ressel team from the inventory and workorder system with no evidence of inaccuracies.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Develop the project wish list of the ongoing facilities needs for the District into reports for the Board and the general public.*

Subtask 5.3 - Public Access - Determine whether the public has access to program performance and cost information that is readily available and easy to locate. **Partially Meets.**

- **Districtwide** - The Liberty County School District has a 2014 Board-approved document that serves as the only policy and direction for open record requests. There is no administrative procedure to guide open record requests and the process for requesting open records is not shown on the District's website.

LCSD is providing the public easy access to some, but not all, of the District's Budget/Financial data in compliance with provisions found in s. 1011.035, *Florida Statutes*, regarding school district budget transparency.

- **Facilities** - Maintenance and Transportation does not submit reports to the Board that are shared as part of the Board packets. The District's website provides bus routes and contact information of two employees in the Department. However, the website provides little information to the public about facilities and maintenance activities.
- **Technology** - The Technology Department has a page on the District website <https://www.lcsb.org/technology> that contains information for staff and students including a copy of the District's accessibility plan. There is, however, no program performance or cost information available on the site.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Create an administrative procedure to set a consistent fee structure, as referred to in Policy 8310, and prominently advertise the procedure for requesting public records on the District's website.*
- *Immediately make all data required in statute available to the public in compliance with s. 1011.035, Florida Statutes, School district budget transparency.*
- *Prepare regular reports to the Board and add relevant information about the facilities and maintenance function to the District's website.*
- *Gather and report technology-related cost and performance data to the Board and the general public through the website.*

Subtask 5.4 - Accuracy and Completeness - Review processes the program has in place to ensure the accuracy and completeness of any program performance and cost information provided to the public. **Meets.**

- **Districtwide** - The Finance Department has procedures in place to ensure that reasonable and timely actions are taken to ensure that annual financial reports are accurate.
- **Facilities** - The District prepares and submits the facilities reports as required by FLDOE and the Ressel team found no evidence that these reports were incomplete or inaccurate.
- **Technology** - Published documents such as the Technology Disaster Recovery Plan appear to be comprehensive, accurate and complete.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Ressel & Associates made no recommendation under this subtask.

Subtask 5.5- Corrective Actions - Determine whether the program has procedures in place that ensure that reasonable and timely actions are taken to correct any erroneous and/or

*incomplete program information included in public documents, reports, and other materials prepared by the District and that these procedures provide for adequate public notice of such corrections. **Partially Meets.***

- **Districtwide** - There is no formal process or procedure in place to take corrective action should data be inaccurately reported.
- **Facilities** - LCSD nor FLDOE have identified any corrective actions needed in the facilities reports the District provided.
- **Technology** - The Ressel team identified no instances where corrective actions were required

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Contemplate the need for retractions and republication of reports or other data, and establish internal guidelines to follow to ensure adequate public notice of such corrections.*

RESEARCH TASK 6 - PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

Finding Summary: Overall, the Liberty County School District Partially Meets Task 6.

Of the five (5) subtasks associated with Research Task 6, Ressel & Associates concluded that the District met standards on two subtasks and partially met standards on three subtasks. Task 6.5 is considered met as the District has no charter schools. Overall, Ressel and Associates found the general compliance and control environment districtwide is strong in most areas, but additional expertise and oversight of the facility construction and contract management functions are needed. The District is in compliance in all material aspects with the Surtax provisions including the proposed use of funds.

Subtask 6.1 - Compliance Processes** - Determine whether the program has a process to assess its compliance with applicable (i.e., relating to the program's operation) federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations; contracts; grant agreements; and local policies. **Partially Meets.

- **Districtwide** – LCSD's Board Policy Manual provides a compliance framework that is comprehensive and up to date. Few administrative procedures exist, however, to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations; contracts; grant agreements; and local policies in the program areas under review.
- **Facilities** - The facilities and maintenance functions lack a process to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations. In compliance with Board policy regarding the District's tax-exempt status and to control construction costs,

when purchasing materials for large projects, the Construction Manager competitively bids the materials and the District pays for the materials directly to avoid paying sales tax.

- **Technology** - LCSD has extensive policies and procedures addressing the control of the technology inventory and the use of technology devices by students and staff and uses a number of programs and applications to monitor compliance and/or deter abuses.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Subscribe to an administrative procedures service or require key departments to prepare administrative procedures to document how LCSD will implement and comply with policy.*
- *Determine the skill sets most critical to fulfilling the Director's job requirements and establish a plan for one-time and ongoing staff development related to each of those functional areas.*

Subtask 6.2 - Compliance Controls - Review program internal controls to determine whether they are reasonable to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations; contracts; grant agreements; and local policies and procedures. **Partially Meets.**

- **Districtwide** - Competitive bidding is decentralized in terms of formal bids and quotes; meaning that each department or area is responsible for ensuring compliance with purchasing policies with few document processes, procedures or controls in place to ensure legal compliance.

Budgetary controls over purchasing and the payment of invoices are strong, beginning with the use of requisitions in Skyward that encumber the funds and Board approval required before vendor payments are released. LCSD also has policies and procedures for the recording and inventorying of District assets and the appropriate disposal of assets.

- **Facilities** - The District has no established checklists or standards relating to the documentation required to support compliance with competitive bidding requirements, contract management activities or contract close-outs.
- **Technology** - LCSD employs a number of applications and manual processes to ensure that policies are followed.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Implement a tighter control system that at a minimum includes review of competitive bid and contract documents by outside counsel.*
- *Establish checklists relating to the documentation required for all construction-related services to ensure and validate compliance.*

Subtask 6.3 - Addressing Non-Compliance - Determine whether program administrators have taken reasonable and timely actions to address any noncompliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations; contracts; grant agreements; and local policies and procedures identified by internal or external evaluations, audits, or other means. **Partially Meets.**

- **Districtwide** - The Auditor General identified areas of non-compliance with purchasing guidelines in its Operational Audit, that have not been adequately addressed.
- **Facilities** - The Maintenance and Transportation Director was unaware that areas of non-compliance were found by the Auditor General and was not involved in preparing a response.
- **Technology** - By policy, the District has established discipline processes for non-compliance with use policies for students and staff, up to and including employee dismissal.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Inform the Director and Finance staff of the Operational Audit findings and require them to create agreed to and documented procedures for the appropriate handling of future large projects*

Subtask 6.4 - Surtax Compliance - Determine whether program administrators have taken reasonable and timely actions to determine whether planned uses of the surtax are in compliance with applicable state laws, rules, and regulations. **Meets.**

- **Districtwide** - LCSD has taken reasonable and timely action to comply with State laws, rules and regulations regarding the process for bringing the Surtax referendum to the Voters and for the planned use of the proceeds should the Surtax be approved by Voters.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Ressel & Associates made no recommendation under this subtask.

Subtask 6.5 - Charter School Funds - Determine whether the school District has processes to distribute funds to District charter schools and mechanisms for charter schools to report how the funds are used. **Meets.**

At this time, there are no charter schools in Liberty County; therefore, this provision of law does not currently pertain.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

In January 2022, Ressel & Associates responded to a Request for Quote (RFQ) issued from the Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) for a performance audit of the Liberty County School District. Ressel & Associates was awarded the contract and immediately began work on the project by drafting a work plan which was first approved by OPPAGA. The work plan was then provided to the District's leadership.

As stated in the RFQ, the work plan addressed the requirements of Ch. 2018-118, *Laws of Florida*, found codified in s. 212.055(10), *Florida Statutes*, passed during the 2018 session of The Florida Legislature. The relevant portion states as follows:

212.055 Discretionary sales surtaxes; legislative intent; authorization and use of proceeds.—It is the legislative intent that any authorization for imposition of a discretionary sales surtax shall be published in the Florida Statutes as a subsection of this section, irrespective of the duration of the levy. Each enactment shall specify the types of counties authorized to levy; the rate or rates which may be imposed; the maximum length of time the surtax may be imposed, if any; the procedure which must be followed to secure voter approval, if required; the purpose for which the proceeds may be expended; and such other requirements as the Legislature may provide. Taxable transactions and administrative procedures shall be as provided in s.212.054. (11)

PERFORMANCE AUDIT.—

(a) To adopt a discretionary sales surtax under this section, an independent certified public accountant licensed pursuant to chapter 473 shall conduct a performance audit of the program associated with the proposed surtax.

- (b)*
- 1. At least 180 days before the referendum is held, the county or school district shall provide a copy of the final resolution or ordinance to the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.*
 - 2. Within 60 days after receiving the final resolution or ordinance, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability shall procure the certified public accountant and may use carryforward funds to pay for the services of the certified public accountant.*
 - 3. At least 60 days before the referendum is held, the performance audit must be completed and the audit report, including any findings, recommendations, or other accompanying documents, must be made available on the official website of the county or school district.*
 - 4. The county or school district shall keep the information on its website for 2 years from the date it was posted.*
 - 5. The failure to comply with the requirements under subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 3. renders any referendum held to adopt a discretionary sales surtax void.*

(c) For purposes of this subsection, the term “performance audit” means an examination of the program conducted according to applicable government auditing standards or auditing and evaluation standards of other appropriate authoritative bodies.

Statutory Charge In accordance with s. 212.055(11), Florida Statutes, and *Government Auditing Standards* (2011 Revision) issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the certified public accountant must conduct a performance audit of the Liberty County School District program areas within the administrative unit(s) which will receive funds through the referenda approved in the final resolution including:

- the District administrative unit(s) related to facility construction, reconstruction, renovation, remodeling, land acquisition and improvement, retrofitting and
- the purchase of technology equipment, hardware and software for the District.

This performance audit is organized in the following six chapters:

- Chapter 1 - Program Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness
- Chapter 2 - Program Design and Structure
- Chapter 3 - Alternative Delivery Methods
- Chapter 4 - Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures
- Chapter 5 - Reporting Accuracy and Adequacy
- Chapter 6 - Program Compliance

METHODOLOGY

Ressel & Associates began the audit by conducting a virtual kick-off meeting with Liberty County School District (LCSD) administrators on March 29, 2022. During this initial Zoom meeting with the Superintendent and key administrators, the process as detailed in the workplan, timelines and a preliminary data request list were shared. Following this meeting, staff began the process of gathering data on the preliminary data request list and saving the documents to a drop box file created by Ressel & Associates.

During this same visit, administrators and Ressel & Associates discussed the need for a list of peer school districts to use for comparison purposes based on their size and/or proximity to LCSD. Based on the district’s selection, the Ressel team began gathering peer data from the Florida Department of Education and directly from the following peer school districts:

- Calhoun County School District
- Gadsden County School District
- Jackson County School District
- Wakulla County School District

While comparison data were not used to evaluate LCSD, the information, when analyzed along with the data gathered from the District, provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities that may exist in the Liberty County School District.

Beginning on April 18, 2022, the Ressel Team conducted virtual interviews and focus group sessions with key staff and Board members. On May 6, 2022, the Ressel team conducted an onsite visit primarily to tour the facilities, observe operations and physically examine files and documents relating to the program areas under review. While onsite, the Ressel Team visited all of the school and administrative sites in the District, accompanied by the Superintendent.

In addition, the Ressel Team conducted case studies of two major capital outlay projects:

1. Construction of Liberty County High School
2. Relocation of the JROTC Building to the new Liberty County High School site

The case studies examine the projects from start to finish, and identify lessons learned, if any, and how LCSD responded. The case studies are included in **Chapter 1** of this report.

During the subsequent weeks, the team reviewed a wide array of policy and program documents, conducted additional telephone interviews and email exchanges as-needed to ensure that all relevant data were collected, validated and recorded.

On July 13, 2022, a virtual meeting was held with LCSD leadership to review and validate the final report findings. Corrections were made to address factual errors or omissions based on supporting documentation, and the District was given an opportunity to prepare a response to the report. That response is provided as an addendum to this final report.

PEER COMPARISON DATA

Students

As shown in **Exhibit 1**, student performance is very good and has steadily improved since 2013. In comparison to its peers, LCSD's student performance is better than most peers and on par with Wakulla CSD for the periods shown.

Exhibit 1
School District Grades (2010 through 2019)

School District	Grade 2019	Grade 2018	Grade 2017	Grade 2016	Informational Baseline Grade 2015	Grade 2014	Grade 2013	Grade 2012	Grade 2011	Grade 2010
Liberty CSD	A	A	B	B	B	B	C	B	A	B
Calhoun CSD	B	A	B	B	A	B	B	B	A	A
Gadsden CSD	C	C	C	C	D	D	D	C	C	C
Jackson CSD	B	B	B	C	B	C	C	B	B	B
Wakulla CSD	A	A	A	B	A	B	B	A	A	A

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

NOTE: FLDOE did not give Grades in 2020 due to the pandemic and Grades for 2021 were given but each district had the option of having their grade reported by virtue of FDOE Emergency Order No. 2021-EO-02, which states “only districts for which an approved opt in request was submitted by the school district superintendent have a letter grade assigned for the 2020-21 school year.” More information can be found at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19861/urlt/2021-EO-02.pdf>.

Student enrollment has declined in LCSD and in the peer districts. As shown in **Exhibit 2**, the third quarter counts are up slightly in LCSD and in all other peer districts with the exception of Jackson CSD that continued to decline. The rise in student counts may relate to a decline in COVID.

Exhibit 2
Change in Student FTE Counts
2017-18 to 2021-22 School Years

District	# of Students 2021-22*	# of Students 2020-21	# of Students 2019-20	# of Students 2018-19	# of Students 2017-18	% Change
Liberty CSD	1,270	1,211	1,273	1,306	1,367	-7.6%
Calhoun CSD	2,072	2,007	2,114	2,126	2,201	-6.2%
Gadsden CSD	4,715	4,652	4,812	1,750	4,969	-5.4%
Jackson CSD	5,823	5,863	6,131	6,188	6,310	-8.4%
Wakulla CSD	5,072	4,947	5,035	5,044	5,156	-1.7%

* January 2022, Third Calculation

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

As shown in **Exhibit 3**, LCSD has fewer minority students but the highest percent of students with disabilities of all but one of its peers.

The correlation between performance and the make-up of the student population can be seen in Gadsden CSD with the second highest economically disadvantaged population and the lowest overall grading trends in the performance chart.

Exhibit 3
Total Enrollment/Membership by District
By Percent Minority, Economically Disadvantaged and Disabled
2020-21

School District	Total Students	Percent Minority	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Percent w/Disabilities
Liberty CSD	1,270	22.7%	73.3%	21.0%
Calhoun CSD	2,072	22.6%	84.0%	22.5%
Gadsden CSD	4,715	96.8%	104.5%	16.5%
Jackson CSD	5,823	40.1%	86.3%	17.8%
Wakulla CSD	5,072	21.3%	64.3%	20.3%
Average w/o LCSD	4,421	45.2%	84.6%	18.7%

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 4 breaks out the student ethnicity by district. As can be seen, there are relatively few students in the minority groups.

Exhibit 4
Enrollment by Ethnicity (2019-2020)

School District	Total Students	White	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	American Indian or Alaska Native	Two or More Races	Percent Minority
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	
Liberty CSD	1,270	982	45	106	**	**	**	**	22.7%
Calhoun CSD	2,072	1,603	200	62	**	**	**	78	22.6%
Gadsden CSD	4,715	152	3,506	1,119	**	**	24	11	96.8%
Jackson CSD	5,823	3,487	1,921	355	**	**	**	424	40.1%
Wakulla CSD	5,072	3,994	452	158	**	**	**	304	21.3%
Average w/o LCSD	4,421	2,309	1,520	424	**	**	24	204	45.2%

** Number of students fewer than 10

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Finance

In comparison to its peers, **Exhibit 5** shows that LCSD like its peers is heavily dependent on State dollars, with only Calhoun CSD having more dependence on the State.

Exhibit 5
Revenue Sources
FY 2020-21

School District	Federal Total	Federal % of Total	State	State % of Total	Local	Local % of Total	Total
Liberty CSD	\$780,034	6.3%	\$10,105,461	81.3%	\$1,537,412	12.4%	\$12,422,907
Calhoun CSD	\$307,985	1.7%	\$15,758,540	86.5%	\$2,152,556	11.8%	\$18,219,081
Gadsden CSD	\$241,481	0.6%	\$30,670,938	78.5%	\$8,153,542	20.9%	\$39,065,961
Jackson CSD	\$384,174	0.7%	\$41,917,554	80.1%	\$10,049,900	19.2%	\$52,351,628
Wakulla CSD	\$438,990	1.1%	\$32,499,434	80.1%	\$7,617,956	18.8%	\$40,556,380
Average w/o LCSD	\$430,533	2.1%	\$26,190,385	81.3%	\$5,902,273	16.6%	\$32,523,191

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 6 tracks the overall funding trends by category over the last five years. As shown, State funding has declined for LCSD over the last five years in direct correlation to declining enrollment, however some gains can be seen in the amount of funding from federal and local sources.

Exhibit 6
LCSD Revenue Source Trends
2017-18 to 2021-22 (Budget)

Revenue Source	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Budget	Percent Change
Federal Direct	\$36,299	\$49,328	\$48,920	\$32,799	\$75,000	106.6%
Federal Through State and Local	\$465,155	\$955,976	\$531,286	\$747,235	\$650,000	39.7%
Federal Total	\$501,455	\$1,005,303	\$580,206	\$780,034	\$725,000	44.6%
State	\$10,762,839	\$10,754,590	\$11,180,013	\$10,105,461	\$9,782,405	-9.1%
Local	\$1,684,241	\$1,729,219	\$1,406,408	\$1,537,412	\$1,709,938	1.5%
Total	\$12,948,534	\$13,489,112	\$13,166,626	\$12,422,907	\$12,217,343	-5.6%

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 7 indicates that LCSD's General spending per pupil is higher than all of its peers. When combined with the capital expenditures driven up by the construction of the new high school, total per pupil spending is 48 percent higher than the peer average.

Exhibit 7
Annual Financial Report Expenditures
Per Unweighted Full-Time Equivalent (UFTE) [Students
FY 2020-21

School District	General	Special Revenue	Debt Service	Capital Projects	Total
Liberty CSD	\$11,079	\$2,448	-	\$4,770	\$18,297
Calhoun CSD	\$9,045	\$1,836	-	\$606	\$11,488
Gadsden CSD	\$9,881	\$4,026	\$47	\$87	\$14,041
Jackson CSD	\$8,432	\$3,394	\$214	\$1,030	\$13,070
Wakulla CSD	\$8,426	\$1,731	-	\$686	\$10,843
Average w/o LCSD	\$8,946	\$2,747	\$131	\$602	\$12,361

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Based on these indicators, the overall cost is considerably higher than its peers.

Exhibit 8 examines spending by function over the last five years. Spending is down over the five-year period, but student enrollment has declined at a faster pace, meaning the overall per pupil expenditures rose by more than \$400 per pupil or 4.3 percent.

Exhibit 8
LCSD General Fund Expenditures
FY 2017-18 through 2021-22 (Budgeted)

EXPENDITURES	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Budget	% Change
Instruction	\$7,237,954	\$7,531,148	\$7,186,200	\$7,215,420	\$6,821,579	-5.8%
Student Support Services	\$213,297	\$307,805	\$333,450	\$277,702	\$289,750	35.8%
Instructional Media Services	\$90,238	\$98,219	\$97,028	\$132,181	\$130,935	45.1%
Instruction and Curriculum Dev. Services	\$416,063	\$378,307	\$323,001	\$407,530	\$458,405	10.2%
Instructional Staff Training Services	\$42,339	\$235,967	\$20,099	\$16,872	\$6,550	-84.5%
Instruction-Related Technology	\$739,465	\$566,514	\$534,124	\$385,545	\$452,078	-38.9%
Board	\$310,127	\$446,094	\$398,591	\$424,587	\$446,299	43.9%
General Administration	\$404,283	\$786,728	\$439,632	\$453,674	\$478,723	18.4%
School Administration	\$667,960	\$675,289	\$728,303	\$703,002	\$718,789	7.6%
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	\$0	\$1,511,867	\$979,396	\$108,427	\$0	0.0%
Fiscal Services	\$332,259	\$337,133	\$339,536	\$332,841	\$385,026	15.9%
Food Services	\$3,012	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-100.0%
Central Services	\$7,145	\$70,048	\$70,067	\$71,039	\$76,561	971.5%
Student Transportation Services	\$614,614	\$651,593	\$595,502	\$606,707	\$632,402	2.9%
Operation of Plant	\$1,244,136	\$1,179,482	\$1,333,729	\$1,383,045	\$1,279,006	2.8%
Maintenance of Plant	\$301,548	\$391,031	\$592,266	\$418,710	\$272,135	-9.8%
Administrative Technology Services	\$226,224	\$243,505	\$224,025	\$219,011	\$230,331	1.8%
Community Services	\$219,610	\$60,867	\$73,075	\$70,926	\$73,240	-66.6%
CAPITAL OUTLAY: Facilities Acquisition and Construction	\$0	\$73,423	\$30,199	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Other Capital Outlay	\$40,368	\$63,282	\$242,572	\$28,250	\$0	-100.0%
DEBT SERVICE: (Function 9200) Redemption of Principal	\$47,876	\$50,220	\$0	\$0	\$0	-100.0%
Interest	\$1,308	\$7,770	\$0	\$0	\$0	-100.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$13,159,825	\$15,666,295	\$14,540,791	\$13,255,469	\$12,751,809	-3.1%
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenditures	-\$211,292	-\$2,177,182	-\$1,374,165	-\$832,562	-\$534,466	153.0%
Student FTE Count	1,367	1,306	1,273	1,211	1,270	-7.1%
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$9,630.03	\$11,992.33	\$11,418.60	\$10,945.89	\$10,040.79	4.3%

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Also shown, LCSD has experienced deficit spending patterns in every year for the last five years.

Technology

Exhibit 9 explores expenditures for Instruction-Related Technology and Administrative Technology Services for the last five years. As shown, total expenditures have declined, by 29.3

percent. Much of that decline may be linked to a decline in Digital Technology funding from the State.

Exhibit 9
LCSD General Fund Expenditures
LCSD Instructional and Administrative Technology
2017-18 Actuals through 2021-22 Budgeted

EXPENDITURES	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Budget	% Change
Instruction-Related Technology	\$739,465	\$566,514	\$534,124	\$385,545	\$452,078	-38.9%
Administrative Technology Services	\$226,224	\$243,505	\$224,025	\$219,011	\$230,331	1.8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$965,689	\$810,019	\$758,149	\$604,557	\$682,409	-29.3%
Student FTE Count	1,367	1,306	1,273	1,211	1,270	-7.1%
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$706.67	\$620.06	\$595.36	\$499.22	\$537.33	-24.0%

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 10 compares LCSD's total and per pupil Instructional and Administrative Technology expenditures to its peers. As shown, LCSD's expenditures are significantly higher than the peer average and highest of all of the peers.

Exhibit 10
Comparative General Fund Expenditures
Instructional and Administrative Technology
FY 2020-21

EXPENDITURES	Liberty CSD	Calhoun CSD	Gadsden CSD	Jackson CSD	Wakulla CSD	Average w/o LCSD
Instruction-Related Technology	\$385,545	\$563,479	\$252,017	\$251,410	\$285,924	\$338,208
Administrative Technology Services	\$219,011	\$25,256	\$867,428	\$554,582	\$423,937	\$467,801
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$604,557	\$588,735	\$1,119,445	\$805,992	\$709,861	\$806,008
Student FTE Count	1,211	2,007	4,652	5,863	4,947	4,367
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$499.22	\$293.28	\$240.62	\$137.46	\$143.50	\$203.71

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Facilities

Exhibit 11 provides a five-year trend analysis of LCSD's Plant Maintenance and Plant Operations expenditures. The overall expenditures in these two categories have remained fairly constant, but per pupil expenditures have gone up primarily due to student enrollment declines.

Exhibit 11
LCSD General Fund Expenditures
Plant Maintenance and Plant Operations
2017-18 Actuals through 2021-22 Budgeted

EXPENDITURES	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Budget	% Change
Operation of Plant	\$1,244,136	\$1,179,482	\$1,333,729	\$1,383,045	\$1,279,006	2.8%
Maintenance of Plant	\$301,548	\$391,031	\$592,266	\$418,710	\$272,135	-9.8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,545,684	\$1,570,513	\$1,925,995	\$1,801,755	\$1,551,140	0.4%
Student FTE Count	1,367	1,306	1,273	1,211	1,270	-7.1%
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$1,131.09	\$1,202.21	\$1,512.45	\$1,487.82	\$1,221.37	8.0%

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 12 compares LCSD's total and per pupil Plant Maintenance and Plant Operations expenditures to its peers. As shown, LCSD's expenditures are higher than the peer average and second highest only to Gadsden CSD. Wakulla CSD is the lowest.

Exhibit 12
Comparative General Fund Expenditures
Plant Maintenance and Plant Operations
FY 2020-21

EXPENDITURES	Liberty CSD	Calhoun CSD	Gadsden CSD	Jackson CSD	Wakulla CSD	Average w/o LCSD
Operation of Plant	\$1,383,045	\$1,925,100	\$5,485,187	\$5,870,821	\$4,862,048	\$4,535,789
Maintenance of Plant	\$418,710	\$718,511	\$3,274,265	\$1,897,887	\$1,137,176	\$1,756,959
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,801,755	\$2,643,610	\$8,759,452	\$7,768,707	\$5,999,224	\$6,292,748
Student FTE Count	1,211	2,007	4,652	5,863	4,947	4,367.46
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$1,487.82	\$1,316.91	\$1,882.78	\$1,324.95	\$1,212.80	\$1,434.36

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 13 shows total annual energy costs, including food services expenditures, but excluding gasoline and diesel used for student transportation.

The cost per square foot for all energy costs is in line with the peer averages, but cost per square foot for electricity is below the peer averages.

Exhibit 13
Annual Energy Cost Information
2020-21 School Year

District	Natural Gas	Bottled Gas	Electricity	Heating Oil	Total Energy Costs	Total Square Footage	Square Foot Cost	
							All Energy	Elec Only
Liberty CSD	\$0	\$36,535	\$443,877		\$480,412	452,606	\$1.06	\$0.98
Calhoun CSD	\$2,757	\$8,920	\$591,222		\$602,898	611,830	\$0.99	\$0.97
Gadsden CSD	\$66,082	\$37,464	\$1,282,108		\$1,385,654	1,283,988	\$1.08	\$1.00
Jackson CSD	\$10,845	\$17,861	\$1,759,517		\$1,788,223	1,721,573	\$1.04	\$1.02
Wakulla CSD	\$0	\$28,486	\$1,185,764	\$20,584	\$1,234,833	1,072,050	\$1.15	\$1.11
Average w/o LCSD	\$19,921	\$23,183	\$1,204,653	\$20,584	\$1,252,902	1,172,360	\$1.06	\$1.02

Source: Florida School District Annual Energy Cost Information, June 2022.

Exhibit 14 shows the count of total satisfactory stations at each school site versus FLDOE's assessment of capacity in comparison to the student FTEs in those facilities. As shown, LCSD school facilities are not at or near capacity, meaning that the district has significant capacity for growth in the future.

Exhibit 14
Liberty CSD FISH Capacity Data Based on Satisfactory Stations
Reported December 31, 2021

Facility	Use Description	Total Satisfactory Stations	Capacity	Student FTE	% of Capacity
Liberty Senior High	Senior High	732	585	10.6	1.4%
Hosford Elementary Junior High	Combination	552	496	338.6	61.3%
Liberty Superintendent's Office	County Administration	0	0	0.0	n/a
Bus Garage	Transportation	0	0	0.0	n/a
W R Tolar K-8	Combination	827	744	454.9	55.0%
Liberty Senior High (New)	Senior High	540	405	311.4	57.7%

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 15 compares total classrooms and student stations and capacity numbers, including relocatable classrooms, to the total student FTE's in each district. The numbers in this chart do not add to the numbers shown above as FLDOE has not yet reconciled the totals for all facilities and all student FTEs.

Exhibit 15
Comparative FISH Capacity Data
December 31, 2021

District	Permanent Classrooms	Relocatable Classrooms	Total Classrooms	Permanent Student Stations	Relocatable Student Stations	Total Student Stations	Capacity	Student FTEs	% of Capacity
Liberty CSD	143	9	152	3,031	194	3,225	2,312	1,187	51.3%
Calhoun CSD	179	35	214	3,762	718	4,480	3,316	2,053	61.9%
Gadsden CSD	466	24	490	9,915	431	10,346	7,541	4,186	55.5%
Jackson CSD	588	35	623	12,538	703	13,241	11,756	6,001	51.0%
Wakulla CSD	303	15	318	5,913	355	6,268	5,821	4,800	82.5%
Average w/o LCSD	384	27	411	8,032	552	8,584	7,109	4,260	59.9%

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

LCSD's total capacity use is lower than its peers, with Wakulla CSD having the highest capacity use.

Although a number of the component parts of the Liberty facilities are historic, **Exhibit 16** shows the overall average age of the facilities is below that of its peers, presumably due to the construction of the new high school.

Exhibit 16
Age of Permanent Facilities
2021-22 School Year

District	Total NSF	SQFT 1-10 Yrs Old	SQFT 11-20 Yrs Old	SQFT 21-30 Yrs Old	SQFT 31-40 Yrs Old	SFT 41-50 Yrs Old	SQFT >50 Yrs Old	Avg Age
Liberty CSD	398,583	23.60%	20.10%	26.90%	0.20%	16.20%	13.00%	28
Calhoun CSD	523,798	51.30%	1.50%	5.50%	16.70%	9.40%	15.60%	29
Gadsden CSD	1,119,343	3.00%	28.70%	14.20%	2.10%	15.50%	36.50%	42
Jackson CSD	1,462,040	22.30%	18.10%	14.00%	3.10%	20.20%	22.30%	34
Wakulla CSD	1,016,141	1.20%	23.20%	29.90%	9.40%	12.70%	23.60%	34
Average w/o LCSD	1,030,331	19.5%	17.9%	15.9%	7.8%	14.5%	24.5%	35

Source: Florida Inventory of School Houses, Florida Department of Education, June 2022.

Exhibit 17 shows the number of relocatable classrooms in each District. As can be seen, relatively few relocatable classrooms are in use by LCSD in comparison to their peers.

Exhibit 17
Number of Satisfactory Relocatable Classrooms
2021-22 School Year

District	K-3 Core Classrooms	4-8 Core Classrooms	9-12 Core Classroom	ESE Core Classroom	Total Core Classrooms	Total Non-Core Classrooms	Total Classrooms
Liberty CSD	-	-	4	-	4	-	4
Calhoun CSD	13	8	9	1	31	-	31
Gadsden CSD	4	-	-	2	6	1	7
Jackson CSD	5	13	-	4	22	-	22
Wakulla CSD	-	-	12	1	13	-	13
Average w/o LCSD	7.3	10.5	10.5	2.0	18.0	1.0	18.3

Source: Florida Inventory of School Houses, Florida Department of Education, June 2022.

Safety and Security

Although there are a number of additional Safe School expenditure categories, **Exhibit 18** shows that LCSD and its peers spent the majority of the allocated funds for school resource officers.

Exhibit 18
Safe Schools Appropriation Expenditures
2020-21 School Year*

District	School Resources Officers	Other	Total Safe Schools Appropriation Expenditure
Liberty CSD	\$294,028		\$294,028
Calhoun CSD	\$308,851	\$35,301	\$344,152
Gadsden CSD	\$568,709	-	\$568,709
Jackson CSD	\$517,673	-	\$517,673
Wakulla CSD	\$501,591	-	\$501,591

Source: Safe Schools Appropriation Expenditure Report, Florida Department of Education, June 2022.

Exhibit 19 provides information on the School Hardening Grants provided by the State in FY 2020-21. The grant is given in addition to the Safe School funding and is allocated based on student FTEs. As shown, LCSD received the minimum of \$42,000.

Exhibit 19
School Hardening Grant Allocation
2020-21

District	2019-20 COFTE plus Charter FTE	Allocation Based COFTE and Charter FTE	Compression to \$42,000 Minimum	2021 School Hardening Grant
Liberty CSD	1,188.45	\$18,097	\$23,903	\$42,000
Calhoun CSD	2,059.47	\$31,360	\$10,640	\$42,000
Gadsden CSD	4,693.09	\$71,462	-	\$71,462
Jackson CSD	5,977.11	\$91,014	-	\$91,014
Wakulla CSD	4,980.42	\$75,837	-	\$75,837

Source: Florida Department of Education, June 2022.

Staffing

Exhibit 20 compares pupil/teacher and pupil to total staffing ratios in LCSD to those of its peers. LCSD is below the peer averages in both categories.

Exhibit 20
Pupil to Employee Ratios (2021-22)

School District	Total Students	Total Staff	FTE Teachers	Pupil/Teacher Ratio	Pupil/Staff Ratio
Liberty CSD	1270	218	100	13	5.8
Calhoun CSD	2072	289	140	15	7.2
Gadsden CSD	4715	771	309	15	6.1
Jackson CSD	5823	964	447	13	6.0
Wakulla CSD	5072	652	325	16	7.8
Average w/o LCSD	4,421	669	305	15	6.6

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibits 21 through 24 provide information on the salaries and the number of employees in each classification as compared to the peers. In nearly every category, LCSD salaries fall below the peer averages. Teacher salaries shown in Exhibit 24 are one of those exceptions.

Exhibit 21
Central Administrators Salaries and Counts
FY 2020-21

School District/ Position		Liberty CSD	Calhoun CSD	Gadsden CSD	Jackson CSD	Wakulla CSD	Average w/o LCSD
Superintendent	Average Salary	\$102,623	\$100,378	\$118,296	\$116,693	\$130,819	\$116,546
	Number Employed	1	1	1	1	1	1
Deputy/ Associate/ Assistant Area Superintendent For Admin	Average Salary		\$87,200		\$92,668		\$89,934
	Number Employed		1		1		1
Business/ Finance	Average Salary	\$63,100	\$77,522	\$69,721	\$72,551	\$94,450	\$78,561
	Number Employed	2	1	1	2	1	1
Technology	Average Salary			\$59,200	\$63,187	\$70,300	\$64,229
	Number Employed			2	1	2	2
Staff Services	Average Salary			\$62,035	\$49,540	\$86,350	\$65,975
	Number Employed			2	1	1	1
Facilities	Average Salary		\$77,522	\$72,672	\$83,736	\$98,500	\$83,107
	Number Employed		1	1	1	1	1
Transportation	Average Salary			\$76,938	\$87,486	\$77,625	\$80,683
	Number Employed			1	1	2	1
Food Service	Average Salary			\$46,571		\$64,907	\$55,739
	Number Employed			2		1	2
Media Services	Average Salary			\$76,490			\$76,490
	Number Employed			1			1
Career & Technical Education	Average Salary			\$50,000		\$89,451	\$69,726
	Number Employed			1		1	1
Exceptional Education	Average Salary		\$77,522	\$64,500	\$82,346		\$74,789
	Number Employed		1	1	1		1
Student Services	Average Salary				\$78,486	\$84,300	\$81,393
	Number Employed				1	1	1
Federal Programs	Average Salary			\$84,975			\$84,975
	Number Employed			1			1
Total Central Office Administrators		3	3	5	14	10	11

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 22
Principal and Assistant Principal Salaries and Counts (2020-21)

School District		Liberty CSD	Calhoun CSD	Gadsden CSD	Jackson CSD	Wakulla CSD	Average w/o LCSD
High School - Principal	Average Salary	\$72,443	\$80,325	\$76,568	\$72,126	\$86,651	\$78,917
	Number Employed	1	1	2	3	1	2
	Contract Length	12	12	12	12	12	12
Middle/Junior High - Principal	Average Salary		\$74,395	\$73,575	\$68,066	\$82,326	\$74,590
	Number Employed		1	3	1	2	2
	Contract Length		12	12	12	12	12
Elementary - Principal	Average Salary	\$81,229		\$71,053	\$72,439	\$79,294	\$74,262
	Number Employed	1		5	4	4	4
	Contract Length	12		12	12	12	12
Other Type Schools - Principal	Average Salary	\$67,286	\$79,094	\$81,585	\$74,326	\$72,026	\$76,758
	Number Employed	1	2	1	2	2	2
	Contract Length	12	11	12	12	12	12
High School - Assistant Principal	Average Salary	\$65,346	\$63,128	\$50,058	\$62,860	\$76,491	\$63,134
	Number Employed	1	2	4	5	5	4
	Contract Length	12	11	11	12	11	11
Middle/Junior High - Assistant Principal	Average Salary	\$62,044		\$56,346	\$60,506		\$58,426
	Number Employed	1		6	1		4
	Contract Length	10		11	12		12
Elementary - Assistant Principal	Average Salary	\$63,286	\$56,358	\$54,524	\$59,928	\$74,763	\$61,393
	Number Employed	1	1	4	4	4	3
	Contract Length	12	12	11	12	12	12
Other Type Schools - Assistant Principal	Average Salary		\$60,128	\$54,500	\$61,256		\$58,628
	Number Employed		2	2	1		2
	Contract Length		12	12	12		12

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 23
Trades Worker's Salaries and Counts (2020-21)

School District		Liberty CSD	Calhoun CSD	Gadsden CSD	Jackson CSD	Wakulla CSD	Average w/o LCSD
Electrician	Average Salary			\$53,947	\$57,487		\$55,717
	Number Employed			1	2		2
	Contract Length			12	12		12
Air Conditioning Technician & Boiler Mechanic	Average Salary		\$28,268	\$37,653	\$45,228		\$37,050
	Number Employed		1	3	3		2
	Contract Length		12	12	12		12
Mechanic	Average Salary	\$34,091	\$39,816	\$33,365	\$37,148	\$40,848	\$37,794
	Number Employed	2	2	5	6	4	4
	Contract Length	12	12	12	12	12	12
Carpenter	Average Salary						N/A
	Number Employed						N/A
	Contract Length						N/A
Custodian/ Groundskeeper	Average Salary	\$24,625	\$22,120	\$21,234	\$20,872	\$26,981	\$22,802
	Number Employed	16	9	56	48	47	40
	Contract Length	11	12	11	11	12	11

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 24
Average Teacher Salary and Years of Experience (2020-21)

School District	Average Teacher Salary	Avg Years of Experience
Liberty CSD	\$44,436	10.5
Calhoun CSD	\$43,478	12.2
Gadsden CSD	\$40,383	5.8
Jackson CSD	\$45,068	12.2
Wakulla CSD	\$45,649	6.8
Average w/o LCSD	\$43,644	9.3

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 25 shows LCSD's total staffing trends over the last five years. As shown, the student to staff ratios have shifted by category while total student to staff ratios remained unchanged.

Exhibit 25
LCSD Staffing Trends 2017-18 through 2021-22

Liberty County School District	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	Change	% Change
Number of Students	1,270	1,211	1,273	1,306	1,367	-96	-7.6%
Administrators							
Officials, Administrators and Managers-Instructional	7	8	8	1	7	0	0.0%
Officials, Administrators, Managers - Total	7	8	8	1	7	0	0.0%
Consultants/ Supervisors of Instruction	1	1	1	0	1	0	0.0%
Principals	3	3	3	0	3	0	0.0%
Assistant Principals	3	3	3	0	3	0	0.0%
Community Education Coordinators	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total Administrators	14	15	15	1	14	0	0.0%
Student to Administrator Ratio	90.7	80.8	84.9	1306.4	97.6	-7	-7.6%
Teachers							
Elementary Teachers (PK-6)	42	41	40	35	41	1	2.4%
Secondary Teachers (7-12)	34	37	35	31	34	0	0.0%
Exceptional Student Education Teachers	15	14	12	12	14	1	6.7%
Other Teachers	9	9	12	2	11	-2	-22.2%
Total Teachers	100	101	99	80	100	0	0.0%
Student to Teacher Ratio	12.7	12.0	12.9	16.3	13.7	-1.0	-7.6%
Professional Staff							
Guidance Counselors	3	3	3	3	3	0	0.0%
Social Workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
School Psychologists	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Librarians /Audio-Visual Workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Other Professional Staff - Non-Administrative							
Instructional	12	9	9	4	12	0	0.0%
Non-Instructional	11	11	12	0	11	0	0.0%
Total Professional Staff	26	23	24	7	26	0	0.0%
Student to Professional Staff Ratio	48.8	52.7	53.1	186.6	52.6	-3.7	-7.6%
Support Staff							
Para-professionals	27	26	25	20	30	-3	-11.1%
Technicians			0	0	0	0	0.0%
Administrative Support Workers	15	14	14	7	16	-1	-6.7%
Service Workers	32	31	33	3	46	-14	-43.8%
Skilled Crafts Workers	1	1	1	0	1	0	0.0%
Laborers, Unskilled	3	3	5	0	3	0	0.0%
Total Support Staff	78	75	78	30	96	-18	-23.1%
Student to Support Staff Ratio	16.3	16.2	16.3	43.5	14.2	2.0	12.6%
Total Full-Time Staff	218	214	216	118	236	-18	-8.3%
Student to Total Full-Time Staff Ratio	5.8	5.7	5.9	11.1	5.8	0.0	0.0%

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 26 compares LCSD's total staffing to that of its peers. In comparison to its peers, LCSD's student to staff ratios by category and in total are lower than the peer averages and in some categories the lowest among its peers, indicating that LCSD has more staff per student than its peers.

Exhibit 26
Staffing Peer Comparison 2021-22

District/Category	Liberty CSD	Calhoun CSD	Gadsden CSD	Jackson CSD	Wakulla CSD	Peer Average w/o LCSD
Student FTE Count	1,270	2,072	4,715	5,823	5,072	4,421
Administrators						
Officials, Administrators and Managers-Instructional	7	7	21	13	15	14
Officials, Administrators, Managers - Total	7	7	21	13	15	14
Consultants/ Supervisors of Instruction	1		6	5	1	4
Principals	3	4	11	14	9	10
Assistant Principals	3	5	17	11	12	11
Education Coordinators	0	1			1	1
Total Administrators	14	17	55	43	38	38
Student to Administrator Ratio	90.7	121.9	85.7	135.4	133.5	119.1
Teachers						
Elementary Teachers (PK-6)	42	56	128	182	123	122
Secondary Teachers (7-12)	34	56	122	171	137	122
Exceptional Student Education Teachers	15	28	45	61	61	49
Other Teachers	9		14	33	4	17
Total Teachers	100	140	309	447	325	305
Student to Teacher Ratio	12.7	14.8	15.3	13.0	15.6	14.7
Professional Staff						
Guidance Counselors	3	3	16	20	2	10
Social Workers	0	1	7		4	4
School Psychologists	0		4	1		3
Librarians /Audio-Visual Workers	0	1	6	9	6	6
Other Professional Staff - Non-Administrative						
Instructional	12	11	29	22	23	21
Non-Instructional	11	13	38	9	5	16
Total Professional Staff	26	29	100	61	40	58
Student to Professional Ratio	48.8	71.5	47.1	95.5	126.8	85.2
Support Staff						
Paraprofessionals	27	40	81	181	86	97
Technicians		3	7	4	7	5
Administrative Support Workers	15	17	47	70	54	47
Service Workers	32	40	156	126	98	105
Skilled Crafts Workers	1	3	11	15	4	8
Laborers, Unskilled	3		5	17		11
Total Support Staff	78	103	307	413	249	268
Student to Support Staff Ratio	16.3	20.1	15.4	14.1	20.4	17.5
Total Full-Time Staff	218	289	771	964	652	669
Student to Total Full-Time Staff Ratio	5.8	7.2	6.1	6.0	7.8	6.8

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

***CHAPTER 1:
PROGRAM ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY,
AND EFFECTIVENESS***

1.0 PROGRAM ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY, AND EFFECTIVENESS

Chapter 1 presents audit findings related to the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the program areas under review. As part of field work, Ressel & Associates examined the District's internal monitoring structure including management reporting and the results of internal and external audits and operational performance reviews. In addition, Ressel & Associates evaluated program performance and costs and thoroughly researched the strengths and weaknesses associated with past projects of comparable size and complexity.

The specific audit evaluation tasks are provided below:

- 1.1 ***Management Reports*** - Review any management reports/data that program administrators use on a regular basis and determine whether this information is adequate to monitor program performance and cost;
- 1.2 ***Performance Evaluation Criteria*** - Determine whether the program is periodically evaluated using performance information and other reasonable criteria to assess program performance and cost;
- 1.3 ***Findings and Recommendations*** - Review findings and recommendations included in any relevant internal or external reports on program performance and cost;
- 1.4 ***Reasonable and Timely Action*** - Determine whether program administrators have taken reasonable and timely actions to address any deficiencies in program performance and/or cost identified in management reports/data, periodic program evaluations, audits, etc.;
- 1.5 ***Program Performance*** - Evaluate program performance and cost based on reasonable measures, including best practices;
- 1.6 ***Case Studies of Past Projects*** - Evaluate the cost, timing, and quality of current program efforts based on a reasonably sized sample of projects to determine whether they were of reasonable cost and completed well, on time, and within budget; and
- 1.7 ***Competitive Procurement*** - Determine whether the District has established written policies and procedures to take maximum advantage of competitive procurement, volume discounts, and special pricing agreements.

NOTE: Audit Evaluation Tasks 1.1-1.5 will be addressed district wide and in each of the program areas under review, whereas 1.6 and 1.7 are addressed as a separate subchapter as shown below.

Finding on program economy, efficiency, and effectiveness: Did Not Meet. Management reporting is limited and performance monitoring activities are primarily informal. No financial reports are being produced for the Board and the unassigned fund balance is dangerously low. Response to external audit findings and recommendations are strong for financial audits, but less rigorous in the competitive procurement and contracting arena. The internal monitoring

structure of the District overall is hampered by a lack of management oversight and technical expertise in the competitive procurement and contract management functions.

Findings by Research Subtask:

- Subtask 1.1 *Management Reports – Did Not Meet* - No reports are provided to leadership or the Board that are adequate to monitor program performance or cost.
- Subtask 1.2 *Performance Evaluation Criteria – Did Not Meet* - There is a lack of any type of program level performance evaluation criteria that is regularly tracked and monitored at the leadership and Board level.
- Subtask 1.3 *Findings and Recommendations – Meets* – LCSD provided reports as requested.
- Subtask 1.4 *Reasonable and Timely Action – Partially Meets* - External Financial and Federal Single Audits performed by the Auditor General over the last three fiscal years were generally unmodified and the response to correct identified weaknesses were reasonable and timely.. The October 2021 Operational Audit identified weaknesses relating to one or more procurement and contract management practices that have not been adequately addressed to mitigate the noted deficiencies.
- Subtask 1.5 *Program Performance – Partially Meets* - The Unassigned fund balance for the District has fallen below 5 percent, which is dangerously low. The Facilities function is reactive in its approach which is driving up costs. The Technology function is using available funds to improve technology districtwide but with the decline in State funding is faced with significant challenges.
- Subtask 1.6 *Case Studies of Past Projects – Meets* - Case Studies of two major construction projects provided evidence that LCSD’s construction management process has resulted in projects coming in on time and within budget
- Subtask 1.7 *Competitive Procurement – Partially Meets* - LCSD’s competitive procurement framework is strong in terms of policy but lacks the structure and procedures to ensure that goods and services are procured in a cost effective and compliant manner.

In this chapter, program economy, efficiency, and effectiveness for the Liberty County School District is presented in the following functional areas:

- 1.1 Districtwide Support for Areas Under Review
- 1.2 Facilities Planning, Use, and Construction
- 1.3 Technology Implementation and Upgrades
- 1.4 Case Studies of Past Projects
- 1.5 Competitive Procurement

1.1 DISTRICTWIDE SUPPORT FOR AREAS UNDER REVIEW

1.1.1 Management Reporting

OBSERVATION: Based on a review of Board packets, regular financial reports showing the budget to actual expenditures to date are not provided to the Board on a regular basis.

Section 6A-1.008 Financial Statements of the Florida Administrative Code states:

At least monthly the superintendent of schools shall submit, for use and consideration of the school board, a financial statement in a form prescribed by the school board.

The CFO confirmed that no regular financial statements are presented to the Board.

As of June 2022, the financial information found in the Board packets is transactional data showing districtwide expenditures for the prior month, cash on hand, a report of internal funds at the three campuses and a list of checks that must be approved by the Board before they can be issued. When appropriate, there is also information provided for budget amendments, relating to the items being amended.

As shown in **Exhibit 1-1**, there is no budget information provided that would allow Board members to determine how actual revenues or expenditures compare to the amounts budgeted. Providing the information relating to cash-on-hand in the bank may allow the Board members to know whether there is enough money in the bank to pay the checks that they are authorizing, but it is not the same as a running fund balance calculation.

The two primary duties of a School Board are to establish policies and approve and monitor the budget. Approving transactions is a control that prevents payments to unauthorized vendors for unauthorized purposes. Without budget to actual data, the Board cannot determine how the expenditures they are authorizing will impact the financial condition of the District. Board members also have no trend data for the year that would alert them if one or more budget categories are spending at a faster pace than anticipated. For example, if the budget for electricity is \$1.2 million for the year, and after four months the District has spent \$500,000, some analysis may be needed to determine if rates, usage or a sudden heat wave are causing the higher than anticipated costs.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-1: Immediately begin submitting monthly financial reports to the Board providing them with sufficient detail to allow the Board to reasonably assess the District's financial performance.

OBSERVATION: Formal management reports are not provided to the Board or the Superintendent relating to program performance or cost.

Board Policy 0118 Purpose of the Board states [emphasis added]s:

The Board declares and, thereby, reaffirms its intent to:

- A. maintain open communications with citizens of the District. The Board shall keep them informed of the progress and problems of the District, and the citizens shall be encouraged to bring their thoughts and concerns about the educational system to the attention of this body;*
- B. establish policies and make decisions on the basis of declared educational philosophy and goals; and*
- C. act as a truly representative body for citizens in all matters related to programs and operations. The Board recognizes that ultimate responsibility for public education rests with the State, but the Board has been assigned specific authority through statute, and the Board shall not relinquish or fail to exercise that authority.*

Over the last three years there were no examples found of any reports presented to the Board other than the Superintendent's monthly updates which are provided in a bulleted format. The Superintendent pointed out that because LCSD is within a very small community, much of the information is shared informally. In addition, he said that word-of-mouth is used effectively to communicate issues with parents and community members.

The Board only meets for 15 minutes per meeting and usually only one time per month. This limited time includes recognitions as well. No time is allotted in the agendas for management reports nor are any prepared for the Board as the Board has set no expectations nor requirements for such reports. During Board member interviews, the Ressel team was told that they trust the administration to handle the operations of the District.

Informally, the Superintendent said that he meets regularly with his leadership team and he receives verbal updates regarding their program areas. When an area such as Maintenance identifies a need that will require additional money, the issue is discussed and the CFO is involved in determining if funds are available from another source, or if external funds need to be identified.

The Superintendent gave a number of examples of when no funding was available where he sought out and received grants or special appropriations to assist them to cover the costs. The majority of these issues are reactive to a critical breakdown or event.

Information regarding emerging issues is informally shared by the Superintendent with Board members who frequently visit the schools or through phone calls or emails. Often times, the Board members will individually make suggestions and/or initiate calls to individuals who may have expertise and/suggestions for possible ways to address critical maintenance or repair issues.

Regular Board meetings last 15 to 20 minutes, meaning that the Board meetings are not the vehicle this District is using as a time to receive or impart knowledge to the Board or the community. Most of the real business and communication happens outside of the Board room. This is a problem since the public has no access to program performance or costs and is not aware of important management information.

As shown, one important role of a School Board, as emphasized in law and best practice, is to review compliance with State laws and School Board policies. Although trust and a positive relationship between the Administration and Board is critically important, it is the responsibility of the School Board of Liberty County to keep the public and themselves informed so that decisions are made in the best interest of the children and citizens of the community.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-2: Prepare management reports for the School Board based on specified performance related criteria, as well as formal reports providing sufficient detail pertaining to emerging issues so the Board and general public has a mechanism for obtaining factual data about the programs and projects under review.

1.1.2 Performance Evaluation Criteria

OBSERVATION: There is a lack of any type of program level performance evaluation criteria that is regularly tracked and monitored at the leadership and Board level.

Ressel & Associates found no formal performance evaluation criteria in use at the senior administrator or Board levels to monitor the performance of the program areas under review. As discussed in greater detail in **Chapter 4** of this report, a Strategic Plan has been adopted and the Superintendent has taken the initial steps in this process. When the plan is fully developed and implemented, the potential is there for establishing the necessary performance metrics and evaluation criteria.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-3: Follow-through with the Strategic Planning process and establish performance evaluation criteria with which to assess program performance and cost.

1.1.3 Findings and Recommendations and 1.1.4 Reasonable and Timely Action

Over the last three years, the Auditor General has conducted five audits or reviews, each containing findings and recommendations for the improvement of districtwide operations of one or more of the areas under review. Each of the reports and findings shown in **Exhibit 1-2** will be discussed in the relevant program area under review.

**Exhibit 1-2
Auditor General Reports
Issued 2020 through 2022**

Number	Title	Audit Period	Date Issued
2020-118	Liberty County District School Board - Financial and Federal Single Audit	FYE 06/30/2019	02/12/2020
2021-205	Liberty County District School Board - Florida Education Finance Program - Attestation Examination	FYE 06/30/2020	05/13/2021
2021-114	Liberty County District School Board - Financial and Federal Single Audit	FYE 06/30/2020	01/25/2021
2021-083	Liberty County District School Board - Operational Audit		12/18/2020
2022-147	Liberty County District School Board - Financial and Federal Single Audit	FYE 06/30/2021	03/15/2022

Source: Florida Auditor General <https://flauditor.gov/pages/Reports.aspx>.

The Attestation Examination issued in 2022 is not discussed here, as the findings are not related to the areas under review. Grimsley & Associates performs audits of internal funds (activity funds) and renders opinions on those statements. The findings of those audits are not presented as they are not relevant to the program areas under review.

OBSERVATION: External Financial and Federal Single Audits performed by the Auditor General over the last three fiscal years were generally unmodified.

Exhibit 1-3 provides a three-year summary of the audit findings.

**Exhibit 1-3
Liberty County School District
Three Year Summary of Audit Results**

	FY 2020-21	FY 2019-20	FY 2018-19
Auditor General Report/ Independent Auditor	Auditor General	Auditor General	Auditor General
Type of Auditor’s Report Issued – Financial Statements	Unmodified	Unmodified	Unmodified
Material Weaknesses –Financial Reporting	No	No	No
Significant Deficiency – Financial Reporting	None Reported	None Reported	Yes
Material Non-Compliance – Financial Statements	No	No	No
Material Weaknesses – Federal Awards	No	No	No
Significant Deficiency – Federal Awards	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported
Type of auditor’s report issued on compliance for major programs	Unmodified	Unmodified	Unmodified
Any audit findings disclosed that are required to be reported in accordance with 2 CFR 200.516(a)? (formerly Section 510(a) of OMB Circular A-133)?	No	No	No
Prior Year Audit Findings Corrected	N/A	Yes	No
Significant Deficiency: Report No. 2019-151 and Prior Year Report No.2018-001: The Director of Finance, who also served as the District’s security administrator, and three additional employees continued to have full update access privileges to information technology (IT) applications or components that allowed them to perform functions incompatible or inconsistent with their assigned job responsibilities.			

Source: LCSD’s Audited Financial Reports for Fiscal Years 2021,2020 and 2019.

OBSERVATION: LCSD has taken timely and appropriate action to address the findings identified in the FY 2018 and 2019 Financial and Federal Single Audits.

The finding relating to segregation of duties was repeated in two audits because the issue date for the 2018 audit was late and the corrective action was not taken until the FY 2019 audit had begun. The CFO had access to everything in Skyward and was unaware that she even had that capability. The Technology Coordinator is the one who grants the accesses and levels of approval and immediate action was taken to remove the CFO’s accesses and capabilities.

A system is now in place and documented in procedures for approval processes, and where necessary, the Superintendent signs off on the CFO’s actions.

The new procedures are as follows:

IT Access Privileges Procedures

1. The Principal or Director recommends new hires and fills out the Recommendation form for the Superintendents approval.
2. After the Superintendent approves the new hire, the Superintendent will send the recommendation form to HR Department to process.
3. The HR Department will send out the recommendation form to IT Department, Insurance Representative, and Payroll.

4. The IT (TSA) will set up the access privilege for each employee based on employee job responsibilities.
5. The IT (TSA) will contact the employee that they are set up in Skyward.

LCSD is aware of the need for segregation of duties, but is constantly challenged to maintain the checks and balance needed due to their size.

OBSERVATION: The October 2021 Operational Audit identified five findings that included issues related to the District’s competitive procurement and contract management practices.

The summary provided in the 2021 Operational Audit provides the following list of findings.

This operational audit of the Liberty County School District (District) focused on selected District processes and administrative activities and included a follow-up on findings noted in our report No. 2018-103. Our operational audit disclosed the following:

Finding 1: *District records did not demonstrate that the District complied with State law and Board policies by competitively negotiating architect services for the Liberty County New High School Project (High School Project).*

Finding 2: *District monitoring of construction management entity (CME) payments, which included subcontractor service costs, was deficient. For the High School Project, the Board-approved CME guaranteed maximum price contract totaled \$16.3 million, including \$13.8 million for services by 26 subcontractors.*

Finding 3: *District monitoring of the CME subcontractor selection process needs improvement. For the High School Project, the CME selected some subcontractors who were not the lowest bidder and CME-awarded subcontracts did not always agree with subcontractor bid amounts.*

Finding 4: *The District needs to enhance controls over negotiations, monitoring, and documenting the reasonableness of CME general conditions costs.*

Finding 5: *The CME contract for the High School Project did not contain a penalty to be paid by the contractor for a failure to comply with contract terms.*

Finding 6: *The District did not timely comply with State law requiring, effective July 1, 2019, the District to post on its Web site graphical representations of summary financial efficiency data and fiscal trend information.*

NOTE: The findings in the 2021 Operational Audit regarding Competitive Procurement and Contract Management are addressed in detail in Section 1.5 of this Chapter

1.1.5 Program Performance

The Ressel team evaluated LCSD’s districtwide performance in terms of systemic support for the program areas under review in the following areas:

- Demonstrated ability to maintain financial stability
- Demonstrated ability to competitively procure goods and services
- Demonstrated ability to provide construction oversight for large projects

Financial Stability

The financial condition of a school district is evaluated based on creating and maintaining a balanced budget with sufficient reserves to sustain the district should unforeseen needs arise.

OBSERVATION: LCSD has not maintained an unrestricted fund balance of at least 5 percent as stipulated in policy.

Board Policy, 6233 -DISTRICT BUDGET, Section C - General Fund Ending Fund Balance reads as follows:

...As required by Florida statute, the Board shall maintain a General Fund ending fund balance not classified as restricted, committed, or nonspendable in the District's approved operating budget that is sufficient to address normal contingencies.

1. Any time the portion of the General Fund's ending fund balance not classified as restricted, committed, or nonspendable in the District's approved operating budget is projected to fall below five percent (5%) of projected General Fund revenues during the current fiscal year, the Superintendent shall develop and submit to the Board for approval a plan to restore the ending fund balance to five percent (5%) of projected General Fund revenues.

2. The Superintendent shall provide written notification to the Board and to the Commissioner of Education if at any time the portion of the general fund's ending fund balance not classified as restricted, committed, or nonspendable in the District's operating budget is projected to fall below projected revenues as prescribed by law.

Similar information is also found in Board Policy 6235 - FUND BALANCE.

Exhibit 1-4 provides an analysis of the General Fund, unrestricted and total fund balances from the 2013-14 to 2020-21 fiscal years.

**Exhibit 1-4
Unrestricted and Total Fund Balances
FY 2013-14 through 2020-21**

Fiscal Year End	General Fund Expenditures	Unassigned Fund Balance	Unassigned Fund Balance as a Percent of General Fund Expenditures	Total of Assigned and Unassign Fund Balance	Percent of Total Expenditures
2013-14	\$12,913,067	\$194,367 + \$165,556 assigned for budget shortfall	2.79%	\$529,437	4.1%
		\$359,923			
2014-15	\$12,849,620	\$592,282	4.61%	\$691,659	5.4%
2015-16	\$12,894,259	\$905,148 + \$82,927 assigned for budget shortfall	7.66%	\$1,095,235	8.5%
		\$988,075			
2016-17	\$13,099,473	\$428,817 + \$197,600 assigned for budget shortfall	4.78%	\$833,531	6.4%
		\$626,417			
2017-18	\$13,159,825	\$687,747	5.23%	\$869,640	6.6%
2018-19	\$15,286,292	\$1,829,323	11.97%	\$2,096,473	13.7%
2019-20	\$14,540,791	\$1,061,409	7.30%	\$1,178,269	8.1%
2020-21	\$13,255,469	\$575,282	4.34%	\$632,436	4.8%

Source: Compiled by Ressel & Associates from Audited Financial Statements, 2013-14 through 2020-21.

As stated in the 2021 Annual Financial Report, “at the end of the 2021 fiscal year, the governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$830,026.01, a decrease of \$4,065,858.08 from the prior year. This decrease was primarily due to expenditures related to the construction of the new Liberty County High School which occurred in the 2020-21 fiscal year.”

As shown, prior to 2017-18, adjustments had to be made to increase the unassigned fund balance due to budget shortfalls from the prior year. Beginning in 2018-19 revenues relating to the new high school construction inflated the fund balance, but as those monies were spent down, the fund balance decreased accordingly.

In 2020 voters chose not to renew the Surtax. As a result, the last three payments to the State for the District’s portion of the cost for the new high school had to be paid out of existing funds, which brought the fund balance down to just below the 5 percent goal. In June of 2022, the last payment to the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) for the high school of approximately \$174,000 will be due. The Director of Finance indicated that budget cuts and cost reduction measures will allow the District to maintain its fund balances at or around the 5 percent goal.

The final paragraph in Board Policy, 6233 -DISTRICT BUDGET, Section C - General Fund Ending Fund Balance states:

“If the projected portion of the general fund’s ending fund balance not classified as restricted, committed, or nonspendable in the District’s approved operating budget falls

below three percent (3%) of projected general fund revenues for two (2) consecutive fiscal years, the Superintendent will reduce the District's administrative expenditures reported pursuant to F.S. 1010.215 in proportion to the reduction in the general fund's ending balance or the reduction in student enrollment, whichever is greater.”

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) in its publication, *Fund Balance Guidelines for the General Fund* recommends: “*at a minimum, that general-purpose governments, regardless of size, maintain unrestricted budgetary fund balance in their general fund of no less than two months of regular general fund operating revenues or regular general fund operating expenditures...*”

Based on the total General Fund expenditures of approximately \$12 million annually, the GFOA would recommend at least a \$2 million fund balance.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-4: Take immediate action to increase the General Fund Unrestricted Fund Balance to safer operating levels.

Competitive Procurement

OBSERVATION: LCSD’s competitive procurement framework is strong in terms of policy but lacks the structure and procedures to ensure that goods and services are procured in a cost effective and compliant manner.

Competitive procurement is addressed in greater detail in **Section 1.5** of this chapter. As noted, the Board Policies are built on State and federal laws, rules and guides and are comprehensive and up to date, but there are not procedures in place to guide campuses and departments regarding how to carry out those policies. In a decentralized system where compliance is dependent on the principals and department heads, detailed procedures or checklists outlining each of the steps and requirements, and timelines is critical. In addition, this oversight is provided by the Superintendent, without advice of legal counsel, or involvement of the CFO.

As pointed out in the Auditor General’s 2021 Operational Audit, in the absence of a strong control structure over purchasing, documentary evidence of negotiations were not properly maintained and weaknesses were found in contracts and contract oversight.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-5: Implement a stronger system of controls over competitive procurement to ensure compliance with Board Policy.

Construction Oversight

OBSERVATION: Case Studies of two major construction projects provided evidence that LCSD’s construction management process has resulted in projects coming in on time and within budget; however, reliance on external expertise without sufficient oversight was identified as a cause for concern.

As discussed in **Section 1.5** of this chapter, the new high school construction project and the associated relocation of the JROTC Building both were successful projects in terms of cost and timelines.

The District recognized the need for external expertise and contracted for an Architect and Construction Manager. Under the Construction Manager, the District also required them to provide for an Engineering firm and Building Inspector, which covered the primary bases in terms of ensuring skilled and experienced expertise was in place to design and build the facility.

The Superintendent, Director of Transportation and Maintenance and even Board members visited the site almost daily to monitor construction progress. However, according to findings from the Auditor General’s Operational Audit, there were identified weaknesses in the oversight relating to subcontractor selection, progress billings, and the like.

In discussions with the CFO and Director, neither defined their role in the oversight process as holding the contractor accountable. The CFO holds the contract copies and pays the invoices. The Director accepts the invoices with the assurance of the Construction Manager that the billing is accurate and complete but does not audit the invoices personally.

In the absence of assigned internal roles and responsibilities for the oversight of future contracts, the District remains at risk in terms of obtaining the highest quality goods and services from the contracted entities.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-6: As new projects are envisioned, implement a stronger internal contract management and oversight process with specific responsibilities clarified to ensure proper oversight.

1.2 FACILITIES PLANNING, USE, AND CONSTRUCTION

OBSERVATION: Regular management reports are not prepared or requested for the facilities and maintenance program.

Information is communicated about facility and maintenance needs as they arise during the year. In the past, the Director of Transportation and Maintenance met with the Superintendent weekly, but they no longer regularly meet. The Director informally maintains a “wants and needs” spreadsheet of funding needs. The Director has developed the list over several years, including

transportation, facilities, and maintenance projects. However, the Director does not use it to prepare regular management reports.

Instead of preparing management reports, if there is a project need, unrelated to whether the project is on the spreadsheet, he discusses it with the Director of Finance to determine the source of the funds to address the issue. He prepares and presents information to the Superintendent and Board as needed.

Without regular management reports, the Superintendent and the Board do not have a regular method to know the status of the facilities and maintenance program, and how to be informed about future issues.

Effective organizations require management reports with operational and financial information, including relevant key performance indicators, for the facilities and maintenance function so decision makers can be informed. For example, many school districts prepare a monthly update regarding progress on the project being implemented as part of the 5-Year Capital Projects plan; prepare an analysis of cost trends relating to energy use, and the current efforts underway to control those costs, details regarding efforts to reduce deferred maintenance needs (what has been done to address any of the projects listed on the needs list) and suggestions for addressing those issues in the short and long term.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-7: Prepare regular management reports for leadership and the School Board for the facilities and maintenance function.

1.2.2 Performance Evaluation Criteria

OBSERVATION: There are no specific performance evaluation criteria to evaluate the facilities and maintenance functions.

Until only recently, LCSD has had no strategic plan with goals and objectives relating to the operational functions of the District. In the absence of a defined plan, the Superintendent had not required the operations functions of the District to establish performance evaluation criteria.

The goals found in the developing Strategic Plan for Facilities include the following:

Goal 5 – FACILITIES: The Liberty County School District will strive to have the best facilities at each school campus.

Outcomes

- a. The Liberty County School District will be great stewards of our facilities. We will keep competent maintenance staff employed to ensure little to no interruption to the educational day for students.*
- b. We will finish the LCHS Football Fieldhouse/Concession Stand.*
- c. There will be a softball complex built at the new LCHS Softball field.*

d. There will be a new pursuit of Special Facilities Funding for a new lunchroom at Tolar School

e. Money from the Florida Department of State Historical Preservation division will be pursued to address repairs for the old Hosford School Administration building and gymnasium.

As noted in the Districtwide section of the chapter, the District will need to take the next step to add strategies and measurable performance criteria to each of these outcomes.

The effect of not having performance evaluation criteria is that managing construction projects without project metrics makes it difficult to measure the success of the project and whether or not the construction manager is meeting the project's goals and objectives. This results in an increased risk for success of the overall program, making it difficult to address deficiencies in program performance and/or costs.

Gadsden County School District, a peer district, identifies several types of performance evaluation criteria and information in its strategic plan. **Exhibit 1-5** provides the highlights.

**Exhibit 1-5
Gadsden County School District Excerpt Strategic Plan
2017-2022**

SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES									
Goal Statement: To improve and maintain the efficacy of systems, processes and overall operations of the district.									
Objective: By the end of the 2022 School Year the district will have...	Metric	Strategy	Current Data 2016- 2017	TARGET AND TIMELINES					Accountability Champion(s)
				2017- 2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	
(SP1) Made major renovations, remodeling and addition of capital outlay projects as outlined in the Five-Year Facilities Work Plan.	Completion of projects as scheduled	Repair or replace HVAC systems	Declining functionality	HMS- C Tower GCHS-C1 GCHS-C2	HMS-Bldg. 8 GBES-Bldg. 4	GCHS-C3	HMS-Bldg. 11	GBES-Bldg. 6 GCHS- C2 HMS-Bldg. 2	Superintendent Director of Facilities
		Renovations (paint, flooring as needed)	Declining functionality	Planning	HMS-Bldg. 8 GBES-Bldg. 2	HMS-Bldg. 1 HMS-Bldg. 10	HMS-Bldg. 9 GBES-Bldg. 3	GBES-Bldg. 6 HMS-Bldg. 7	Superintendent Director of Facilities
(SP2) Completed construction of a new K-8 School Facility.	Annual Completion of Project as Scheduled	Design, construct and occupy a new K-8 facility and discontinue use of facilities as needed.	At conceptual Stage	Planning	Planning	Begin Construction	On-going Construction	Complete Construction	Superintendent Director of Facilities

Source: Gadsden County School District Strategic Plan, 2017-2022.

Effective organizations require performance evaluation criteria as part of overall project management. ProjectManager.com is a comprehensive resource for guiding projects. Identifying project and performance evaluation criteria, especially for large projects, is critical. These criteria could include time, cost, scope, resources, risk, and quality. Managing the construction projects to ensure the projects are proceeding as planned and hitting all the scheduling and budget milestones have been set is crucial.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-8: Develop performance evaluation criteria for the facilities and maintenance function, including measures to hold external contractors accountable.

OBSERVATION: LCSD tracks deferred maintenance needs but does not consider this a measure of performance.

Deferred maintenance can be used as a measure of the effectiveness of a program when viewed in combination with the type of items on the list and the relative ability of the staff to address those needs.

The District has stated that funding is the primary reason for the \$2.1 million District list of delayed projects which may be true. However, the measure may also be used to alert the District that staff are not performing key duties, additional staff are needed or staff with differing levels of expertise are needed. For example:

- There is no preventative maintenance plan or schedule. Maintenance staff said “off the top of our head” every 3 months they change air filters.
- The high school completed in 2020 still may have some incomplete issues from the final punch list.
- There are roofing issues at the two older schools that may be the result of insufficient upkeep.

Without developing some type of performance evaluation criteria to identify financial and operational components, the District will continue to struggle to implement its spreadsheet of projects.

The Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities prepared by the School Facilities Maintenance Task Force, National Forum on Education Statistics and the Association of School Business Officials International recommends designing a preventive maintenance program using these overall steps:

- Conduct an audit of the buildings, grounds, and equipment.
- Select structural items and pieces of equipment for preventive maintenance.
- Decide on the frequency and type of inspections.
- Follow the established schedule and document the inspections.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-9: Incorporate deferred maintenance into the performance expectations, preventive maintenance schedules and evaluation criteria.

1.2.3 Findings and Recommendations and 1.2.4 Reasonable and Timely Action

NOTE: The findings in the 2021 Operational audit regarding Competitive Procurement are addressed in detail in Section 1.5 of this Chapter.

1.2.5 Program Performance

OBSERVATION: The District does not formally evaluate the performance of facilities and maintenance functions of the District, however the Ressel team found the function is reactive in its approach to maintenance which has resulted in the District operating in a continual crisis mode, which in turn has resulted in higher costs per student than its peers.

The method used by the maintenance function is to respond to the workorder requests as they arrive to the maintenance email in-box, which is a reactive approach to managing facilities. The department does not have a method to evaluate the performance of facilities and maintenance, and they lack a preventative maintenance schedule to follow for all the buildings and systems. If the maintenance staff cannot address the issue requested in the workorder, the Director reaches out to vendors to provide the service. The services are typically for HVAC, electrical, some plumbing, and the food service equipment maintenance.

The District does not have a process, tools, or measures to evaluate the performance of the facilities and maintenance function. However, while on site in the District, the chiller at the Administration Building had broken down just prior to the visit, and the Ressel team observed the makeshift efforts used to temporarily keep the equipment running. The maintenance team made efforts to address the issue, but the total breakdown of the chiller had not been anticipated and no consideration had been given to this need at the time the decision was made to relocate the administration to the old high school.

This temporary fix is not sustainable, and the District is now faced with a new crisis that may result in costs of up to \$1 million to replace the system.

As noted above, preventative maintenance has not been a priority. Yet, industry experts say that every dollar spent on preventative maintenance saves an average of nearly five dollars on expenses, or an average of 12 to 18 percent in the cost overall.

Exhibit 1-6 provides a five-year trend analysis of LCSD's Plant Maintenance and Plant Operations expenditures.

**Exhibit 16
General Fund Expenditures
Plant Maintenance and Plant Operations
2017-18 Actual through 2021-22 Budgeted**

EXPENDITURES	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Budget	% Change
Operation of Plant	\$1,244,136	\$1,179,482	\$1,333,729	\$1,383,045	\$1,279,006	2.8%
Maintenance of Plant	\$301,548	\$391,031	\$592,266	\$418,710	\$272,135	-9.8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,545,684	\$1,570,513	\$1,925,995	\$1,801,755	\$1,551,140	0.4%
Student FTE Count	1,367	1,306	1,273	1,211	1,270	-7.1%
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$1,131.09	\$1,202.21	\$1,512.45	\$1,487.82	\$1,221.37	8.0%

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 1-7 compares LCSD’s total and per pupil Plant Maintenance and Plant Operations expenditures to its peers. As shown, LCSD’s expenditure are higher than the peer average and second highest only to Gadsden CSD. Wakulla CSD has the lowest cost per pupil expenditures.

**Exhibit 1-7
Comparative General Fund Expenditures
Plant Maintenance and Plant Operations
FY 2020-21**

EXPENDITURES	Liberty CSD	Calhoun CSD	Gadsden CSD	Jackson CSD	Wakulla CSD	Average w/o Liberty CSD
Operation of Plant	\$1,383,045	\$1,925,100	\$5,485,187	\$5,870,821	\$4,862,048	\$4,535,789
Maintenance of Plant	\$418,710	\$718,511	\$3,274,265	\$1,897,887	\$1,137,176	\$1,756,959
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,801,755	\$2,643,610	\$8,759,452	\$7,768,707	\$5,999,224	\$6,292,748
Student FTE Count	1,211	2,007	4,652	5,863	4,947	4,367.5
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$1,487.82	\$1,316.91	\$1,882.78	\$1,324.95	\$1,212.80	\$1,434.36

Source: FL Department of Education

The cost per student is a common standard measure of performance. Without a performance evaluation process, determining what component of the plant maintenance and operations expenditures to shift to reduce costs becomes more challenging.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation 1-10: Incorporate a preventative maintenance component into the Facilities and Maintenance function.

1.3 TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION AND UPGRADES

1.3.1 Management Reporting

OBSERVATION: No formal management reports are prepared relating to technology; information is provided to management verbally.

The Coordinator provided the Ressel team a number of valuable reports that could provide the basis for performance reports. A Gap Analysis, a list of devices by campus and other significant pieces of information were readily available which could provide the basis for comprehensive management and Board level reports, and the Coordinator said the information is shared when requested or when needs arise. In most instances, however, the Coordinator communicates much of the information verbally to leadership.

While this communication style may be effective for some matters, tracking and reporting performance based on key indicators could provide management more tangible information from which to make decisions and plan for the future.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-11: Prepare at least quarterly Technology Reports for the Superintendent and Board providing information on established performance metrics as well as the current status of Technology in the District and alerting them to emerging challenges and needs.

1.3.2 Performance Evaluation Criteria

OBSERVATION: The Think HelpDesk application provides an efficient mechanism for reporting and tracking performance as it relates to IT-related workorders, however other metrics that would be useful on a more global level have not been established.

The Think HelpDesk system is capable of producing management reports that the department uses internally to monitor school and individual device trends and the number of workorder issued, pending, and worked at each school.

When a request for service is entered via email, all five of the Technology staff receive an email notification. When repairs are made, or parts ordered, etc. they enter the information into the system. The schools and departments as well as the Technology can access the system and can see the status of the request (i.e., repairs completed, in progress, parts ordered, etc.)

Exhibit 1-8 provides a sample of the information available on the system.

Exhibit 1-8 Think HelpDesk Example

PRIORITY	APPROVAL	TICKET SLA	ENTERED DATE/TIME	NAME PHONE	CATEGORY	ISSUE	SCHOOL ROOM PROPERTY ID (V#)	GROUP ASSIGNED	STATUS LAST TOUCH
NORMAL	*	24339	05-17-22 12:02PM	MARY FLOWERS 8506432241	PRINTER ISSUE	CLOGGED WITH OLD JOBS A students was trying to print a paper in color, but the color computer was all clogged with old jobs and we were not able to delete then.	LIBERTY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ROOM: LIBRARY	TECH TISHA STRICKLAND	NEW
NORMAL	*	24338	05-17-22 11:41AM	SHERRY FLOWERS 158	PRINTER ISSUE	MY PRINTER IS NOT WORKING... Printer isn't working.	W. R. TOLAR K-8	TECH STACEY VOWELL	NEW
HIGH	*	24337	05-17-22 11:09AM	KELSEY SHULER	APPLICATIONS	STUDENT STAR I have a student locked out of their Renaissance account. AR grades are due tomorrow and he still needs to take tests.	HOSFORD ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ROOM: 103	TECH HEATHER RICHTER	NEW
NORMAL	*	24336	05-17-22 10:08AM	EMILY BYRAM	APPLICATIONS	VCL MEDIA PLAYER Panel does not have VCL Media Player installed. Would like to request VCL Media Player be added to ClearTouch panel.	LIBERTY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ROOM: 313	TECH TISHA STRICKLAND	NEW
NORMAL	*	24335	05-17-22 07:28AM	MARC MCCASKILL 31133	NETWORKING	NETWORK ISSUES Device will not connect to the network.	W. R. TOLAR K-8 ROOM: 133 V7534	TECH STACEY VOWELL	ON HOLD 05/17/2022 07:29AM
NORMAL	*	24334	05-17-22 07:27AM	MARC MCCASKILL 31133	ACCOUNT MAINTENANCE	NETWORK ISSUES Device will not connect to the network.	W. R. TOLAR K-8 ROOM: 133 V7540	TECH STACEY VOWELL	ON HOLD 05/17/2022 07:29AM
NORMAL	*	24329	05-16-22 10:21AM	KELSEY SHULER	COMPUTER HARDWARE	STUDENT COMPUTER #4 can not type on her computer. I have the on screen keyboard pulled in to get her by	HOSFORD ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ROOM: 103	TECH HEATHER RICHTER	NEW

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Source: Technology Coordinator, May 2022.

The Technology Coordinator said that she uses the information to monitor the volume of work at each campus, and also looks for school and device trends. The technicians at each school report to the building principal. The information from this system allows both the Coordinator and Principal to monitor the productivity of the technicians at each campus.

While the information from the system provides useful information, programmatically there are no high level performance criteria used to track trends or measure performance. Industry experts differ on exactly what key performance measures should be tracked and often adjust the indicators to meet specific entities, such as schools. The most common criteria indicators include:

- Time to complete work orders
- Number of work orders closed per technician
- Technical support staff to device ratios
- Application, program use data
- Repair and replacement cycle times
- System downtimes and failures
- Equipment/device inventory and aging reports
- Cyber Security attempts/breaches

The benefits of tracking and reporting this information include

- Ability to identify ways to improve user satisfaction
- Ability to keep management apprised of emerging trends or concerns
- Improve planning based on empirical evidence.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-12: Identify critical performance criteria that will provide the department and leadership information relating to the overall performance of the Technology program.

1.3.3 Findings and Recommendations

No findings or recommendations relating to technology were identified.

1.3.4 Reasonable and Timely Action

No findings or recommendations relating to technology were identified.

1.3.5 Program Performance

OBSERVATION: LCSD has outpaced its peers in per pupil expenditures for Instructional and Administrative Technology over the last five years in an effort to improve technology districtwide.

Based on interviews and a tour of LCSD schools, the District has made significant strides to improve student and staff access to technology. As Digital Technology funds from the State waned, the District dedicated ESSER money to refresh devices.

Exhibit 1-9 provides a five-year trend analysis of LCSD’s Instructional and Administrative Technology expenditures.

**Exhibit 1-9
General Fund Expenditures
Instructional and Administrative Technology
2017-18 Actuals through 2021-22 Budgeted**

EXPENDITURES	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Budget	% Change
Instruction-Related Technology	\$739,465	\$566,514	\$534,124	\$385,545	\$452,078	-38.9%
Administrative Technology Services	\$226,224	\$243,505	\$224,025	\$219,011	\$230,331	1.8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$965,689	\$810,019	\$758,149	\$604,557	\$682,409	-29.3%
Student FTE Count	1,367	1,306	1,273	1,211	1,270	-7.1%
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$706.67	\$620.06	\$595.36	\$499.22	\$537.33	-24.0%

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

Exhibit 1-10 compares LCSD’s total and per pupil Instructional and Administrative Technology expenditures to its peers. As shown, LCSD’s expenditures are significantly higher than the peer average and highest of all the peers.

**Exhibit 1-10
Comparative General Fund Expenditures
Instructional and Administrative Technology FY 2020-21**

EXPENDITURES	Liberty CSD	Calhoun CSD	Gadsden CSD	Jackson CSD	Wakulla CSD	Average w/o Liberty CSD
Instruction-Related Technology	\$385,545	\$563,479	\$252,017	\$251,410	\$285,924	\$338,208
Administrative Technology Services	\$219,011	\$25,256	\$867,428	\$554,582	\$423,937	\$467,801
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$604,557	\$588,735	\$1,119,445	\$805,992	\$709,861	\$806,008
Student FTE Count	1,211	2,007	4,652	5,863	4,947	4,367.5
Per Pupil Expenditures	\$499.22	\$293.28	\$240.62	\$137.46	\$143.50	\$203.71

Source: FL Department of Education, 2022.

These significant expenditures represent a commitment to improving technology for its students; however, as funding for technology decreases, the District will be challenged to systematically refresh all of the thousands of devices they have acquired. As mentioned in **Chapter 4** of this

report, developing a sustainable funding strategy for Technology may include an examination of the most appropriate and sustainable refresh cycle for the District.

OBSERVATION: LCSD is applying for and receiving E-Rate money to improve the technology infrastructure for the District.

As shown in **Exhibit 1-11**, LCSD has been awarded almost \$540,000 in E-Rate money over the last three years.

**Exhibit 1-11
Liberty E-Rate Funding and Use
FY 2019 through FY 2021**

Year/ Category	Requested	Awarded	District's Share	Purpose Used
2019 C1*	\$104,220.00	\$104,220.00	\$0.00	Ongoing for Internet and WAN
2019 C2	\$10,803.50	\$9,625.13	\$1,178.37	Hardware - switches, wireless access points, etc.
2020 C1	\$104,220.00	\$104,220.00	\$0.00	Ongoing for Internet and WAN
2020 C2	\$97,040.00	\$97,040.00	\$0.00	Hardware - switches, wireless access points, etc.
2021 C1	\$104,220.00	\$104,220.00	\$0.00	Ongoing for Internet and WAN
2021 C2	\$119,742.05	\$119,742.05	\$0.00	Hardware - switches, wireless access points, etc.
Total	\$540,245.55	\$539,067.18	\$1,178.37	

Source: LCSD Technology Coordinator, May 2022.

The FCC's E-Rate program makes telecommunications and information services more affordable for schools and libraries. With funding from the federal Universal Service Fund (fcc.gov/general/universal-service-fund), E-Rate provides discounts for telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections to eligible schools and libraries. Eligible schools and libraries may receive discounts on telecommunications, telecommunications services, and Internet access, as well as internal connections, managed internal broadband services and basic maintenance of internal connections.

Discounts range from 20 to 90 percent and are based on the poverty level of the schools. Rural schools and libraries may also receive a higher discount. Liberty is eligible for 90 percent reimbursement on Category 1 expenditures and 85 percent of Category 2 expenditures, and must pay some portion of the service costs.

An eligible school or library identifies goods or services it needs and submits a request for competitive bids to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). The bid request and competitive bidding processes must comply with FCC rules and also State and local procurement requirements. USAC posts these requests on its website for vendors to bid on. After reviewing the vendors' bids, the school or library selects the most cost-effective eligible products and services using price as the primary factor. It then applies to USAC for approval for the desired purchases.

Next, USAC issues funding commitments to eligible applicants. When a vendor provides the selected services, either the vendor or the applicant submits requests to USAC for reimbursement of the approved discounts.

Although there is considerable paperwork and tracking involved, the Coordinator said that effort is worth it as the E-Rate money has allowed them to maintain and improve the District's infrastructure overall.

OBSERVATION: Recent changes in State funding for information technology have seriously impacted the District's ability to meet the growing technology needs in the future.

Identifying a sustainable source of revenues to support technology has been a challenge. Temporarily, ESSER funds have allowed LCSD to refresh 1,100 student devices and these funds are to be used in the coming year to refresh approximately 100 aging staff computers. There are, however, no sustainable funding sources to sustain the refresh program in the future, meaning as these devices age out, there will be no money to systematically refresh those devices.

The Coordinator provided a gap analysis of ongoing needs that included a cost of \$100,000 for systematic refreshes. The standard refresh cycle in most districts is three years due to the rapid advancements in technology and the need for devices to be capable of supporting instructional programming as it evolves. This level of spending may be appropriate for the near future since so many computers will be relatively new. Based on an inventory of over 1,800 devices, a three-year refresh cycle, used as a standard by many school districts, would require the purchase of 600 new devices each year. Assuming a very conservative average cost of \$550 per device the annual cost would be \$330,000 per year. Using the same approximate cost per device, the proposed \$100,000 will enable the purchase of approximately 180 devices, resulting in a 10 year replacement cycle for the 1,800 devices. When faced with funding shortfalls, districts have forgone the refresh of staff and administrative computers for four or more years, and in some cases have differentiated the refresh cycles by grade levels so that only those devices that must be refreshed to accommodate the accesses need for curriculum or testing are refreshed on a three year cycle.

Discussions regarding sustainable funding sources began in May, but the immediate budgetary constraints are limiting the options. Grants are being discussed but like the ESSER funds, are often one-time money.

While additional funding is needed, successful districts are also looking at strategies for controlling cost by making strategic spending decisions. Building a sustainable model that keeps pace with ever evolving technology requires careful analysis and planning, For example:

- What is the optimum number and type of devices needed to support the program delivery methods in use for the District? Five years ago, the goal was to have 1 to 1 student devices at every grade level. Today the device to student ratios are approaching 2 to 1. Is more, better? And, if so, more of what types of devices? What devices are actually used and making a difference?
- What is the optimum device refresh cycle and is the same refresh cycle appropriate at all grade levels?
- What are the right tools (hardware and software) and approaches for the job? What is needed in a computer lab versus a classroom and why?
- What software, applications, and programs are providing the promised return on investment and what should be eliminated?

- Could partnerships with other districts, higher education institutions, governmental entities or private industry be used to share services, improve buying power or increase accesses?

Strategic analysis and planning combined with the identification of sustainable funding are needed to ensure that the District’s resources are being used effectively and efficiently.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-13: Strategically analyze technology spending patterns and evaluate how available dollars can and should be allocated for maximum efficiency.

1.4 CASE STUDIES OF PAST PROJECTS

Ressel & Associates conducted case studies of two major capital outlay projects in an effort to *evaluate the cost, timing, and quality of current program efforts*. Those projects included:

1. Construction of Liberty County High School
2. Relocation of the JROTC Building to the new Liberty County High School site

The case studies examine the projects from start to finish, and identify lessons learned, if any, and how LCSD responded to correct any missteps in the process.

Highlights of each case study are presented here.

OBSERVATION: Case Studies of two projects indicate that past projects have come in on time and within budget with heavy reliance on internal and external support.

The management of recent projects provide evidence of the District’s ability to effectively and efficiently manage the project envisioned in the Surtax Reference.

Liberty County High School

Project Description: The project was a new high school built at the location of the old Bristol Elementary School. The old LCHS was approaching 40 years old and was having severe maintenance issues. Anticipated increased enrollment and the need for a modern gymnasium, larger dining, larger library, and CTE facilities played a significant role in the planning. The site was chosen due to its proximity to all the high school athletic fields. Bristol Elementary School was no longer being used as a school site, closed in 1998 after Tolar K-8 was built. At the time of the project, it was being used as the District Office site. The new District Office site was moved to the site of the old Liberty County High School upon completion of the new high school and the old Bristol Elementary School was razed. A Castaldi report was prepared to approve the razing of the Bristol Elementary School.

This was the third school completed with Special Facilities Funding. The first school was Tolar K-8 School in 1998, Hosford K-8 School in 2009. All buildings are paid for upon completion through this funding source.

Project Start Date: April 19, 2019
Expected Final Project Completion Date: August 20, 2020
Actual Project Completion Date: August 20, 2020
Projected Project Cost: \$18 million
Final Actual Project Cost: \$24 million
Project Cost Variance: \$6 million added for storm hardening as a result of Hurricane Michael.
Location: 12852 NW CR 12 Bristol, FL 32321
Land Size: 17 Acres
Building/Addition Size: 96,000 Net Square Feet
Construction Type: New Construction
Funding Source(s): Special Facilities Funding s. 1013.64, *Florida Statutes*.

Lessons Learned: Flexibility in managing construction projects was critical. Work was originally scheduled to begin in 2018, but it was delayed due to Hurricane Michael in October 2018. The extra \$6 million required new engineered plans that extended the project time by five months. The District contracted with the same architects as its last school project (Hosford K-8 in 2009), so they learned that using familiar Architects aided the District with this construction project..

Coordinating with other governmental entities was also necessary. The Bristol Public Library was at the site which required coordination with the Liberty County Board of County Commissioners to move it. A lesson was learned about evaluating financial options. The old LCHS JROTC was a new building so the District received quotes and evaluated the costs to build another building for \$1.75 million or the lower cost of \$800,000 to move it. The District decided to relocate it.

OBSERVATION: Flexibility with the construction timeline and increased State funding due to unforeseen circumstances of Hurricane Michael resulted in the district successfully constructing the Liberty County High School as planned. However, the District had to rely heavily on internal and external support to ensure a successful completion of the projects.

Internal support included from the Finance Office to complete the complex financial components of the project. The District paid a financial supplement to an accounts payable staff for “all the extra time and effort,” although these tasks appear to be in the role of the Finance Office. The Director of Finance maintained all the procurement and contract documents. The Finance Office reviewed and approved all the invoices for payment. The Director of Transportation and Maintenance did not participate in the financial oversight of the project.

External support included architects, engineers, and the construction manager. The construction manager hired the subcontractors and implemented all components of the project. The School Board approved the construction manager to select the engineer and manage all aspects of the building construction. **Chapter 3, Section 3.1.4** identifies the internal and external support roles that were in place for the project.

Relocation of the JROTC Building to the new Liberty County High School site

Project Description: In 2009, a JROTC building was built on the site of the Liberty High School. During the planning stage for the new high school, there was discussion with the architects and the construction manager about whether to rebuild the JROTC building at the new high school site as part of the overall high school plans or to relocate the building. The building was in good condition, looked new, and would not be needed at the old LCHS site.

The District received a \$1.75 million quote to rebuild it and an \$800,000 quote to relocate it to the new LCHS site. The decision was made to relocate it and to place it on the south side of the new LCHS site to join with the CTE wing.

Project Start Date: April 19, 2019

Expected Final Project Completion Date: August 20, 2020

Actual Project Completion Date: August 20, 2020

Projected Project Cost: \$1.75 million

Final Actual Project Cost: \$800,000

Project Cost Variance: \$950,000

Location: 12852 NW CR 12 Bristol, FL 32321

Land Size: 17 Acres

Building/Addition Size: 15,000 Net Square Feet

Construction Type: Relocation of Existing Building

Funding Source(s): Special Facilities Funding



Lessons Learned: The District learned that moving a 15,000 square foot building is possible. The building was cut in half and moved in two pieces. Putting a building back together was a challenge. Although the roof color did not match the new LCHS roof color, the District decided it blended just fine due to being a neutral beige color.

OBSERVATION: Choosing the more challenging option to relocate rather than raze an existing building allowed \$950,000 of special facilities funding to be used as part of the new high school. However, the District had to rely heavily on internal and external support to ensure a successful completion of the projects.

Chapter 3, Section 3.1.4 identifies the internal and external support roles that were in place for the project. This project was one specific component of building the new Liberty County High School. The same internal and external support as the high school project was in place for this project since they were connected projects.

1.5 COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT

OBSERVATION: The Board Purchasing policies contain detailed guidance on the process for initiating and obtaining approval for purchases however there are no documented procedures that guide campus and department level staff through the process.

As shown in Exhibit 1-12, LCSD has an extensive list of policies relating to purchasing and the competitive procurement processes.

Many of these policies are written at the detail level of a procedure, and are referred to by staff as their purchasing policies and procedures. There is no separate purchasing manual and the Accounting Procedures Manual references the “Purchasing Policies” in general, but contains no procedures for purchasing.

**Exhibit 1-12
Purchasing-Related Policies**

Policy	Description	Last Revised
6320 – Purchasing and Contracting for Commodities and Contractual Services	Applies to all purchases of commodities and contractual services not otherwise exempted	9/9/21
6320.01 – Vendor Preferences	Outlines the process for bidding, protesting bids, bid bonds, and the like.	4/8/14
6322 – Construction Contracting and Bidding	Outlines the construction bidding processes	4/14/20
6324 – Cone of Silence	Prohibits communication regarding a particular IFB, RFP, or ITN	4/8/14
6325 – Procurement - Federal Grants/Funds	Outlines procedures for purchases made with federal/grant funds	5/10/21
6326 – Bid Protests	Outlines how bid protests will be resolved.	4/8/14
6330 – Acquisition Of Professional Architectural, Engineering, Landscape Architectural, Or Land Surveying Service	Outlines purchasing procedures for services exempted in Policy 6320	4/8/14
6334 – Prequalification Of Contractors For Educational Facilities Construction	Requires the School Board to pre-qualify contractors for a one (1) year period or for a specific project	11/14/17
6345 – Change Orders	The Superintendent can authorize change orders of up to \$5,000 and Board approves above that amount.	4/8/14
6423 – Use Of Credit Cards	Authorizes the use of credit cards	4/8/14
6440 – Cooperative Purchasing	Authorizes the use of interlocal agreements for purchasing	4/8/14

**Exhibit 1-12 (continued)
Purchasing-Related Policies**

Policy	Description	Last Revised
6450 – Local Purchasing	If all other considerations are equal, the Board prefers to purchase from businesses located in Liberty County.	4/8/14
6460 – Vendor Relations	Prohibits purchasing knowingly with any supplier of materials, supplies and services to this District that any Board member or the Superintendent has any financial interest, direct or indirect, whatsoever.	4/8/14
6480 – Expenditures	Expenditures from District and all other funds available for the public-school program shall be authorized by law and procedures prescribed by the School Board.	1/14/20

Source: Compiled by Ressel & Associates, May 2022.

The position responsible for the Accounts Payable function works with campus level staff when they have questions regarding purchasing, receiving, or invoicing. When new people are hired at the campus or department level for this purpose, the Accounts Payable person will sit with them to train them on the processes including what is needed when the goods or services are received and the invoice is ready to be paid.

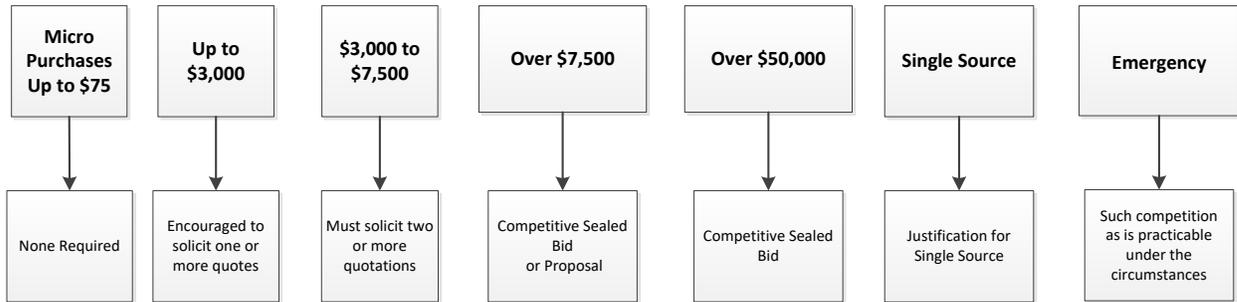
While reference to policy and hands on training are helpful, there are internal procedures relating to purchasing that are not well documented in policy. For example, the only purchasing thresholds in policy are found in Policy 6320:

- The Superintendent is authorized to purchase commodities and contractual services where the total amount does not exceed \$50,00 (Typo in policy but the assumption is this is \$50,000)
- \$50,000 - competitive solicitations shall be requested from three (3) or more sources

According to staff, any purchases over \$1,000 are required to have three quotes, and any purchases over \$5,000 require Superintendent approval. There are exemptions to the quote and competitive bidding requirements when purchasing through a State or cooperative purchasing contract. Examples of local purchases exist however, where there is no exemption where multiple quotes were not solicited and “sole source” documentation was not obtained as required in Policy 6320.

Based on a review of best practices many districts have procedures that illustrate the thresholds and simplify the requirements at each level as shown in **Exhibit 1-13**.

**Exhibit 1-13
Sample of Competitive Procurement Thresholds**



Source: Compiled by Ressel & Associates LLC. June 2022/

Reference to the policy or procedure subsection generally follow with detailed instructions.

Reliance on each of the assigned campus and department level staff to read and digest the requirements contained in the 14 policy documents shown above is not reasonable or effective and leaves the District prone to unintended violations of policy.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-14: Create administrative purchasing procedures that detail the specific thresholds and required processes at each level, as well as the processes to follow in Skyward, the documentation required to support each purchase, the receiving processes and the processes for requesting or authorizing payment of invoices.

OBSERVATION: Although policy states the competitive processes that are to be used, in practice, there is no District-level leadership position other than the Superintendent to ensure that LCSD complies with policy and takes maximum advantage of competitive procurement, volume discounts and special pricing agreements.

LCSD attempts to avoid the need for competitive procurements where possible, but making extensive use of purchasing cooperatives, piggyback agreements with other districts, etc. however the use of local vendors for spot purposes may be circumventing the documented procurement policies.

When quotes and bidding are needed, the departments and/or schools are responsible. The process for competitive bidding is lined out in policy and the policy is on-line. There is, however, only limited purchasing and competitive bidding expertise at the department and campus levels, and only limited oversight at the administrative level. The Finance Department relies on the departments and campuses to know and apply the appropriate competitive procurement activities. Finance is not involved in that process. Finance relies on the Skyward system to send things through the appropriate approval path, and expects the approvers to check to be sure that quotes are obtained or cooperative purchasing agreements are used effectively. Finance sets up vendors in the system and takes action to open accounts with local vendors but

there was no evidence provided that indicated a blanket purchase order was established or any attempt had been made to obtain volume discounts. Anecdotally, staff said that the local vendors are very supportive of the schools and always give the District very good pricing, but no specific evidence was provided in support.

The majority of purchasing that require competitive procurements are generally facility related and the Director of Transportation and Maintenance reports directly to the Superintendent, making the Superintendent almost solely responsible for providing or seeking expertise and monitoring compliance. The Board has final approval of all contracts, but Board members generally defer to the recommendations made by the administration.

According to staff in the Finance area, there is very little tracking done to ensure that purchases are made through approved State contracts or that local purchases that are cumulatively over the bid or quote threshold are identified so that competitive bids can be obtained and blanket purchase orders issued for the future.

The Director of Transportation and Maintenance used the services of architects and contract management services to aid in the competitive procurement required as part of the new high school construction project. The Superintendent provided some oversight and drew on the expertise of the Board Attorney in preparing some of the competitive procurement documents and drafting of contracts.

The CFO said she is not responsible for monitoring the competitive bidding process; she maintains the contract files and make sure that the invoices submitted for payment have all of the supporting documentation and are in line with the contract terms and conditions.

A number of findings in the Auditor General Operational Audit Report issued in December 2020 illustrate the absence of sufficient oversight.

Finding 1: *District records did not demonstrate that the District complied with State law and Board policies by competitively negotiating architect services for the Liberty County New High School Project (High School Project).*

The detailed discussion contained two parts: 1) competitive negotiations are required 2) no documentation could be found to support whether these negotiations occurred. District policies appeared to be consistent with State law; however there was no evidence this occurred as records could not be found.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-15: Assign the Assistant Superintendent the responsibilities for ensuring that all purchases are compliant with Board policy and administrative procedures. When appropriate, solicit a review by the Board attorney.

OBSERVATION: Four of the six findings in the Auditor General’s Operational Audit relate to insufficient contract oversight and more specifically District oversight of the Construction Manager; although the new High School project is complete, the District remains ill-equipped to provide the level of contract oversight expertise needed for future large projects.

Finding 2: District monitoring of construction management entity (CME) payments, which included subcontractor service costs, was deficient.

Finding 3: District monitoring of the CME subcontractor selection process needs improvement.

Finding 4: The District needs to enhance controls over negotiations, monitoring, and documenting the reasonableness of CME general conditions costs.

Finding 5: The CME contract for the High School Project did not contain a penalty to be paid by the contractor for a failure to comply with contract terms.

The District response issued along with the audit in 2020 stated that ‘procedures’ would be enhanced or established to address the concerns, and while policies were revised following the issuance of this report, there are no procedures documenting how the requirements will be implemented or the internal processes that will be used to ensure compliance.

Contract management best practices compiled by the Ressel team from a number of sources include the following components:

- A clearly drafted contract with clear and measurable criteria for performance, including provisions for the consequences for non-compliance.
- A central contract file that is accessible, well organized and easily referred to ensure that no contract terms are overlooked or misapplied.
- A mechanism for recording and tracking operational and financial key performance measures either through a contract management software, Excel spreadsheet, etc., that can be used to compare progress, payments and timelines to the established contract terms and agreements
- An assigned person or persons accountable for
 - critical monitoring and evaluation of the contractor’s performance,
 - the quality of work performed,
 - the quality of materials in comparison to the contract specification and designs, and
 - the accuracy and completeness of progress billings, including all supporting documentation.
 - effective collaboration between and among the contributing experts such as architects, contractors, the internal contract manager and regulatory organizations to ensure compliance with and efficient navigation of codes, standards and legal requirements.

In many districts, the Director position is also a certified Building Official with the associated training and expertise to hold contractors accountable for proper design and construction. In some districts, a retired individual with extensive contract management experience is contracted to perform quasi-construction audit activities to review billings and hold contractors accountable for providing the goods and services stipulated in the contract.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-16: Contract for the services of a qualified individual to act in the role of construction auditor/manager to ensure that the District receives the high-quality goods and services negotiated in large construction or renovation contracts.

OBSERVATION: Referencing the limited number of vendors and suppliers available in the area, LCSD makes single source purchases or issues single source contracts for certain goods and services. However, the documentation and approval requirements related to single source contracting are not always followed.

LCSD is primarily a rural community with a limited number of businesses in the immediate area that can provide the goods or services the District needs. Further, according to administrators, vendors from other communities are sometimes unwilling to travel to LCSD to provide goods or service, which seriously limits the District's options in terms of competitive procurement.

The Director of Maintenance and Transportation gave several examples for single source purchases:

- HVAC repairs (local business)
- Electrical repairs (local business)
- Plumbing repairs (multiple local businesses)

From Policy 6320

The State Board has waived the requirement for requesting competitive solicitations from three (3) or more sources for purchases by the Board if:

3. *Commodities and contractual services when:*
 - a. *Competitive solicitations have been requested in the manner prescribed by this policy; and*
 - b. *The Board has made a finding that no valid or acceptable firm proposal has been received within the prescribed time.*

When such a finding has been officially made, the Board may enter into negotiations with suppliers of such commodities and contractual services and may execute contracts with such vendors under whatever terms and conditions as the Board determines to be in its best interests.

No evidence was provided to show that this policy had been complied with. Generally, a purchase order is issued for each job, without a formal contract for ongoing services. In nearly every instance the Ressel team was told that these firms give the District favorable rates, however, the rates are only shown on the final invoice.

Faced with similar situations, a number of smaller districts negotiate an annual contract with the vendors following the single source guidelines as a way to document that the District has complied with the language as well as spirit of the law and policy.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1-17: Ensure that single source procurements are well documented and signed off on by the Superintendent and the Board prior to the purchase being made, except in emergency situations that require immediate action based on identifiable health and safety issues.



***CHAPTER 2:
PROGRAM DESIGN AND STRUCTURE***

2.0 PROGRAM DESIGN AND STRUCTURE

Chapter 2 presents findings related to program design and structure. As part of the audit, Ressel & Associates examined the organization and management structure of the District as a whole and the component units within the organization that are now or will be responsible for the program areas identified in the Surtax Resolution. The examination included contracted and other external services that are now or will be used in the implementation of the projects outlined in the Resolution. In addition, the Ressel team assessed the procurement and contracting function to determine its capacity for handling the volume and complexity of work anticipated in the Resolution.

The specific audit evaluation tasks performed are provided below.

- 2.1 **Organization Structure** - Review program organizational structure to ensure the program has clearly defined units, minimizes overlapping functions and excessive administrative layers, and has lines of authority that minimize administrative costs; and
- 2.2 **Staffing Levels** - Assess the reasonableness of current program staffing levels given the nature of the services provided and program workload.

Finding on program design and structure: Partially Meets. LCSD's central organization structure is properly aligned, minimizing overlaps and excess layers of management. Based on overall student to staff ratios districtwide, the Ressel team further concluded that an analysis of districtwide staffing needs for 2022-23 is needed to determine if additional staff reductions can be made. The organization of the program areas under review are generally appropriate, however, the Maintenance and Transportation Department may be better aligned with other operational functions under the Assistant Superintendent. Staffing levels are reasonable in the program areas of maintenance, custodial, and technology.

Findings by Research Subtask:

- Subtask 2-1- *Organization Structure -Meets* - The overall central organization is organized into clearly defined units with a minimum of overlapping functions or layers. The facilities and maintenance function is clearly defined in the organization, but the Director of Transportation and Maintenance is the only operational function that does not report to the Assistant Superintendent. Information Technology is organized under the Director of Instruction, has clearly defined units with no identified overlapping functions or excess administrative layers.
- Subtask 2-2 - *Staffing Levels – Partially Meets* - LCSD has made efforts over the last two years to reduce staffing levels through attrition. Current staffing levels on a per pupil basis indicate a need for better allocation formulas and an annual review of the

allocations. Staffing levels in maintenance, custodial and technology are in line with industry standards.

In this chapter, program design and structure in the Liberty County School District is presented in the following functional areas:

- 2.1 Districtwide Support for Areas Under Review
- 2.2 Facilities Planning, Use, and Construction
- 2.3 Technology Implementation and Upgrades

2.1 DISTRICTWIDE SUPPORT FOR AREAS UNDER REVIEW

2.1.1 Organizational Structure

The School Superintendent in the Liberty County School District is an elected position. The current Liberty County School District Superintendent, Kyle Peddie is in his first term. Prior to being elected as Superintendent in 2020, Mr. Peddie was a school board member for 18 years.

In this section, Ressel & Associates reviewed program organizational functions to ensure the program has clearly defined units, minimizes overlapping functions and excessive administrative layers, and has lines of authority that minimize administrative costs.

The current districtwide organizational chart for the central office in the Liberty County School District is shown in **Exhibit 2-1**.

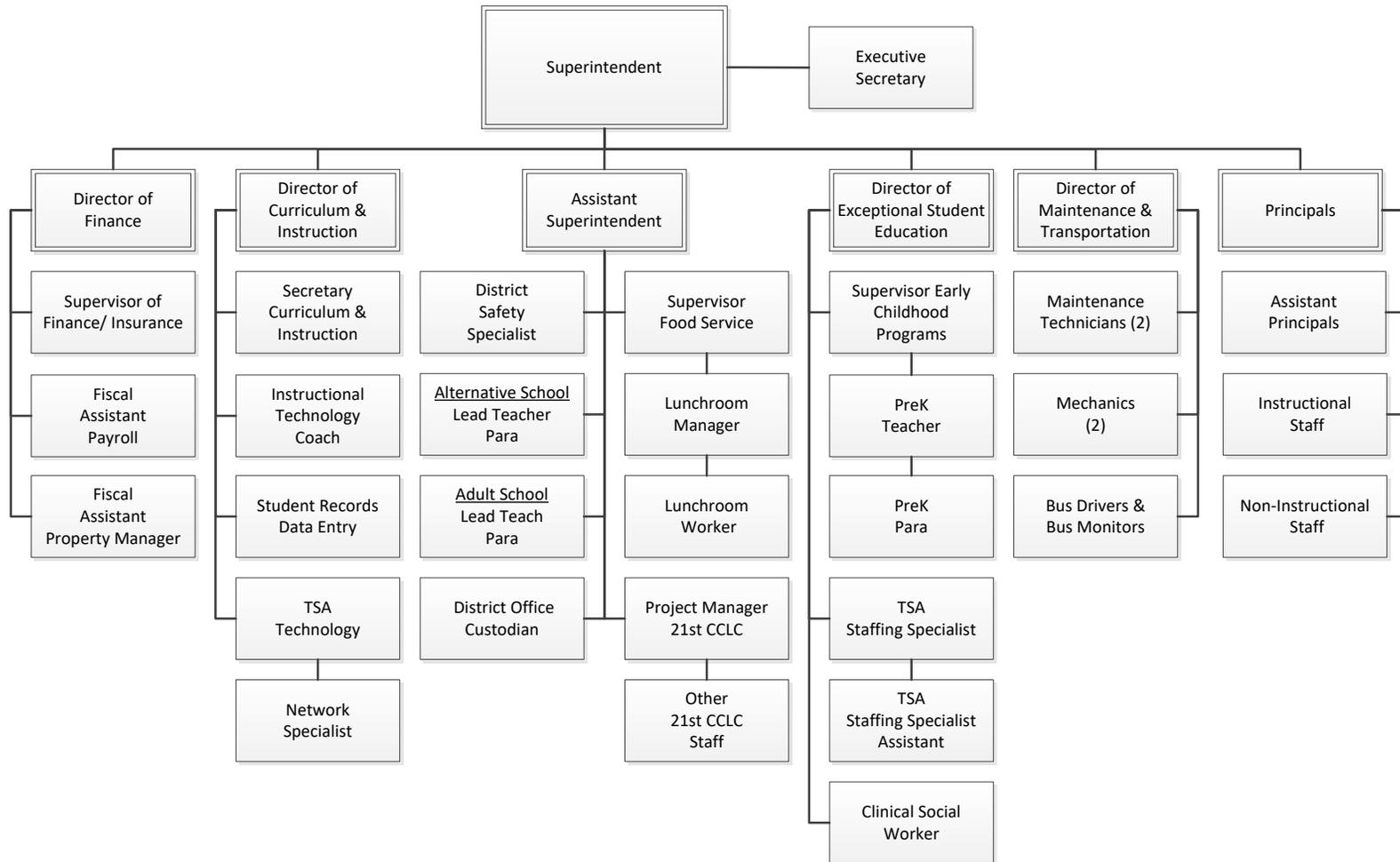
OBSERVATION: The overall central organization is organized into clearly defined units with a minimum of overlapping functions or layers. Despite recent changes in state laws, however, the Liberty County School District has not elevated the position of Safety and Security Specialist to report to the Superintendent.

The Safety and Security Specialist stated that he reports to the Assistant Superintendent, but also reports to the Superintendent on significant issues.

Florida Statute 1006.07 states that the school safety specialist shall:

- 1. Review school district policies and procedures for compliance with state law and rules, including the district's timely and accurate submission of school environmental safety incident reports to the department pursuant to s. 1001.212(8).*
- 2. Provide the necessary training and resources to students and school district staff in matters relating to youth mental health awareness and assistance; emergency procedures, including active shooter training; and school safety and security.*
- 3. Serve as the school district liaison with local public safety agencies and national, state, and community agencies and organizations in matters of school safety and security.*

**Exhibit 2-1
Current Central Office Organization
Liberty County School District
2021-22 School Year**



Source: Liberty County School District, Superintendent's Office, July 2022.

4. In collaboration with the appropriate public safety agencies, as that term is defined in s. 365.171, by October 1 of each year, conduct a school security risk assessment at each public school using the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool developed by the Office of Safe Schools pursuant to s. 1006.1493. Based on the assessment findings, the district's school safety specialist shall provide recommendations to the district school superintendent and the district school board which identify strategies and activities that the district school board should implement in order to address the findings and improve school safety and security. Each district school board must receive such findings and the school safety specialist's recommendations at a publicly noticed district school board meeting to provide the public an opportunity to hear the district school board members discuss and take action on the findings and recommendations. Each school safety specialist shall report such findings and school board action to the Office of Safe Schools within 30 days after the district school board meeting.

(b) Each school safety specialist shall coordinate with the appropriate public safety agencies, as defined in s. 365.171, that are designated as first responders to a school's campus to conduct a tour of such campus once every 3 years and provide recommendations related to school safety. The recommendations by the public safety agencies must be considered as part of the recommendations by the school safety specialist pursuant to paragraph (a).

(c) Each district school board and charter school governing board must adopt an active assailant response plan. By October 1, 2019, and annually thereafter, each district school superintendent and charter school principal shall certify that all school personnel have received annual training on the procedures contained in the active assailant response plan for the applicable school district or charter school.

State Board Rule 61-1.0018 on "State Safety Requirements and Training" states:

(17a) Each school district superintendent must designate a school safety specialist for the district that is either a school administrator employed by the district, or a law enforcement officer employed by the sheriff's office located in the school district, as provided by Section 1006.07(6)(a). F.A.

Elevating the position could ensure that the district is in compliance with state law, and emphasize the key role of Safety and Security in the District.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-1: Modify the central office structure of the Liberty County School District and have the Safety and Security Specialist report directly to the Superintendent with a dotted line to the Assistant Superintendent emphasizing the significant importance of school safety.

Legal Services

OBSERVATION: The Liberty County School District has three attorneys providing services, yet there is little coordination among attorneys.

There is no coordination or oversight of the attorneys; no senior staff member is assigned responsibility for completing this task.

School Board Policy P0156, Legal Counsel, is vague on legal services needed for the Liberty County School District and only consists of the following statement:

The School Board may employ or retain legal counsel to render legal services as are needed by the Board or Superintendent for school matters.

Liberty County School District uses three outside attorneys:

- One attorney is available from PAEC through regular membership fees at no additional cost to the District. This attorney handles litigations, reprimands, and dismissals.
- A second attorney provides school board services for meetings at \$1,200 per month (\$14,400 annually). This attorney is on a retainer contract for his service. Beyond the board meetings, this attorney charges \$150 per hour, but he has never charged for any additional service.
- A third attorney is used for union negotiations and grievance issues, primarily for teachers. **Exhibit 2-2** shows the charges the monthly services provided by a third firm. This firm provides detailed invoices as to what services are provided each month.

If the annual costs for the second attorney are added to the cost of the School Board attorney, the annual fees are about \$26,000 per year which is a reasonable cost for legal services in a small district. As stated, one of the three attorneys is paid for by PAEC.

Exhibit 2-2
Legal Expenses by Month and Year for Third Attorney
Liberty County School District
2019-20 to 2021-22 to Date

2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
By Month	Amount	By Month	Amount	By Month	Amount
August 2019	\$1108.18	August 2020	\$20.00	August 2021	\$808.00
September 2019	\$80.00	September 2020	\$440.00	October 2021	\$1,296.44
October 2019	\$220.00	October 2020	\$2,615.08	December 2021	\$1,828.14
November 2019	\$1,378.46	November 2020	\$940.00	January 2022	\$242.50
January 2020	\$465.50	December 2020	\$3,258.80	February 2022	\$317.00
February 2020	\$2,538.46	February 2021	\$351.00	March 2022	\$60.00
March 2020	\$3,757.00	March 2021	\$1,058.94		
April 2020	\$2,243.45	January 2021	\$220.00		
May 2020	\$840.00	April 2021	\$60.00		
June 2020	\$1,080.00	May 2021	\$1,476.45		
		June 2022	\$1,530.44		
	\$13,711.05		\$11,970.71		\$4,309.58

Source: Liberty County School District, 2022.

In the absence of an assigned person to oversee and monitor legal services there may be instances when legal services are sought without the knowledge of the Board and other instances

where legal counsel is needed and not obtained. One example from the Auditor General's Report is the lack of contracting and competitive procurement being monitored by legal counsel.

While three attorneys/firms appear to be providing non-overlapping services, no coordination exists for legal services in the Liberty County School District, and there is no monitoring of legal fees. Instead, the three attorneys act in silos with no direct coordination among them.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-2: Assign one central office administrator to be responsible for overseeing legal services, providing coordination with and among the three attorneys, and monitoring legal expenses.

OBSERVATION: LCSD has effectively used job shadowing to ensure continuity of services in the Finance and Curriculum Departments to prepare for the departure of the Directors in those areas.

The Director of Finance retired effective June 30, 2022; in preparation the District hired an individual with financial experience in another school district to shadow the current Director for three months. The Superintendent also transferred a school guidance counselor for Instruction to shadow the Director of Curriculum for the several months before her retirement.

The current state of affairs with the opportunity for succession planning exemplifies a best practice to smoothly transition new administrators.

In fact, financial policies and procedures are well documented and the departing Director used them for training purposes. This transition and succession plan provided a positive opportunity for the new Directors to learn from the retiring Directors.

LCSD managers who were interviewed described this as an excellent structured training experience for both new Directors.

2.1.2 Staffing Levels

OBSERVATION: Although LCSD has made efforts over the last two years to reduce staffing levels through attrition, the current staffing levels on a per pupil basis indicate a need for better allocation formulas and an annual review of the allocations.

Full-time staff in LCSD have declined since 2018 by 8.3 percent while student enrollment also declined; however, the student to teacher ratio decreased from 13.7 to 12.7, and the student to administrator ratio decreased from 97.6 to 90.7, which is relatively low in comparison to peers.

Annually, Florida school districts self-report the number of full-time staff in each category to the Florida Department of Education (DOE). The categories are defined by DOE; however, school districts have some discretion when assigning staff to the categories. For example, an administrator in one district might be considered instructional staff in another. Therefore, the data only are generally useful in making broad comparisons.

Exhibit 2-3 provides full-time staffing levels as reported to the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) in the fall of 2018 by LCSD and its peers. While the number of staff by category is presented, the ratio of students to staff by category, calculated by Ressel & Associates, allows for a more relevant comparison.

As shown, the Student to Total Full-Time Staff Ratio is the lowest among the peer districts, indicating that LCSD has more total staff per student than peers, which may indicate that LCSD may be over staffed.

In addition, LCSD has maintained a lower student to teacher ratio than all of its peers. In terms of administrators, LCSD also has the lowest ratio of student to administrator ratio, which indicates that the District has more administrators than most peers on a per pupil basis.

Exhibit 2-3
Number of Full-Time Staff
Liberty County School District and Peer School Districts
2020-21 School Year

District/ Category	Liberty	Calhoun	Gadsden	Jackson	Wakulla	Peer Average w/o Liberty
Student FTE Count	1,270	2,072	4,715	5,823	5,072	4,421
Administrators						
Officials, Administrators and Managers-Instructional	7	7	21	13	15	14
Officials, Administrators, Managers - Total	7	7	21	13	15	14
Consultants/ Supervisors of Instruction	1		6	5	1	4
Principals	3	4	11	14	9	10
Assistant Principals	3	5	17	11	12	11
Education Coordinators	0	1			1	1
Total Administrators	14	17	55	43	38	38
Student to Administrator Ratio	90.7	121.9	85.7	135.4	133.5	119.1
Teachers						
Elementary Teachers (PK-6)	42	56	128	182	123	122
Secondary Teachers (7-12)	34	56	122	171	137	122
Exceptional Student Education Teachers	15	28	45	61	61	49
Other Teachers	9		14	33	4	17
Total Teachers	100	140	309	447	325	305
Student to Teacher Ratio	12.7	14.8	15.3	13.0	15.6	14.7
Professional Staff						
Guidance Counselors	3	3	16	20	2	10
Social Workers	0	1	7		4	4
School Psychologists	0		4	1		3
Librarians /Audio-Visual Workers	0	1	6	9	6	6
Other Professional Staff - Non-Administrative						
Instructional	12	11	29	22	23	21
Non-Instructional	11	13	38	9	5	16
Total Professional Staff	26	29	100	61	40	58
Student to Professional Ratio	48.8	71.5	47.1	95.5	126.8	85.2
Support Staff						
Paraprofessionals	27	40	81	181	86	97
Technicians		3	7	4	7	5
Administrative Support Workers	15	17	47	70	54	47
Service Workers	32	40	156	126	98	105
Skilled Crafts Workers	1	3	11	15	4	8
Laborers, Unskilled	3		5	17		11
Total Support Staff	78	103	307	413	249	268
Student to Support Staff Ratio	16.3	20.1	15.4	14.1	20.4	17.5
Total Full-Time Staff	218	289	771	964	652	669
Student to Total Full-Time Staff Ratio	5.8	7.2	6.1	6.0	7.8	6.8

Source: Florida Department of Education, 2019; Student to Staff Ratios and Change Number and Percentages Calculated by Ressel & Associates.

In order to drill down into these numbers, **Exhibit 2-4** provides a trend analysis of LCSD's self-reported numbers for the last five years.

**Exhibit 2-4
Full-Time Staffing by Category
Liberty County School District
2017-18 to 2021-22 School Years**

Liberty County School District	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	Change	% Change
Number of Students	1,270	1,211	1,273	1,306	1,367	-96	-7.6%
Administrators							
Officials, Administrators and Managers-Instructional	7	8	8	1	7	0	0.0%
Officials, Administrators, Managers - Total	7	8	8	1	7	0	0.0%
Consultants/ Supervisors of Instruction	1	1	1	0	1	0	0.0%
Principals	3	3	3	0	3	0	0.0%
Assistant Principals	3	3	3	0	3	0	0.0%
Community Education Coordinators	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total Administrators	14	15	15	1	14	0	0.0%
Student to Administrator Ratio	90.7	80.8	84.9	*	97.6	-7	-7.6%
Teachers							
Elementary Teachers (PK-6)	42	41	40	35	41	1	2.4%
Secondary Teachers (7-12)	34	37	35	31	34	0	0.0%
Exceptional Student Education Teachers	15	14	12	12	14	1	6.7%
Other Teachers	9	9	12	2	11	-2	-22.2%
Total Teachers	100	101	99	80	100	0	0.0%
Student to Teacher Ratio	12.7	12.0	12.9	16.3	13.7	-1.0	-7.6%
Professional Staff							
Guidance Counselors	3	3	3	3	3	0	0.0%
Social Workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
School Psychologists	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Librarians /Audio-Visual Workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Other Professional Staff - Non-Administrative							
Instructional	12	9	9	4	12	0	0.0%
Non-Instructional	11	11	12	0	11	0	0.0%
Total Professional Staff	26	23	24	7	26	0	0.0%
Student to Professional Staff Ratio	48.8	52.7	53.1	186.6	52.6	-3.7	-7.6%
Support Staff							
Para-professionals	27	26	25	20	30	-3	-11.1%
Technicians			0	0	0	0	0.0%
Administrative Support Workers	15	14	14	7	16	-1	-6.7%
Service Workers	32	31	33	3	46	-14	-43.8%
Skilled Crafts Workers	1	1	1	0	1	0	0.0%
Laborers, Unskilled	3	3	5	0	3	0	0.0%
Total Support Staff	78	75	78	30	96	-18	-23.1%
Student to Support Staff Ratio	16.3	16.2	16.3	43.5	14.2	2.0	12.6%
Total Full-Time Staff	218	214	216	118	236	-18	-8.3%
Student to Total Full-Time Staff Ratio	5.8	5.7	5.9	11.1	5.8	0.0	0.0%

Source: Florida Department of Education, 2019; Student to Staff Ratios and Change Number and Percentages Calculated by Ressel & Associates.

*District reporting error.

As shown, over the last five years the total number of full-time staff in LCSD has decreased by 8.3 percent as compared to a decrease in student enrollment of 7.6 percent. The Administrator and Professional ratios have declined over the same time period.

The leadership team indicated that LCSD has made a concerted effort to reduce staff through attrition and the number of staff has declined in five years in most areas. They provided information on several positions eliminated from January 2021 to date:

1/2021-6/2021

- 1 supervisor (district office)
- 1 teacher (Hosford)

6/2021-present

- 2 lunchroom workers (Hosford & Tolar)
- 1 janitor (Hosford)
- 2 executive secretaries (district office)
- 6 health aides (LCHS, Tolar, Hosford)
- 1 Teacher (Tolar)

Upcoming

- 1 teacher (LCHS)
- 1 para (LCHS)

The District also provided documentation to show that, overall, the number of district staff has declined by a total of 15 positions between 2017-18 and 2021-22. However, a further reduction in staffing is needed to help build or maintain the fund balance.

Staffing represents an enormous part of the budget and controlling staff size is the most significant tool for efficiency. Consequently, many school districts use staffing allocation formulas based on student enrollment to control costs during times of declining enrollment and to project new needs as enrollment increases.

Exhibits 2-5 through **2-7** provide sample staffing model published by the Region 1 Education Service Center in Texas for elementary, middle and high schools that address one measured approach for the allocation process based on standards and expert guidance. These are not provided to be prescriptive but to show how a model might be developed.

**Exhibit 2-5
Elementary Campus
Sample Basic Staffing Model**

Position	Allocation	Min Enrollment	Max Enrollment	Source	Comments/Notes
Professional Staff					
Principal	1			AdvancED	
Assistant Principal	0.5	500	749	AdvancED	
Assistant Principal	0.5	Every additional 250		AdvancED	
Counselor	0.5	1	499	AdvancED	
Counselor	0.5	Every additional 250		AdvancED	
Librarian	0.5	1	249	AdvancED	
Librarian	0.5	250		AdvancED	
School Nurse (RN or LVN)	1	1	750	NASN	District must have 1 RN (TASB recommends 1 RN: 5 LVN)
Teacher (Non-Special Ed)	1	1	22	TEC	K-4 (excluding SC st.)
Teacher (Non-Special Ed)	1	1	25	AdvancED	5-6 (excluding SC st.)
Support Staff					
Campus Secretary	1			AdvancED	
PEIMS/Attendance Clerk	1				
Office Clerk	1	750			
Intructional Aide	1	1	75	State Average	
Custodian	1	18,000 Sq. Ft	20,000 Sq. Ft	APPA - Association of Physical Plant Administrators	

Source: Region 1 Education Service Center.

**Exhibit 2-6
Middle School Campus
Sample Basic Staffing Model**

Position	Allocation	Min Enrollment	Max Enrollment	Source	Comments
Professional Staff					
Principal	1			AdvancED	
Assistant Principal	0.5	250	499	AdvancED	
Counselor	0.5	1	250	AdvancED	
Librarian	0.5	1	249	AdvancED	
Librarian	0.5	250	999	AdvancED	
Librarian	1	1000		AdvancED	
School Nurse (RN or LVN)	1	1	750	NASN	District must have 1 RN (TASB recommends 1 RN: 5 LVN)
Teacher (Non-Special Ed)	1	1	25	AdvancED	Excluding SC Students
Support Staff					
Campus Secretary	1			AdvancED	
PEIMS/Attendance Clerk	1				
Office Clerk	1	750			
Intructional Aide	1	1	75	State Average	
Custodian	1	18,000 Sq. Ft	20,000 Sq. Ft	APPA - Association of Physical Plant Administrators	

Source: Region 1 Education Service Center.

**Exhibit 2-7
High School Campus
Sample Basic Staffing Model**

Position	Allocation	Min Enrollment	Max Enrollment	Source	Comments
Professional Staff					
Principal	1			AdvancED	
Assistant Principal	0.5	250	499	AdvancED	
Counselor	0.5	1	250	AdvancED	
Librarian	0.5	1	249	AdvancED	
Librarian	0.5	250	999	AdvancED	
Librarian	1	1000		AdvancED	
School Nurse (RN or LVN)	1	1	750	NASN	District must have 1 RN (TASB recommends 1 RN: 5 LVN)
Teacher (Non-Special Ed)	1	1	25	AdvancED	Excluding SC students
Support Staff					
Campus Secretary	1			AdvancED	
Registrar	1			TASB	
PEIMS/Attendance Clerk	1				
Office Clerk	1				
Bookkeeper	1				
Intructional Aide	1	1	75	State Average	
Custodian	1	18,000 Sq. Ft	20,000 Sq. Ft	APPA - Association of Physical Plant Administrators	

Source: Region 1 Education Service Center.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-3: Continue efforts to reduce staffing levels by conducting an analysis of staffing needs for 2022-23 to determine if additional staff reductions can be made in all areas.

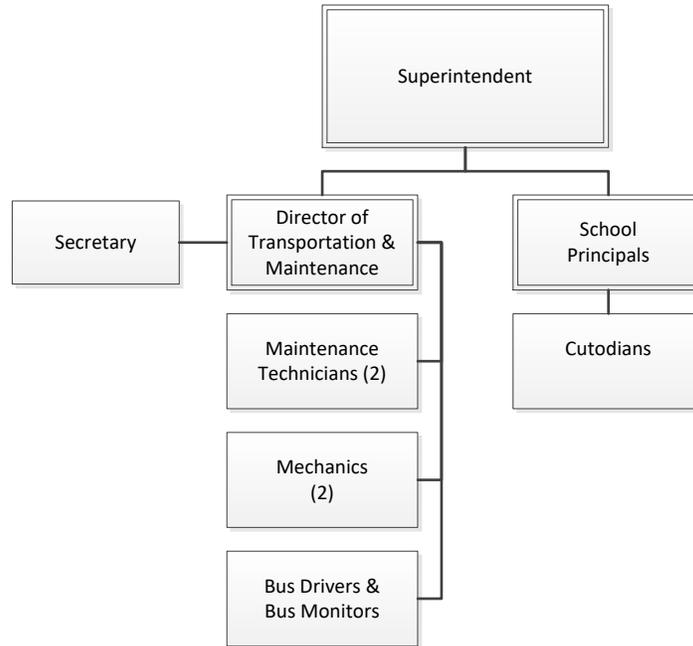
2.2 FACILITIES PLANNING, USE, AND CONSTRUCTION

2.2.1 Organizational Structure

The Director of Transportation and Maintenance reports to the superintendent, and has two direct reports in maintenance and 20 direct reports in Transportation. Although Maintenance and Transportation are two defined units, when a bus driver is absent, the review team was told that the Director or one of the maintenance crew may be required to drive.

Exhibit 2-8 shows the organization of the Transportation and Maintenance Department and the custodial functions.

**Exhibit 2-8
Transportation and Maintenance Department Organization
School Year 2021-22**



Source: LCSD, May 2022

OBSERVATION: The facilities and maintenance function is clearly defined in the organization, but the Director of Transportation and Maintenance is the only operational function that does not report to the Assistant Superintendent.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-8** above, the Director of Transportation and Maintenance is one of four direct reports to the superintendent. The Director interacts with the superintendent as needed to manage the programs. For example, when significant facilities or maintenance purchases are needed, they formally or informally meet to discuss the options. The Director includes the superintendent and other staff in his purchase order requests. He said that he and the superintendent previously had regular weekly meetings, but those no longer occur. Although he was unsure about the reason for the change, it is possible that once construction of the new high school was completed, the need for update meetings diminished.

Given the nature of the work performed by the Director, additional collaboration with the Assistant Superintendent who is responsible for Human Resources, Safety and Security and all other Operational functions such as Food Service, may be needed. For example, decisions regarding facility maintenance could have a direct impact on safety and security, food service, as well as instructional programs, According to staff, a great deal of informal communication goes on among the various groups, however, it is not clear how formal planning, decision-making or the prioritization of needs is coordinated among the groups.

Many districts organize all academic functions under one leadership position and all operational functions under another leadership position. This grouping is done to ensure that collaboration occurs among the like groups.

Facilities-related school safety projects are part of the Assistant Superintendent's management role. The Director of Transportation and Maintenance does not discuss the facilities needs with the Assistant Superintendent. Without connecting the overall facilities projects with the school safety elements, critical school safety considerations in facilities may be missed.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce provides resources for developing an appropriate and effective organizational structure. The purpose of an organizational structure is to clearly define how the school district is going to run, considering these three key elements:

- Chain of Command: How are tasks delegated, and how is work approved?
- Span of Control: Who manages which staff, and what tasks fall under that department's responsibilities?
- Centralization: Where are decisions made? Which staff and departments have a say in each decision?

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-4: Evaluate the organization structure to determine if the Maintenance and Transportation would be more effectively placed under the Assistant Superintendent to improve collaboration with and among other operational areas.

2.2.2 Staffing Levels

OBSERVATION: There is no succession plan to ensure seamless services when the Director of Transportation and Maintenance completes the five-year retirement DROP program in December 2025.

The Director of Transportation and Maintenance has worked for the district for 22 years, has managed the program as the Director for three years and officially retired in 2020, but was rehired under the DROP program. As such, he can work for five years, but the program ends in December 2025.

The Director has developed the practices and processes that are in place in the department, and mentors the two maintenance staff under his supervision. To develop leadership in-house, however, will require a commitment to providing formal staff development to obtain basic knowledge of various codes and certifications required to effectively manage the program.

The district has not planned for job shadowing as yet, which has been an effective method for transitioning individuals into key finance and instructional positions. Without a structured succession plan, the department and the district risk a continuity of services for the program. Best practices suggest that "succession planning is the process whereby an organization ensures that employees are recruited and developed to fill each key role within the organization. In this process, you ensure that you will never have a key role open for which another employee is not prepared."

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-5:

Create a succession plan for the Transportation and Maintenance Department which will develop internal staff to assume the position or involve job shadowing as used effectively in finance and instruction.

OBSERVATION: LCSD's Maintenance team is efficiently maintaining the district's 398,589 net square feet of facilities.

A standard published in American School and University M&O Cost Study, indicates that a ratio of one maintenance staff to 107,439 square feet of space is an appropriate guide to use when staffing maintenance personnel. The standard cites that maintenance personnel may include electricians, HVAC technicians, general maintenance workers and grounds crews.

The district's two maintenance staff, supported by the Director who performs many maintenance-related functions, maintain the district's 398,589 net square feet of facilities reported in the FISH report. Based on the industry standard, the district should employ four maintenance staff. The Director confirmed that the work can be completed with the staff they have given that the district contracts for the other services such as HVAC, electric and a small amount of plumbing work.

While the district's older facilities have significant equipment replacement and renovation needs based on age related deterioration, the facilities toured during the onsite visit appeared to be clean and well maintained.

OBSERVATION: LCSD's custodial staff are effectively and efficiently maintaining 28,500 square feet of facilities, which exceeds industry standards.

The district employs 14 custodians at the three campuses and the administration office. One custodian cleans the administration office. The number of custodians is equitable across the campuses. Liberty County High School and Hosford K-8 each have four custodians, while Tolar K-8 has five custodians.

They are staffed for all day shifts, and regularly move around the school to clean in classrooms when the students are in P.E. or are at lunch. The custodians report to the principals and principals said that they were pleased with the level of cleaning performed by the staff at their school.

The Association of Physical Plant Administrators publication, Custodial Staffing Guidelines, Second Edition, establishes custodial staffing levels based on five defined levels of cleaning. Level 2, ordinary tidiness, establishes a staffing level of one custodian for every 20,000 square feet of facility space. The district has a total of 398,589 net square feet according to the FISH report. Based on this standard, a total of 20 custodians would be appropriate. The fact that 14

positions can keep the facilities clean is a measure of efficiency as well as dedication by staff to their jobs.

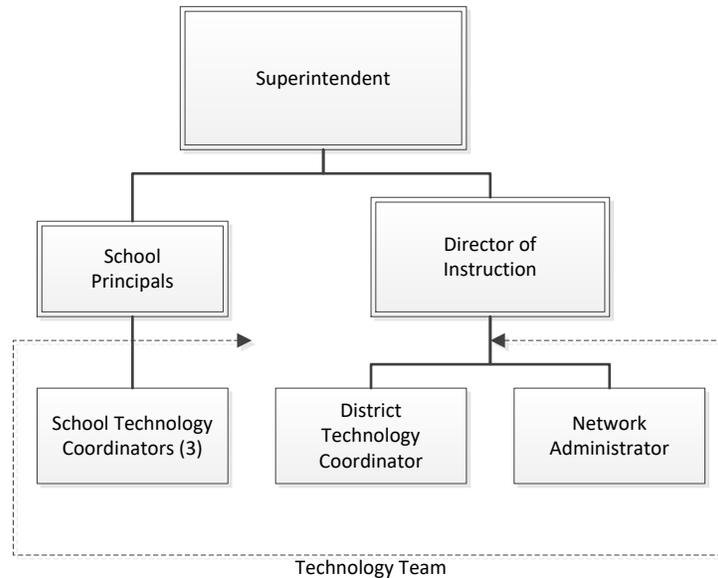
2.3 TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION AND UPGRADES

2.3.1 Organizational Structure

OBSERVATION: Information Technology is organized under the Director of Instruction, has clearly defined units with no identified overlapping functions or excess administrative layers.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-9**, the District Technology Coordinator who is primarily responsible for the technology functions for LCSD, reports to the Director of Instruction and is considered a peer to the Network Administrator.

**Exhibit 2 9
Technology Team Structure**



Source: District Technology Coordinator, Mary 2022.

There are three School Technology Coordinators who report to their respective principals. All of the five positions that make up the Technology Team are teachers on special assignment. Only one of the School Coordinators teaches a class. The District Coordinator and Network Administrator are 12-month employees but the School Coordinators are on a 10-month contract.

As shown, the organization structure is flat with no redundant administrative layers. The Coordinator and Network Administrator provide back up to one another but their roles are clearly defined. The Technology Coordinator oversees technical support and instructional integration support as needed. The Network Administrator is responsible for ensuring that the network is up and running at all times. Since they are small, system security is shared. They both onboard and remove employees as needed.

The greatest need for support is at the elementary and middle school level which means that the workload for technicians is fairly evenly distributed.

According to the Coordinator, it is a constant challenge to keep all the systems up and running which such a small staff, however, she attends monthly Consortia meetings with IT Leads from other district where they can hear concerns and challenges from other districts and exchange ideas for addressing emerging issues.

2.3.2 Staffing Levels

OBSERVATION: The five-member Technology Team effectively supports 1,800 devices in the schools as well as devices housed at the central office and the campuses.

As shown in Exhibits 2-10 through 2-12 , LCSD has 1,724 devices on the three school campuses and supports additional devices at the central office for an estimated total for all devices of 1,800.

**Exhibit 2-10
Liberty County High School Devices**

Liberty County High School	
Device Type	Number
Dell Laptop 3190 2-in-1	150
DELL LATITUDE 11	25
Dell Latitude 3189 Business Co	25
DELL LATITUDE 3380	75
DELL LATITUDE 3380	107
DELL OPTIPLEX	13
DELL OPTIPLEX 300	40
HP PROBOOK 11 G1 TOUCHSCREEN	5
HP PROBOOK 11 G2 TOUCHSCREEN	15
HP PROBOOK X360 11 G5 EE	50
Non-computing Devices	35
Total Devices	540
Enrollment	337
Devices per Student	1.60

Source: LCSD Technology Coordinator, June 2022.

**Exhibit 2-11
Hosford Elementary & Junior High School**

Hosford Elementary & Junior High School	
Device Type	Number
65" 7000X INTERACTIVE PANEL	1
CLEAR TOUCH 75" 5000C INTERAC	24
Dell Laptop 3190 2-in-1	425
Dell OptiPlex Desktops	13
HP PROBOOK 11 G2 TOUCHSCREEN	43
HP ProBook 450 (Teacher Laptops)	30
MICROSOFT SURFACE PRO-2017	1
MICROSOFT SURGACE PRO-2017	1
Total Devices	538
Enrollment	362
Devices per Student	1.49

Source: LCSD Technology Coordinator, June 2022

**Exhibit 2-12
W. R Tolar K-8 School**

W. R Tolar K-8 School	
Device Type	Number
CLEAR TOUCH 75" 5000C	1
CLEAR TOUCH 75" 5000C INTERACTIVE PANEL	31
DELL DESKTOP	22
DELL LAPTOP 3190 2-IN-1	561
HP 450 PROBOOK G5	31
Total Devices	646
Enrollment	475
Devices per Student	1.36

Source: LCSD Technology Coordinator, June 2022

Based on a team of five, including the Coordinator and Network Administrator, this equates to one support person for every 360 devices (1,800 devices/5 staff). Based on an industry standard for school operations of between 200 and 400 devices per technician, the ratio appears to be within range.

Another measure of efficiency is the technician to total user ratio. Since the pandemic, in addition to staff, students and often times parents are included in the user group. The Ressel team found this to be appropriate in LCSD, as LCSD allows students to check out computers and the agreement form clearly states that they are to “consult with the Technology Team” before installing software or making any changes. With approximately 1,200 students and 220 staff, the total user to technical support person is 284 users per staff person assigned (1,420 users/5 staff). According to industry standards, the larger the organization and the degree of technology

dependence have a significant impact on the number of users that a single technician can support. The standards range from 150 to 350 users per technician. Based on the District's size, LCSD's ratio falls in the higher range, but appears manageable based on the mix of staff and student users.

dependence have a significant impact on the number of users that a single technician can support. The standards range from 150 to 350 users per technician. Based on the District's size, LCSD's ratio falls in the higher range, but appears manageable based on the mix of staff and student users.

***CHAPTER 3:
ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY METHODS***

3.0 ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY METHODS

Chapter 3 presents audit findings related to alternative delivery methods used in the program areas under review. As part of the fieldwork, Ressel & Associates examined the programs and services currently being provided through shared service or outsourced/contract arrangements and also assessed what, if any, activities or services, might be delivered in an alternative method. Further, Ressel & Associates evaluated the manner in which the District assesses alternative delivery methods.

The specific audit evaluation tasks performed are provided below.

- 3.1 **Feasibility of Alternative Methods** - Determine whether program administrators have formally evaluated existing inhouse services and activities to assess the feasibility of alternative methods of providing services, such as outside contracting and privatization, and determine the reasonableness of their conclusions;
- 3.2 **Cost/Benefit Assessment** - Determine whether program administrators have assessed any contracted and/or privatized services to verify effectiveness and cost savings achieved and determine the reasonableness of their conclusions;
- 3.3 **Service Delivery Changes** - Determine whether program administrators have made changes to service delivery methods when their evaluations/assessments found that such changes would reduce program cost without significantly affecting the quality of services; and
- 3.4 **Additional Opportunities** - Identify possible opportunities for alternative service delivery methods that have the potential to reduce program costs without significantly affecting the quality of services, based on a review of similar programs in peer school Districts (e.g., other school Districts, etc.).

Finding on alternative delivery methods: Partially Meets. LCSD has defaulted to hiring external expertise for professional services and other technical areas requiring specialized expertise. No formal analysis of the costs and benefits is being conducted to assess whether additional staff could reduce overall costs while maintaining or improving the quality of services. A notable exception was the analysis done to determine whether to relocate or rebuild the JROTC building, the result of which was a cost savings of \$950,000 based on the alternative approach for relocation.

Findings by Research Subtask:

- Subtask 3.1-*Feasibility of Alternative Methods – Partially Meets* - LCSD has made use of contract services, outsourcing and other alternative delivery methods throughout the District; however, program administrators have not formally evaluated existing in-house services and activities to assess the feasibility of alternative methods of providing services. LCSD has been a member of the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium (PAEC) for decades and believes services are cost effective due to the economies of scale that can be achieved through the partnership with other districts.

- Subtask 3.2- *Cost/Benefit Assessment – Meets* – Although the Ressel team did not identify any districtwide cost benefit analyses, the construction related assessment for the costs and benefits associated with the relocate versus rebuild decision for the JROTC Building resulted in significant savings for the District. An example of a cost/benefit analysis conducted in Technology benefited the District.
- Subtask 3.3 - *Service Delivery Changes- Partially Meets* – the major change in service delivery resulted from the decision to relocate the JROTC Building. The Ressel team identified no other examples districtwide or in technology.
- Subtask 3.4 - *Additional Opportunities – Meets* - LCSD lacks the expertise and time required to conduct professional construction project oversight to ensure appropriate materials are being used, billings are based on actual work performed and the like. The Ressel team found that contracting for the temporary services of an expert with construction management and accounting expertise to assist the District with future major construction, renovation, and repair projects would be beneficial.

In this chapter, alternative delivery methods in the Liberty County School District are presented in the following functional areas:

- 3.1 Districtwide Support for Areas Under Review
- 3.2 Facilities Planning, Use, and Construction
- 3.3 Technology Implementation and Upgrades

3.1 DISTRICTWIDE SUPPORT FOR AREAS UNDER REVIEW

3.1.1 Feasibility of Alternative Methods

OBSERVATION: LCSD has made use of contract services, outsourcing and other alternative delivery methods throughout the District; however, there is no formal process in place to evaluate the feasibility or cost/benefit of these decisions.

As shown by the list of contracted and outsourced services that follow in this chapter, LCSD has taken advantage of numerous opportunities for outsourcing certain services or pursuing alternatives to the traditional methods of doing business. For example, the District made the decision to move the JROTC Building rather than build a new one based on the costs and savings involved.

When determining whether to outsource certain tasks, administrators in the operations areas stated that the rationale was generally based on a need to get the job done in a timely manner for the need for additional expertise not found in-house. In the Maintenance Department, for example, there are a number of ongoing contracts with external providers for HVAC, electrical and the maintenance of Food Service equipment.

According to industry experts, when there is need for highly technical services or the need is intermittent and would not occupy the time of a full-time employee, it may be more cost effective to contract for the service. Or, if the demand is ongoing with peaks that would demand

an excessively large staff, a contract service that can guarantee coverage during peak periods may be more cost effective.

Creating a uniform process for justifying the use of contract services—that includes a cost benefit analysis of both hiring in-house staff and the contract option, and the associated indirect costs—can provide a more studied approach for such decisions.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-1: Create a uniform process for justifying both contract services and the creation of new positions, which examines the full cost and benefits for both options.

OBSERVATION: LCSD has been a member of the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium (PAEC) for decades and believes services are cost effective due to the economies of scale that can be achieved through the partnership with other districts.

The Panhandle Area Educational Consortium (PAEC) is Florida’s first, legislatively (FS 1001.451) created Educational Consortium, founded in 1967 as a support unit to help small districts with limited resources to better serve children, teachers, and administrators. PAEC presently serves 14 member districts (including the Liberty County School District), representing over 45,000 students, as well as many other non-member districts who purchase services on a contract basis.

In addition to providing a wealth of instructional services to member districts, PAEC also provides several business services, including:

- student data services;
- finance and payroll services;
- risk management – property and casualty;
- human resources;
- district strategic planning;
- legislative network; and
- policy updates.

Exhibit 3-1 shows the services which PAEC is providing to the Liberty County School District in the 2021-22 school year and the cost for each service.

Exhibit 3-1
Master Resolution and Contract
for the Liberty County School District
Participation in PAEC Central Services
2021-22 School Year

Service	District Assessment
PAEC Membership Services	\$5,440
Professional Development Center	\$4,270
Curriculum Support Services	*
Human Resources Support Services	\$4,399
Gateway Educational Computing Consultants (Finance/Payroll)	\$10,164
Gateway Support Services (\$5,459.18 credit)	\$6,657
Skyward License Fee (flow through to Skyward) ISCorp Hosting Fee (flow through to Skyward)	\$1,944
Student Data Services	
Student Data Support Services	\$14,708
Focus School Software Fee (flow through to Focus)	\$7,809
TOTAL (with credits)	\$55,390

Source: PAEC, 2022.

*Credit for 2020-21 services applied due to COVID.

As other small school districts in North Florida, Liberty contracts with PAEC for economies of scale provided by the Consortium. LCSD is saving dollars by sharing costs with other small Panhandle districts. By doing such, they do not have to secure these services separately or obtain these skills on their own.

No analysis of cost savings has been completed at the state or local level; however, the benefits of the District's participation in the PAEC are clearly evident. School districts and State leaders acknowledge the value of consortia providing smaller rural districts resources and services they would not have access to acting alone.

During interviews, staff said PAEC provided daily support at some level to the finance, human resources and instructional areas of the District. The Consortium is also instrumental in establishing networking groups. For example, the Technology Coordinator said she attends regular meetings with technology staff from member districts where they exchange information. The members of this group also provide guidance via phone and email when one of the member districts is facing a problem or new situation.

3.1.2 Cost/Benefit Assessment

The Ressel team identified no examples where a cost-benefit assessment was applied to obtain central administrative services.

3.1.3 Service Delivery Changes

As noted above, the District uses PAEC for many districtwide systems and support functions. The Ressel team identified no other examples where alternative methods were instrumental in affecting service delivery changes at the central administrative level.

3.1.4 Additional Opportunities

The Ressel team identified no additional opportunities for alternative delivery methods at the central administration level.

3.2 FACILITIES PLANNING, USE, AND CONSTRUCTION

3.2.1 Feasibility of Alternative Methods

OBSERVATION: The District has not evaluated the feasibility of increasing the number of general maintenance staff while decreasing the amount of contracted work.

There are two general maintenance staff assigned to maintain the current facilities. For significant maintenance projects and new construction type projects, the Director of Transportation and Maintenance evaluates the workload and skill of the maintenance staff to determine if contract services are needed.

The general practice for the department is to contract for maintenance and construction services that are outside the scope of the existing staff. The department typically reaches out to known and experienced vendors for HVAC, electric, and food service equipment maintenance.

The maintenance staff are skilled in multiple trades, but they are not specialists in any certain trade. The Director confirmed that they can complete most of the requested work orders and therefore, he does not have a demonstrated need to request additional staff. The Director mentioned that having additional funds to complete the facilities projects is the biggest issue, not staff. The work orders that require the computer program that operates the HVAC systems is an example where the maintenance staff cannot complete the work because the vendor manages the computer program.

The department has not evaluated shifting the number of maintenance staff to the amount of contracted service work. When the maintenance staff cannot complete the work, the Director of Transportation and Maintenance said that there are three companies who provide HVAC, electrical and food service equipment maintenance. **Exhibit 3-2** is a summary of those services.

Exhibit 3-2
Maintenance and Repair Contracted Services
School Year 2021-22

Service Type	Company	Total Cost
HVAC	FSM Controls	\$30,902
Electrical	Ken Rudd Electrical	\$32,301
Food Service Equipment Maintenance	CRSS	\$39,144
Total		\$102,347

Source: LCSD Director of Finance, 2022.

The department has not evaluated the cost of hiring an additional staff position to reduce the need for contracted services. Based on the scenario described under **Recommendation 3-1**, when the accumulated cost for contracted services exceeds the cost of hiring an employee with the skills to perform the work, a more detailed analysis is required. The financial data provided by the District in **Exhibit 3-2** identifies that in school year 2021-22, more than \$100,000 was spent in several key maintenance areas, but there is not sufficient detail to determine if it would be more appropriate to develop another maintenance staff position.

Without regular analysis and consideration of whether additional training and obtaining specialty knowledge could impact the spending level for vendors to conduct maintenance work, the department will likely continue to operate in the same manner.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-2: Conduct an analysis to evaluate the annual expenditures for maintenance-related contracted services that could have been performed in house had there been sufficient staff to determine if another position should be added.

3.1.2 Cost/Benefit Assessment and 3.1.3 Service Delivery Changes

OBSERVATION: Detailed in Case Study 2 in Chapter 1, the District evaluated the cost to relocate the existing JROTC building to the new Liberty County High School site, and the cost to construct a new JROTC building at the campus.

In 2009, a JROTC building was built on the site of the Liberty High School. During the planning stage for the new high school, there was discussion with the architects and the Construction Manager about whether to rebuild the JROTC building at the new high school site as part of the overall high school plans or to relocate the building. The building was in good condition, looked new, and would not be needed at the old LCHS site.

This project was one specific component of building the new Liberty County High School. The District coordinated with the Construction Manager of the Liberty County High School project to obtain quotes for both options. The District received a \$1.75 million quote to rebuild it and an \$800,000 quote to relocate it to the new LCHS site. The decision was made to relocate it and to place it on the south side of the new LCHS site to join with the Career and Technology Education wing.

The District saved \$950,000 by choosing to relocate it instead of rebuilding the facility. The District learned that moving a 15,000 square foot building is possible. The building was cut in half and moved in two pieces. Putting a building back together was a challenge. Although the roof color did not match the new LCHS roof color, however the District decided the neutral beige color blended with the main roof.

3.1.4 Additional Opportunities

OBSERVATION: LCSO lacks the expertise and time required to conduct professional construction project oversight to ensure appropriate materials are being used, billings are based on actual work performed and the like.

Because of the District's size, it is not fiscally possible to hire an employee with the level of knowledge, experience, and expertise necessary to oversee a major construction project like the new high school. Recognizing the need for that level of expertise, the District has sought the assistance of external expertise. For the new school construction projects, the four types of external experts that the District relied on include the architect, Construction Manager, engineer, and the building official.

For the architect services, the Director of Transportation and Maintenance confirmed that there was an evaluation process because he participated in the process. The Superintendent signed the contract for the architects. The Director of Finance maintains the evaluation and selection process documentation, but the District could not provide evidence, so the Ressel Team could not verify the process.

Relying on the expertise of the architect impacts the current maintenance efforts. The architect recommends the types and brands of systems to include in the new building. The Director of Transportation and Maintenance was aware of some of the systems that would be installed in the new high school, but he was not experienced enough at that time to determine the impact of those systems on the ability to maintain them. For example, the type of HVAC system installed requires a contractor to maintain as the existing maintenance staff lack the expertise to maintain it.

For the Construction Manager services for the new high school project, the District conducted a bid and evaluation process with some board members, the Superintendent and the Director of Transportation and Maintenance participating in the evaluation process. The Superintendent signed the contract. The Construction Manager selects the subcontractors for the project. The Director of Transportation and Maintenance said that with the high school project occurring during the pandemic, the cost of the subcontractors shifted from the Construction Manager's initial discussion to the final start of the project.

For the engineering services, the board approved the Construction Manager to direct the evaluation and selection of the engineers. The Director of Finance did not maintain documentation of the process because that effort was part of the Construction Manager's role. The Ressel Team could not verify this information.

For the building inspector services, the board approved the Construction Manager to direct the selection of the building inspector. The Director of Transportation and Maintenance confirmed that there was a building inspector for the high school project. The Director of Finance did not maintain documentation of the process because that effort was part of the Construction Manager's role. The Ressel Team could not verify this information.

For all the construction-related services, the contractors send an invoice for payment to the Director of Finance. The Director of Transportation and Maintenance does not receive, review, or approve payments to the contractors.

Relying on external expertise without requiring documentation to support that reliance is not consistent with ensuring transparency with the public. Based on the case studies and the various findings in the Auditor general report there were problems because the Superintendent has not assigned to the Director a role to confirm the Construction Manager and related services meet the terms and conditions of the contract and that the amount of the invoice the Construction Manager submits to the Director of Finance is correct and complete. Neither the Director of Finance nor the Director of Transportation and Maintenance assume ownership of the documentation of the process.

In addition to the envisioned Surtax projects, LCSD has a chiller at the administration building that needs to be replaced and a drain field at one of the schools that is failing. Both of these projects will be outsourced, but given the construction management problems encountered during the High School construction project, this may be challenging. Grants and Surtax money may not allow the District to use those funds to hire an employee to perform this function, but contract services can be used. As such, some smaller and even larger districts have contracted for the temporary services of a retired community member with construction management and accounting expertise to oversee the projects, ensure that all paperwork, grant terms, and State code requirements, etc. are met.

The Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities published by the School Facilities Maintenance Task Force, National Forum on Education Statistics and the Association of School Business Officials International reflects on the best strategy to manage contracted facilities activities. The Guide cites the following best practice, *“School staff must still put considerable energy into managing privatized endeavors. For example, when contracted staff are hired, precise specifications must be drawn up for the procurement, including an objective standard for measuring performance. Moreover, depending on the complexity of the task, a member of the in-house staff may still need to serve as project manager. To be effective, the project manager should have expertise in maintenance and operations, a thorough understanding of the contractor’s scope of work, the skills to evaluate the contractor’s performance, and the authority to assign supplemental support tasks to in-house staff.”*

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-3: Consider contracting for the temporary services of an expert with construction management and accounting expertise to assist the District with future major construction, renovation, and repair projects.

3.3 TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION AND UPGRADES

3.1.1 Feasibility of Alternative Methods

OBSERVATION: The Ressel team found no evidence that formal feasibility studies had been conducted to determine what, if any, of the services provided in house could be outsourced to a private provider in a cost-effective manner.

Staff indicated that the majority of technology hardware maintenance and installation activities are handled in house. In some instances, a vendor may include the installation of equipment with the purchase, based on specialized needs or staff workload constraints. Further, staff indicated that their remote location also restricts them in terms of vendors being willing to provide onsite services.

In the absence of such feasibility studies, however, it is possible that the department may be missing opportunities for accessing goods and services in a more cost effective and efficient manner.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-4: As opportunities arise in the technology arena, conduct a formal analysis to determine if an alternative delivery method is feasible and efficient.

3.1.2 Cost/Benefit Assessment

OBSERVATION: As part of the services paid for with E-Rate funding, LCSD has agreements with Cloud59 Networks which includes MIBS and IaaS and was able to roll the current network lease agreement into this plan.

After exploring several options, the District made the decision to enter into an agreement with Cloud 29 Networks for Broadband and Network Server Infrastructure services at a competitive rate as part of the E-Rate funding program. The competitive procurement standards in place for E-rate are rigorous, and intended to ensure that goods and services purchased with E-Rate money are obtained based on cost and quality of services provided.

In this situation, LCSD was able to obtain high quality goods and services and were able to roll the current network lease agreement into this agreement as well. The goods and service obtain through this arrangement are as follows:

MIBS AGREEMENT

Managed Internal Broadband Service \$2,000/month or \$24,000/year

Scope of Services:

- *Network Infrastructure monitoring of internal broadband components (i.e., switches, routers, APs, perimeter firewall)*
- *Configuration assistance and remote troubleshooting of internal broadband components*
- *On-site support as needed to restore or troubleshoot network service*

SERVER Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) AGREEMENT

Tier 1 - Monthly Rate (36-month agreement) \$1,200/month or \$14,400/year

Scope of Services:

Hardware: Cloud59 will assess the network server infrastructure and provide a hardware solution that meets the current needs of Liberty County Schools. Current server lease in place will be incorporated into this agreement. Cloud59 shall be responsible for

maintenance of provided hardware components for the duration of the contract. LCSB retains hardware responsibility for servers that it has purchased prior to agreement.

Monitoring: Cloud59 will provide monitoring of provided hardware components, as well as any LCSB-owned server hardware that remains in place.

Backups: Cloud59 will provide disaster recovery backup services from primary server(s) to secondary server(s). 130 E. Madison St, Dublin, GA. Cloud59 will also administer daily backups of user-created files residing on file servers. Cloud59 shall retain all backups for a minimum of 1 month.

Hardware Cycle: After 5 years of service from current server hardware, Cloud59 will replace existing servers provided as part of this contract with newer generation to ensure hardware reliability.

Terms: *Liberty County Schools (LCSB) agrees to the Scope Of Services as set forth in this document. Early termination of agreement on the part of LCSB will result in a termination fee that is equal to the amount remaining on 36-month agreement. Monthly rate does NOT include hourly services such PC troubleshooting/repair, network administration, or IT consulting other than provisioning and management of virtual servers as part of the IaaS solution.*

At the end of 36-month term, LCSB may renew the contract with terms to be negotiated at that time. If the decision is not to renew, LCSB shall be responsible for supplying server hardware and backup solutions to replace the services that were provided by Cloud59.

3.1.3 Service Delivery Changes

The Ressel team found no instances where technology administrators made changes to service delivery methods when their evaluations/assessments found that such changes would reduce program cost without significantly affecting the quality of services.

3.1.4 Additional Opportunities

The Ressel team identified no additional opportunities for changes in technology-related delivery methods.

***CHAPTER 4:
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES***

4.0 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Chapter 4 presents findings related to goals, objectives and performance measures. As part of the field work, Ressel & Associates examined major districtwide planning efforts and the manner in which management measures day-to-day performance and budgets, and the system of internal controls used to ensure that the program areas under review are meeting their goals and objectives.

The specific audit evaluation tasks are provided below.

- 4.1 ***Program Goals and Objectives*** - Review program goals and objectives to determine whether they are clearly stated, measurable, can be achieved within budget, and are consistent with the District's strategic plan;
- 4.2 ***Performance Measures*** - Assess the measures, if any, the District uses to evaluate program performance and determine if they are sufficient to assess program progress toward meeting its stated goals and objectives; and
- 4.3 ***Internal Controls*** - Evaluate internal controls, including policies and procedures, to determine whether they provide reasonable assurance that program goals and objectives will be met.

Finding on goals, objectives, and performance measures: Did Not Meet. LCSD's districtwide planning efforts are in progress but few program plans and goals are in use to evaluate performance. Performance is informally measured through work order systems and the absence of crisis. With the exception of the technology function, there are few internal control mechanisms in place to ensure the achievement of formal or informal program goals and objectives.

Findings by Research Subtask:

- Subtask 4.1 - *Program Goals and Objectives – Did Not Meet* - The 2022–24 Strategic Plan adopted by the School Board on April 12, 2022, provides the basis by which future program goals and objectives can be evaluated; however senior staff, principals, Board members, and community representatives were not included in the creation of the Plan. Maintenance nor Technology have formal program goals and objectives.
- Subtask 4.2 - *Performance Measures– Did Not Meet* - LCSD's Strategic Plan does not contain strategies or clearly measurable criteria or key performance indicators by which to regularly evaluate progress or the effectiveness of the program areas under review. Nor do the maintenance or technology functions.
- Subtask 4.3 - *Internal Controls – Partially Meets* - Although the District current has no internal control mechanisms in place districtwide or in facilities or maintenance, the Technology Department has policies, procedures and systems in place that provide

reasonable assurance in most cases that systems will continue to operate as intended and the user environment is controlled.

In this chapter, the program performance and monitoring of the Liberty County School District is presented in the following functional areas:

- 4.1 Districtwide Support for Areas Under Review
- 4.2 Facilities Planning, Use, and Construction
- 4.3 Technology Implementation and Upgrades

4.1 DISTRICTWIDE SUPPORT FOR AREAS UNDER REVIEW

4.1.1 Program Goals and Objectives

OBSERVATION: The 2022–24 Strategic Plan adopted by the School Board on April 12, 2022, provides the basis by which future program goals and objectives can be evaluated; however senior staff, principals, Board members, and community representatives were not included in the creation of the Plan.

A Draft Strategic Plan for 2022-24 was developed by the Superintendent and approved by the School Board in April 2022. When he was elected, he recognized that a Strategic Plan did not exist in the Liberty County School District and that this was a major void. The Superintendent developed the Plan as part of a leadership development training program sponsored by the Florida Superintendent’s Association without input from senior staff, principals, Board members or community representatives.

Strategic planning is a proactive process of identifying the critical issues that an entity must address to efficiently continue providing value. Within school districts, a good strategic plan serves as a map for the Board, senior leadership and staff to guide and direct business actions towards meeting the district’s goals. In addition, such a plan moves a district from a reactionary mode to a proactive operating mode by connecting goals, strategies, performance measures, and action plans to the budget. School districts that link these elements through the planning process realize high success rates in achieving identified goals.

Under the Bylaws, the Board is charged with formulating a vision, goals, and strategic plan for the District and that process should involve all stakeholder.

0171.2 REVIEW OF POLICY - PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

*It will be the policy of the School Board to review its policies on the philosophy of education, educational goals, curriculum and instruction, participation of disabled students, and educational options at least once every two (2) years as an aspect of the comprehensive review of policy. **To this end, this effort will involve all stakeholders to formulate a vision, goals, and strategic plan for the District.***

The vision, mission, and core values of the Draft LCSD Strategic Plan are identified in **Exhibit 4-1**. The Plan’s five goals are included in **Exhibit 4-2**. As can be seen, Goal 4 - School Safety and Goal 5 – Facilities relate to the program areas under review. The Plan does not, however, include strategies relating to information technology, or the inclusion of instructional technology in the strategic goals for classroom instruction, which is a planned use for a portion of the Surtax proceeds.

**Exhibit 4-1
Mission and Vision
Liberty County School District
2022-24 Initial Strategic Plan**

MISSION:

Our mission is to create an educational organization that functions with professionalism, integrity, pride, and excellence. The main objective of the Liberty County School District is to educate our students to be productive citizens of our community, our nation, and our world. We are committed to building on a foundation of common community values of respect, integrity, and spirituality while engaging in academic achievement. We stress the importance of individual competence, effort, and perseverance while learning to work interdependently to achieve goals. We pride ourselves on our determination, common sense, perseverance, and creative thinking to solve problems in order to provide students with an education that has a broader focus than academics that will promote a happy successful life.

VISION:

To inspire a love of learning, instill social responsibility, integrity, and respect in all students, demonstrated through their excellence and determination for success using a systems approach of continuous improvement.

Source: Liberty County School District, 2022.

**Exhibit 4-2
Initial Strategic Plan Goals
Liberty County School District**

Goal 1 – INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP: The Liberty County School District will ensure the school leadership (Principals and Assistant Principals) are the instructional leaders at all the schools.

Goal 2 – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: The Liberty County School District will strive to remain an “A” district in the State of Florida.

Goal 3 – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: The Liberty County School District will strive to remain financially solvent while providing the needed goods and services to staff and students.

Goal 4 – SCHOOL SAFETY: The Liberty County School District will keep our students and staff safe while on campus, extracurricular events, and during transportation to and from school.

Goal 5 – FACILITIES: The Liberty County School District will strive to have the best facilities at each school campus.

Goal 6 – STUDENT TRANSPORTATION: The Liberty County School District will have dependable and safe transportation for its students and staff.

Goal 7 – COMMUNITY OUTREACH: The Liberty County School District will foster productive relationships and partnerships with parents, businesses, and other governmental bodies.

Source: Liberty County School District, 2022.

Each goal is supported by outcomes. **Exhibit 4-3** includes outcomes for **GOAL 5, FACILITIES.**

Exhibit 4-3
Liberty County School District 2022-24 Initial Strategic Plan
Outcomes for Goal 5

Goal 5 – FACILITIES: The Liberty County School District will strive to have the best facilities at each school campus.
Outcomes a. The Liberty County School District will be great stewards of our facilities. We will keep competent maintenance staff employed to ensure little to no interruption to the educational day for students. b. We will finish the LCHS Football Fieldhouse/Concession Stand. c. There will be a softball complex built at the new LCHS Softball field. d. There will be a new pursuit of Special Facilities Funding for a new lunchroom at Tolar School, e. Money from the Florida Department of State Historical Preservation division will be pursued to address repairs for the old Hosford School Administration building and gymnasium.

Source: Liberty County School District, 2022.

A strong Strategic Plan for a school district addresses four general questions:

- Where is the school district as a whole, and the departments now?
- Where does the school district want to be in 5-10 ten years or longer?
- How is the school district going to get there?
- How will the school district measure progress and success?

Although not required in law, most Florida school districts have districtwide strategic plans.

Using an effective plan model, **Exhibit 4-4** provides the components of an effective strategic plan.

**Exhibit 4-4
Overview of an Effective Strategic Plan**

Area of Review	Component of the Plan	Specific Focus of the Review
<i>Where are we now?</i>	Internal/External Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation Inventory/Environmental Scan • Customer Analysis • Quality Assessment and Benchmarking • Strategic Issues
	Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad Comprehensive Statement of the School District’s Purpose • Core Values and Actions to Achieve Mission • Employees and Management Involvement
<i>Where do we want to be?</i>	Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the School District’s Uniqueness when Combined with the Mission and Principles • A Compelling Image of the Desired Future
	Strategic Plan Framework/ Goals and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Desired Result After Three or More Years • Specific and Measurable Targets for Accomplishment • Leads to Quality Initiative Goals and Objectives
<i>How do we get there?</i>	Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities to Accomplish Goals and Objectives • Detailed Action Plans with Linkage to Budget • Leads to Resource Allocation
<i>How do we measure our progress?</i>	Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures Accountability and Continuous Improvement-linked Performance Targets
	Monitoring and Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods to Measure Results • Systems to Monitor Progress • Compilation of Management Information • Maintains Plan on Track Toward Goals

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2020.

The Superintendent acknowledges that the current Plan is incomplete and needs to be augmented to support best practices.

Missing from the LCSD Strategic Plan are the following:

- Detailed Action Plans with Linkage to Budget
- Leads to Resource Allocation
- Accountability and Continuous Improvement-linked Performance Targets
- Methods to Measure Results
- Systems to Monitor Progress
- Compilation of Management Information
- Plan to Track Toward Goals

Also, in the absence of input from key stakeholders in the augmentation of the Plan, it will be difficult for the stakeholders to take ownership of the Plan, earnestly seek to advance the Plan goals or understand the linkages that are required between the goals and objectives, the budget, and each department or campus’s role in accomplishing the broader goals.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-1: Augment the 2022-24 Strategic Plan with the input and approval of the Board and involvement of District employees and community representatives.

4.1.2 Performance Measures

OBSERVATION: LCSD's Strategic Plan does not contain strategies or clearly measurable criteria or key performance indicators by which to regularly evaluate progress or the effectiveness of the program areas under review.

As stated previously, the Superintendent indicated he created the initial Strategic Plan as part of a project with the Superintendent's Association. The Superintendent realizes that this plan is not complete and must be augmented in the near future.

Comparing the Liberty County School District 2022-24 Strategic Plan to the components of an effective plan, it is clear that several components are missing:

- Most outcomes are not quantifiable.
- Each outcome has no timelines.
- Outcomes have no linkage to the budget.

As can be seen in **Exhibit 4-3**, the outcomes are not quantifiable. For example, Outcome b states:

We will finish the LCHS Football Fieldhouse/Concession Stand.

By having such an initiative in vague terms, staff has no guidance as to:

- the deliverable due date (or if it is spread out over several years); and
- the necessary fiscal resources needed to accomplish this initiative.

As shown, one of the 2020-21 Short Terms goals is to establish key performance indicators/ measures (KPI) for the operational areas. HES Facilities Management, a facility services group with a particular focus on the needs of customers in K-12 schools and higher education, lists the following as some of the most fundamentally useful measures:

- Ratio of Preventive Maintenance to Emergency Maintenance
- Utility Costs Per Square Foot
- Work Order Completion Times
- Customer Satisfaction Rates
- Staffing Ratios by Trade

The measures when linked to a strategic goal can provide valuable information regarding progress toward goals as well as performance and productivity.

For example, Outcome (a) shown in **Exhibit 4-3** reads as follows:

- a. The Liberty County School District will be great stewards of our facilities. We will keep competent maintenance staff employed to ensure little to no interruption to the educational day for students.

Each of the KPIs listed above would be useful measures for determining program performance and progress toward goal achievement. Continuing the process to link the strategies to the budget would constitute the next step in the progression.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-2: Revise the Strategic Plan to include a timelines, measurable outcomes, and linkages to the District’s budget.

4.1.3 Internal Controls

OBSERVATION: Because the goals and objectives are still being finalized and there are no metrics used to monitor performance, the District has not yet established an internal control system to provide reasonable assurance that program goals and objectives will be met.

As noted in Chapter 1 of this report, LCSD does not produce regular management reports for leadership or the Board. To date, the evaluation of the program areas under review has been mostly informal, and those processes are discussed in greater detail under each of those sections in this chapter.

In the absence of a Strategic Plan with goals, objectives, strategies and measurable outcomes, the program areas generally bring matters directly to the Superintendent. In a Strategic Plan environment, successful school districts establish regular progress reporting intervals for both leadership and the Board, annual or biannual workshops to review progress and modify or update strategies as needed, establish new short-term strategies for the coming year, etc.

As shown in **Exhibit 4-5**, one very large district in Virginia has a very detailed plan for monitoring that breaks up the plan monitoring into more manageable parts, with a rotation over the year for all areas to have their time allotted for review.

The actual schedule of events varies significantly from district to district, based on size and complexity, but as shown below establishing a clear schedule of activities and expectations regarding the information that will be gathered and reported is critical for districts of all sizes.

Exhibit 4-5 Fairfax County School District Strategic Plan Monitoring Schedule

APPROACH

The overall approach is to give the School Board and the community a quarterly update/report on the Strategic Plan, focused both on the work accomplished and the results achieved. In addition, the report will outline major Strategic Plan activities for the coming year that are designed to address areas in need of improvement. Each quarterly report will provide a comprehensive review of one of the four Strategic Plan goals areas, with a secondary focus on essential updates in the other three goal areas. In addition to these reports, the School Board will have the opportunity in June of each year to reassess the plan and make necessary adjustments to content and time lines.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

These updates will involve three components – a written draft report, a work session to discuss the draft report, and a public presentation on the final report. The report will focus on the work accomplished and the measures and metrics that the School Board has identified for monitoring. Data and information not included for School Board monitoring, but important for internal monitoring, will become part of the Strategic Plan monitoring process and will be available to the School Board through online access.

Source: <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/strategic-plan/strategic-plan-reporting-and-monitoring>

In the absence of an established reporting format and schedule, the plan is less likely to be used as an effective planning tool, and the plan will in all likelihood end up having little or no real impact on the District's operations.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-3: Establish a reporting format and schedule for the continual review of progress and updating of the Strategic Plan.

4.2 FACILITIES PLANNING, USE, AND CONSTRUCTION

4.2.1 *Program Goals and Objectives*

OBSERVATION: The Department prepares and submits the required Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) plans but has not used the State plans to establish goals or guide formal planning efforts and has no other formal program goals and objectives.

Without comprehensive clearly stated measurable program goals and objectives, the Department will be challenged to implement its facilities and maintenance program in a consistent manner, resulting in only a wish list projects with no clear framework for prioritization.

The Superintendent, Director and Board Members refer to a project list maintained by the Director over the last four years as their needs list and planning document, however the \$2.1

million list includes both critical needs and wish list items, is not prioritized, has no projected timelines or link the projects to the District long-range vision or strategies for the future.

The Department has prepared and submitted the required FLDOE plan, but they do not use it to manage the program. According to staff, there is little consensus among the Director, Superintendent, and the school board on what should be the priority.

The Director adds projects to the list as they arise. The projects remain on the list primarily due to a lack of funding.

Exhibit 4-6 is the District-provided wish list of 50 items for what they characterized as both wants and needs.

Exhibit 4-6
Facility and Transportation Projects
May 2022

#	Project	School	Non-Athletic Facility Project Estimated Cost \$	Athletic Facility Project Estimated Cost \$	Transportation Project Estimated Cost \$
1	Buses "2 or more	Trans			226,000
2	Handicap Van	Trans			60,000
3	7 Passenger Van	CO			50,000
4	Truck	Maint			60,000
5	Trucks	Hosford/CO			40,000
6	Mowers	All Schools/4	60,000		
7	Tractor/Loader	Tolar/CO	30,000		
8	10 Passenger Van	CO			75,000
9	Freezer/Cooler Cover	Tolar	9,400		
10	Generator Food Service	CO	37,350		
11	Fire Alarm Upgrade	Tolar	41,798		
12	Fencing Relocate	Tolar	52,264		
13	Football Concession Roof "Old"	LCHS		8,000	
14	Mass Communication System	Tolar	50,980		
15	Mass Communication System	Hosford	40,340		
16	Fuel Pump Computer System	Trans			6,637
17	Rekeying	Hosford/Tolar/CO	25,000		
18	Drop Off/Pickup Loop	Tolar	70,700		
19	Athletic Parking	LCHS		34,750	
20	Gym Covering	LCHS		14,185	
21	Covered Walk and Pavilions	LCHS	41,400		
22	Bus Camera upgrade	Trans			25,860
23	Football Bleacher Repair	LCHS Visitor side		80,000	
24	Nurse Station Frig	LCHS	1,299		
25	ROTC Classroom Flooring	LCHS	56,730		
26	IT Room Flooring	CO	20,425		
27	Paving gym loop/Front Office	LCHS	24,418		

Exhibit 4-6 (Continued)
Facility and Transportation Projects
May 2022

#	Project	School	Non-Athletic Facility Project Estimated Cost \$	Athletic Facility Project Estimated Cost \$	Transportation Project Estimated Cost \$
28	Custodial Washer/Dryer	LCHS	1,195		
29	Flooring	Tolar	150,000		
30	Gym Washer/Dryer	LCHS		1,026	
31	Gym Ice Machine	LCHS		4,989	
32	Batting Cage	Hosford		15,000	
33	Digital Sign	CO		33,775	
34	New Front Entrance	CO	25,000		
35	Playground Drainage & Sod	Tolar	Not Estimated		
36	Roof Repair Main Bldg. Chimneys	Hosford	Not Estimated		
37	Baseball Poles Painted	LCHS		10,000	
38	Bus Barn Add-On	Trans			Not Estimated
39	Softball Drainage	LCHS		Not Estimated	
40	Softball Fieldhouse	LCHS		300,000	
41	Softball Bleacher Footers	LCHS		1,200	
42	Softball Sound System	LCHS		13,000	
43	Softball Safety Netting	LCHS		1,500	
44	Softball Washer/Dryer	LCHS		1,026	
45	Softball Ice Machine	LCHS		4,989	
46	Softball Internet	LCHS		9,250	
47	Football Fieldhouse	LCHS		225,000	
48	Football Ice Machine	LCHS		4,989	
49	Football Washer/Dryer	LCHS		1,026	
50	Football Internet	LCHS		15,985	
	Total Amount	\$2,061,486	\$738,299	\$779,690	\$543,497
	Total Project Count	50 Total Projects	20 Projects	21 Projects	9 Projects

Source: Facility Report, 2022.

The list is presented in the order that the Director said was his priority. It is significant to note that there is a near equal number of student learning facilities projects as there are athletic facilities projects. When funds become available, spending limited funds on facilities projects that benefit all students to improve their learning outcomes is critical. Although athletic facilities projects are important, given that few funds exist, improving athletic facilities may be a decision to evaluate and prioritize against the District's other needs.

Of the 50 total projects, only 20 are non-athletic facility projects at a total estimated cost of \$738,299, or 36 percent. There are 21 athletic facility projects with an estimated cost of \$779,690, or 38 percent. The list also includes nine transportation/vehicle projects with an estimated cost of \$543,497, or 26 percent.

Jackson County School District, one of LCSD's peer districts, identifies a specific facilities-related goal in its strategic plan. As part of its overall plan for growth and improvement, the goal to renovate, improve and repair facilities is implemented through specific measurable elements of assigning task ownership, including what, who, how and when.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-4: Define the maintenance and facility-related departmental goals, align the projects in the list to the goals to advance those goals and develop strategies and timelines for implementation.

4.2.2 Performance Measures

OBSERVATION: The Department does not have performance measures, and the only system with the potential for measuring staff performance is an email-based work order system with limited capabilities.

The primary mechanism used by the District to monitor the performance of maintenance staff is the work order system, which consists of an email group: maintenance@lcsb.org. Email subgroups are categorized by school that can be grouped to determine the total open or closed requests for service.

The requestor of the work is typically the principal or the campus secretary. They send an email to the maintenance email group. The Director responds to the requestor, the two maintenance staff and the Superintendent. The Director and staff determine the most important requests to address and the work is performed. Once done, maintenance staff sends a “done” email to the requestor, the Superintendent, and the Director, and deletes it from their email. The email chain of replies is the only historic information regarding the life of a work order. Parts, costs, nor amount of maintenance worker time are included in the work order. It is a communication device not a true work order system, such as the system used by the Technology areas. Consequently, no reports can be produced showing the number of open, pending or complement workorder in the last month. The Director can look back on the emails and manually produce a list.

Exhibit 4-7 is the total count of work orders. In school year 2020-21, there were 558 work orders and in school year 2021-22, there were 479 work orders.

**Exhibit 4-7
Work Order Count
2020-21 through 2021-22**

Work Orders		
	2020-21	2021-22
ELC	21	15
District Office	51	56
Hosford	136	119
LCHS	158	162
WR Tolar	192	127
Total	558	479

Source: LCSD Maintenance & Transportation Department, June 2022.

Workorders that cannot be completed primarily because of the cost sit in the email with no action. The Director provided 44 workorders that cannot be completed due to funding. This included:

- 2022 to date: 19 workorders
- 2021: 20 workorders
- 2020: 4 workorders
- 2019: 1 workorder

Without some type of regular communication on the status of these pending workorders, a solution and funds may not surface. The Director knows that these are pending workorders because they are still in the maintenance email and they have not been moved to a completed workorder folder. The original requestor would also know about these workorder requests, but they also do not receive any status communication. The Director has been informed that there are no funds available to solve these issues, but he does not regularly provide a report of outstanding work orders.

The Efficient Plant Management publication provides performance indicators to measure effectiveness in managing facilities. Since the District has no other facilities staff, with two maintenance staff working a 40-hour week with 100 percent of their time scheduled, knowing where their time is spent is critical for managing the program. School districts typically expect preventive maintenance to be between 50-70 percent of the staff-hours, while planned and scheduled corrective work would be between 20-30 percent of the technicians' time. Specific examples of these measures include:

- Emergency Repairs as a Percentage of Scheduled Hours: Measures how much unplanned emergency work the Maintenance Department does.
- Planned and Scheduled Work Completion Rate: Measures the opposite of the emergency repairs metric, as it measures what is going right in the organization.
- Scheduled Preventive Maintenance (PM) Hours Completed on Time as a Percentage of Scheduled Preventive Maintenance Hours: Measures PMs Completed on Time.
- Maintenance Overtime as a Percentage of Maintenance Time: Measures the health of the organization regarding whether overtime is increasing or decreasing.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-5: Develop performance measures, and systems for tracking the efficiency of the maintenance and facilities functions and regularly report performance to leadership and the Board.

4.2.3 Internal Controls

OBSERVATION: The department has a facilities and maintenance procedures manual that is not currently in use and has no other internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that program goals and objectives will be met.

Internal controls start with documented policies and procedures that are then monitored to ensure compliance.

The Director was not aware of any board policies related to facilities. However, LCSD has multiple board policies, including, for example:

- **7100 - FACILITIES PLANNING.** The School Board recognizes that careful, prudent planning is essential to the efficient operation of the schools and that planning must be grounded on accurate data. In order to assure that future District construction supports the educational program and responds to community needs, the Board will prepare a capital construction plan and will revise that plan periodically thereafter. The plan shall include a thorough description and analysis of local and regional demographic factors which influence general population growth and public school enrollments.
- **7101 - BUILDING PERMITS AND THE CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICE.** The School Board shall subcontract for code enforcement services. Approved project plans will be reviewed for code compliance, permits issued, and the work inspected.
- **7240 - SITE ACQUISITION.** It is the policy of the School Board that real property acquisition price be based on a true value with regard for fair remuneration to the seller but not on enhancement of the value of the site to the seller.
- **7410 – MAINTENANCE.** The School Board recognizes that the fixed assets of this District represent a significant investment of this community and their maintenance is of prime concern to the Board. The Board directs the conduct of a continuous program of inspection, maintenance, and rehabilitation for the preservation of all school buildings and equipment. Wherever possible and feasible, maintenance shall be preventive.

The Director said that the department does not have anything written for procedures. However, the Superintendent provided a July 2021 procedures manual that appears to be a template from another district. For example, there are references to a staff of 28 in the Facilities Department. There are references to the Director of Facilities, Safety and Special Projects, which is not in place at LCSD. There are multiple references to SCSB employees, which appears to be another district.

Another example is that the facilities and maintenance procedures manual references a continuous improvement program, but the District does not have this program. The manual references school board policy 8.29 about suggestions for improvement. It says “Continuous improvement is a concept we value in the Facilities Department. If you have ideas of how we can improve, please feel free to discuss with your Director of Facilities, Maintenance and Transportation. The Director will review all suggestions submitted in writing and will respond with a written response to all process improvement suggestions submitted in writing.

It is not unusual for districts to use a template from another district as a starting point for establishing their own procedures, however if the template is not modified to address the current situation in this district, and if staff are not involved in the process of drafting procedures, the usefulness of the document is limited.

There are also purchasing and competitive procurement policies that were in place but were not followed according to the Auditor General’s Operational audit. Failure to acknowledge the

existence of policy coupled with the absence of comprehensive and relevant procedures makes it difficult if not impossible to establish internal controls to monitor performance or compliance, as discussed in greater detail in **Chapter 6** of this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-6: Once the maintenance team has conducted a full review of Board policy relating to facilities, amend the existing procedures manual to reflect actual practice with cross references to appropriate board policies.

The documents should be used to train staff. If additional training could benefit the Director or a member of his team relating to purchasing, contract management, code recognition and enforcement and the like, immediate action should be taken to provide the necessary staff development to the Director and one or more members of the maintenance team.

4.3 TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION AND UPGRADES

4.3.1 *Program Goals and Objectives*

OBSERVATION: Since the State exempted districts from submitting a Digital Classrooms Plan to the Florida Department of Education, LCSD discontinued the practice of preparing a Digital Classroom Plan and currently has no long or short-range plans for Technology or performance measures to assess the effectiveness of student initiatives or progress toward goals.

During the 2017 Florida Legislative Session, the Digital Classroom Allocations statute, s. 1011.62(12), was modified to exempt districts from submitting a Digital Classrooms Plan to the Florida Department of Education. This coincided with the reduction and eventual elimination of Digital Classroom allocations to districts. The Technology Coordinator said that the District stopped creating and updating the plan at that time.

LCSD Board Policy 2252 - Digital Classrooms, adopted in 2017 still requires the preparation of a plan.

LCSD provided the following response to the Ressel team request for “current plans for new projects (approximate schedule; location, dollars) that include:

- Software (ERPs, SIS, etc.)
- Hardware
- Retrofitting of Buildings/Classrooms”

Two stated goals in the document provided to the Ressel team included:

- ***Our goal is to refresh staff and student devices on a three-year cycle. We hope to have an annual budget of \$100,000 to complete this ongoing project. Starting [during] the 2022-23 school year, there are no Digital allocations provided and thus no budget to accomplish this refresh.***

- *Almost all classrooms have been furnished with interactive panels, document cameras and mobile labs. There are a few remaining classrooms that need to be outfitted to complete this project. It is **our goal** to purchase interactive panels for the 2022-23 school year. These classrooms are at Hosford and Tolar schools. The cost is approximately \$5,000 per classroom.*

Over the last three years, the pandemic shifted the learning environment for nearly all students and teachers nationally. Once the paradigm shift to virtual learning took hold, districts across the nation have had to totally rethink their educational delivery systems and the hardware, software and device needs including the infrastructure necessary to support this new environment. LCSD was no exception. The Technology function in LCSD reports to Instruction as the District has recognized technology's importance in terms of student success.

The creation and maintenance of a Technology Plan should not be viewed as a compliance issue or a means for obtaining State funds, but rather, successful technology plans should be woven into and support the District's overall goals and strategies for continuing to provide the highest quality education for its students.

For example, the District should establish minimum, uniform technology standards for classrooms in each school, broken out by grade level. This creates a standard for technology use that ensures all schools will have access to the same equipment and software. The goals provided above seek to do this but lack a funding source to fully implement the plan.

Districts should also institute a plan for district-wide teacher instruction and standardization. Every teacher needs to be adequately trained to ensure technology competencies as defined by the District. This too is addressed in some of the campus level planning documents reviewed by the Ressel team.

Many of the elements of a plan exist, but the process for gathering the information and obtaining buy-in for the direction and goals as well as the funding sources that can be used to address these needs will require collaboration.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-7: Create and implement a Technology Plan that expands the goals stated above to more broadly address the primary functions of the department and will allow the District's technology functions to mature educationally and administratively.

4.3.2 Performance Measures

OBSERVATION: The Technology Coordinator has a wealth of information available that could be used to measure performance, but that information is not regularly reported or used by leadership for that purpose.

During interviews and based on the responses to the preliminary data request list, the Technology Coordinator produced an enormous amount of information regarding the number of devices by school and room number, work order system capabilities and great deal of additional information that she uses to ensure that all systems, devices and programs are operating as intended. In the absence of adequate funding however, she said it is becoming more difficult to do.

As mentioned above, LCSD is no longer preparing a Technology Plan, but has informal goals for maintaining and enhancing technology.

In response to the preliminary data request, the Technology Coordinator prepared a Needs/Gap Assessments indicating that current operating and E-Rate Funds fall short of meeting the expected Technology needs in the coming year, but planning strategies for meeting those needs have not yet been discussed. **(Exhibit 4-8)**

According to staff, ESSER Funds are being used to temporarily meet some of the ongoing needs, but those funds are temporary in nature and may allow for immediate one-time device refreshing, but cannot be depended on to address the operating needs.

**Exhibit 4-8
2022 Needs/Gap Assessment**

Our goal is to refresh staff and student devices on a three-year cycle. This refresh helps ensure devices have current patches and updates which ultimately protects our network. Replacing EOL devices on a regular rotation will not only keep our network safe but also provides a better learning experience for teachers and students when devices can efficiently run latest software, etc. We hope to have an annual budget of \$100,000 to complete this ongoing project.

Starting [during] the 2022-23 school year, there are no Digital allocations provided [by the State] and thus no budget to accomplish this refresh.

The Digital Allocations also covered the cost of many software applications (not a complete list). These funds will have to come from a different funding source in the future. 2021-2022		
Software - Technology	Cost	Fund
Adobe Creative Cloud K-12 Licensing	\$2,460.00	Digital - 1384
Archive Social	\$2,988.00	Digital - 1384
Cloud59 MIBS*	E-Rate + \$3,600.00	Digital - 1384
Extreme Network licensing	\$8,685.00	Digital - 1384
FortiNet Filter & Firewall	\$9,000.00	Digital - 1384
Goverlan Suite	\$378.00	Digital - 1384
Help Desk	\$1,626.00	Digital - 1384
KnowBe4	\$2,088.00	Digital - 1384
Ncomputing Labs Annual Maintenance	\$420.00	Digital - 1384
Nearpod	\$9,500.00	Digital - 1384
PDQ Deploy Enterprise	\$156.60	Digital - 1384
SafeShare	\$2,450.00	Digital - 1384
SoftLINK	\$5,364.00	Digital - 1384
WebTitan	\$5,250.00	Digital - 1384
Zoom Meeting and Webinar	\$7,900.00	Digital - 1384
Total	\$61,865.60	

Source: LCSD Technology Coordinator, May 2022.

As shown, the primary funding source was the State Digital Technology allocation which was reduced and then eliminated. While the list is not prioritized, the Coordinator said they may have to make hard choices regarding what they may be able to do without if funding cannot be found.

Long and short-range goals and performance measures that include developing sustainable funding strategies based on the most appropriate student to device ratios, the appropriate refresh cycles for student and staff devices, and the like, could help to move forward with the available funding in the future.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-8: Once a comprehensive Technology Plan is developed, create key technology-related strategies and performance measures to assess program cost and performance and lead to sustainable funding for the future.

4.3.3 Internal Controls

OBSERVATION: The Technology Department has policies, procedures and systems in place that provide reasonable assurance in most cases that systems will continue to operate as intended and the user environment is controlled.

The five key components of the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations (COSO) Internal Control Framework as they apply to information technology include:

- The Control Environment – Leadership’s support for the controls, often evidenced in governance polices and willingness to hold individuals and groups accountable for their actions
- Risk Assessment and Management – Identifying the areas of greatest risk and taking steps to mitigate that risk
- Control Activities – Processes and procedures, including a robust plan to ensure business continuity in the event of an emergency
- Outsourcing – Identifying areas where outsourcing is appropriate and managing the contracts to evaluate performance
- Monitoring – continual examination of outcomes, outputs and desired states

As noted in **Chapter 6** of this report, LCSD has an extensive list of Board approved technology-related policies that leadership supports in terms on the ramifications for student or staff misconduct or misuse of technology. In addition, the District is using Goverlan and Softlink programs to monitor the use of technology and provide remote access as needed for repairs and uploads.

As noted in **Chapter 5** of this report, LCSD has assessed its risk and determined that Cyber Security is a high priority and uses Active Directory/Azure to continually monitor and alert them when breaches or attempts are made. The vendor also assists them in identifying vulnerabilities.

LCSD has a comprehensive Technology Disaster Recovery Plan (TDRP) which is published on the Technology page of the District’s website that includes a notification calling tree to ensure that the right people are contacted in the event of a disaster. The plan documents the risk assessment that was performed and focuses plans to on the level of business disruption which could arise from each type of disaster (**Exhibit 4-9**)

Exhibit 4-9
LCSD's Technology Disaster Risk Assessment

Potential disasters have been assessed as follows:			
Potential	Probability Rating	Impact Rating	Description of Potential Consequences & Remedial Actions
Flood	5	3	All critical equipment is located on 1 st floor.
Fire	5	3	
Tornado	5	3	
Electrical storms	3	3	Use of surge protectors on all servers to protect from damage.
Hurricane	5	3	
Act of sabotage	4	3	
Electrical power failure	2	4	UPS devices are used to help with quick power outages.
Loss of communications	3	3	

Probability: 1 – Very High, 5 – Very Low; Impact: 1 – Total Destruction, 5 – Minor Annoyance

Monitoring is accomplished through the Goverlan and Softlink systems mentioned above, as well as physical monitoring that is performed daily by the technology team centrally and at the campus level.

***CHAPTER 5:
REPORTING ACCURACY AND ADEQUACY***

5.0 REPORTING ACCURACY AND ADEQUACY

Chapter 5 presents findings related to reporting accuracy and adequacy. During the performance audit, Ressel & Associates examined districtwide information systems as well as any ancillary systems used in each of the functional areas under review to determine if the systems are meeting the business needs of the organization and are capable of delivering timely, accurate and useful information for management and stakeholders. Ressel & Associates also examined the District's website and other tools used to keep the general public informed about ongoing projects and business activities. The Open Records processes were also assessed for responsiveness and accuracy.

The specific audit evaluation tasks are provided below.

- 5.1 **Information Systems** - Assess whether the program has financial and non-financial information systems that provide useful, timely, and accurate information to the public;
- 5.2 **Internal and External Reports** - Review available documents, including relevant internal and external reports, that evaluate the accuracy or adequacy of public documents, reports, and requests prepared by the District related to the program;
- 5.3 **Public Access** - Determine whether the public has access to program performance and cost information that is readily available and easy to locate;
- 5.4 **Accuracy and Completeness** - Review processes the program has in place to ensure the accuracy and completeness of any program performance and cost information provided to the public; and
- 5.5 **Corrective Actions** - Determine whether the program has procedures in place that ensure that reasonable and timely actions are taken to correct any erroneous and/or incomplete program information included in public documents, reports, and other materials prepared by the District and that these procedures provide for adequate public notice of such corrections.

Finding on reporting accuracy and adequacy: Partially Meets. LCSD has financial and non-financial information systems that provide useful, timely and accurate information for management purposes. Of the limited number of reports prepared by the program areas under review the Ressel team found them to be accurate and complete. The District has made the website more accessible by the public and there is limited amount of data available for public review on the Technology webpage and on the Board site. The public can request data through the Open Records process, however there are no administrative procedures to guide that process. Some, but not all of the performance and cost data are made available on the website in compliance with the Financial Transparency Act.

Findings by Research Subtasks:

- Subtask 5.1 - *Information Systems – Partially Meets* - Districtwide, there are many financial and non-financial information systems in use, however few are used to provide information to the public. The only information system regularly used by Maintenance

and Transportation is an email-based work order system that is incapable of providing useful, timely, and accurate information to the public. The Technology Department uses a number of information systems that effectively support the IT programs in the District.

- Subtask 5.2 - *Internal and External Reports* - Meets - No reports were found that evaluate the accuracy or adequacy of public documents, reports, and requests prepared by the District. Facilities and Maintenance prepares only a limited number of reports required by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) and no instances were found indicating that the reports were inaccurate or incomplete.
- Subtask 5.3 - *Public Access* - Partially Meets - There is no administrative procedure to guide open record requests and the process for requesting open records is not shown on the District's website. LCSD provides some, but not all of the data related to s. 1011.035, Florida Statutes, regarding school district budget transparency. There is little information on the website relating to Facilities and Maintenance, and while there is a great deal of information available on the Technology webpage, the Department provides no program performance or cost data.
- Subtask 5.4 - *Accuracy and Completeness* – Meets - The Finance Department has procedures in place to ensure that reasonable and timely actions are taken to correct any financial reporting errors and external audit findings. The Ressel team found no evidence of errors or omissions in the reports produced by technology and maintenance.
- Subtask 5.5- *Corrective Actions* - Partially Meets -Although the Ressel team found no instances where corrective actions were needed, LCSD has no formal process or procedure in place to take corrective action should data be inaccurately reported.

In this chapter, the reporting accuracy and adequacy in the Liberty County School District are presented in the following functional areas:

- 5.1 Districtwide Support for Areas Under Review
- 5.2 Facilities Planning, Use, and Construction
- 5.3 Safety and Security Improvements
- 5.4 Technology Implementation and Upgrades

5.1 DISTRICTWIDE SUPPORT FOR AREAS UNDER REVIEW

5.1.1 Information Systems

The major business technology in use districtwide and in the program areas under review are shown in **Exhibit 5-1**. While not all of these systems result in specific reports for the public, all are systems that contribute to the overall management and operation of the District.

**Exhibit 5-1
Primary Business Technology**

Function	Name
Finance, Budget, Purchasing	Skyward, ERP System
Human Resources System, Payroll, Time and Attendance	Skyward, ERP System
Student information system, gradebook, attendance, etc.	Focus School Software
Cyber Security	Active Directory/Azure
Emergency Safety Alert System	Motorola Safer Watch
Technology Help Desk System	Think HelpDesk
Technology Monitoring	Goverlan
Monitoring and remote access for computer repairs	Softlink
Cyber Security	Active Directory/Azure

Source: Technology Coordinator, May 2022

Of significance to the District overall is the Motorola Safer Watch, which is an internet based emergency alert system that when activated, alerts all emergency responders and the District leadership and staff of an emergency situation. The system is set up on all staff laptops and an app can be downloaded onto an individual’s phone. An alert signaled from anywhere within the geographic vicinity of the District will trigger the alert. To avoid accidental alerts, the system will not send alerts if the signal is triggered outside of the immediate vicinity of the District. Staff are not required to put the app on their phones, but the superintendent estimated that 90 percent of the staff have done so.

OBSERVATION: Although the Skyward system is the primary enterprise resource system for the District, the District has not taken advantage of some of the system capabilities, including the ability to reduce manual processes and produce user friendly reports.

As noted in **Chapter 1** of this report, monthly financial reports are not being prepared for the Board. In June, the former CFO said she was working with PAEC to implement a report that would show budget against total expenditures and hoped it would be made part of the Board packet soon.

The current timekeeping and leave accounting process has been paper-based for some time, but the former CFO was actively attempting to implement the automated system in Skyward and hoped to be able to do that this summer.

Liberty is a participating District in PAEC’s Gateway Finance and Payroll System Services and as such are eligible to receive technical support and training relating to the Skyward finance and human resource/payroll application. *“Services include on-site and telephone consultation, as well as training for district personnel with regard to initial and continuing implementation of system, operational changes required by software updates, and operational changes per requirements of the Florida Department of Education.”*

In light of the recent retirement of the CFO, there is an opportunity for LCSD to receive in depth system training and carefully examine the Skyward system capabilities to determine how the system can be used more effectively.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-1: Schedule training and consultation on Skyward for the new CFO and key leaders to determine how the system the District can maximize the system capabilities.

5.1.2 Internal and External Reports

OBSERVATION: The Ressel team found no reports that evaluated the accuracy or adequacy of public documents, reports, and requests prepared by the District related to the program areas under review.

As discussed in **Chapter 1** and **Chapter 4** of this report, there are only limited reports prepared and submitted for to the Board or provided to the general public. The Ressel team found no evidence of inaccurate reports being released and retracted for correction nor any policies or procedures indicating how corrective action would be taken.

5.1.3 Public Access

OBSERVATION: The Liberty County School District has a 2014 Board-approved document that serves as the only policy and direction for open record requests. There is no administrative procedure to guide open record requests and the process for requesting open records is not shown on the District's website.

Since the new Superintendent took office in 2019, the Assistant Superintendent was given responsibility for open records requests. He estimates receiving about three requests per month. Requests are logged into a spreadsheet. A search of the District's website regarding public records requests found no information on how one submits an open records request.

The School Board Policy relating to Open Records is in the LCSD Policy Manual as Policy 8310, Policy Records. The policy outlines procedures for responding to requests, redacting information that is not subject to open records, estimating labor and copying costs, and invoicing for the cost of preparing the requested documents.

Policy 8310 on Open Records Requests is quite detailed and states:

- *Pursuant to State law, the Superintendent shall appoint a Records Management Liaison Officer (RMLO), who shall serve as the primary point of contact between the District and the Division of Library and Information Services of the Florida Department of State, which is the agency responsible for the State's records management program. The Superintendent may also appoint a Custodian of Records for the District who shall be responsible for implementing the requirements in State law and the State's records management program regarding the public records maintained by the District.*
- *Any individual may inspect and request copies of public records of this District during the regular business hours of the office in which such records are maintained. The District may not require requests for public records to be in writing, nor may the person requesting the information be required to disclose name, address, or phone number*

unless specifically required to do so by law. The Superintendent is authorized to grant or refuse access to the records of this District in accordance with the intent of this policy and applicable law.

- *No record in a personnel file which is confidential and exempt from inspection and copying pursuant to applicable law shall be disclosed except as provided by applicable law.*
- *Every person who has custody of a public record shall permit the record to be inspected and copied by any person desiring to do so, at any reasonable time, under reasonable conditions, and under supervision of the custodian of public records.*
- *A District employee who has custody of public records may designate another District employee to permit the inspection and copying of public records, but must disclose the identity of the designee to the person requesting to inspect or copy the public records.*
- *A custodian of public records and/or his/her designee must promptly acknowledge, in writing, requests to inspect or copy records promptly and respond to such requests in good faith. A good faith response includes making reasonable efforts to determine from other officers or employees of the School District whether such a record exists, and, if so, the location at which the record can be accessed. Upon determination that the requested record exists, it must be reviewed to determine whether it contains any information that would be statutorily exempt from public inspection or copying as provided by law. See Policy 8350 – Confidentiality.*
- *Duplicated copies or certified copies of the District's public records shall be provided upon payment of the appropriate fee set forth in the Florida statutes. If the nature or volume of the public records requested will require extensive use of information technology resources or more than fifteen (15) minutes of clerical or supervisory assistance by District personnel, a special service charge attributable to the extensive use of the information technology resources and/or the labor cost of the personnel providing the service will be collected as permitted by State law.*
- *In addition, the actual cost of duplication will be collected for copies of the District's public records in a form other than a duplicated copy. The special service charge will also be collected if the requested copies of the public records in a form other than duplicated copy will require extensive use of information technology resources or more than fifteen (15) minutes of clerical or supervisory assistance by District personnel as permitted by State law.*
- *If the request for copies of a public record in any form could result in the collection of a special service charge, an estimate of the fee that will be due and payable shall be provided to the requestor. The duplication of the requested records will commence upon payment of the estimated fee by the requestor.*
- *No public record may be removed from the office in which it is maintained, except by a Board employee in the course of the performance of his/her duties.*

- *All District records will be maintained in accordance with general records schedules GS1-SL and GS7, as established by the Department of State.*

Sections 1003.25 and 1002.221, *Florida Statutes*, as well as Chapter 119, *Florida Statutes*, provide specific guidelines for open records requests.

The District lacks administrative procedures to implement the school board policy and state law regarding open records laws.

Since the Assistant Superintendent was charged with this responsibility in January 2021, no fees have been charged for open records requests. However, the Assistant Superintendent has a tracking system/chart to log incoming requests and sends the requestor a confirmation receipt. With the response being provided in a timely manner, the District is in compliance with the law except for assessing costs. As a result, there will continue to be inconsistencies in the policy application.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-2: Create an administrative procedure to set a consistent fee structure, as referred to in Policy 8310, and prominently advertise the procedure for requesting public records on the District's website.

OBSERVATION: The District's website appears to be user friendly, timely, and accurate, but it lacks information on the Surtax and program areas under review.

The Liberty County School District's website is maintained by the District's Technology Coordinator. She makes changes to the website as needed, but at least two times a week. The site is hosted by *School Insight* at a cost of about \$3,500 per year.

Only limited information is available to the public on the program areas under review, and at the time of this writing, no information has been posted announcing the referendum or describing the proposed use of the funds. A search of Board minutes did reveal a copy of the Surtax Resolution that was passed by the Board in August 2021.

The Board agenda and Board packets are placed on the website well in advance of meetings. No "gatekeeper" is responsible to provide oversight to ensure content is accurate. The information is provided to the Technology Coordinator and posted. Although no inaccuracies were found, in the absence of some type of oversight to ensure that all information on the website is accurate and timely, the risk of inaccurate information being posted remains.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-3: Augment information on the website to include the areas under review and assign an upper level employee responsibility for reviewing and validating

information prior to it being given to the Technology Coordinator for posting to the website to ensure accuracy.

OBSERVATION: LCSD is providing the public easy access to some but not all of the District’s Budget/Financial data in compliance with provisions found in s. 1011.035, *Florida Statutes*, regarding school district budget transparency.

As shown in **Exhibit 5-2**, the LCSD Finance and Human Resource webpage contains contact information for staff in the Finance Department and a list of documents, including a link called Fiscal Transparency as well as other links to information required by the statute.

**Exhibit 5-2
LCSD Finance and Human Resource Webpage**



Source: <https://www.lcsb.org/financeandhumanresources>.

Exhibit 5-3 examines s. 1011.035, *Florida Statutes* School District Budget Transparency and assesses the District’s compliance with the stated provisions.

**Exhibit 5-3
Analysis of Statutory Requirements**

Statutory Requirement	Ressel Team Assessment
<p><i>(1) It is important for school districts to provide budgetary transparency to enable taxpayers, parents, and education advocates to obtain school district budget and related information in a manner that is simply explained and easily understandable. Budgetary transparency leads to more responsible spending, more citizen involvement, and improved accountability. A budget that is not transparent, accessible, and accurate cannot be properly analyzed, its implementation thoroughly monitored, or its outcomes evaluated.</i></p>	<p>The per pupil expenditures shown in Exhibit 5-4 below provide simple, easy to read key performance data and an associated document provides definitions for those indicators.</p> <p>Links to budget documents are provided for FY 2016-17 through FY 2021-22 and the associated documents include a budget schedule for the year, a summary budget document with required language regarding Mil rates, and a full budget in the form used to report information to the State with no explanation of the funds or codes other than the object description.</p>
<p><i>(2) Each district school board shall post on its website a plain language version of each proposed, tentative, and official budget which describes each budget item in terms that are easily understandable to the public. This information must be prominently posted on the school district’s website in a manner that is readily accessible to the public.</i></p>	<p>No information of this type was available on the Finance Web Page; however, some budget information was found in the Board hearing minutes from past years. It was not clear, however, how this information was shared with the public in advance of the meetings.</p>
<p align="center"><i>(3) Each district school board is encouraged to post the following information on its website:</i></p>	
<p><i>(a) Timely information as to when a budget hearing will be conducted.</i></p>	<p>On June 17, 2022, the most recent information provided was for the 2021-22 budget with references to the July 16, 2021, hearing dates. No information was yet available on that date for the 2022 hearing dates.</p>
<p><i>(b) Each contract between the district school board and the teachers’ union.</i></p>	<p>No page or link was found on the website for a teacher union contract.</p>
<p><i>(c) Each contract between the district school board and noninstructional staff.</i></p>	<p>No page or link was found on the website for a non-instructional staff contracts.</p>
<p><i>(d) Each contract exceeding \$35,000 between the school board and a vendor of services, supplies, or programs or for the purchase or lease of lands, facilities, or properties.</i></p>	<p>No page or link was found on the website where this type of information would be provided. No information was available online describing the process by which vendors would be set up or notified about postings.</p>
<p><i>(e) Each contract exceeding \$35,000 that is an emergency procurement or is with a single source as authorized under s. 287.057(3).</i></p>	<p>None found</p>
<p><i>(f) Recommendations of the citizens’ budget advisory committee.</i></p>	<p>None found</p>
<p><i>(g) Current and archived video recordings of each district school board meeting and workshop.</i></p>	<p>Board meeting audio is available online at https://www.lcsb.org/meetings</p>
<p align="center"><i>(4) The website should contain links to:</i></p>	
<p><i>(a) Help explain or provide background information on various budget items that are required by state or federal law.</i></p>	<p>None found</p>
<p><i>(b) Allow users to navigate to related sites to view supporting details.</i></p>	<p>There is a link to a State Report showing per pupil pending data.</p>
<p><i>(c) Enable taxpayers, parents, and education advocates to send e-mails asking questions about the budget and enable others to view the questions and responses.</i></p>	<p>Contact information is available on the Finance and Human Resources page.</p>

Source: Compiled by Ressel & Associates, June 2022.

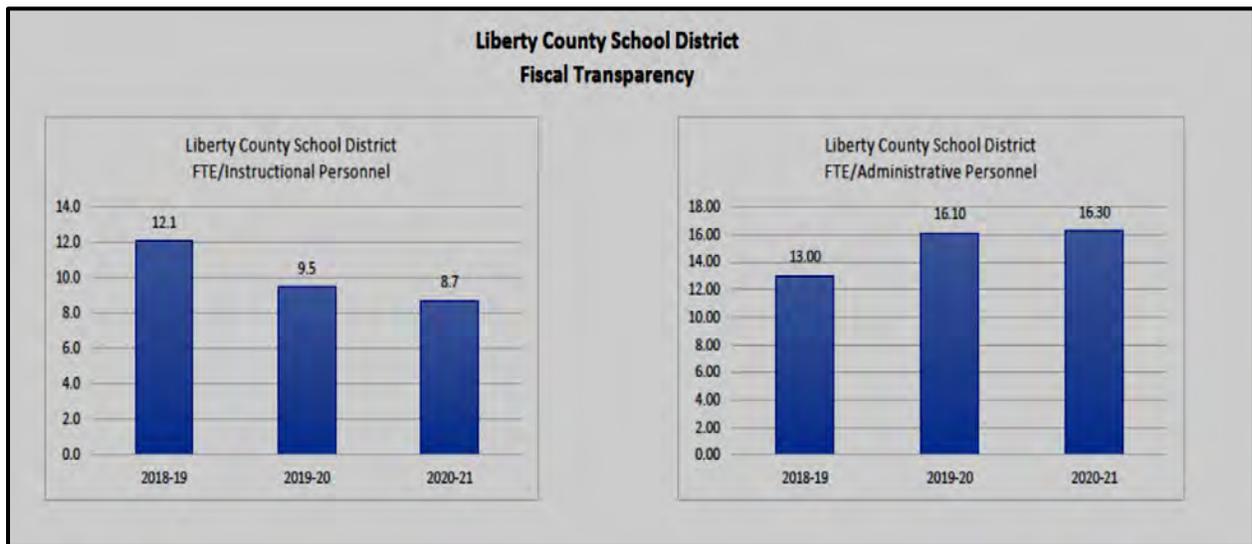
Under the Fiscal Transparency tab, the following options are available:

- 2018-19 Fiscal Transparency

- 2019-20 Fiscal Transparency
- 2020-21 Fiscal Transparency
- 2020-21 Graphics for School District Fiscal Transparency and Web-based Fiscal Transparency Tool
- Definitions and Calculations Methodology.

As shown in **Exhibit 5-4**, each of the Annual Fiscal Transparency documents contain charts and graphs detailing the required staffing and student ratio calculation.

Exhibit 5-4 **Sample Fiscal Transparency Charts**



Source: <https://www.lcsb.org/financeandhumanresources>.

Annual Financial Reports are available on this site; however, they are not the audited financial statements provided by the Auditor General and there are no links to the site where all audited financial reports, attestations and operational audits for all districts in the state are made available.

While minimally compliant, the public does not have easy access to much of the data required by statute.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-4: Immediately make all data required in statute available to the public in compliance with s. 1011.035, Florida Statutes, School district budget transparency.

5.1.4 Accuracy and Completeness

OBSERVATION: The Finance Department has procedures in place to ensure that reasonable and timely actions are taken to ensure that annual financial reports are accurate.

LCSB employs several levels of control over the accuracy of financial reports:

- An ERP System that is capable of compiling and reporting data
- An internal control system that includes multiple approvals and signoffs designed to detect and allow immediate mitigation of the errors
- Staff with experience in accounting standards and the unique school-related requirements
- External audits by the Auditor General and a contracted auditor for internal funds.

As a result, the District has received unmodified opinions on its last three Auditor General Audits of Financial Statements with minimal identified inaccuracies or weaknesses.

5.1.5 Corrective Actions

OBSERVATION: There is no formal process or procedure in place to take corrective action should data be inaccurately reported.

Corrective actions relating to audit findings are generally the responsibility of the CFO. There is not a communications office that might be charged with responsibility for preparing retraction notices as might be found in larger school districts, therefore the responsibility would fall to the Superintendent designee should a retraction or reprint be necessary.

In the absence of planning for this eventuality, it is possible that corrections would not be provided in a timely manner or be fully communicated to the affected parties.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-5: Contemplate the need for retractions and republication of reports or other data, and establish internal guidelines to follow to ensure adequate public notice of such corrections.

5.2 FACILITIES PLANNING, USE, AND CONSTRUCTION

5.2.1 Information Systems

OBSERVATION: The only information system regularly used by Maintenance and Transportation is an email-based work order system that is incapable of providing useful, timely, and accurate information to the public; the capabilities of Skyward for producing relevant facility related operational costs and analytics are not being fully utilized.

The work order system consists of an email group: maintenance@lcsb.org. Email subgroups are categorized by school that can be grouped to determine totals. The director creates and manages

folders in the work order email system, but management reports such as by type of issue are not available to readily sort and organize. The email chain of replies is the only system that captures the life of a work order. No other information is regularly provided by the maintenance staff to capture the resolution of the work order.

Skyward is the main financial system used by the District and is capable of producing reports on facility and maintenance expenditures, capital budgets and the like, but the system is only tangentially used to provide information on the facility operational costs as part of the budgeting process.

For example, **Exhibit 5-5** provides energy cost data captured in Skyward. Based on the District’s total square footage, it would be possible to use the system to produce and report energy costs per square foot, and track the rise and fall of costs over time.

**Exhibit 5-5
LCSD Annual Energy Cost Information
2020-21 School Year**

Natural Gas	Bottled Gas	Electricity	Heating Oil	Total Energy Costs	Total Square footage *	Square Foot Cost	
						All Energy	Elec Only
\$0	\$36,535	\$443,877	\$0	\$480,412	452,606	\$1.06	\$0.98

Source: District Financial Report, Florida Department of Education, June 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-6: Evaluate the continued use of the email-based work order system and explore the capabilities of Skyward to expand transparency to the public about the maintenance of the District’s assets.

5.2.2 Internal and External Reports

OBSERVATION: Facilities and Maintenance prepares only a limited number of reports required by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) and no instances were found indicating that the reports were inaccurate or incomplete.

There are a number of reports that are prepared and issued for State reporting purposes. **Section 5.2.4 Accuracy and Completeness** provides examples of the reports.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-7: Develop the project wish list of the ongoing facilities needs for the District into reports for the Board and the general public.

5.2.3 Public Access

OBSERVATION: Maintenance and Transportation does not submit reports to the Board that are shared as part of the Board packets. The District’s website provides bus routes and contact information of two employees in the Department. However, the website provides little information to the public about facilities and maintenance activities.

The Director of Transportation and Maintenance does not regularly prepare and submit reports to the Board unless something is requested of the Department. On the District’s website, there is a link for Departments. Under the link, there is a page for Transportation and Maintenance. On that page, there is a Contact List with names, phone numbers and email addresses for the secretary and the Director. The Director’s title on the first page is incorrectly cited as Director of Facilities, Maintenance & Transportation. The second name is the secretary, whom the Director said is no longer in the Department.

The Director does not post information about the Department on the District’s website. The Department has not submitted any of the State reports or the list of needs or any other information to the IT Coordinator responsible for the Website content.

Upon review of the websites of each of the four peer districts regarding facilities and maintenance information, Gadsden County School District is the best example of comprehensive facilities and maintenance information with references to the FLDOE website (although none of the websites reviewed included the districts’ state-required reports). The following information is posted on Gadsden’s website:

Under Links, there is a link for Maintenance. It states the following:

Welcome to the Facilities Department. The Facilities Department manages Planning, Construction and Maintenance of all Facilities operated by the Gadsden County School District. Our goal is to provide cost-effective services at each school creating and maintaining an environment, inside and out, that is comfortable, safe, and conducive to learning. No matter what the scope of work, Facilities staff are committed to providing the best services possible, within budget, and in a timely manner. Florida’s Department of Education provides administrative guidelines for the Maintenance and Operations of School Districts. Follow the link below for a better understanding of how a Facilities Department is organized and what’s expected of it.

<http://www.fl DOE.org/finance/edual-facilities>

Department functions. A. Maintenance – See the Work Order Requests page for additional information. 1. Work Orders 2. Emergencies 3. Project Requests. B. Custodial – Custodial services do not fall under the Facilities Department. However, we do take an active part in assisting the schools in coordinating activities and purchasing materials and equipment. C. Construction D. Facilities Reporting

An informative Facilities and Maintenance website could include the following links:

- Overall purpose and role statement
- Contact information for staff, including name, title, email address and phone number
- List of all the district's facilities that are maintained
- Florida Department of Education's Educational Facilities webpage: [Educational Facilities \(fldoe.org\)](https://fldoe.org)
- Community use of facilities request document
- Current RFP and RFQ, if applicable
- Construction projects ongoing, including timelines and photos, if applicable
- Prequalified contractor list and process to become a contractor

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-8: Prepare regular reports to the Board and add relevant information about the facilities and maintenance function to the District's website.

5.2.4 Accuracy and Completeness

OBSERVATION: The District prepares and submits the facilities reports as required by FLDOE and the Ressel team found no evidence that these reports were incomplete or inaccurate.

Annually, prior to the District adopting its budget, the District submits a Five-Year Facilities Work Plan required s. 1013.35(2) *Florida Statutes* that includes a schedule of major repair and renovation projects necessary to maintain the educational and ancillary facilities of the District. It provides a complete, balanced capital outlay plan to inform DOE about the District's financial feasibility. The District submitted the plan on September 17, 2021.

The District coordinated with its architects regarding the educational plant survey and the Castaldi report as part of the site planning for the new Liberty County High School location. FLDOE received and approved the plan to raze the building. The District ensures that the FLDOE approved prior to proceeding with the projects. FLDOE's notes included the following:

This facility was originally the old segregation school and had subsequently been used as ancillary administration for a period of time, then used for general school storage for the last 10 years. In addition, the buildings here recently sustained roof damage from hurricane Michael. All the buildings at this site were recommended to be razed. This site will become part of the campus for the approved Special Facilities Construction Account for the construction of the new Liberty Senior High school. All administrative staff will transfer to the existing Liberty High School site which will become the new Liberty County School Board District Office.

The District prepared and submitted to the FLDOE Office of Educational Facilities its Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) report in March 2022. The District completed the Certification of Facilities Data form which was signed by the Director of Transportation and Maintenance, the superintendent, and the School Board Chair.

5.2.5 Corrective Actions

LCSD nor FLDOE have identified any corrective actions needed in the facilities reports the District provided.

5.3 TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION AND UPGRADES

5.1.1 Information Systems

OBSERVATION: The Technology Department uses a number of information systems that effectively support the IT programs in the District.

- Technology Help Desk System - Think HelpDesk
- Technology Monitoring- Goverlan
- Monitoring and remote access for computer repairs - Softlink
- Cyber Security - Active Directory/Azure

The Think HelpDesk application provides an efficient mechanism for reporting and tracking performance as it relates to IT-related workorders. The system is capable of producing management reports that the Department uses internally to monitor school and individual device trends and the number of workorders issued, pending and worked at each school.

Goverlan is a remote administrative software that allows technicians to reset passwords, unlock an account, install a driver or device, add a printer, install, repair a software and monitor performance. Goverlan has some reporting capabilities.

Softlink is primarily used by teachers to remotely control or monitor student computers, no matter where they are located through remote access to each student's monitor, keyboard, and mouse. No reporting capabilities were identified.

Active Directory/Azure is an enterprise identity service that provides single sign-on, multifactor authentication, and conditional access to guard against the majority of cybersecurity attacks. Reports are available through this system.

There are also two educational systems that were launched to assist the District to better communicate with students, parents, and staff.

- **Clever SSO** was launched in 2016. Clever single sign-on (SSO) enables LCSD students and staff to securely authenticate and login to applications that the District supports. Clever not only helps with security but saves valuable class time as students login to the different applications daily.
- **ParentSquare** has changed the way LCSD communicates and engages with parents and students. ParentSquare provides two-way communication with parents via email, text or the ParentSquare app. LCSD can share school or class news as well as direct message a single parent. Not only can LCSD message parents, but the application allows parents to

see calendar events and RSVP, posts can be sent to share pictures, links and attachments, forms can be completed and signed as well as parents can volunteer to support events.

5.1.2 Internal and External Reports

Although many of the systems above are not being currently used to produce formal reports, the capability to access a significant amount of data exists. Some data was provided to the Ressel team from the inventory and workorder system with no evidence of inaccuracies.

5.1.3 Public Access

OBSERVATION: The Technology Department has a page on the District website <https://www.lcsb.org/technology> that contains information for staff and students including a copy of the District's accessibility plan. There is, however, no program performance or cost information available on the site.

The Council of the Great City Schools provides a long list of metrics that can be used to provide cost and performance data for Information Technology. Below are some simple indicators recommended by the Council that are directly related to cost/performance with a brief explanation of their importance.

- IT Spending Percent of District Budget - This measure evaluates the importance of technology for the District as a whole.
- IT Spending - Capital Investments - This measure evaluates the level of spending by cost category.
- IT Spending per Student - This measure puts spending into perspective based on the number of students served.

LCSD's Technology webpage does not contain this level of information but it does provide parents, students and staff information about and direct links to the Clever, FOCUS and Skyward. In addition, the site contains a link to the Technology Disaster Recovery Plan, instructions for using the Help Desk system as well as the Acceptable Use Policy, guidelines for student home laptop use and a student home laptop check out form.

In terms of public access, the District has prepared a District Accessibility Plan to ensure that "the website is accessible to the widest possible audience, regardless of technology or ability." **Exhibit 5-6** provides a copy of that plan.

Exhibit 5-6 District Accessibility Plan

Accessibility Plan

Liberty County School District is committed to providing a website that is accessible to the widest possible audience, regardless of technology or ability. This website endeavors to comply with best practices and standards defined by Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act.

Liberty County School District Websites ADA Compliance Plan

1. Plan to convert all Non-Compliant PDF documents to be compliant with assistive technologies.
2. Add descriptive information to picture, logo and any other images located on our website.
3. Review color schemes to make sure the colors are standard schemes used in all web browsers.

Timeline for Compliance

Liberty County Schools started the implementation of these changes on July 1, 2016 and will continue working to make our web pages as accessible as possible to better meet the needs of People with Disabilities. This will be an ongoing effort as we will need to update information on our site on a regular basis.

If you need any assistance with our website, contact the appropriate webmaster.

District - Lynn Guthrie at 850-643-2275 or email to lynn.guthrie@lcsb.org
Hosford School – Heather Richter at 850-379-8480 or email to heather.richter@lcsb.org
LCHS – Jeani Griffin at 850-643-2275 or email to jeani.griffin@lcsb.org
WR Tolar School – Stacey Vowell at 850-643-2426 or email to stacey.vowell@lcsb.org

Our Equity Coordinator, Title IX and Compliance Coordinator as required by 34 C.F.R. 104.4 is Aaron Day, Assistant Superintendent of Schools and can be reached at 850-643-2275 or email to aaron.day@lcsb.org.

Source: <https://www.lcsb.org/technology>, June 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-9: Gather and report technology-related cost and performance data to the Board and the general public through the website.

5.1.4 Accuracy and Completeness

Published documents such as the Technology Disaster Recovery Plan appear to be comprehensive, accurate and complete.

5.1.5 Corrective Actions

The Ressel team identified no instances where corrective actions were required.

***CHAPTER 6:
PROGRAM COMPLIANCE***

6.0 PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

Chapter 6 presents findings related to program compliance. As part of the performance audit, Ressel & Associates assessed the adequacy of processes and internal controls used to ensure compliance with and remediate instances of non-compliance with federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations; contracts; grant agreements; and local policies and procedures applicable to the program areas under review. Ressel & Associates further assessed the District's compliance with Florida Statute Title XIV, 212.055: Discretionary sales surtaxes; legislative intent; authorization and use of proceeds.

The specific audit evaluation tasks are provided below.

- 6.1 **Compliance Processes** - Determine whether the program has a process to assess its compliance with applicable (i.e., relating to the program's operation) federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations; contracts; grant agreements; and local policies;
- 6.2 **Compliance Controls** - Review program internal controls to determine whether they are reasonable to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations; contracts; grant agreements; and local policies and procedures;
- 6.3 **Addressing Non-Compliance** - Determine whether program administrators have taken reasonable and timely actions to address any noncompliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations; contracts; grant agreements; and local policies and procedures identified by internal or external evaluations, audits, or other means;
- 6.4 **Surtax Compliance** - Determine whether program administrators have taken reasonable and timely actions to determine whether planned uses of the surtax are in compliance with applicable state laws, rules, and regulations; and
- 6.5 **Charter School Funds** - Determine whether the school District has processes to distribute funds to District charter schools and mechanisms for charter schools to report how the funds are used.

NOTE: Audit Evaluation Tasks 6.1-6.3 will be addressed district wide and in each of the program areas under review, whereas 6.4 and 6.5 are addressed as a separate subchapter as shown below.

Finding on program compliance: Partially Meets. The general compliance and control environment districtwide is strong in most areas, but additional expertise and oversight of the facility and construction and contract management functions are needed. The District is in compliance in all material aspects with the Surtax provisions including the proposed use of funds. The District has no charter schools therefore evaluation Task 6.5 is not relevant.

Findings by Research Subtask:

- Subtask 6.1 - *Compliance Processes* –Partially Meets - LCSD’s Board Policy Manual provides a compliance framework that is comprehensive and up to date. Few administrative procedures exist, however, to ensure compliance. The facilities and maintenance functions lack a process to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations
- Subtask 6.2 - *Compliance Controls* - Partially Meets - Competitive bidding is decentralized in terms of formal bids and quotes; meaning that each department or area is responsible for ensuring compliance with purchasing policies with few document processes, procedures or controls in place to ensure legal compliance. Budgetary controls over purchasing and the payment of invoices are strong. LCSD also has policies and procedures for the recording and inventorying and disposal of District assets.
- Subtask 6.3 - *Addressing Non-Compliance* - Partially Meets - The Auditor General identified areas of non-compliance with purchasing guidelines in its Operational Audit, that have not been adequately addressed. The Maintenance and Transportation Director was unaware that areas of non-compliance were found by the Auditor General and was not involved in preparing a response. By policy, the District has established discipline processes for non-compliance with technology use policies for students and staff, up to and including employee dismissal.
- Subtask 6.4 - *Surtax Compliance* - Meets - LCSD has taken reasonable and timely action to comply with state laws, rules and regulations regarding the process for bringing the Surtax referendum to the Voters and for the planned use of the proceeds should the Surtax be approved by Voters.
- Subtask 6.5 - *Charter School Funds* - Meets - At this time, there are no charter schools in Liberty County; therefore, this provision of law does not currently pertain.

In this chapter, program compliance for the Liberty County School District is presented in the following functional areas:

- 6.1 Districtwide Support for Areas Under Review
- 6.2 Facilities Planning, Use, and Construction
- 6.3 Technology Implementation and Upgrades
- 6.4 Surtax Compliance
- 6.5 Charter School Funds

6.1 DISTRICTWIDE SUPPORT FOR AREAS UNDER REVIEW

OBSERVATION: The Liberty County School Board Policy Manual created by Neola provides a compliance framework that is very comprehensive and up to date.

In 2013, when the Neola Policy Services was given the contract for the Liberty County Policy Manual, the Policy Manual was completely purged at a cost of \$25,000. No policy in the Manual is older than 2014. For an annual fee of about \$6,000, Neola provides draft policy updates every six months to the manual primarily based on changes in federal and state laws.

Policies provide the framework for the District to be in compliance with the law. Board members and administrators report that they are pleased with the services provided by Neola and feel that the annual assessment is well worth the cost.

Effective district management requires sound, clearly written and legally valid policies adopted by the Board to guide management decisions. The State of Florida mandates that each school board adopt policies that govern the operation of its schools and make them accessible to all school employees and the public. (Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 120, Florida Statutes). Policies are clearly accessible on the District's website.

Clear, updated policies provide a framework for Board and school district decisions.

OBSERVATION: Few administrative procedures exist in Liberty County School District to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations; contracts; grant agreements; and local policies in the program areas under review.

The District has a limited number of procedures such as the Finance and Maintenance procedures that are not inclusive of many related policies.

Board Policy 1030.01, on the development of administrative procedures, states:

The School Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to determine whether administrative procedures will be needed to implement each of the policies adopted by the Board. When the content of the procedure meets the definition of a rule set forth in F.S. Chapter 120, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board shall adopt said administrative procedure. Further, when in the judgment of the Superintendent adoption by the Board is advisable, the adoption of said procedure shall be recommended by the Superintendent for adoption.

All administrative procedures shall be consistent with the adopted policies, and shall describe the manner in which those policies are to be implemented.

The Superintendent may also issue administrative and student handbooks as may be necessary for the effective administration of the schools and distribute them to employees and students and/or their parents.

As long as the provisions of these administrative procedures and handbooks are consistent with Board policies, or with Federal/State law, they will be considered to be an extension of the policy manual and binding upon all employees and students.

The administrative procedure shall be available electronically on the District's web site, and print copies shall be maintained in the Office of the Superintendent and the Office of the Board Attorney.

The Assistant Superintendent recognizes the lack of administrative procedures and has started creating procedures (e.g., employee onboarding procedures). However, he has had little time to engage in this activity.

In the absence of administrative procedures, District administrators and staff have no guidance to implement Board policy.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-1: Subscribe to the Neola administrative procedures services or require key departments to prepare administrative procures to document how LCSd will implement and comply with policy.

Neola offers administrative procedures templates which link to policy for an annual fee of about \$10,000.

Purchasing

OBSERVATION: As discussed in Chapter 1, Board Purchasing policies comply with Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C) 6A-1.012 and contain detailed guidance on competitive procurement processes.

There are 14 detailed policies relating to purchasing that address the component sections required by the Administrative Code. There is no separate Purchasing Manual and various documents and procedures refer to this body of policies as purchasing procedures.

These policies are regularly updated to ensure compliance with changes to state and federal law. For example, purchasing policies were updated in 2021 to ensure compliance with two Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) sections (200.318 and 200.328) relating to federal awards.

OBSERVATION: Finance-related procedures have been developed by the Director of Finance to ensure that the internal departmental procedures comply with policy and these procedures are being used as a training tool for the incoming Director.

The Director of Finance indicated that when she was first hired, there was very little documentation relating to the financial activities of the District. As a result, she was forced to work through the processes on her own.

Over the years, the Director said she created and continually updates the procedures as shown in the following topics:

- Revenue Accounting Procedures
- Payroll Accounting Procedures
- Liability Procedures
- Budget Procedures
- Receivables Procedures
- Cash And Investment Procedures
- General Disbursement Procedures
- Capital Outlay Accounting Procedures
- Insurance Procedures

- General Roles And Responsibilities (References To Specific Programs, Laws, And Individuals Responsible)

The current Director announced her retirement effective June 30, 2022, and an Assistant Director was hired to shadow her during the final months of her time in the District. The Director's last day in the District was June 15, 2022, at which time the Assistant Director assumed the Director's responsibilities. Final appointment of the Assistant Director as the Director became official on July 1, 2022.

During the training process, the Director and Assistant Director said they added or modified information to make the procedures more useful to the new person. Each procedure contains details regarding the systems and people who are responsible for each step in the process.

These same procedures are used by the Finance staff and, when necessary, are used to train new or transferring campus and department level staff on their roles and responsibilities in the various processes.

6.1.2 Compliance Controls

Purchasing and Contracting

OBSERVATION: Competitive bidding is decentralized in terms of formal bids and quotes; meaning that each department or area is responsible for ensuring compliance with purchasing policies with few document processes, procedures or controls in place to ensure legal compliance.

The Superintendent acts as the central source of control over the departments and campuses that are needing to issue large contracts and indicated during interviews that he oversees the competitive bidding processes.

The District does not use legal counsel to review competitive procurement documents or sign off on contracts. The Director of Finance said she and her staff are not involved in the bidding processes, but are responsible for ensuring that the Accounts Payable function is carried out according to the terms of the contract.

Fully executed contracts are held in Finance by the Accounts Payable person.

The majority of competitive bids are initiated for construction, repair and renovation projects; however the Director's expertise is not in the competitive procurement processes.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-2: Implement a tighter control system that at a minimum includes review of competitive bid and contract documents by outside counsel.

Budgetary Controls

OBSERVATION: Budgetary controls over purchasing and the payment of invoices are strong, beginning with the use of requisitions in Skyward that encumber the funds and Board approval required before vendor payments are released.

Requisitions and Purchase Orders are required. Policy 6320.01 States:

Purchase Order Required for Other than Construction, Remodeling, and Renovation

Each purchase shall be based upon a request originating from the principal or department head where the product is used, except in extreme emergencies, when the Chief Business Officer may grant permission for such purchases. Each emergency purchase shall be followed immediately with a purchase order.

Each request, or agreement/contract, shall be properly financed and budgeted prior to the issuing of a purchase order. The payment of an unauthorized purchase shall be the sole responsibility of the person placing the order.

Purchase requests are entered into Skyward prior to a purchase being made, including any purchases made with the only two credit cards in use by the District. If there are not sufficient funds in the account, the requisition is rejected. If there are sufficient funds, the request goes through the appropriate approval path predetermined in Skyward. When finally approved, a purchase order is generated. Once the purchase is made, the invoice and receiving documents are matched to the purchase order and the accounts payable staff member initiates the payment to the vendor in Skyward and a check is cut, but is NOT released. Once a month, the Board meets and is given a list of all of the payments to be made for the month. Only after the Board approves the payments does the accounts payable person release the checks to the vendors. If the Board does not approve a specific payment, the check is canceled and backed out of Skyward.

This control process ensure that sufficient funds are in the budget at the time of purchase, and that the vendor payments are being made only after both the administration and Board have authorized the payment.

In addition to the internal controls and encumbrance mechanisms, every check that is cut is brought to the Board, regardless of the dollar amount, and the checks are not released until the Board signs off on the list of payments.

OBSERVATION: LCSD has policies and procedures for the recording and inventorying of District assets and the appropriate disposal of assets that are closely followed in compliance with federal grant agreements and state guidelines.

Policies 7310 and 7450 relate to the control of the inventory of technology devices as well as the appropriate disposal of the devices, including guidelines relating to the disposal of devices that were purchased with federal dollars.

During the site visit, the Ressel team observed the Technology Coordinator receiving and tagging new devices as they were received. Further, while visiting the campuses, individuals told

the team they had just received the inventory sheets and had instructions for handling items that could not be found or were considered obsolete and ready for disposal.

6.1.3 Addressing Non-Compliance

OBSERVATION: The Auditor General identified areas of non-compliance with purchasing guidelines in its Operational Audit, that have not been adequately addressed.

The areas of non-compliance related to poor record keeping, lack of compliance with legal competitive bid requirements, etc. The District's response indicated that procedures would be put into place, but despite the policy documents, there are no procedures outlining the step by step processes that must be followed in terms of advertising the bids, etc. Further discussion and recommendations can be found in **Chapter 1** of this report under Competitive Procurement.

6.2 FACILITIES PLANNING, USE, AND CONSTRUCTION

6.2.1 Compliance Processes

OBSERVATION: The facilities and maintenance functions lack a process to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

The Director of Transportation and Maintenance oversees the facilities and maintenance function but is not a certified Building Official with training to identify and ensure compliance with federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations. Over his 20+ years in the District he has garnered the expertise and experience needed to carry out this role, however, he has not had the opportunity to attend professional development and ongoing training to keep him up to date on the most current changes in industry standards and regulations.

The job description for the Director position states the following compliance-based responsibilities:

- *Monitor the implementation of assigned state and federal programs in assigned areas to ensure compliance with provisions of approved plans and/or grants.*
- *Prepare and disseminate information necessary for programs according to state and/or federal requirements.*
- *Work with the District Finance Director to establish and/or maintain financial records and/or budgets for each funded program to ensure adherence to budget requirements, maintenance of records for fiscal compliance, and administer the departments' approved budget.*
- *Ensure all purchasing guidelines (district, state, and federal) are followed.*
- *Oversee construction of new facilities and renovation of existing facilities.*

- *Prepare bid specifications & solicit bids for facilities projects to be submitted for Board approval.*
- *Take action to ensure compliance with applicable codes, rules, and statutes.*
- *Ensure that capital & major maintenance projects are coordinated with appropriate regulatory agencies.*
- *Ensure that District policies and governmental regulations are consistently and accurately applied to assignments.*

To carry out these duties, the Director must not only have maintenance and construction related experience, but must also have current training and skills to recognize and address each of these topics.

Although no training opportunities were found on the PAEC website, the Consortium does offer consulting expertise relating to facility maintenance and construction processes and may be able to provide appropriate sources for staff development such as the Florida Building Officials Association.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-3: Determine the skill sets most critical to fulfilling the Director's job requirements and establish a plan for one-time and ongoing staff development related to each of those functional areas.

OBSERVATION: In compliance with Board policy regarding the District's tax-exempt status and to control construction costs, when purchasing materials for large projects, the Construction Manager competitively bids the materials and the District pays for the materials directly to avoid paying sales tax.

The District does not have the staff to bid and purchase materials directly, but instead relies on the Construction Manager to bid the material purchases, but the District pays for the materials directly.

On the high school construction project, the Construction Manager included the amount of \$350,000 that the District would save in sales taxes by implementing the direct purchase approach. As part of the plan for the high school, the District and the construction manager developed the process to allow the District to save money. The Construction Manager identifies the item to be purchased, they order and receive the item, and notifies the Director of Finance to pay for the item purchased. The Director of Transportation and Maintenance is not part of the process to receive, review or pay for the purchases.

For work order maintenance projects where the Director of Transportation and Maintenance has determined that the District will complete the job by contracting with an external electrician, HVAC technician or plumber, the purchasing process ensures that the District does not pay sales taxes. Once the contractor identifies and communicates about the needed part, the Director of

Transportation and Maintenance requests and receives approval of the purchase. Typically, the contractor picks up the part and installs it to complete the work.

Efficient public organizations maximize the opportunities available regarding avoiding paying taxes to reduce the costs of projects.

The result of the District paying for all the purchases directly is that it allows the contractors to order and receive the product that is needed for the project, while allowing the District to get the benefit of the sales tax savings. The alternative is that the contractor purchases and pays sales tax, and passes those costs onto the District, resulting in an overall more expensive project.

6.2.2 Compliance Controls

OBSERVATION: The District has no established checklists or standards relating to the documentation required to support compliance with competitive bidding requirements, contract management activities or contract close-outs.

As discussed in **Chapter 4** of this report, LCSD has a Maintenance Procedure manual that appears to be a template from another district that still needs to be modified to address LCSD procedures. There are Financial Procedures but these procedures do not address purchasing. Neither of these documents contain checklists or standards relating to the documentation required to support compliance with competitive bidding requirements, contract management activities or contract close-out procedures.

Contract files are maintained in the Finance Office and at the time of the Auditor General's Operational Audit, no files could be located to validate that appropriate processes were followed in securing architectural services. The files observed by the Ressel team were for the most part complete, but some documents could not be located.

Industry best practices suggest maintaining each contract file in two sections with documentation in each section as follows:

Procurement History

1. Copies of solicitation and specifications including timelines
2. Copies of all bids, quotes, etc.
3. Names and positions of evaluation committee
4. Original evaluation criteria and documentation of evaluation results
5. Copies of evaluation committee recommendations with justifications
6. Documentation of negotiations if appropriate
7. Board minutes or formal contract award sign-off, if Board approval not required.

Contract Management

1. A signed copy of the complete contract
2. All signed amendments including rationale for the contract change and justification for the resulting cost/price or delivery date change
3. All correspondence with the contractor
4. Approvals or disapprovals of contract deliveries
5. Requests for waivers or deviations and the associated responses

6. Documentation regarding settlement of claims and disputes
7. Documentation regarding stop work or suspension of work orders
8. Contract closeout documentation

In the construction area, closeout documentation is particularly important. An example of the closeout checklist used in the Martin County School District illustrates the complexity of this process. (Exhibit 6-1)

**Exhibit 6-1
Closeout Checklist Example**

Date: ___-___-___		
MCSO Close-Out Form		
Project School		
Project Title		
Architect's Project No. -		
Item #	Status	Close-Out Item
1		3 Copies: AIA Application For Payment, Signed and Sealed, Noted as Final Payment.
2		Consent of Surety to make final payment.
3		Release of Lien from all Sub-Contractors or Laborers who have filled an Intent to Lien.
4		Warranty/Guarantee from Construction Manager for one-year from the date of Substantial Completion.
5		Warranty/Guarantee from each Sub-Contractor for one-year from the date of Substantial Completion.
6		Copy of the approval by the Architect-Engineer and the transmittal to the end user of manuals, shop drawings, as-builds, brochures, warranties, list of sub-contractors with phone numbers, addresses and contact persons.
7		Verification that all applicable district personnel have been trained in the operation of their new equipment (per system: HVAC, controls, etc.)
8		Executed Roof Warranty in the name of the Martin County School District.
9		OEF Form 209, Certificate of Final Inspection.
10		Completed Punch-list.
11		SREF 4.2(3)(e) Architect's Certificate of Specification of Asbestos Containing Materials.
12		SREF 4.2(3)(e) Construction Manager's Certificate of Asbestos Use.
13		SREF 4.2(3)(d) Threshold inspector's statement that building complies with Threshold Plan.
14		OEF Form 110B, Certificate of Occupancy.
15		OEF Form 564 for new construction or additions to existing schools only
16		Inspection Log Book

Source: Martin CSD Facilities and Planning Department, July 2018.

Documentation may vary depending on the type of solicitation and contract, however, knowing in advance that specific documentation is required will also service to guide the process and ensure compliance.

In addition, as highlighted in **Section 4.1.5 Internal Controls**, the Department has a facilities and maintenance procedures manual that is not currently in use. The Director said that the Department does not have anything written for procedures. However, the Superintendent provided a July 2021 procedures manual that appears to be a template from another district.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-4: Establish checklists relating to the documentation required for all construction-related services to ensure and validate compliance.

6.2.3 Addressing Non-Compliance

OBSERVATION: The Maintenance and Transportation Director was unaware that areas of non-compliance were found by the Auditor General and was not involved in preparing a response; instead, he referred the team to the Finance Office for more information.

Since the majority of findings in that report dealt directly with the project his Department was accountable for, the fact that the Director was not aware of the issues or involved in the process for responding would indicate that no changes to that Department's processes and procedures would flow through to future projects.

Ownership of the problem and the solution are the cornerstone for improvement.

The response indicated that procedures would be revised to address the findings. The only procedures found for the Maintenance and Facility functions included no changes addressing the findings.

If ownership of the problem is not taken, and no procedures exist to address the necessary corrective actions, the likelihood that meaningful change can occur is seriously diminished.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-5: Inform the Director and Finance staff of the Operational Audit findings and require them to create agreed to and documented procedures for the appropriate handling of future large projects that specifically address the identified issues as they will relate to future large projects.

6.3 TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION AND UPGRADES**6.3.1 Compliance Processes**

OBSERVATION: LCSD has extensive policies and procedures addressing the control of the technology inventory and the use of technology devices by students and staff and uses a number of programs and applications to monitor compliance and/or deter abuses.

The policies listed in **Exhibit 6-2** include comprehensive guidance for the use of personal and school-owned properties and contain language regarding the District's right to monitor the use of the devices with language in multiple policies giving the District the right to monitor devices without the express knowledge of the user. The consequences for misuse are also stated.

Exhibit 6-2 Technology-Related Policies

Policy	Description	Last Revised
5136 Wireless Communication Devices	Appropriate use of wireless devices by students and staff	4/8/2014
7310 Disposition of Surplus Property	Outlines the methods for disposal of property including property purchased with federal dollars	7/18/2019
7450 Property Inventory	Requires tagging and inventorying of all equipment	9/9/2021
7530 – Lending of Board-Owned Equipment	Establishes the guidelines for removing property from District property	4/8/2014
7530.01 – Staff Use of Wireless Communication Devices	Outlines acceptable use of wireless devices by staff	4/8/2014
7540 – Computer Technology And Networks	Superintendent to develop a plan for technology acquisition	4/8/2014
7540.01 – Technology Privacy	Outlines restrictions and monitoring activities to ensure compliance	4/8/2014
7540.02 – District Web Page	Authorizes the creation of a web page and acceptable content.	4/8/2014
7540.03 – Student Network And Internet Acceptable Use And Safety	Outlines restrictions and monitoring activities to ensure compliance by students.	4/8/2014
7540.04 – Staff Network And Internet Acceptable Use And Safety	Outlines restrictions and monitoring activities to ensure compliance by staff.	Effective 4/9/14
7540.05 – Electronic Mail	What can and should be transmitted via email.	4/9/2014
7542 – Access To Technology Resources From Personal Communication Devices	Restricts access to District resources such as servers and internal networks, projectors, printers from person devices	Adopted April 8, 2014
7543 – Utilization of The District’s Website And Remote Access To The District’s Network	Website Content and Access to Server Restrictions	Technical Change 3/19/21

Source: Compiled by Ressel & Associates, May 2022.

While a number of these policies have not been updated since 2014, Ressel found the wording to be broad enough to encompass current needs. For example, the policies relating to student and staff acceptable use have a 2014 revision date, but the language remains relevant and is included in the agreement forms that must be signed each year.

6.2.2 Compliance Controls

OBSERVATION: LCS D employs a number of applications and manual processes to ensure that policies are followed.

The acceptable use policies are distributed annually to students and staff to ensure that parents, students and staff are aware of the parameters. The District has internet filtering applications so most of the sites and materials that staff or students should not be accessing are simply not available to them. If a principal or department head has a specific concern, the Technology Department has the applications that allow them to do more in depth monitoring.

Additionally, the Technology Department's work order system tracks the computer inventories and the Department has processes in place to ensure that devices and other assets are disposed of in a manner compliant with policy. There are separate guidelines for assets purchased with federal dollars, and the system tracks which devices require this special handling.

The Department is also responsible for onboarding and removing employee accesses to systems, and processes are in place to guide that process.

6.2.3 Addressing Non-Compliance

OBSERVATION: By policy, the District has established discipline processes for non-compliance with use policies for students and staff, up to and including employee dismissal.

Board Policy B7530.01 – *Staff Use of Wireless Communication Devices* outlines the disciplinary actions that can result from non-compliance.

Potential Disciplinary Action/Cancellation of Board-Owned WCD (Wireless Communication Device)

Violation of this policy may constitute just cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination. Use of the WCD in any manner contrary to local, State or Federal laws will constitute misuse, and will result in the Board immediately canceling the employee's privilege to use a Board-owned WCD and return of the device.

The Student Acceptable Use document available on the Technology page of the District's website contains a composite of the various Board Policies. Within this document are the levels of discipline based on the infraction, and as shown in **Exhibit 6-3**, requires both the student and parent's signature.

Exhibit 6-3
Student Acceptable Use Policy Agreement Form

Student Acceptable Use Policy Agreement Form

1. I have read and agree to follow the Liberty County School District's Acceptable Use Policy. Any failure to comply may terminate my privileges.
2. I agree to practice appropriate digital citizenship and responsible social networking.
3. I understand that my digital device(s) will be monitored online and/or physically inspected at any time without notice.

Student

Student Name: _____ (please print)

School: _____ (school name)

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Permission
(Required for students to operate or access the LCSD Network)

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read, understand, and agree to the Liberty County School District's Acceptable Use Policy for use of the LCSD's Network and the internet. I give permission for my child to use the district's network and technology resources in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy.

Parent/Guardian's name: _____ (please print)

Parent/Guardian's signature: _____ Date: _____

Source: <https://www.lcsb.org/technology>, June 2022.

Information Technology is involved in identifying issues and providing supporting documentation of the infraction but is not directly involved in the leadership's administration of the discipline.

6.5 SURTAX COMPLIANCE

As discussed in this section, the Ressel team assessed whether the program administrators have taken reasonable and timely actions to determine whether planned uses of the surtax are in compliance with applicable state laws, rules, and regulations.

OBSERVATION: LCSD has taken reasonable and timely action to comply with state laws, rules and regulations regarding the process for bringing the Surtax referendum to the Voters and for the planned use of the proceeds should the Surtax be approved by Voters.

LCSD had a surtax for a number of years, a portion of which was dedicated to the repayment of the District’s portion of the cost of the new high school that was financed through the State’s Special Facilities program. According to Board members and leadership, a referendum to renew the Surtax in 2020 failed.

Florida law authorizes local governments to impose several types of local option taxes. In some cases, the Florida Department of Revenue administers the tax for the local government, and, in other cases, the local government administers the tax. When the Department administers the tax, its responsibilities include collecting the tax and distributing the funds to local governments to spend on locally authorized projects.

Title XIV, 212.055: “Discretionary sales surtaxes; Legislative Intent; authorization and use of proceeds” outlines the intended uses and restrictions on the uses of the proceeds from the School Capital Outlay Surtax:

It is the legislative intent that any authorization for imposition of a discretionary sales surtax shall be published in the Florida Statutes as a subsection of this section, irrespective of the duration of the levy. Each enactment shall specify the types of counties authorized to levy; the rate or rates which may be imposed; the maximum length of time the surtax may be imposed, if any; the procedure which must be followed to secure voter approval, if required; the purpose for which the proceeds may be expended; and such other requirements as the Legislature may provide. Taxable transactions and administrative procedures shall be as provided in s. 212.054.

(6) SCHOOL CAPITAL OUTLAY SURTAX.—

(a) The school board in each county may levy, pursuant to resolution conditioned to take effect only upon approval by a majority vote of the electors of the county voting in a referendum, a discretionary sales surtax at a rate that may not exceed 0.5 percent.

(b)The resolution must include a statement that provides a brief and general description of the school capital outlay projects to be funded by the surtax. The resolution must include a statement that the revenues collected must be shared with eligible charter schools based on their proportionate share of the total school district enrollment. The statement must conform to the requirements of s. 101.161 and shall be placed on the ballot by the governing body of the county. The following question shall be placed on the ballot:

<i>FOR THE</i>	<i>CENTS TAX</i>
<i>AGAINST THE</i>	<i>CENTS TAX</i>

(c) The resolution providing for the imposition of the surtax must set forth a plan for use of the surtax proceeds for fixed capital expenditures or fixed capital costs associated with the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of school facilities and campuses which have a useful life expectancy of 5 or more years, and any land acquisition, land improvement, design, and engineering costs related thereto. Additionally, the plan shall include the costs of retrofitting and providing for technology implementation, including hardware and software, for the various sites within the school district. Surtax revenues may be used to service bond indebtedness to finance projects authorized by this subsection, and any interest accrued

thereto may be held in trust to finance such projects. Neither the proceeds of the surtax nor any interest accrued thereto shall be used for operational expenses. Surtax revenues shared with charter schools shall be expended by the charter school in a manner consistent with the allowable uses set forth in s. 1013.62(4). All revenues and expenditures shall be accounted for in a charter school's monthly or quarterly financial statement pursuant to s. 1002.33(9). The eligibility of a charter school to receive funds under this subsection shall be determined in accordance with s. 1013.62(1). If a school's charter is not renewed or is terminated and the school is dissolved under the provisions of law under which the school was organized, any unencumbered funds received under this subsection shall revert to the sponsor. Ch. 2020-10 LAWS OF FLORIDA Ch. 2020-10 2

(d) Surtax revenues collected by the Department of Revenue pursuant to this subsection shall be distributed to the school board imposing the surtax in accordance with law.

Exhibit 6-4 provides a copy of the August 2021 LCSD Resolution for the Surtax in its entirety. **Exhibit 6-5** provides the list of planned uses.

Exhibit 6-4
Liberty County School District
August 2021 Resolution for Surtax Referendum

Resolution
No.: 2021- DI

RESOLUTION ORDERING AND PROVIDING FOR THE HOLDING OF A REFERENDUM ELECTION TO DETERMINE IF THE ELECTORS IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LIBERTY COUNTY, FLORIDA APPROVE THE LEVY BY THE SCHOOL BOARD OF LIBERTY COUNTY, FLORIDA OF A ONE-HALF PERCENT (0.5%) SALES SURTAX IN ORDER TO FINANCE EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS AND FACILITIES; AGREEING TO COMPLY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 212.055(6), FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING CERTAIN OTHER MATTERS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of Liberty County, Florida (hereinafter the "Board"), acting as the governing body of the School District of Liberty County, Florida (hereinafter the "District"), as follows:

SECTION I. **AUTHORITY FOR RESOLUTION.** This Resolution is adopted pursuant to section 212.055(6), Florida Statutes, and other applicable provisions of law.

SECTION II. **FINDINGS.** It is hereby found and determined that:

- A. Section 212.055(6), Florida Statutes, authorizes school boards, such as the Board, to levy a discretionary sales surtax not to exceed one-half percent (0.5%). Such levy is subject to approval by a majority vote of the electors of the county in which the District is located.
- B. The Board hereby determines that is in the best interest of the District and its students to levy the discretionary sales surtax authorized by section 212.055(6), Florida Statutes, in an amount equal to one-half percent (0.5%) (hereinafter the "Surtax").
- C. The Board has heretofore determined to acquire and construct the educational improvements and facilities described in Exhibit A, attached hereto, as such improvements and facilities may be modified from time to time by the Board (hereinafter the "Improvement Project"). Acquisition and construction of the Improvement Project is necessary for the District to accommodate the growth to its student enrollment.
- D. The levy of the Surtax is necessary for the Board to fund the Improvement Project. The Surtax shall be used to acquire and construct the Improvement Project or pay bond indebtedness issued to finance the Improvement Project, as permitted by Section 212.055(6), Florida Statutes. The Surtax shall be levied for a period of ten (10) years, beginning January 1, 2023 and ending December 31, 2032.

Exhibit 6-4 (Continued)
Liberty County School District
August 2021 Resolution for Surtax Referendum

- E. The Improvement Project consists of fixed capital expenditures or fixed capital costs associated with the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of school facilities and campuses which have a useful life expectancy of five (5) years or more, and any land acquisition, land improvement, design and engineering costs related thereto. In addition, the Improvement Project also has a component for costs of retrofitting and providing for technology implementation, including hardware and software, for various sites within the District.

SECTION III. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT & PLAN FOR USE OF SURTAX REVENUES.

The Board hereby adopts a plan for the use of the Surtax revenues, which plan provides for the use of such revenues to pay any portion of the costs of the Improvement Project as described in Exhibit A, attached hereto, and as further described in the findings provided in SECTION II, above. In accordance with the plan for the use of the Surtax revenues herein adopted, at the subsequent option of the Board, Surtax revenues may be used for the purpose of (i) paying any portion of the costs of the Improvement Project, (ii) servicing bond indebtedness the proceeds of which are used to finance any portion of the costs of the Improvement Project, or (iii) the making of lease payments pursuant to lease purchase agreements for the acquisition of any portion of the Improvement Project. The specific projects to be funded with the proceeds of the Surtax revenues may be modified from time to time as the Board determines to be in the best interest of the District and its students. The revenues collected from the Surtax shall be shared with eligible charter schools based on the charter school(s) proportionate share of the total school district enrollment.

SECTION IV. LEVY OF SURTAX. Subject to approval of the electors of Liberty County, Florida, the Board hereby levies the Surtax in an amount equal to one-half percent (0.5%). The Surtax shall take effect on January 1, 2023 and shall remain in effect for a period of ten (10) years. No proceeds of the Surtax nor any interest accrued thereon shall be used for operational expenses. If the Surtax shall be approved by referendum, the Board shall comply with the requirements of section 212.055(6), Florida Statutes.

SECTION V. ELECTION ORDERED. A referendum election is hereby ordered to be held in Liberty County on November 8, 2022, to determine whether the Board may levy the Surtax. The Board hereby instructs the governing body of Liberty County, Florida to place such question on the ballot in accordance with section 212.055(6)(b), Florida Statutes.

SECTION VI. NOTICE OF ELECTION. The Superintendent, in connection with the Supervisor of Elections, shall publish notice of the referendum in the manner and at the times required by Florida law.

Exhibit 6-4 (Continued)
Liberty County School District
August 2021 Resolution for Surtax Referendum

SECTION VII. PLACES OF VOTING; INSPECTORS AND CLERKS. The polls will be open at the voting places on the date of such referendum election from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. All qualified electors residing within the District shall be entitled and permitted to vote at such referendum election on the proposition provided herein. The places of voting and the inspectors and clerks of the referendum election shall be those designated by the Supervisor of Elections of Liberty county, Florida in accordance with Florida law.

SECTION VIII. OFFICIAL BALLOT. The ballots to be used in the referendum shall contain a statement relating to the levy of the Surtax, and shall be in substantially the following form:

OFFICIAL BALLOT

School District of Liberty County, Florida
Referendum Election – November 8, 2022

**REFERENDUM REGARDING LEVY OF SALES SURTAX
BY SCHOOL BOARD TO FINANCE EDUCATIONAL
FACILITIES**

Shall the Liberty County School District levy a school capital outlay surtax of one-half percent (0.5%) for a period of ten (10) years beginning January 1, 2023, and ending December 31, 2032, with collections commencing upon passage of the referendum, to finance educational facilities, including construction, reconstruction, renovation, remodeling, land acquisition and improvement, retrofitting and the purchase of technology equipment, hardware and software for the Liberty County School District, and the revenues collected from the Surtax shall be shared with eligible charter schools based on the charter school(s) proportionate share of the total school district enrollment.?

YES = For the one-half percent (0.5 cents) sales surtax (TAX)

NO = against the one-half percent (0.5 cents) sales surtax (TAX)

SECTION IX. ABSENTEE VOTING. Adequate provision shall be made for absentee voters. The form of ballots to be used in such referendum election for absentee voters shall be the same as used at the polling places for such elections.

SECTION X. PRINTING OF BALLOTS. The Supervisor of Elections of Liberty County is authorized and directed to have printed on plain white paper a sufficient number of the aforesaid ballots for use of absentee electors entitled to cast such ballots in such referendum election and shall also have printed sample ballots and deliver them to

Exhibit 6-4 (Continued)
Liberty County School District
August 2021 Resolution for Surtax Referendum

the inspectors and clerks on or before the date and time for the opening of the polls for such referendum election for the voting places; and, further, is authorized and directed to make appropriate arrangements for the conduct of the election at the polling places specified.

SECTION XI. ELECTION PROCEDURE. The Supervisor of Elections shall hold, administer, and conduct the referendum election in the manner prescribed by law for holding elections in the District. Returns shall show the number of qualified electors who voted at such referendum election on the proposition and the number of votes cast respectively for and against approval of the proposition. The returns shall be canvassed in accordance with Florida law.

SECTION XII. SEVERABILITY. In the event that any word, phrase, clause, sentence or paragraph hereof shall be held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect any other word, clause, phrase, sentence, or paragraph hereof.

SECTION XIII. REPEALING CLAUSE. All resolutions in conflict or inconsistent herewith are repealed insofar as there is conflict or inconsistency.

SECTION XIV. EFFECTIVE DATE. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption. However, the Surtax authorized hereunder shall only be effective upon approval by a majority vote of the electors of Liberty County, Florida.

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED THIS 10th day of August, 2021.

ATTEST:

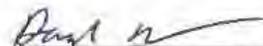
The School Board of Liberty County,
Florida, acting as the governing body of the
Liberty County School District

BY:



Kyle Peddic, Superintendent

BY:



Darrell L. Hayes, Chairperson

Exhibit 6-5
Liberty County School District
Planned Use of Surtax Revenues from
August 2021 Resolution for Surtax Referendum

EXHIBIT A

PLAN FOR USE OF SURTAX REVENUES

1. Pursuant to Section 212.055(6), Florida Statutes, fixed capital expenditures or fixed capital costs to be funded by the Surtax revenues shall be for:
 - (a) construction, reconstruction, renovation, remodeling, or improvement of school facilities and campuses and any land acquisition, land improvement, design and engineering costs associated therewith;
 - (b) safety and security improvements of school facilities and campuses;
 - (c) retrofitting, upgrading, and providing for technology equipment and implementation, including hardware and software, for various sites within the District.
2. The scope of the projects will be based on a detailed assessment of the facility need and condition, and providing for a safe and appropriate learning environment.

Source: Liberty County School District, August 2021

Exhibit 6-6 examines the statutory requirements and provides an explanation of how the District has answered the requirements.

**Exhibit 6-6
Statutory School Capital Outlay Requirements**

Statutory Requirement	District Initiative
<p>The resolution shall include a statement that provides a brief and general description of the school capital outlay projects to be funded by the Surtax.</p>	<p>Requirements met? Yes.</p> <p><i>BALLOT QUESTION:</i> Shall the Liberty County School District levy a school capital outlay surtax of one-half percent (0.5%) for a period of ten (10) years beginning January 1, 2023, and ending December 31, 2032, with collections commencing upon passage of the referendum, to finance educational facilities, including construction, reconstruction, renovation, remodeling, land acquisition and improvement, retrofitting and the purchase of technology equipment, hardware and software for the Liberty County School District, and the revenues collected from the Surtax shall be shared with eligible charter schools based on the charter school(s) proportionate share of the total school district enrollment. ?.</p>
<p>The resolution must include a statement that the revenues collected must be shared with eligible charter schools based on their proportionate share of the total school district enrollment.</p>	<p>_____ <i>For the one-half percent (0.5 cents) TAX</i> _____ <i>Against the one-half percent (0.5 cents) TAX</i></p>
<p>The statement shall conform to the requirements of s. <u>101.161</u> and shall be placed on the ballot by the governing body of the county.</p>	<p>Liberty County Commissioners approved the amended resolution on August 10, 2021.</p>
<p>The resolution providing for the imposition of the surtax must set forth a plan for use of the surtax proceeds for fixed capital expenditures or fixed capital costs associated with the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of school facilities and campuses which have a useful life expectancy of 5 or more years, and any land acquisition, land improvement, design, and engineering costs related thereto.</p> <p>The resolution must include a statement that the revenues collected must be shared with eligible charter schools based on their proportionate share of the total school district enrollment.</p>	<p>Requirements met? Yes. The ballot language includes only acceptable uses of the surtax and language acknowledging the prohibition regarding the use of these funds for operating expenditure</p> <p><i>“No proceeds of the Surtax nor any interest accrued thereon shall be used for operational expenses.”</i></p> <p>Exhibit 6-7, below, provides a list of the planned projects consistent with the generic description of planned uses shown in Exhibit A of the Resolution (Exhibit 6-5 above).</p> <p><i>Required language. ‘Revenues collected must be shared with eligible charter schools based on their proportionate share of total school district enrollment.’ NOTE: The required language is present, however, Liberty County has no Charter Schools at this time..</i></p>
<p>Additionally, the Plan shall include the costs of retrofitting and providing for technology implementation, including hardware and software, for the various sites within the school district.</p>	<p>Requirement met? Yes. The District’s plan contains classroom technology retrofits including hardware and software improvements.</p>
<p>Surtax revenues may be used to service bond indebtedness to finance projects authorized by this subsection, and any interest accrued thereto may be held in trust to finance such projects.</p>	<p>Requirements met? Yes. LCS D’s plan does not seek to leverage the revenues through bonded indebtedness.</p> <p>Projects eligible for Special Facility Funding from the State may be supported by the Surtax revenues.</p>
<p>Neither the proceeds of the surtax nor any interest accrued thereto shall be used for operational expenses.</p>	<p>The District’s plan is consistent with statutory requirements and contains no operating expenses:</p>

Source: Compiled by Ressel & Associates, May 2022.

In June 2022, the Superintendent provided the Ressel team the following plan elaborating on the planned use of the Surtax proceeds (**Exhibit 6-7**).

Exhibit 6-7
Liberty County School District Surtax Use Plan

Liberty County School District
½ Cent Surtax Plan

The Liberty County School District is committed to meeting the statutory regulations of s.101.161 and meeting the guidelines for the usage of the surtax to finance educational facilities, including construction, reconstruction, renovation, remodeling, land acquisition and improvement, hardware, and software for the Liberty County School District.

With an estimated surtax collection of \$200,000 per year, the Plan is as follows:

Technology:

\$100,000.00 per year for the next ten years will be used for device refreshes, hardware, and software. As grants and other funding sources such as eRate become available, funds will be used to leverage additional funding to maximize spending potential. This will be crucial due to **no money** being allocated by the State of Florida currently in Digital Classroom monies.

Construction:

\$75,000 per year for the next ten years to be leveraged beginning in 2023 for the pursuit of Special Facilities Funding through the Florida Legislature for the construction of a new dining facility at WR Tolar K-8 School. Until this Special Facilities is approved, this construction money will be used in the renovation of the project below.

Construction/Renovation:

\$25,000 per year towards the construction/renovation of the new football fieldhouse/concession stand at Liberty County High School. This project began in 2013 and was never finished. Construction is currently 65% complete.

Source: LCSD Superintendent of Schools, May 2022.

6.5 CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDS

This section examines whether the District has processes to distribute funds to District charter schools and mechanisms for charter schools to report how the funds are used.

OBSERVATION: At this time, there are no charter schools in Liberty County; therefore this provision of law does not currently pertain.

***ADDENDUM:
LCSD'S RESPONSE TO PERFORMANCE AUDIT***



LIBERTY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kyle Peddie, Superintendent of Schools

July 25, 2022

Post Office Box 429 • 11051 NW SR 20 • Bristol, Florida 32321
Phone: (850) 643-2275 • Fax: (850) 643-2533 • www.lcsb.org

TO: Ressel and Associates, LLC

RE: LCSD Management Response Letter

Dear Ms. Ressel,

It was indeed a joy to have you and your review team come to Liberty County and evaluate our district's organization for the purposes of the district's pursuit of the ½ cent surtax in November 2022. Your staff was incredibly professional and treated all my staff with the upmost respect. As your audit exposed some weaknesses in various areas of our programming, we are proud that our #1 goal of educating our children is indeed strong. As has been shared with you, the Liberty County School District has recently been named an "A" district again by the Florida Department of Education. We are 1 of 14 districts out of 67 districts in the state that has that distinction. Our district currently ranks #12 out of 67 districts up from #16 last year. This is our mission: "to create an educational organization that functions with professionalism, integrity, pride, and excellence. The main objective of the Liberty County School District is to educate our students to be productive citizens of our community, our nation, and our world. We are committed to building on a foundation of common community values of respect, integrity, and spirituality while engaging in academic achievement. We stress the importance of individual competence, effort, and perseverance while learning to work interdependently to achieve goals. We pride ourselves on our determination, common sense, perseverance, and creative thinking to solve problems in order to provide students with an education that has a broader focus than academics that will promote a happy successful life."

We are getting this mission accomplished in Liberty County!

We respectfully accept your findings and respectfully respond to the findings below:

RESEARCH TASK 1 – THE ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY, OR EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM.

District's response:

1. The District will prepare management reports for the School Board on specified performance criteria, especially those related to informing the School Board and the public of current financial performance. The School Board currently receives financial information each month at

the School Board Meetings, but the district will make this more readily available and accessible during the month.

2. When Superintendent Peddie took office in November 2020, the district did not have a Strategic Plan. After conversations at School Board Meetings, School Board Workshops, and District Advisory Council Meetings, a Strategic Plan was drafted in the spring of 2022. Updates and changes to this plan in the future will be intentional workshops to discuss the plan exclusively. The current plan is a culmination of the will of the district, School Board, and community. In small rural populations, these meetings are very informal yet productive producing results. The School Board was satisfied the Strategic Plan was applicable to the district with their unanimous approval at adoption. In the future, as stated, more formal meetings will take place to address changes to the plan.

3. Performance Evaluation will be enhanced for all external contractors for the sake of accountability. Performance evaluation will be enhanced to promote continuity of service and accountability between each department and leadership.

4. The LCSD has already addressed the findings in the Auditor General's Operational Audit to ensure proper contract oversight and more specifically district oversight of the Construction Manager. The district has proven correction in this area by the procurement of an architect and general contractor to finish the football fieldhouse at LCHS and construct a complex for LCHS softball in the future. Your audit failed to mention this accomplishment as a corrective action presently in place. Our contractors provide much "external expertise" in all facility projects, now and in the past.

5. The district will address creating tighter controls and administrative procedures utilizing Skyward to support each purchase, the receiving processes, and the process for requesting or authorizing payment of invoices.

6. The district had already begun the process of taking immediate action to increase the General Fund Unrestricted Fund Balance by the major absorption of positions and addressing staff/student ratios at all the schools.

7. Preventative maintenance schedules/components for Facilities and Maintenance will be established

8. Single source procurements will be well documented and signed off on by the Superintendent.

RESEARCH TASK 2 – PROGRAM DESIGN AND STRUCTURE

District's Response:

1. Staffing needs have already been addressed for the 22-23 school year and will be an ongoing effort in the future based on the needs of the schools.

2. Organization structure and effectiveness will be evaluated as an ongoing task.

RESEARCH TASK 3 – ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY METHODS

District's Response:

1. Cost/Benefit analysis will continue to see if contract services could be more financially advantageous than performed by existing maintenance staff and vice versa.
2. Cost/Benefit analysis will be utilized for all expenditures in maintenance and in technology.

RESEARCH TASK 4 – GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

District's Response:

1. In the future, as mentioned before, the district's Strategic Plan will be updated by formal intentional meetings with all stakeholders. The plan will be updated with measurable outcomes and linkages to the district's budget.
2. Maintenance and Facility Goals will be clearly defined and communicated by leadership to the School Board for approval, guidance, and performance evaluation.
3. Implementation of a Technology Plan will clearly define goals and objectives to ensure continuity in the administration and educational phases of programming within the district complete with performance measures.
4. The existing facilities manual will be updated by staff and fully implemented to reflect actual practice with references to corresponding board policies.

RESEARCH TASK 5 – REPORTING ACCURACY AND ADEQUACY

District's Response:

1. With a new Director of Finance, the district is committed to fully utilizing all the benefits of Skyward. Inservice training will be provided to staff as needed. We have already made the change for the 22-23 school year to utilize Skyward for staff leave requests and discontinuing the use of the triplicate paper leave forms.
2. Project "wish lists" of ongoing facility needs are provided to the school board. These will be made available on the website for public viewing in the form of reports to the School Board.
3. The process for open record requests will be placed on the district website.
4. The district will immediately comply with Florida Statute 1011.035 regarding school district budget transparency.

5. Technology costs and performance data will be made available on the website.

RESEARCH TASK 6 – PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

District's Response:

1. Each department will prepare administrative procures to document how the district will implement and comply with existing board policy.
2. There is and will continue to be ongoing staff development in all areas. These will be more formally documented in the future.
3. The Liberty County School Board attorney will review all documents related to the competitive bid process. This has been corrected as evidenced by review during the latest RFP for health insurance in June 2022.
4. All future construction projects will have all required documentation to ensure and validate compliance.
5. All items of non-compliance in past audits have been addressed and will continue to be monitored for future compliance.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to respond to your findings and will do our best to make improvements in those areas identified by your team. Thanks again from the bottom of my heart for your participation in this endeavor for our district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Peddie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kyle Peddie

Liberty County Superintendent of Schools