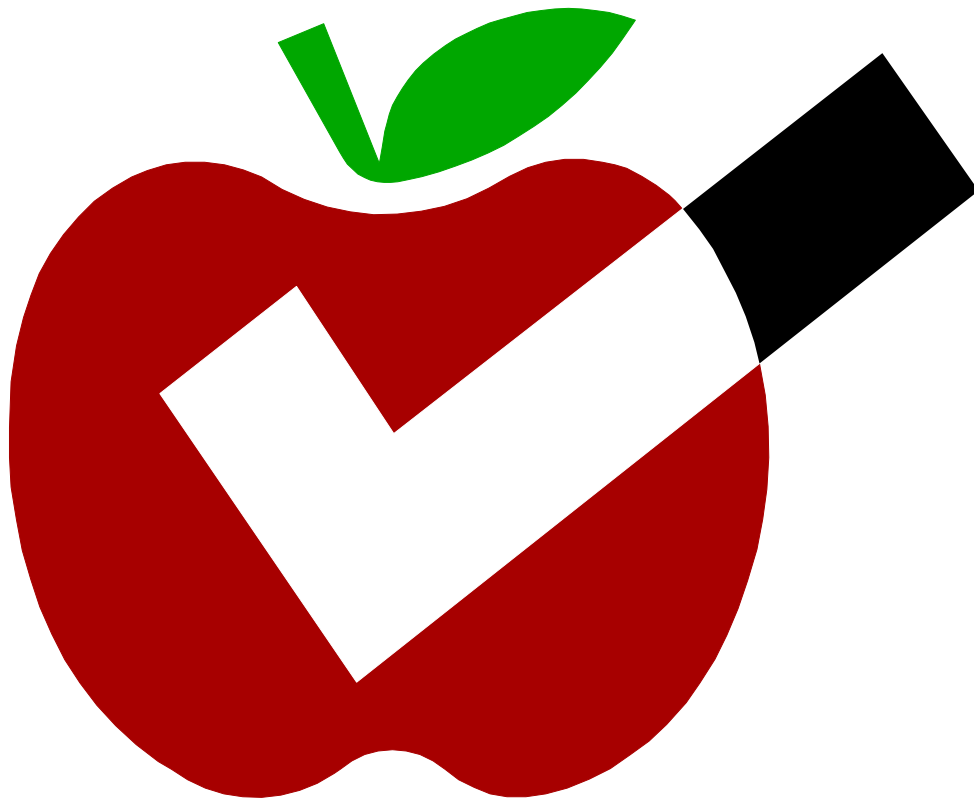


Best Financial Management Practices Review

Lake County School District

December 2001

Report No. 01-68



ValienteHernandez
P.A.



CERTIFIED PUBLIC
ACCOUNTANTS

AUDITORS AND
CONSULTANTS

oppaga

Office of Program Policy Analysis
and Government Accountability
an office of the Florida Legislature



The Florida Legislature

OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY



John W. Turcotte, Director

January 2002

The President of the Senate,
the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
and the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee

I have directed that a Best Financial Management Practices Review be conducted of the Lake County School District. The 2000 Legislature directed that the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) contract for a best practices review of the district, and the results of this review are presented in this report. This review was made pursuant to s. 230.23025, *Florida Statutes*.

OPPAGA is issuing the *Digest of Best Financial Management Practices Review, Lake County School District* to comply with the law that directs OPPAGA to issue a report to the district regarding its use of the best practices and cost savings recommendations.

This review was conducted by ValienteHernandez, P.A., of Tampa, Florida; OPPAGA; and the Auditor General. ValienteHernandez, P.A., was primarily responsible for fieldwork and developing report findings and recommendations. OPPAGA and the Auditor General attended site visits to monitor fieldwork, conducted meetings with district staff to receive input on the draft, and reviewed and edited the report. OPPAGA made the final determination on the district's use of Best Financial Management Practices, based on information in the final report and in consultation with ValienteHernandez, P.A.

David Summers was the contract manager for this review. Other OPPAGA staff included Byron Brown, Kira Honse, Gary VanLandingham, Martha Wellman, Jenny Wilhelm, and Don Wolf under the coordination of Jane Fletcher. Auditor General staff included Jim Kiedinger under the supervision of David Martin.

We wish to express our appreciation to the staff of the Lake County School District for their assistance.

Sincerely,

John W. Turcotte
Director

JWT/mc

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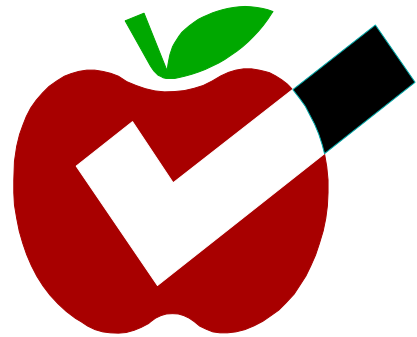
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Digest of the Best Financial Management Practices Review

Lake County School District



Report No. 01-68A

December 2001

Results in Brief

ValienteHernandez P. A., of Tampa, Florida; the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA); and the Auditor General conducted this review. ValienteHernandez P. A. was primarily responsible for fieldwork and developing report findings and recommendations. OPPAGA and the Auditor General attended site visits to monitor fieldwork, attended and conducted meetings with district staff to receive input on the draft, and reviewed and edited the report. OPPAGA made the final determination on the district's use of Best Financial Management Practices, based on information in the final report and in consultation with ValienteHernandez P. A.

By implementing report recommendations, the Lake County School District could improve district operations, save money, and demonstrate good stewardship of public resources. Currently, the Lake County School District is using 57% (131 of 228) of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner and at this time is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. (See Exhibit 1.) A detailed listing of all the best practices that identifies the district's current status in relation to each is on page 8 of this digest report. In addition, the school district can make several improvements in the areas of Educational Service Delivery, Community Involvement, and Safety and Security.

As shown in Exhibit 2, implementing report recommendations will have a positive fiscal

impact of \$557,900 in Fiscal Year 2001-02 and \$5,114,740 over a five-year period.

For more detailed information, please see the Lake County School District [report summary page](#). To go to a specific best practice area within the Lake County School District report, click on the practice area title shown below.

Exhibit 1

Overall the District Is Using Over Half of the Best Practices

Best Practice Area (Total Practices)	Is the District Using Individual Best Practices?		
	Yes	No	N/A
Management Structures (12)	5	7	0
Performance Accountability System (5)	0	5	0
Educational Service Delivery (16)	6	10	0
Administrative and Instructional Technology (20)	12	8	0
Personnel Systems and Benefits (15)	12	3	0
Use of Lottery Proceeds (5)	3	2	0
Use of State and District Construction Funds (4)	1	3	0
Facilities Construction (32)	16	15	1
Facilities Maintenance (26)	10	16	0
Student Transportation (20)	14	6	0
Food Service Operations (17)	9	8	0
Cost Control Systems (31)	22	9	0
Safety and Security (14)	11	3	0
Community Involvement (11)	10	1	0
All Areas (228)	131	96	1

For more detailed information, please see the Lake County School District [report summary page](#). To go to a specific best practice area within the Lake County School District report, click on the practice area title shown below.

Exhibit 2

The District Could Experience a Positive Fiscal Impact of \$5,114,740 Over the Next Five Years By Implementing Recommendations

Recommendation(s) by Review Area	Projected Cost Savings or (Investments) for Fiscal Year 2001-02	Projected Five- Year Net Fiscal Impact
<u>Management Structures</u>		
Conduct a Job Analysis and Compensation Study (Action Plan 3-4)	0	(\$75,000) ¹
<u>Performance Accountability Systems</u>		
Establish an Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (Action Plan 4-1)	0	(402,900)
<u>Educational Service Delivery</u>		
File for Medicaid Direct Services Reimbursement (Action Plan 5-3)	\$128,000	1,152,000
Expand the PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction Department (Action Plan 5-6)	0	(385,900)
Strengthen Accountability for Lost and Damaged Books (Action Plan 5-10)	0	95,000
<u>Administrative and Instructional Technology</u>		
Reinstate In-Service Trainer for TERMS System (Action Plan 6-3)	(40,000)	(200,000)
Implement Existing Licensed Curriculum Management Software (Action Plan 6-8)	0	1,000,000 ²
Implementation of a District-Wide Document Imaging, Storage and Retrieval System (Action Plan 6-13)	0	450,000
<u>Facilities Construction</u>		
Conduct a Facilities Audit (Action Plan 10-5)	(100,000)	(100,000) ¹
<u>Facilities Maintenance</u>		
Establish a Uniform Building Management System (Action Plan 11-4)	49,400	247,000
Increase District-Wide Custodian Productivity to 20,000 Square Feet Per Custodian (Action Plan 11- 12)	330,000	1,650,000
<u>Student Transportation</u>		
Eliminate Unnecessary Courtesy Rides (Action Plan 12-1)	174,500	872,500
Charge School Groups for Field Trips to Cover the Full Cost of the Trip (Action Plan 12-2)	56,600	283,000
Promote Lead Drivers to a Supervisory Position (Action Plan 12-3)	(33,000)	(165,000)
Pursue Reimbursement from Medicaid for Eligible Transportation (Action Plan 12-4)	23,100	115,500
<u>Food Service Operation</u>		
Expand Nutritional Programs (Action Plan 13-7)	0	271,200

Recommendation(s) by Review Area	Projected Cost Savings or (Investments) for Fiscal Year 2001-02	Projected Five- Year Net Fiscal Impact
Cost Control Systems		
Contract Out a Risk Assessment Study (Action Plan 14-1)	(15,000) ¹	(15,000)
Expand the In-House Internal Accounts Auditing Function by Hiring a Full-Time Fiscal Assistant II (Action Plan 14-3)	(15,700)	(123,900)
Use of Purchase Cards to Reduce Inventory (Action Plan 14-6)	0	215,840
Use of Purchase Cards for Supply Items (Action Plan 14-9)	0	230,400
TOTALS	\$557,900	\$5,114,740

¹ One-time investment.

² One-time cost avoidance.

Purpose

The purpose of this best financial management practice review is to

- (1) determine whether the district is using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education;
- (2) save funds;
- (3) improve management;
- (4) increase efficiency and effectiveness; and,
- (5) develop recommendations and detailed action plans to improve district operations.

The review also addresses the significant interest of the Legislature and the school district in identifying cost savings within the school district.

Background

The 2000 Legislature directed that OPPAGA contract for a Best Financial Management Practices Review of the Lake County School District, a medium-sized district located northwest of Orlando.¹ The district has 23 elementary schools, 9 middle schools, 7 high

schools and other educational facilities. The district employs over 3,400 persons of which approximately 1,800 are instructional staff. As of April 2001, the district served 29,217 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth grades.

The 2001 Legislature enacted the Sharpening the Pencil Act and expanded the Best Financial Management Practice program begun in 1997. The best practices are designed to encourage districts to

- use performance and cost-efficiency measures to evaluate programs;
- assess their operations and performance using benchmarks based on comparable school district, government agency, and industry standards;
- identify potential cost savings through privatization and alternative service delivery; and
- link financial planning and budgeting to district priorities, including student performance.

In accordance with Florida law, OPPAGA contracted with ValienteHernandez P. A., a private consulting firm, to conduct this review. OPPAGA and Auditor General staff monitored the firm throughout the review process to ensure the best practices and indicators were applied in the district consistent with reviews by consultants and OPPAGA in other districts. OPPAGA and Auditor General staff attended site visits and provided assistance to the consultant during the course of the review,

¹ During the course of this review, the 2001 Legislature passed the Sharpening the Pencil Act, which made several substantive changes to the Best Financial Management Practices Review process. Among the most important provisions of the act is that it requires each school district to undergo a Best Financial Management Practices Review once every five years and requires public input during the review process and after the distribution of the final report.

which included report drafting.

The consultant's report contains findings related to each best practice and detailed action plans to implement each report recommendation. These action plans were developed with input from the school district and detailed the specific steps the district should take if it decided to implement the recommendation within two years.

Pursuant to s. 230.23025, *Florida Statutes*, OPPAGA made the final determination on whether the school district is using best practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education based on information in the final report and the independent assessment of the district's use of each best practice.

OPPAGA expresses its appreciation to members of the Lake County School Board and district employees who provided information and assistance during the review.

Conclusions For Areas With Best Practices

Currently, the Lake County School District is using 57% of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner and at this time is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. If the Lake County School Board agrees by a majority plus one vote to institute the action plans contained in Appendix A, the district could be using the best practices within two years. If confirmed, the district could then receive the Seal of Best Financial Management from the State Board of Education.

If the Board agrees to implement the action plans,

- the district would need to report annually on its progress toward implementing the plan and on any changes that would affect its use of best practices to the Legislature, the Governor, the SMART Schools Clearing House, OPPAGA, the Auditor General, and the Commissioner of Education, and
- OPPAGA would need to annually conduct a review to determine whether the district has attained compliance with best financial management practices in areas covered by the action plans.

To be consistent with the Legislative intent as expressed in the Sharpening the Pencil Act, OPPAGA also strongly recommends that the school district hold a public hearing within 45 days after the distribution of the report to review the findings and recommendations, and accept public input. The district should give members of the school advisory councils and district advisory councils, parents, and teachers written notice and an invitation to attend the hearing. OPPAGA will attend the hearing as well.

A summary of report conclusions and recommendations by best practice area is presented below.

Management Structures

The district meets 5 of 12 best practices established for management structures. The Lake County School District has the managerial elements it needs to create a strong organizational structure responsive to school needs. The district should continue its efforts to realign its operations, remove communication barriers and build program accountability.

To meet the best practices standards, the district needs to

- develop and update operating procedures;
- update organizational charts, make organizational changes, and analyze salary levels;
- reduce operating costs;
- acquire additional budgeting and finance training for school board members;
- finalize its strategic plan;
- make improvements to the FTE projection process; and
- link financial planning to programmatic goals and student achievement.

Performance Accountability System

Currently, the district meets none of the performance accountability best practices. The district has several performance accountability elements in place that can be used as a starting point to build up effective accountability mechanisms and as a means to ensure that its major programs are meeting their objectives in the most cost-efficient manner. However, the

district needs to make substantial improvements to ensure that each major program is held accountable for its performance and cost efficiency.

To meet the best practices standards, the district needs to develop a program-level accountability system that includes goals and measurable objectives, performance and cost-efficiency measures and benchmarks, and processes to assess and evaluate programs.

Educational Service Delivery

The district is using 6 of the 16 best practices for education service delivery. While the Lake County School District generally offers efficient and effective educational services and programs to its students, it could improve in several areas. The district should ensure that all major programs operate from strategic plans and are periodically evaluated so that critical decisions are based on information linked to program goals and objectives.

To meet the best practices standards, the district needs to

- increase its evaluation of academic performance data;
- promote exemplary teaching practices;
- take several actions to further improve the district's ESE (Exceptional Student Education) and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programs and curriculum and instruction practices;
- strengthen the accountability for and review staffing levels associated with educational programs; and
- take actions to further improve the provision of student support services, such as counseling, social work, and health services.

Administrative and Instructional Technology

The Lake County School District is using 12 of the 20 Administrative and Instructional Technology Best Practices. Lake County School District generally provides students, administrators, and instructional, and non-instructional personnel with the tools needed to learn, instruct, and administrate in an efficient

and effective manner. However, many opportunities to improve the district's processes exist.

To meet the best practices standards, the district needs to take the following actions:

- solicit stakeholder input to identify technology needs and priorities;
- update and improve its technology plan;
- develop and implement a professional development plan for users of administrative and instructional technology;
- annually evaluate its major technology decisions;
- reevaluate its decision to abandon the *ABACUS™* system;
- establish standards for acquiring new computer programs and digital content;
- develop a technology procedures manual; and
- implement a document management system including a centralized imaging system.

Personnel Systems and Benefits

The district's Human Resources Service Department generally practices sound personnel management. Overall, the district is using 12 of the 15 best practices in this area. Minor improvements in a variety of personnel practices are warranted.

To meet the best practices standards, the district needs to develop a strategic plan to better coordinate training of non-instructional staff. In addition, the district should establish mechanisms to assure the efficiency of its personnel systems, including performance measures and periodic review of program performance.

Use of Lottery Proceeds

Overall, the district uses three of the five best practices pertaining to the use of lottery proceeds. In general, the district spends lottery proceeds for purposes that enhance education. The district's definition of enhancement as it applies to lottery funds can be improved by involving various stakeholder groups to review and revise it as necessary on an annual basis.

The district should also communicate how lottery funds are spent on a quarterly basis.

To meet the remaining best practices, the district needs to make changes in the way it allocates lottery funds to individual schools and it evaluates and reports the extent to which lottery funds have enhanced student education.

Use of State and District Construction Funds

Overall, the district uses one of the four best practices pertaining to the use of state and district construction funds. The district generally uses state and district construction funds appropriately and for the intended purposes, although more attention should be paid to complying with construction fund best practices. Because of the scope of school district construction spending, suggested improvements in such areas as growth projections, project planning and management, use of existing resources, and fiscal accounting present opportunities for substantial cost savings and other efficiencies.

To meet the best practices standards, the district needs to consider alternatives to new construction such as changes to attendance boundaries and grade configurations. The district also needs to minimize construction costs by incorporating SMART schools construction standards.

Facilities Construction

The district is using 16 of the 32 Facilities Construction Best Practices. Over the past several years, the district has seen tremendous growth, especially in southern Lake County. With this growth comes the need for additional facilities. Planning is a key to the success for the district to adequately provide the necessary facilities to meet the educational needs. The district needs to formalize and implement its Five-Year Facilities Work Program to ensure that there is a coordinated effort to plan, design, construct, and maintain quality facilities for the public school students of Lake County.

To meet the best practices standards, the district needs to implement an improved facilities planning program. This would include

- establishing a facilities planning committee;
- updating the organizational chart to reflect planning responsibilities;
- using available data to determine facility needs;
- considering alternatives to construction; and
- developing education specifications for each major building project.

Facilities Maintenance

The Lake County School District is using 10 of the 26 best practices for facilities maintenance. Although it complies with federal and state regulatory mandates, the district needs to formalize its approach to facilities maintenance. The maintenance function would benefit from implementing a strategic plan that establishes priorities, guides budget decisions, and proactively reduces costs.

To meet the best practices standards, the district needs to formalize its maintenance function by doing such things as providing written procedures and standards. The maintenance program also needs to ensure it is meeting the needs of the district by implementing accountability mechanism such as customer satisfaction surveys. The district needs to evaluate its staffing levels.

Student Transportation

Transporting students to and from school is a major activity and significant expense. The district is using 14 of the 20 best practices established for student transportation. Making recommended improvements will have a fiscal impact and the resulting increases in efficiencies, personnel retention, and operational integrity are expected to further reduce the net cost of these actions.

To meet the remaining best practices, the district should act as follows:

- Improve its process for anticipating future student transportation needs by better coordinating growth planning with the county government. The district also should assess its current bus replacement schedule to ensure that it is appropriate and sustainable.

- Improve computer support for the transportation department, including providing timely budget information and developing a technology plan for the department.
- Develop measurable goals and objectives, and performance benchmarks for the transportation function.
- Periodically review the organizational structure and staffing levels of the transportation function to minimize administrative layers and processes.

Food Service Operations

The district is using 9 of the 17 Food Service Operations Best Practices. In the last three years, the program has reverted back to being self-operated and, through overall good management, morale is high.

To meet the best practices standards, the district needs to improve its overall accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its food service program by doing such things as having a formal system for identifying barriers to student participation and conducting an overall program evaluation against performance measures. In addition, the district needs to link its budget to established goals. An improved equipment replacement and preventive maintenance program would also improve operations.

Cost Control Systems

The district is using 22 of the 31 best practices established for cost control systems. The district's system includes internal auditing, financial auditing, asset management, inventory management, risk management, financial management, purchasing, and payment processing. The district should conduct annual risk assessments to identify and minimize potential risks. It should enhance internal funds auditing, fixed assets counting, inventory management, and purchasing processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

To meet the remaining best practices, the district should establish an internal audit function, follow up in a timely manner on external audit findings, improve the timeliness of financial information on school internal accounts,

improve controls for verifying the accounting for district assets, and make specified improvements in other cost control areas such as inventory requisitioning, inventory management, cash management, and purchasing.

Safety and Security

The district is using 11 of the 14 Safety and Security Best Practices. For example, the district has clearly stated goals and measurable, outcome-based objectives for its safety and security program. However, the district could take further preventative measures to ensure the overall security of its students and employees.

To meet the remaining best practices, the district should

- evaluate its Drop-Out Prevention programs to determine if its current efforts are producing positive results;
- assess its school safety security systems and school evacuation plans; and
- establish procedures to ensure that students and employees are provided appropriate safety equipment and information.

Community Involvement

The district is using 10 of the 11 Community Involvement Best Practices. It has developed and maintained an effective, well-received community involvement program.

To meet the best practices standards, the district needs to improve the accountability systems for the community involvement program, including the assignment of oversight responsibility and the development of performance measures.

These steps would provide the basis for objective appraisals of the district's community involvement efforts.

Lake County School District Best Financial Management Practices

Currently, the Lake County School District is using 57% (131 of 228) of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and at this time is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. This appendix provides a detailed listing of all the best practices and identifies the district's current status in relation to each. For more detailed information, please see the Lake County School District [report summary page](#). To go to a specific best practice area within the Lake County School District report, click on the practice area title shown below.

<i>Best Practices</i>		<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>	
<u>MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent have been clearly delineated, and board members and the superintendent have procedures to ensure that they have effective working relationships.	✓		3-7
2. The board and superintendent have procedures to ensure that board meetings are efficient and effective.	✓		3-15
3. The board and superintendent have established written policies and procedures that are routinely updated to ensure that they are relevant and complete.		✓	3-18
4. The district routinely obtains legal services to advise it about policy and reduce the risk of lawsuits. It also takes steps to ensure that its legal costs are reasonable.	✓		3-23
5. The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority.		✓	3-26
6. The district periodically reviews its administrative staffing and makes changes to eliminate unnecessary positions and improve operating efficiency.		✓	3-35
7. The superintendent and school board exercise effective oversight of the district's financial resources.		✓	3-44
8. The district has clearly assigned school principals the authority they need to effectively manage their schools while adhering to district-wide policies and procedures.	✓		3-48
9. The district has a multi-year strategic plan with annual goals and measurable objectives based on identified needs, projected enrollment, and revenues.		✓	3-52
10. The district has a system to accurately project enrollment.		✓	3-56
11. The district links its financial plans and budgets to its priority goals and objectives, and district resources are focused towards achieving those goals and objectives.		✓	3-62

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
------------------------------	---	--	--

12. When necessary, the district considers options to increase revenue.	✓		3-64
<u>PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has clearly stated goals and measurable objectives that can be achieved within budget for each major educational and operational program. These major programs are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Educational Programs</u>: Basic Education (K-3, 4-8, 9-12), Exceptional Student Education, Vocational/Technical Education, and English for Speakers of Other Languages. • <u>Operational</u>: Facilities Construction, Facilities Maintenance, Personnel, Asset and Risk Management, Financial Management, Purchasing, Transportation, Food Services, and Safety and Security. 		✓	4-8
2. The district uses appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks to evaluate its major educational and operational programs and uses these in management decision making.		✓	4-28
3. The district regularly assesses the performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs using performance measures and benchmark data and analyzes potential cost savings and/or cost avoidance of alternatives, such as outside contracting and privatization.		✓	4-46
4. The district formally evaluates the performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs and uses evaluation results to improve program performance and cost-efficiency.		✓	4-48
5. The district clearly reports on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational and operational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers.		✓	4-53

<u>EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. District administrators use both academic and nonacademic data to improve K-12 education programs.		✓	5-8
2. District administrators facilitate sharing effective instructional practices to improve student performance.		✓	5-26
3. The district provides effective and cost-efficient Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs.		✓	5-28
4. The district provides effective and cost-efficient instruction as part of its English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program.		✓	5-38
5. The district provides effective and cost-efficient secondary vocational and adult/technical education programs.	✓		5-51
6. The district's curricular framework is linked to Florida's accountability standards and to the Sunshine State Standards.		✓	5-57

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
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<u>EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
7. The district has adopted a plan for the progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 that maximizes student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards.	✓		5-69
8. The district ensures that school improvement plans effectively translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives and that school advisory councils meet statutory membership requirements.		✓	5-70
9. The district's process for selecting instructional materials ensures that instructional materials meet the needs of teachers and students.	✓		5-78
10. Each student has current and appropriate instructional materials in core courses that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards and the district's pupil progression plan.	✓		5-79
11. The district's procedures for acquiring, maintaining, and disposing of instructional materials are cost-effective.	✓		5-83
12. The district has implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the overall performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its major educational programs. ²		✓	5-86
13. The district regularly reviews its organizational structure and the staffing of the central office and schools to minimize administrative layers and processes.		✓	5-87
14. The district clearly reports on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers.		✓	5-90
15. The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction.	✓		5-90
16. The district provides necessary support services (guidance counseling, psychological, social work, and health) to meet the needs of its students in a cost-efficient manner.		✓	5-93

<u>ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
1. The district has solicited and used broad stakeholder input in developing an integrated learning system and in setting priorities for administrative and instructional technology decisions.		✓	6-7
2. The district has a comprehensive technology plan that provides direction for administrative and instructional technology decision making.		✓	6-11

² See performance accountability best practices and indicators for more information on each indicator for this best practice.

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
3. The district provides formal and informal support to assist educators in incorporating technology into the curriculum.	✓		6-17
4. The district provides technical support for educational and administrative systems in the district.	✓		6-18
5. The district provides technical support for hardware, software, and infrastructure in a timely and cost-effective manner.	✓		6-22
6. The district has a professional development plan that reflects the district's vision of integrating technology to enhance and enrich the learning environment, as well as improve administrative support.		✓	6-26
7. The district provides professional development for the instructional technologies.		✓	6-28
8. The district bases technology acquisitions on instructional needs and makes technology acquisitions based on those needs. ³	✓		6-34
9. The district bases technology acquisitions on the results of research, planning, and evaluations of previous technology decisions to ensure technology decisions are cost-effective.		✓	6-39
10. The district has established standards for acquiring new programs and digital content that promote the integration of technology into everyday curricular needs.		✓	6-45
11. The district has a stable and efficient infrastructure. ⁴	✓		6-48
12. The district has established and communicated a policy stating appropriate uses of all types of technology resources, including computers, video equipment, software, and the Internet.	✓		6-48
13. The district supports compliance with the established policy on safe and legal use of technology resources.	✓		6-50
14. Segregation of Duties: The district segregates duties to reduce the risk that unauthorized transactions will be entered and not discovered quickly.	✓		6-50
15. User Controls: The district's user controls ensure authorization prior to processing transactions and ensure all output represents authorized and valid transactions.	✓		6-51
16. Application Controls: The district's applications are designed to provide users with reliable data.	✓		6-52

³ Instructional needs include incorporating technology into the curriculum and needs of students learning how to use technology.

⁴ Examples of this include a Wide Area Network (WAN) and a Local Area Network (LAN).

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		
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<u>ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
17. General Controls: The district has established general controls in the areas of access, systems development and maintenance, documentation, operations, and physical security to promote the proper functioning of the information systems department.		✓	6-52
18. The district's management information systems provide data needed by administrative and instructional personnel in a reliable and timely manner.	✓		6-54
19. The district has taken steps to minimize the number of databases that are independent of its centralized computer systems.	✓		6-56
20. Other Controls: The district has established appropriate controls related to electronic data exchange transactions, other transactions processed through electronic media, and image processing systems.		✓	6-57

<u>PERSONNEL SYSTEMS AND BENEFITS</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has efficient and effective processes for recruiting and hiring qualified personnel.	✓		7-6
2. The district maintains a reasonably stable work force through competitive salary and benefit packages and through district-wide efforts to address and remedy factors that contribute to increased turnover.	✓		7-8
3. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program to achieve and maintain high levels of productivity and employee performance among non-instructional employees.		✓	7-12
4. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for instructional employees to attain and maintain high quality instruction and to achieve high levels of student performance.	✓		7-15
5. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for school-based administrators.	✓		7-17
6. The district's system for formally evaluating employees is designed to improve and reward excellent performance and productivity, and to identify and address performance that does not meet the district's expectations for the employee.	✓		7-18
7. The district ensures that employees who repeatedly fail to meet the district's performance expectations, or whose behavior or job performance is potentially harmful to students, are promptly removed from contact with students, and that the appropriate steps are taken to terminate those persons' employment.	✓		7-20

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
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<u>PERSONNEL SYSTEMS AND BENEFITS</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
8. The district maintains clear and effective channels of communication with employees.	✓		7-21
9. The district has efficient and cost-effective policies and practices for providing substitute teachers and other substitute personnel.	✓		7-22
10. The district maintains personnel records in a highly efficient and accessible manner.	✓		7-22
11. The district uses cost-containment practices for its Workers' Compensation Program.	✓		7-24
12. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the human resource program.		✓	7-26
13. The district periodically reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the office of human resources to minimize administrative layers and processes.	✓		7-28
14. The district periodically evaluates its personnel practices and adjusts these practices as needed to reduce costs and/or improve efficiency and effectiveness.		✓	7-28
15. For classes of employees that are unionized, the district maintains an effective collective bargaining process.	✓		7-30

<u>USE OF LOTTERY PROCEEDS</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
1. The district has defined "enhancement" in a way that the public clearly understands.	✓		8-3
2. The district uses lottery money consistent with its definition of enhancement.	✓		8-5
3. The district allocates lottery funds to school advisory councils as required by law.		✓	8-7
4. The district accounts for the use of lottery money in an acceptable manner.	✓		8-13
5. The district annually evaluates and reports the extent to which lottery fund expenditures have enhanced student education.		✓	8-13

<u>USE OF STATE AND DISTRICT CONSTRUCTION FUNDS</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
1. The district approves use of construction funds only after determining that the project(s) are cost-efficient and in compliance with the lawfully designated purpose of the funds and the district's five-year facilities work plan.		✓	9-3
2. The district uses capital outlay and operational funds appropriately, lawfully, and in accordance with its adopted five-year facilities work plan.	✓		9-11

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		
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<u>USE OF STATE AND DISTRICT CONSTRUCTION FUNDS</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
3. The district minimizes construction costs by using appropriate measures from the SMART (Soundly Made, Accountable, Reasonable and Thrifty) Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards. ⁵		✓	9-13
4. When designing and constructing new educational facilities, the district incorporates factors to minimize the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility.		✓	9-15

<u>FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has established a facilities planning committee that includes a broad base of school district personnel, parents, construction professionals, and other community stakeholders.	✓		10-6
2. The district has established authority and assigned responsibilities for facilities planning.		✓	10-8
3. The five-year facilities work plan provides budgetary plans and priorities based on the master plan and input from the facilities planning committee.		✓	10-11
4. The five-year facilities work plan is based on a thorough demographic study and enrollment projections.		✓	10-13
5. The five-year facilities work plan is based on an evaluation of the physical condition and the ability of facilities to meet educational needs.		✓	10-16
6. When developing the annual five-year facilities work plan the district evaluates alternatives to minimize the need for new construction.		✓	10-18
7. District planning prioritizes construction needs.	✓		10-20
8. The district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the current <i>Laws of Florida</i> .	✓		10-21
9. For all projects with dates of construction contracted after July 1, 2001, the district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the Florida Building Code.	NA ⁶		10-21
10. The school board ensures responsiveness to the community through open communication about the construction program and the five-year facilities work plan.	✓		10-22

⁵ The web page is: <http://smartschools.state.fl.us>.

⁶ The implementation of the Florida Building Code has been delayed to January 1, 2002. Due to this delay, the district accountability for this best practice is on hold. Senate Bill 52-C, if not vetoed by the Governor, will postpone the effective date of the Florida Building Code to March 1, 2002.

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
<u>FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
11. The district develops descriptions and educational specifications for each project.		✓	10-22
12. Educational specifications for new construction, remodeling, and renovations include a description of activity areas.		✓	10-24
13. The architectural design fulfills the building specification needs as determined by the district.		✓	10-26
14. New construction, remodeling, and renovations incorporate effective safety features.	✓		10-27
15. The district begins school site selection well in advance of future need based on expected growth patterns.		✓	10-27
16. The board considers the most economical and practical locations for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as need to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to development, and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties.	✓		10-29
17. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the construction program.		✓	10-30
18. The district has considered, and where possible implemented, the general requirements recommended in the SMART Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards.		✓	10-31
19. The district minimizes construction costs through the use of prototype school designs and frugal construction practices.	✓		10-33
20. The district secures appropriate professional services to assist in facility planning, design, and construction.	✓		10-34
21. The district can demonstrate that funds collected for school projects were raised appropriately.	✓		10-37
22. District planning provides realistic time frames for implementation that are coordinated with the opening of schools.	✓		10-37
23. For each project or group of projects, the architect and district facilities planner develop a conceptual site plan and building specifications.	✓		10-37
24. The district follows generally accepted and legal contracting practices to control costs.	✓		10-38
25. The district has assigned one person with the authority and responsibility to keep facilities construction projects within budget and on schedule.	✓		10-41
26. The board minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to minimize project costs.	✓		10-42

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
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<u>FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
27. The architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project.	✓		10-43
28. The district requires appropriate inspection of all school construction projects.	✓		10-44
29. The district conducts a comprehensive orientation to the new facility prior to its use so that users better understand the building design and function.		✓	10-44
30. The district conducts comprehensive building evaluations at the end of the first year of operation and regularly during the next three to five years to collect information about building operation and performance.		✓	10-46
31. The district analyzes building evaluations to determine whether facilities are fully used, operating costs are minimized, and changes in the district's construction planning process are needed.		✓	10-47
32. The district analyzes maintenance and operations costs to identify improvements to the district's construction planning process.		✓	10-48

<u>FACILITIES MAINTENANCE</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
1. The district's maintenance and operations department mission, organizational structure, and operating procedures are established in writing.		✓	11-5
2. The district has established maintenance standards in its short- and long-term plans for providing appropriately and equitably maintained facilities within budget and in accordance with the district's five-year facilities work plan and annual budget.		✓	11-11
3. The district clearly identifies and communicates performance standards and expected outcomes to maintenance and operations staff.		✓	11-15
4. The district ensures that maintenance and custodial standards are regularly updated to implement new technology and procedures.		✓	11-16
5. The district obtains and uses customer feedback to identify and implement program improvements.		✓	11-19
6. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance and efficiency of the maintenance and operations program.		✓	11-21
7. The district accurately projects cost estimates of major maintenance projects.		✓	11-23

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
<u>FACILITIES MAINTENANCE</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
8. The administration has developed an annual budget with spending limits that comply with the lawful funding for each category of facilities maintenance and operations.	✓		11-24
9. The board maintains a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations.	✓		11-26
10. The maintenance and operations department regularly evaluates maintenance and operations activities to determine the most cost-effective method of providing needed services.		✓	11-26
11. The district minimizes equipment costs through purchasing practices and maintenance.	✓		11-28
12. The district uses proactive maintenance practices to reduce maintenance costs.		✓	11-30
13. The maintenance and operations department regularly reviews the organizational structure of the maintenance and operations program to minimize administrative layers and processes.		✓	11-32
14. The maintenance and operations department regularly reviews the staffing levels of the maintenance and operations program to maximize the efficient use of personnel.		✓	11-33
15. The maintenance and operations department ensures qualified staff by using appropriate hiring practices.	✓		11-36
16. The maintenance and operations departments has a written job description for each position within the department.	✓		11-37
17. The district provides appropriate supervision of maintenance and operations staff.	✓		11-37
18. The district provides a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff to enhance worker job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.		✓	11-38
19. The district provides maintenance and operations department staff the tools and equipment required to accomplish its assigned tasks.	✓		11-40
20. A computerized control and tracking system is used to accurately track work orders and inventory.		✓	11-40
21. The maintenance and operations department has a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the district.		✓	11-43
22. District policies and procedures clearly address the health and safety conditions of facilities.	✓		11-44
23. The maintenance and operations department identifies and implements strategies to contain energy costs.		✓	11-45

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
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<u>FACILITIES MAINTENANCE</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
24. The district has an energy management system in place, and the system is maintained at original specifications for maximum effectiveness.		✓	11-46
25. The school district complies with federal and state regulatory mandates regarding facility health, safety, and energy efficiency conditions.	✓		11-47
26. The district is aware of and prepared for the permitting and inspection requirements of the Florida Building Code.	✓		11-48

<u>STUDENT TRANSPORTATION</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
1. The student transportation office plans, reviews, and establishes bus routes and stops to provide efficient student transportation services for all students who qualify for transportation.	✓		12-8
2. The district ensures that all regular school bus routes and activity trips operate in accord with established routines, and any unexpected contingencies affecting those operations are handled safely and promptly.	✓		12-13
3. The district effectively and efficiently recruits and retains the bus drivers and attendants it needs.	✓		12-19
4. The district trains, supervises, and assists bus drivers to enable them to meet bus driving standards and maintain acceptable student discipline on the bus.	✓		12-21
5. The district provides student transportation services for exceptional students in a coordinated fashion that minimizes hardships to students and accurately reports exceptional students transported to receive state funding.	✓		12-29
6. The district ensures that staff acts promptly and appropriately in response to any accidents that occur.	✓		12-34
7. The district ensures that appropriate student behavior is maintained on the bus at all times.	✓		12-36
8. The school district has a process to ensure that a sufficient school bus fleet is acquired economically and will be available to meet the district's future student transportation needs.		✓	12-37
9. The district provides timely routine servicing for buses and other district vehicles, as well as prompt response for breakdowns and other unforeseen contingencies.	✓		12-42
10. The district ensures that fuel purchases are cost-effective and that school buses and other vehicles are efficiently supplied with fuel.	✓		12-45
11. The district maintains facilities that are conveniently situated to provide sufficient and secure support for vehicle maintenance and other student transportation functions.	✓		12-49

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<u>STUDENT TRANSPORTATION</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
12. The district maintains an effective staffing level in the vehicle maintenance area and provides support for vehicle maintenance staff to develop their skills.	✓		12-54
13. The district maintains an inventory of parts, supplies, and equipment needed to support student transportation functions that balances the concerns of immediate need and inventory costs.	✓		12-55
14. The district provides appropriate technological and computer support for student transportation functions and operations.		✓	12-59
15. The district has established an accountability system for student transportation, and it regularly tracks and makes public reports on its performance in comparison with established benchmarks.		✓	12-62
16. The district coordinates long-term planning and budgeting for student transportation within the context of district and community planning.		✓	12-64
17. The district monitors the fiscal condition of student transportation functions by regularly analyzing expenditures and reviewing them against the budget.		✓	12-67
18. The district provides regular, accurate, and timely counts to the Florida Department of Education of the number of students transported as part of the Florida Education Finance Program.	✓		12-68
19. The district has reviewed the prospect for privatizing student transportation functions, as a whole or in part.	✓		12-69
20. The district periodically reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the student transportation program to minimize administrative layers and processes.		✓	12-73

<u>FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The food service program is clearly defined with a mission statement, operating policies and procedures, and performance expectations.		✓	13-8
2. The district regularly reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the food service program to enhance the efficiency of program operation.		✓	13-10
3. The district uses a comprehensive food service training program to increase productivity, improve employee performance, and enhance the food service program.	✓		13-12
4. The district identifies barriers to student participation in the school meals program and implements strategies to eliminate the barriers.		✓	13-14

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
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<u>FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
5. The district has established cost-efficiency benchmarks based on comparable private and public sector food service programs and other applicable industry standards.		✓	13-17
6. The district regularly evaluates the school food service program based on established benchmarks and implements improvements to increase revenue and reduce costs.		✓	13-18
7. The district regularly assesses the benefits of service and service delivery alternatives, such as contracting and privatization, and implements changes to improve efficiency and effectiveness.		✓	13-20
8. The program budget is based on department goals, revenues, and expenditure projections.		✓	13-23
9. The district's financial control process includes an ongoing review of the program's financial and management practices.	✓		13-25
10. The district accounts for and reports meals served by category.	✓		13-26
11. The district regularly evaluates purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase efficiency.	✓		13-27
12. The district has developed an effective inventory control system that is appropriate to the size of the school food service program.	✓		13-27
13. The district has a system for receiving, storing, and disposing of food, supplies, and equipment.	✓		13-27
14. The district has a plan for the repair and replacement of equipment that includes preventive maintenance practices.		✓	13-28
15. The district provides school meals designed to meet the nutritional needs of students.	✓		13-29
16. The district's food production and transportation system ensures the service of high quality food with minimal waste.	✓		13-30
17. The district follows safety and environmental health practices and regulations.	✓		13-30

<u>COST CONTROL SYSTEMS</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
1. The district has established an internal audit function with its primary mission to (1) provide assurance that the internal control processes in the organization are adequately designed and functioning effectively, and (2) where appropriate, offer recommendations and counsel to management that will improve performance.		✓	14-7
2. The district obtains an external audit in accordance with government auditing standards.	✓		14-9
3. The district provides for timely follow-up of findings identified in the external audit.		✓	14-10

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
<u><i>COST CONTROL SYSTEMS</i></u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
4. The district obtains and reviews required financial information relating to school internal accounts, direct service organizations (DSOs), and charter schools.		✓	14-11
5. Segregation of Duties: The district segregates responsibilities for custody of assets from record keeping responsibilities for those assets.	✓		14-15
6. Authorization Controls: The district has established controls that provide for proper authorization of asset acquisitions and disposals.	✓		14-16
7. Project Accounting: The district has established records that accumulate project costs and other relevant data to facilitate reporting construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors.	✓		14-16
8. Asset Accountability: The district provides recorded accountability for capitalized assets.	✓		14-16
9. Asset Safeguards: Assets are safeguarded from unauthorized use, theft, and physical damage.		✓	14-16
10. Segregation of Duties over Inventory: The district segregates responsibilities for custody of inventories from record keeping responsibilities for those assets.	✓		14-19
11. Inventory Requisitioning Controls: The district has established and implemented controls that provide for proper inventory requisitioning.	✓		14-20
12. Inventory Accountability and Custody: The district has established controls that provide for inventory accountability and appropriate safeguards exist for inventory custody.		✓	14-20
13. Inventory Management: The district periodically evaluates the inventory function to determine its cost-effectiveness.		✓	14-22
14. General: The district has a process to set objectives for risk management activities, identify and evaluate risks, and design a comprehensive program to protect itself at a reasonable cost.	✓		14-26
15. Providing for Coverage Against Risk Exposure: The district has comprehensive policies and procedures relating to acquiring and reviewing coverage for risks of loss.	✓		14-26
16. Management Control Methods: District management communicates its commitment and support of strong internal controls.		✓	14-27
17. Financial Accounting System: The district records and reports financial transactions in accordance with prescribed standards.	✓		14-28
18. Financial Reporting Procedures: The district prepares and distributes its financial reports timely.	✓		14-28
19. Budget Practices: The district has a financial plan serving as an estimate of and control over operations and expenditures.	✓		14-29

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		
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<u>COST CONTROL SYSTEMS</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
20. Cash Management: The district has effective controls to provide recorded accountability for cash resources.		✓	14-29
21. Investment Practices: The district has an investment plan that includes investment objectives and performance criteria designed to maximize return consistent with the risks associated with each investment, and specifies the types of financial products approved for investment.	✓		14-30
22. Receivables: The district has established effective controls for recording, collecting, adjusting, and reporting receivables.	✓		14-30
23. Salary and Benefits Costs: The district has effective controls that provide accountability for the payment of salaries and benefits.	✓		14-31
24. Debt Financing: The district analyzes, evaluates, monitors, and reports debt-financing alternatives.	✓		14-31
25. Grant and Entitlement Monitoring: The district effectively monitors and reports grants activities.	✓		14-31
26. Segregation of Duties: The district segregates purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving functions.	✓		14-32
27. Requisitioning: The district has established controls for authorizing purchase requisitions.	✓		14-33
28. Purchasing: The district has established authorization controls over purchasing.		✓	14-34
29. Receiving: The district has established controls to ensure that goods are received and meet quality standards.	✓		14-37
30. Disbursements: The district has established controls to ensure disbursements are properly authorized, documented, and recorded.	✓		14-38
31. Invoice Processing: The district has established controls for processing invoices to ensure that quantities, prices, and terms coincide with purchase orders and receiving reports.	✓		14-38

<u>SAFETY AND SECURITY</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the safety and security program.	✓		15-3
2. The district regularly reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the safety and security program and minimizes administrative layers and processes.	✓		15-5
3. The district has a written comprehensive plan that includes district-wide emergency and safety procedures and identifies those responsible for them.	✓		15-6

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<u>SAFETY AND SECURITY</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
4. The district identifies district and school personnel who need school safety training and provides those personnel with appropriate training.	✓		15-9
5. The district has developed a checklist for each school that provides step-by-step crisis response procedures.	✓		15-10
6. Each school has a system in place to identify the early warning signs of student violence.	✓		15-12
7. The district identifies and implements parent and community outreach strategies to promote safety in the home and community.	✓		15-14
8. The district conducts a needs assessment to determine the need for violence and drug prevention programs and, based on identified needs, implements appropriate programs.		✓	15-15
9. The district and each school have established disciplinary policies that are well defined and well communicated.	✓		15-17
10. The school board adopts curricula and programs aimed at protecting students, teachers, and administrators.	✓		15-18
11. The district can demonstrate that each school in the district has performed an annual self-assessment of all relevant health and safety issues.	✓		15-18
12. The district ensures that playgrounds are properly constructed, maintained, and supervised so as to reduce the risk of injury.	✓		15-20
13. Each school has appropriate equipment to protect the safety and security of property and records.		✓	15-21
14. The district provides appropriate safety equipment and information to prevent injuries to students and others.		✓	15-23

<u>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</u>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
1. The district has developed a meaningful community involvement mission statement and maintains ongoing community involvement activities in its strategic plan directed toward performing that mission.	✓		16-3
2. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Community Involvement Program.		✓	16-6
3. The district solicits and incorporates parent and community involvement and support.	✓		16-7
4. The district uses a variety of methods of communicating with parents.	✓		16-8

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
<u>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
5. The district periodically reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the Community Involvement Program to minimize administrative layers and processes.	✓		16-9
6. The district has active Parent Teacher Associations /Parent Faculty Organizations (PTA/PFO) and other effective methods to involve and encourage parent leadership and participation.	✓		16-10
7. The district provides activities that encourage families to be involved in the schools.	✓		16-11
8. The district uses community resources to strengthen schools, families, and student learning and consistently offers school resources to strengthen communities.	✓		16-12
9. The district has developed school-business partnerships.	✓		16-12
10. District schools maintain active and effective programs to involve volunteers in the education process.	✓		16-15
11. District schools solicit economic support through school foundations.	✓		16-18

OPPAGA provides objective, independent, professional analyses of state policies and services to assist the Florida Legislature in decision making, to ensure government accountability, and to recommend the best use of public resources. This project was conducted in accordance with applicable evaluation standards. Copies of this report in print or alternate accessible format may be obtained by telephone (850/488-0021 or 800/531-2477), by FAX (850/487-3804), in person, or by mail (OPPAGA Report Production, Claude Pepper Building, Room 312, 111 W. Madison St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-1475).

Florida Monitor: <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/>

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 Auditor General staff included – Jim Kiedinger under the supervision of David Martin

1 Introduction

Best Financial Management Practices Reviews are designed to help districts meet the challenge of educating students in a cost-effective manner. The Lake County School District requested one of these reviews to improve the efficiency of its operations.

Overview

Best Financial Management Practices Reviews are designed to help school districts meet the many challenges of educating students in a cost-effective manner. In these reviews, a school district's management and operational activities are compared to the "best practices" of school districts in many states, and represent the state-of-the-art in school district management, based on published research and analyses.

Because these comparisons are to the acknowledged state-of-the-art, it is not unusual for school districts to fall short of full compliance in some best practice areas. In such instances, the review recommends a plan of action that, if implemented, will allow the district to meet the best practice, thus improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations. The Lake County School Board has requested a Best Financial Management Practice Review for an external assessment of its organization and operations. Board members and administrative staff have indicated a desire to use the financial management best practices to improve the management and operation their school district, and to better meet the district's educational goals.

Created by the Florida Legislature in 1997, Best Financial Management Practices Reviews are intended to increase public confidence and support for districts that demonstrate good stewardship of public resources, encourage cost savings, and improve school district management and use of funds. OPPAGA and the Auditor General in consultation with stakeholders developed 14 best practices for Florida school districts, which the Commissioner of Education adopted on September 4, 1997. Moreover, to assess whether districts are using these best practices OPPAGA and the Auditor General developed an extensive set of indicators designed to encourage districts to

- use performance and cost-efficiency measures to evaluate programs;
- use appropriate benchmarks based on comparable school districts, government agencies, and industry standards to assess their operations and performance;
- identify potential cost savings through privatization and alternative service delivery; and
- link financial planning and budgeting to district priorities, including student performance.

Florida law gives OPPAGA authority to contract with outside consultants for all or parts of the review. Districts found to be using the Best Financial Management Practices will be awarded a Seal of Best Financial Management by the State Board of Education. Districts that are found not to be using Best Financial Management Practices will be provided a detailed two-year action plan for achieving compliance. The district school board must vote whether or not to implement this action plan.

In the case of Lake County School District, while OPPAGA is statutorily responsible for issuing a report regarding the district's financial management practices, the firm of ValienteHernandez, P.A., subcontracted by OPPAGA, conducted the review.

Background and Scope

The mission of the Lake County School District is to ensure that all students become self-directed, caring, productive citizens and lifelong learners in a changing world. The district has 23 elementary schools; 9 middle schools; 7 high schools, and 8 special schools and centers. Two of these schools are magnet schools; one is a charter school. In 2001, the district employed over 3,400 full-time personnel, and served over 29,000 students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, the district's budget was approximately \$154 million.

In accordance with the law, ValienteHernandez P.A. assessed the operations of the district under the fourteen (14) review areas illustrated in Exhibit 1-1.

Exhibit 1-1

Best Financial Management Practices Review Areas

1. Management Structures	8. Facilities Construction
2. Performance Accountability Systems	9. Facilities Maintenance
3. Educational Service Delivery	10. Student Transportation
4. Administrative and Instructional Technology	11. Food Service Operations
5. Personnel Systems and Benefits	12. Cost Control Systems
6. Use of Lottery Proceeds	13. Safety and Security
7. Use of State and District Construction Funds	14. Community Involvement

Both OPPAGA and ValienteHernandez P.A. express the appreciation to members of the Lake County School Board and district employees who provided information and assistance during the review.

Methodology

In conducting this review, ValienteHernandez, P.A. used a variety of methods to collect information about the district's use of the Best Financial Management Practices. Review staff made over 20 site visits to the Lake County School District. Refer to Exhibit 1-2 for a timeline of major project activities. The review staff conducted numerous interviews with district administrators and staff, held two public forums, and conducted site visits to schools. Staff also gathered and reviewed many program documents, district financial data, data on program activities, and data on student performance.

To receive program input ValienteHernandez P.A. surveyed eight groups of stakeholders: school board members, district staff, principals, teachers, non-instructional (support) staff, students, School Advisory Councils, and parents. Questions varied depending on the subject-area and group surveyed, and the results have been incorporated into these reports, where applicable. The surveys were compiled using the Reiter Scale. That is, percentages were calculated only after eliminating "neutral" or "no opinion"

responses. In addition, the categories “strongly agree/agree” and “strongly disagree/disagree” were combined.

In an effort to put Lake’s programs and activities in context with other Florida school districts, staff gathered information from six peer districts around the state: Alachua, Charlotte, Okaloosa, Osceola, St. Johns and Santa Rosa. The peer districts were selected based on their similarities with Lake across a number of categories, including the size of the student population and demographic information. In some special instances, the activities of Lake were alternatively compared to neighboring districts: Marion, Orange, Pasco, Seminole, and Volusia.

Exhibit 1-2

Lake County School District Best Financial Management Practices Review Timeline

Activity	Date
OPPAGA and ValienteHernandez P.A. Teams Conducted First Site Visit Team members reviewed the district's self-assessment with district staff, conducted numerous interviews, collected additional data, identified preliminary high level issues and potential cost savings.	March 13 through March 16, 2001
ValienteHernandez P.A. Teams Conducted Two Public Forums Team members conducted two public forums to obtain input from the community on current issues and concerns as well as outstanding district services or programs. A press release was issued and members of School Advisory Councils, PTA, Parents and the Community were invited. The forums were held simultaneously at the Tavares Middle School and at Cypress Ridge Elementary.	April 12, 2001
OPPAGA and ValienteHernandez P.A. Conducted Second Site Visit Team members conducted numerous interviews with the Superintendent, assistant superintendents, program supervisors and directors to discuss preliminary findings and potential solutions. Individual sessions were held with each school board member to present preliminary findings and recommendations and obtain their input	July 11 through July 13, 2001
OPPAGA and Valiente Hernandez P.A. staff Conducted Third Site Visit Team members shared the draft report with district staff for feedback and to collaboratively check accuracy and refine the action plans.	August 21 and August 22, 2001
Presentation of Final Report to the Lake County School Board	January 25, 2002

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Interviews

To understand the Lake County School District's practices and programs, the review team conducted over 200 on-site interviews with numerous individuals. The review team interviewed a wide range of district personnel representing all levels of staff. Interview participants included school board members, the superintendent, assistant superintendents, and various program directors and supervisors, principals and support staff. In addition, the team held many telephone conversations and exchanged electronic correspondence with district staff to gather additional information and feedback on relevant issues.

On-Site Observations

Team members conducted on-site observations of district operations. These observations included school campuses, transportation facilities, the Learning Resource Center, the district's warehouse, and school cafeterias. In total, the review teams visited ten (10) elementary schools, four (4) middle schools, four (4) high schools and two (2) other educational facilities as illustrated in Exhibit 1-3.

Exhibit 1-3

ValienteHernandez P.A. Visited Twenty District Campuses

Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools	Other Educational Institutes
Astatula	Griffin	Eustis	Lake Hills School
Cypress Ridge	Oak Park	Leesburg	Lake Technical Center
Dabney	Tavares	Mount Dora	
Eustis	Umatilla	Tavares	
Mascotte			
Round Lake			
Skeen			
Tavares			
Triangle			
Villages			

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Public Forums

The review team conducted two simultaneous public forums in two Lake County cities (Tavares and Clermont), to allow citizens to express their concerns regarding current issues and obtain feedback on outstanding district programs and services. At the forum, citizens were invited to speak with or provide written comments to ValienteHernandez P.A. representatives. Comments were later forwarded to the team members reviewing each of the operational or managerial areas of the study. The public forums were very useful to team members in identifying and/or confirming several issues related to the best practice areas.

Peer School Districts

ValienteHernandez P.A., in collaboration with school district staff, identified six peer districts with the purpose of putting Lake's programs and activities in context with comparable Florida school districts. To gather information from the group of peers, the review team contacted the Superintendent of each district who then provided a list of contact individuals for the different review areas. Consequently, ValienteHernandez P.A. staff interviewed a variety of staff from each of the five peer districts for on numerous matters. Peer district staff provided information, documents and data for comparison purposes.

The six peer districts chosen for this review were Alachua, Charlotte, Okaloosa, Osceola, St. Johns and Santa Rosa. These districts were selected based on their similarities with Lake across a number of categories, including student population size and demographic information. ValienteHernandez P.A. also used data from the neighboring districts of Marion, Orange, Pasco, Seminole, and Volusia, to compare selected aspects in the review areas of Personnel Systems and Benefits, Administrative and Instructional Technology, and Educational Service Delivery.

Surveys

To receive program input ValienteHernandez P.A. surveyed eight groups of stakeholders, as illustrated in Exhibit 1-4. The nature of the questions varied depending on the subject-area and group surveyed, and the results have been incorporated into the report, where applicable. The surveys were compiled using the Reiter Scale. That is, percentages were calculated only after eliminating “neutral” or “no opinion” responses. In addition, the categories “strongly agree/agree” and “strongly disagree/disagree” were combined.

Exhibit 1-4

ValienteHernandez P.A. Surveyed Eight Groups of Stakeholders

Survey Group	Total Surveys Distributed
Board Members	5
District Administrators	45
Non-Instructional (Support) Staff	120
Parents	485
School Principals and Assistant Principals	84
Student Advisory Council Members	600
Students (Middle and High School)	505
School Teachers	1,740
Total	3,584

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Other Sources of Information

As part of the review team members contacted additional entities to obtain a variety of information such as statewide practices and data, model district programs, federal and state requirements, and technical/expert assistance. Team members contacted and received extensive input and information from several offices under the Florida Department of Education such especially the department of Education Information and Accountability Services (EIAS). Several other agencies that guide and rule the administration of different educational programs also provided valuable information and data, such as the Office of Multicultural Student Language Education (OMSLE), Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) and Clearinghouse Information Center of the office the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services. Other related agencies that were contacted include the Florida Department of Agriculture, the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS), the *Orlando Sentinel* and the Florida School Boards Association (FASB).



Statistical Profile of the Lake County School District

The mission statement of the Lake County School District is "To prepare individuals for successful lifelong learning, productive employment, and responsible citizenry by providing a safe, resource-filled learning environment".

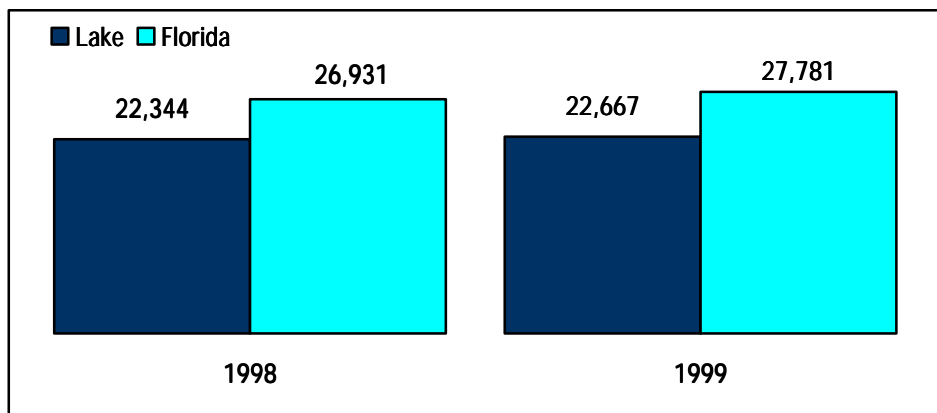
County Profile

Lake County is located in northwest central Florida. The county is named for its 1,400 plus lakes, and it was formed from a portion of Orange County and Sumter County in 1887. Lake County has 14 incorporated cities. The county seat as well as the Lake County School District main administration building is located in Tavares; Information Services, Facilities Maintenance and the Transportation departments are also located in Tavares but all housed separately about a mile from the district's main administration building. Other departments, such as the Learning Resource Center, Testing and Evaluation, and Student Services operate out of a building in Howey-in-the-Hills, nine miles from Tavares.

The county's primary sources of employment are retail trades, service industries, and government sectors. Winn-Dixie Stores, Publix Supermarkets, Village of Lake-Sumter, Inc., Florida Hospital/Waterman, Inc., Leesburg Regional Medical Center, the Lake County School District and the Lake County government are the principal employers. The population in 2000 was 210,528. As shown in Exhibit 2-1, the per capita income of residents averaged \$4,900 below the state average in Fiscal Years 1998 and 1999.

Exhibit 2-1

The Per Capita Income of Residents Averaged \$4,900 Below the State Average

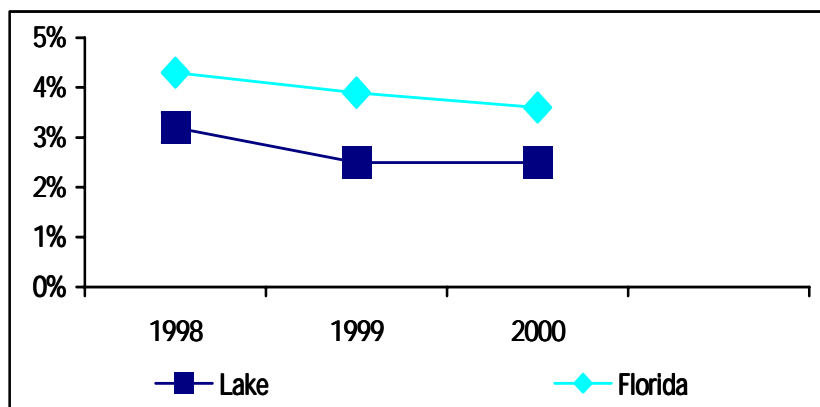


Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis.

As shown in Exhibit 2-2, the unemployment rate in Lake County has been lower than the state's rate during Fiscal Years 1998-2000. During these three years, Lake County's unemployment rate has been on average 1.2% lower than the state's unemployment rate.

Exhibit 2-2

Lake's Unemployment Rate Has Been Consistently Lower than the State's Over the Last Three Years

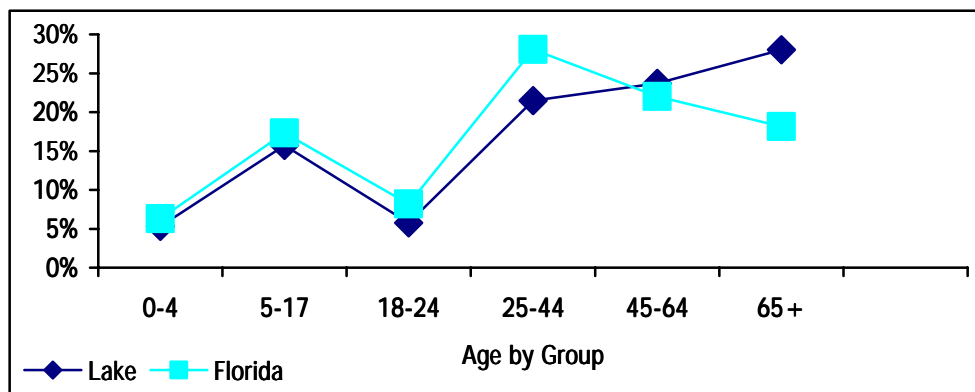


Source: Florida Research & Economic Database: Labor, Force, Employment, and Unemployment.

About 28% of the residents of Lake County were 65 years or older in 1999. Exhibit 2-3 compares the ranges between the age groups. In 1999, the largest difference between Lake's residents and the state's was in the over-65 group. The size of the over-65 group in Lake was about 10% greater than the state's.

Exhibit 2-3

The Size of Lake's School-Aged Population Was Comparable to the State, but the Over-65 Population Was 10% Greater for the Year 1999



Source: US Census: Population Estimates by Age Group: July 1, 1999.

School District Profile

The following section provides a profile of the Lake County School District in comparison with six peers - the Alachua, Charlotte, Okaloosa, Osceola, Santa Rosa, and St. Johns school districts. The peer districts were selected based on their similarities with the Lake County School District across a number of categories, including the size of the student population and demographic information. Information in this section is presented across four main areas.

- District Information
- Student Performance
- Student Characteristics
- Staff Characteristics

School District General Information

The Lake County School District operates 23 elementary, 9 middle, 7 high school and other educational facilities. The district employs over 3,400 persons of which approximately 1,800 are instructional staff.

According to district records as of April 2001, the district served 29,217 students, grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth of which 14,309 are elementary students, 6,851 are middle school students, 7,458 are high school students, and 599 are other types of students such as those receiving alternative education.

Exhibit 2-4 shows the fall 1999 student population of Lake and its peer districts.¹ As illustrated in Exhibit 2-4, Lake's growth rate has been higher than most of its peers over a six-year period. Since the 1994-1995 school year, Lake has grown by about 4,900 students (approximately 21%) from 23,617 in fall 1994 to 28,544 in fall 1999. The growth rate in Lake is also higher than the state's rate by about 8%. Exhibit 2-5 shows detail of the enrollment over the six-year period.

Exhibit 2-4

The Student Population of Lake Was Greater Than Four of The Six Peers in Fall 1999

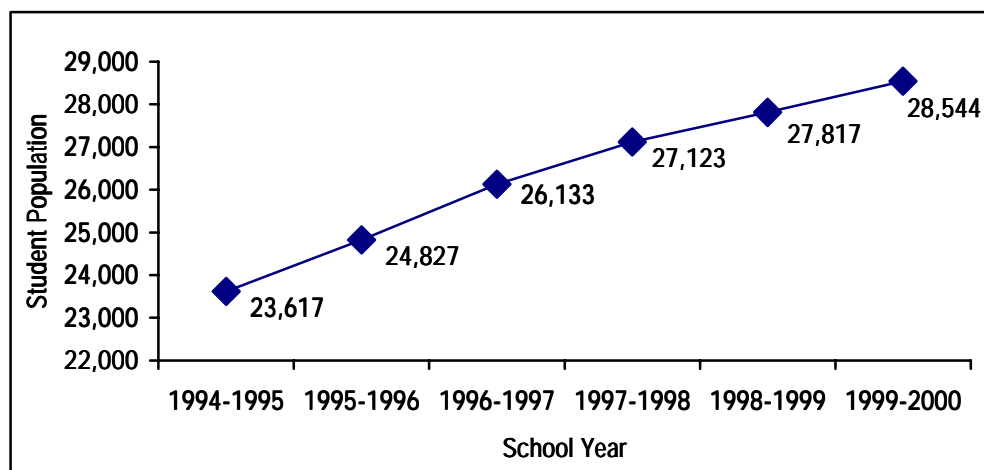
School District	Student Population		Percentage of Growth
	Fall 1994	Fall 1999	
Lake	23,617	28,544	21%
Alachua	28,812	29,906	4%
Charlotte	15,092	16,753	11%
Okaloosa	29,029	30,248	4%
Osceola	24,231	31,877	32%
St. Johns	14,559	19,046	31%
Santa Rosa	18,972	22,226	17%
Peer Average (without Lake)	21,783	25,009	15%
State	2,107,514	2,379,348	13%

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts (Survey 2 demographic data, October 11-15, 1999).

¹ Fall 1999 is the most recent comparable data available at the time of the review.

Exhibit 2-5

Lake's Enrollment Has Steadily Increased Over the Past Six Years



Source: Statistical Brief, Series 99-04B, January 1999, Department of Education.

School District Financial Information

The 2000-01 General Fund budget for the Lake County School District is approximately \$154 million. The school district receives revenue from federal, state, and local sources. Almost half of the state revenue is from the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). This funding source, established by the Legislature annually, prescribes state revenues for education as well as the level of ad valorem taxes (property taxes), which may be levied by each school district in the state. It also includes restricted funding called 'categoricals,' which are funds specified by the Legislature for selected district services, such as instructional materials (textbooks). Exhibit 2-6 shows the district's sources of funds for the General Fund for the budgeted 1999-2000 year.

Exhibit 2-6

District Funds Include Federal, State, and Local Sources

Source	Total
Federal	\$70,000
State	91,928,979
Local	48,039,176
Total Revenue Sources	\$140,038,155
Fund Balance	6,026,421
Total Funds Available	\$146,064,576

Source: Department of Education, Office of Funding and Financial Reporting.

As detailed in Exhibit 2-7, 62.3% of the district's budgeted appropriations are allocated to instruction, curriculum, and staffing training expenditures. Operation and maintenance of plants is the second largest expenditure category, followed by administration and pupil personnel services.

*Exhibit 2-7***Sixty-Two Percent of the District's 2000-2001 Budget Was Allocated for Instructional Activities**

Appropriations	Amount	Percentage
Instruction, curriculum, and staff training	97,340,008	62.3%
Operation and maintenance of plant	15,027,450	9.6%
Administration	13,992,819	9.0%
Pupil personnel services	8,153,699	5.2%
Fiscal and central services	2,715,795	1.7%
Pupil transportation services	7,815,147	5.0%
Community services	1,488,360	1.0%
Facilities acquisition and construction	2,105,372	1.3%
Outgoing transfers	126,488	0.1%
Subtotal	148,765,137	95.2%
Fund balance	7,518,020	4.8%
Total	156,283,158	100.0%

Source: Lake County School District, Resolution No.5 to Amend 2000-01 Budget.

Lake County School District's expenditures per FTE for 1998-1999 are shown in Exhibit 2-8. Lake's expenditures at \$5,142 per FTE were similar to those of its peer districts. The expenditures include funds from the General and Special Revenue Funds.

*Exhibit 2-8***Lake's Expenditures per FTE Were Similar to Its Peers**

School District	1998-99 Expenditures Per FTE		
	Unweighted FTE	Current Expenditures	Expenditures Per FTE
Lake	27,738.36	142,632,268.59	5,142.00
Alachua	29,072.51	168,016,975.68	5,779.00
Charlotte	16,473.01	90,873,476.03	5,517.00
Okaloosa	30,144.02	158,321,451.97	5,252.00
Osceola	30,235.88	155,364,401.22	5,138.00
St. Johns	18,142.02	95,383,458.64	5,258.00
Santa Rosa	21,806.13	112,182,321.27	5,145.00
Average Without Lake			5,348.00
State Total	2,335,660.58	13,141,468,926.01	5,626.00

Source: Florida Department of Education. Profile of Florida School Districts, Financial Data.

Student Performance

The effective delivery of educational services is the first and most important aspect of all school district missions. Critical to the delivery of these services is how districts can maximize student performance while keeping within current budget constraints. Indicators of how well the district is accomplishing this include test scores, graduation rates, and dropout rates. This section profiles student achievement of the Lake County School District, as well as performance information about its peer districts.

Student Test Scores

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment test measures student performance on selected benchmarks in reading and mathematics that are defined by the Sunshine State Standards. The standards articulate challenging content that Florida students are expected to know and be able to do. The standards were developed in seven content areas and were adopted by the State Board of Education in May 1996. All public schools are expected to teach students the content found in the Sunshine State Standards. Students' proficiency in reading and mathematics in grades 4, 5, 8, and 10 is measured by the FCAT and is scored on levels 1 through 5. Exhibits 2-9 and 2-10 illustrate the scores ranging in the five levels.

Exhibit 2-9

FCAT Reading Achievement Levels for Tests Administered in 1999, 2000, and 2001

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
4	100-274	275-298	299-338	339-385	386-500
8	100-270	271-309	310-349	350-393	394-500
10	100-286	287-326	327-354	355-371	372-500

Source: Student Assessment Services Section, Department of Education.

Exhibit 2-10

FCAT Mathematics Achievement Levels for Tests Administered in 1999, 2000, and 2001

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
5	100-287	288-325	326-354	355-394	395-500
8	100-279	280-309	310-346	347-370	371-500
10	100-286	287-314	315-339	340-374	375-500

Source: Student Assessment Services Section, Department of Education.

Exhibit 2-11 provides results for the 2000-2001 FCAT reading and mathematics exam. Lake County's reading scores ranged from 299 to 306. As seen in Exhibit 2-11, Lake's fourth graders would be placed in level 3 for reading while the eighth and tenth graders would be placed in level 2. Lake County's mathematics scores ranged from 309 – 322. Lake's fifth and eighth graders would be placed in level 2 for mathematics while its tenth graders would be placed in level 3. Performance at level 2 indicates that the student has limited success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards. Performance at a level 3 score indicates that the student has partial success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards, but performance is inconsistent. Students at this level answer many questions correctly,

but are generally not successful with questions that are most challenging. Lake scored at a higher level than the state on four out of the six tests. When compared to the average of its peer districts, Lake generally scored below the average.

Exhibit 2-11

Lake's FCAT Reading and Mathematics 2000–2001 Scores Are Comparable to the Peer Districts

District	Mean Scale Scores					
	Reading (Level)			Mathematics (Level)		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10
Lake	306 (3)	299 (2)	304 (2)	322 (2)	309 (2)	319 (3)
Alachua	302 (3)	307 (2)	319 (2)	314(2)	318 (3)	334 (3)
Charlotte	312 (3)	312 (3)	309 (2)	324 (2)	324 (3)	329 (3)
Okaloosa	314 (3)	313 (3)	317 (2)	324 (2)	324 (3)	330 (3)
Osceola	281 (2)	285 (2)	297 (2)	293 (2)	297 (2)	316 (3)
St. Johns	313 (3)	313 (3)	322 (2)	332 (3)	320 (3)	336 (3)
Santa Rosa	323 (3)	322 (3)	319 (2)	330 (3)	333 (3)	333 (3)
Average Without Lake County	308 (3)	309 (2)	314 (2)	320 (2)	319 (2)	330 (3)
State Average	298 (2)	295 (2)	304 (2)	314 (2)	308 (2)	323 (3)

Source: Department of Education. District FCAT Reading and Mathematics Results 2001.

The FCAT Writing exam is also administered throughout each of the state's 67 districts. The FCAT Writing test is an assessment that measures student writing proficiency in Grades 4, 8, and 10. The test requires students to write responses to assigned topics in a single testing period. Beginning in 2000, the Florida Writing Assessment Program (FWAP), also known as Florida Writes!, was called FCAT Writing. Prior to that year, writing was assessed separately through a test called Florida Writes! Scoring for the FCAT exams range from 1, the lowest score to 6, the highest score. Exhibit 2-12 provides 2000-2001 FCAT Writing results. Lake's mean scores ranged from 3.4 to 3.6. Lake's results are generally lower when compared to the state average and to its peer districts.

Exhibit 2-12

Lake's FCAT Writing 2000-2001 Results Are Generally Lower Than the Peer Districts

District	Combined Mean Score		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Lake	3.4	3.5	3.6
Alachua	3.5	3.8	4.1
Charlotte	3.8	3.9	3.8
Okaloosa	3.5	4.0	3.9
Osceola	3.0	3.4	3.6
St. Johns	3.5	3.9	4.0
Santa Rosa	3.6	4.0	3.9
Average Without Lake County	3.5	3.8	3.9
Statewide Average	3.4	3.7	3.8

Source: Department of Education.

The 1976 Legislature created a competency test to be used as part of the requirements for a regular high school diploma. All eleventh graders must take the High School Competency Test (HSCT) and must pass both parts of the test (reading and mathematics) to qualify for a diploma. Exhibit 2-13 compares the percentage passing rate for the Lake County School District and its six peers for the 1998-1999 HSCT exam. Lake County students had passing rates comparable to its peers and the state average.

Exhibit 2-13

Percent of Students Passing the HSCT in Lake County Is Comparable to Its Peers and the State Average

District	Grade 11: Percentage Passing		
	Communications	Math	Both
Lake	82	80	74
Alachua	85	79	76
Charlotte	87	84	78
Okaloosa	85	80	76
Osceola	82	72	69
St. Johns	84	81	66
Santa Rosa	87	83	77
Average Without Lake County	85	80	74
State Totals	81	77	72

Source: Department of Education.

Another indicator of performance of its students is the results of the college placement tests as taken by twelfth graders. Students are likely to take either the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) or the ACT (American College Test) tests as they prepare to graduate high school. Exhibit 2-14 compares Lake's results with its peers. The mean SAT score for Lake students was higher than the state and lower than four of its peer districts' mean SAT score. The ACT composite score for Lake was higher than the state and higher than three of its peer district's ACT composite score.

Exhibit 2-14

Lake Students' Average Score Was Higher Than the State Average on Both the SAT and ACT Test in 1999-2000

School District	SAT			ACT		
	Number Tested	% 12th Graders Tested	Mean Score	Number Tested	% 12th Graders Tested	Composite Score
Lake	425	30.2%	1,002	429	30.5%	21.3
Alachua	878	51.8%	1,060	572	33.8%	20.7
Charlotte	534	48.1%	987	373	33.6%	20.9
Okaloosa	621	32.9%	1,040	920	48.7%	21.4
Osceola	624	40.3%	948	527	34.0%	19.7
St. Johns	573	57.4%	1,016	469	46.9%	21.7
Santa Rosa	280	22.5%	1,057	741	59.4%	21.3
State	53,410	45.9%	995	39,550	34.0%	20.4

Source: Florida District Indicators Report, Department of Education.

Graduation and Students Continuing Their Education

The Lake County School District has had a greater overall decrease in its dropout rate and a greater graduation rate compared with the state average. The dropout rates and graduation rates for the Lake County School District's previous three school years are compared against its peers in Exhibit 2-15. The district's dropout rate has decreased since the 1997-1998 school year while peer districts dropout rates have generally increased. The graduation rates for Lake and its peers have generally decreased over the past three school years.

Exhibit 2-15

Lake's Dropout Rate and Graduation Rate Have Decreased Over the Past Three School Years

School District	Dropout Rate School Year			Graduation Rate School Year		
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Lake	5.8%	3.6%	4.3%	77.0%	65.0%	66.3%
Alachua	5.5%	5.7%	6.3%	78.9%	63.3%	63.7%
Charlotte	3.2%	3.2%	3.7%	71.0%	68.4%	71.7%
Okaloosa	3.0%	4.4%	4.1%	78.9%	77.1%	77.5%
Osceola	5.3%	6.1%	5.5%	82.0%	55.7%	58.9%
St. Johns	1.5%	2.5%	2.3%	75.4%	72.0%	74.9%
Santa Rosa	2.5%	2.1%	2.0%	69.7%	75.4%	73.5%
State	4.8%	5.4%	4.6%	71.9%	60.2%	62.3%

Source: Department of Education.

The percentage of Lake students that entered college was lower than the statewide average and lower than its peers. The percentage of the Lake County School District's students who entered college is compared against its peers in Exhibit 2-16.

Exhibit 2-16

The Percentage of Lake's 1999-2000 Graduates Entering Postsecondary Education Was Lower Than Its Peers and the State Average

School District	Percentage Entering Postsecondary Education
Lake	22%
Alachua	74%
Charlotte	50%
Okaloosa	63%
Osceola	64%
St. Johns	33%
Santa Rosa	80%
State	55%

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts 1999-2000.

Student Characteristics

This section provides information about the student population of the Lake County School District, as well as information about six of its peer districts. The size and demographics of a school district's student population is an important consideration in understanding the challenges it faces. For instance, a different set of challenges exists for a district that is growing versus one that has a declining student enrollment. Exhibit 2-17 shows a history of pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade membership from fall 1994 to fall 1999 for Lake and its peers. Student population has grown consistently in Lake County over the last five years. This is consistent with the statewide trend as well as the average for the peer districts.

Exhibit 2-17

Student Population in Lake Schools Has Consistently Grown Over the Last Five Years

School District	Fall 1994	Fall 1995	Fall 1996	Fall 1997	Fall 1998	Fall 1999
Lake	23,617	24,827	26,133	27,123	27,817	28,544
Alachua	28,812	29,166	29,648	30,063	29,673	29,906
Charlotte	15,092	15,593	16,083	16,294	16,565	16,753
Okaloosa	29,029	29,454	30,048	30,314	30,375	30,248
Osceola	24,231	25,670	27,376	28,740	30,127	31,877
St. Johns	14,559	15,396	16,365	17,623	18,341	19,046
Santa Rosa	18,972	19,779	20,668	21,563	22,021	22,226
Peer Average (without Lake)	21,783	22,510	23,365	24,100	24,517	25,009
State	2,107,514	2,175,233	2,240,283	2,290,726	2,331,958	2,379,348

Source: Statistical Brief, Series 99-07B, January 1999, Department of Education.

Exhibit 2-18 provides information regarding the percentage of the 1999-2000 student population that was eligible for free or reduced lunch for Lake and its peers. The Lake County School District's percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch was higher than its peer district's average and slightly lower than the state average.

Exhibit 2-18

The Proportion of Lake's Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch Is Higher Than Three of Its Peers and Lower Than the State Average for 1999-2000

School District Student Population % Receiving Free/Reduced Meals		
Lake	28,545	40%
Alachua	29,905	45%
Charlotte	16,753	42%
Okaloosa	30,248	19%
Osceola	31,877	44%
St. Johns	19,046	23%
Santa Rosa	22,226	20%
Peer Average	25,009	33%
State Average	2,379,348	44%

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts 1999-2000, March 2001, Florida DOE.

Exhibit 2-19 provides information regarding the racial/ethnic makeup of the fall 1999 student population of Lake County and its peers. The Lake County School District's percentage of white students was generally lower than its peers, but higher than the state average. The percentage of black students in Lake County was generally higher than its peers, but lower than the state's percentage of black students. Lake's percentage of Hispanic students was higher than five of its peers, but lower as compared with the state's percentage. Lake has similar percentages of Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and multiracial students to those percentages reported by the peer districts and the state.

Exhibit 2-19

Similar to Five of Its Peers, Lake's White Student Population Exceeds the State Percentage in Fall 1999

School District	White	Black (Non-Hispanic)	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian	Multi- Racial
Lake	74.36%	16.61%	7.33%	0.94%	0.19%	0.56%
Alachua	54.54%	37.80%	3.92%	2.29%	0.20%	1.24%
Charlotte	85.32%	7.94%	3.75%	1.35%	0.23%	1.40%
Okaloosa	78.72%	12.24%	3.29%	2.82%	0.45%	2.49%
Osceola	52.15%	9.48%	33.92%	2.64%	0.20%	1.60%
St. Johns	85.29%	10.74%	1.92%	0.93%	0.15%	0.96%
Santa Rosa	90.70%	5.26%	1.61%	1.42%	0.56%	0.46%
State	53.71%	25.09%	17.99%	1.84%	0.26%	1.11%

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-20 provides information on the membership of Lake's fall 1999 student population by grade. There were no grade level groupings in which Lake County has the most students. In all of the four categories, Lake was higher than the peer average.

Exhibit 2-20

Lake County's Student Population Distribution By Grade Level Is Similar to Its Peers in Fall 1999

School District	Pre-kindergarten- Kindergarten	1 st -5 th Grades	6 th -8 th Grades	9 th -12 th Grades
Lake	2,717	11,424	6,632	7,771
Alachua	3,043	11,191	6,913	8,759
Charlotte	1,466	5,868	4,169	5,250
Okaloosa	2,535	11,292	7,155	9,266
Osceola	2,764	12,220	7,606	9,287
St. Johns	1,683	7,495	4,673	5,195
Santa Rosa	2,031	8,239	5,590	6,366
Peer Average (without Lake)	2,254	9,384	6,018	7,354
State	229,177	937,725	557,171	655,275

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts, 1999-2000.

Staff Characteristics

Staff characteristics provide a look at the personnel employed by the Lake County School District, as well as information about six of its peer districts. Exhibit 2-21 provides information regarding the number of full-time staff (administrative, instructional, and support) employed by the district.

Exhibit 2-21

The Lake County School District Had a Higher Number of Full-Time Staff Than Three of Its Peers in Fall 1999

School District	Full-Time Staff					
	Administrators	% Of Total	Instruction	% Of Total	Support	% Of Total
Lake	117	3%	1,833	53%	1,485	43%
Alachua	140	4%	2,009	50%	1,838	46%
Charlotte	75	4%	981	50%	905	46%
Okaloosa	112	3%	1,878	55%	1,449	42%
Osceola	95	3%	1,935	51%	1,751	46%
St. Johns	132	6%	1,230	56%	817	37%
Santa Rosa	81	4%	1,349	62%	749	34%
Peer Average (without Lake)	106	4%	1,564	54%	1,252	43%
State	9,252	3%	147,745	55%	111,919	42%

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-22 provides information regarding the gender and race of all full-time staff in the Lake County School District and its peers. Eighty-four percent of Lake's teaching staff is white. This is 15% higher than the state average and 2% higher than the peer average. Two percent of the district's staff is Hispanic and 13% is black (non-Hispanic).

Exhibit 2-22

The Racial Distribution of Lake County's Staff is Similar to Its Peers

School District	Race					Gender		Total
	White	Black (Non-Hispanic)	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian	Male	Female	
Lake	2,894 (84%)	450 (13%)	77 (2%)	10 (< 1%)	4 (< 1%)	818 (24%)	2,617 (76%)	3,435
Alachua	2,781 (70%)	1,123 (28%)	67 (2%)	15 (< 1%)	1 (< 1%)	950 (24%)	3,037 (76%)	3,987
Charlotte	1,826 (93%)	85 (4%)	35 (2%)	12 (1%)	3 (< 1%)	525 (27%)	1,436 (73%)	1,961
Okaloosa	3,081 (90%)	281 (8%)	35 (1%)	25 (1%)	17 (< 1%)	846 (25%)	2,593 (75%)	3,439
Osceola	2,815 (74%)	235 (6%)	692 (18%)	28 (1%)	11 (< 1%)	882 (23%)	2,899 (77%)	3,781
St. Johns	1,867 (86%)	278 (13%)	25 (1%)	8 (< 1%)	1 (< 1%)	548 (25%)	1,631 (75%)	2,179
Santa Rosa	2,069 (95%)	84 (4%)	7 (< 1%)	10 (< 1%)	9 (< 1%)	450 (21%)	1,729 (79%)	2,179
Peer Average (without Lake)	2,407 (82%)	348 (12%)	144 (5%)	16 (1%)	7 (< 1%)	700 (24%)	2,221 (76%)	2,921
State	186,085 (69%)	54,958 (20%)	25,543 (9%)	1,609 (1%)	721 (< 1%)	65,969 (25%)	202,947 (75%)	268,916

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts, 1999-2000.

Exhibit 2-23 provides information regarding the number of teachers by degree level for the Lake County School District and its peers for Fall 2000. The education attainment of Lake County's teachers was above the average attainment of bachelor's degrees, but a below average number of master's degree level instructors.

Exhibit 2-23

In Fall 2000, Compared to Its Peers Lake Had the Highest Percentage of Educators With Bachelor's Degrees

School District	Type of Degree (Number and Percentage of District Total)							
	Bachelor's		Master's		Specialist		Doctorate	
Lake	1,159	66%	559	32%	25	1%	15	1%
Alachua	772	40%	969	51%	121	6%	52	3%
Charlotte	535	51%	479	46%	19	2%	10	1%
Okaloosa	1,073	58%	714	38%	40	2%	28	2%
Osceola	1,266	65%	634	33%	26	1%	13	1%
St. Johns	751	59%	511	40%	0	< 1%	7	1%
Santa Rosa	925	65%	483	34%	19	1%	6	< 1%
State	89,603	60%	53,712	36%	4,021	3%	1,665	1%

Source: Florida Department of Education, Average Teacher Salaries by Degree Level, 2000-01.

3 Management Structures

The Lake County School District has the managerial elements it needs to create a strong organizational structure responsive to school needs. To reach its goals, the district should continue its efforts to realign its operations, remove communication barriers, and build program accountability.

Conclusion

Adversity can be the forge upon which character is built. That is as true of organizations as it is people. The Lake County School District (the district) is in the midst of a remarkable turnaround from the grim financial situation disclosed by an August 2000 special review conducted by OPPAGA and the Auditor General. Armed with a committed leadership team and a firm proposal for designing a new strategic plan, district management began aggressively addressing organizational conditions that may have contributed to the financial emergency, and are pursuing strategies for economic recovery. As noted in this chapter, the resulting organizational realignments, improved management practices and executive oversight are beginning to take hold. However, to reach its goals, the district should continue its effective efforts to realign its operations, remove communication barriers and build program accountability. Still, as shown in Exhibit 3-1, the district can be justifiably proud of its recent accomplishments, as well as its overall compliance with management structure best practices.

Exhibit 3-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Management Structures in the Past Year

- The district has formed a Leadership Team responsible for developing strategic planning, for providing executive oversight, and for coordinating district-wide service delivery.
 - Communications between the superintendent and staff and the school board have significantly improved. Retreats, workshops, and meetings to remove communication barriers have been taking place regularly since December 2000.
 - All members of the school board and Superintendent have been attending Florida School Board Association Master Board Certification training, which will be completed by May 2002.
 - The district is in the process of developing a comprehensive strategic plan. The district anticipates that this process should be completed by December 31, 2001.
 - A capital projects prioritization task force has been established and is in the process of developing a Five-Year Capital Work Plan.
 - The board has adopted a new personnel allocation formula, which has been implemented and is being followed.
 - The district has implemented most of the recommendations made by the organizational
-

review conducted by the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADDs) in October 2000.

- The board policy manual is available on-line on the district's intranet.
 - A planning calendar has been developed and made available to district administrators for the first time in many years.
 - A pilot program for school-based management has been developed, and the district anticipates the program will be implemented in the 2002-03 school year.
-

Source: Lake County School District, May 2001.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Relationship Between The Superintendent and the School Board

- The interaction between the board and the superintendent is supported by clear policies, and significant steps have been taken to improve communications. The district should continue its efforts to maintain the effectiveness of this working relationship. (Page 3-7)
- The board and superintendent have procedures in place to ensure that board meetings are efficient and that the process is as effective as possible. (Page 3-15)
- The board and superintendent have established written policies that are updated regularly. In the area of procedures however, the district has been less thorough. (Page 3-18)
- The district routinely obtains legal services to gain advice on policy and to reduce the risk of lawsuits. The district also takes steps to ensure that its legal costs are reasonable. (Page 3-23)

Organizational Structure, Staffing Levels And Use Of Resources

- The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority at the higher level. However, the organizational charts at the departmental level need to be updated and distributed throughout the district. (Page 3-26)
- The district's new administration is making significant efforts to take its administrative staffing to efficient levels, to improve operating efficiency and to establish procedures that guarantee these levels are maintained. (Page 3-35)
- The superintendent and school board should continue to refine the mechanisms by which the district's financial resources are monitored. (Page 3-44)
- The district has clearly assigned school principals the authority they need to effectively manage their schools while adhering to district-wide policies and procedures and should continue its efforts to enhance communications. (Page 3-48)

Strategic Plan

- Currently, the district does not have a board-approved and detailed strategic plan, but has taken reasonable steps to develop this plan to include annual goals and measurable objectives. (Page 3-52)
- The district's enrollment projections have been acceptable per state standards. However, changes can be made to improve the accuracy and effectiveness of the process. (Page 3-56)
- In the past, the district had not linked its financial plans and budgets to its priority goals. With the new administration, however, this process of accountability has begun and has been given the highest priority. (Page 3-62)
- The district considers all options to increase revenue. (Page 3-64)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Most recommendations in this chapter have little or no fiscal impact as they can be implemented utilizing existing resources of the district. There is only one action plan item that has a fiscal impact as indicated in Exhibit 3-2, which relates to hiring a consultant to conduct a job analysis and compensation study.

Exhibit 3-2

Implementing the Recommendation for Management Structures Will Have a Five-Year Fiscal Impact of \$75,000 in Increased Costs

Action Plan and Strategy		Fiscal Impact: Cost Savings/Increased Revenues or (Increased Costs)					
		Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Total
3-4	Conduct a job analysis and compensation study. (One-time cost)	0	(\$75,000)	0	0	0	(\$75,000)
	Total	0	(\$75,000)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(\$75,000)

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Background

As noted, the Lake County School District is busy reorganizing, having come through a very difficult financial situation that had peaked in August 2000. At that time a special review of the district's financial condition conducted by OPPAGA and the Auditor General, disclosed that the unreserved portion of the district's fund balance had been significantly falling, from over \$7.8 million at the beginning of Fiscal Year 1998-99 to approximately \$2.2 million at the beginning of Fiscal Year 1999-2000. Standard business practice recommends an unreserved fund balance of 3% to 5% of the budget, which represents the amount that can be used for emergencies and other unforeseen events. The district's unreserved fund balance had fallen below the recommended standards. The main causes of this drop were an overestimation of revenues and approval of budgets that had used the fund balance to cover expenditures, including recurring expenses, in excess of revenues as well as subsequent budget adjustments that increased expenditures. Presently, the district's unreserved fund balance is at approximately 4%, which is within acceptable levels.

Also in August 2000, the Florida Commissioner of Education, the district Superintendent at the time and the school board requested that the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) conduct a review of the district with special emphasis on the organizational conditions that had contributed to the financial emergency. The report that was issued included recommendations for the district to ensure organizational efficiency and financial stability in the future in the areas of organizational alignment and management practices. The report also included strategies for economic recovery.

The current Superintendent was elected in November 2000. Upon taking office, the new administration established its executive team with a new Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, hired from outside the district, and an Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, hired from within the organization. Additionally, the new superintendent created the position of Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services, which was filled with an individual from within the district.

Upon taking office, the new superintendent began restructuring the district, drafting a recovery plan and establishing a Leadership Team comprised of the superintendent, the three assistant superintendents and principals representing the elementary, middle, and high schools. The main purpose of the Leadership Team is to assume responsibility for three major management activities which would

- develop comprehensive planning for the school district,
- provide executive oversight for the district, and
- coordinate of district wide service delivery.

Since its inception, the Leadership Team has been very aggressive and is making significant efforts to improve in many areas such as streamlining the organizational structure and aligning the personnel allocation formula. In November 2000, the board approved the concept an economic recovery plan and in March of 2001 it approved its continuation.¹ At the time of this review, the district had adopted many of the recommendations made by OPPAGA and FADSS studies, including increasing the fund balance to an acceptable level.

The district, by national standards, is a large public school system. The demographics of the district are diverse of the district and considerably impacted by growth. The district's central office is located in the city Tavares, approximately 38 miles northwest of Orlando. Also in Tavares and in the vicinity of the central offices are the Maintenance and the Management and Information Services (MIS) departments, each one of these in its own office building. Other administrative offices such as the Learning Resource and the office of Student Services are located in Howey-in-the-Hills, a city approximately 9 miles southwest of Tavares.

To run the operation, the district employs over 3,400 persons of which approximately 1,800 are instructional staff. As of April 2001, the Lake County School District served 29,217 students of which

- 14,309 are elementary students;
- 6,851 are middle school students;
- 7,458 are high school students; and
- 599 are other types of students such as the ones receiving alternative education.

To deliver educational services, the district operates 23 elementary, 9 middle, 7 high schools and 8 other educational facilities.

The district has a five-member board elected for four-year terms. The board has regularly scheduled meetings twice each month and meets frequently in workshop sessions. All district legal matters currently are handled by outside independent counsel. Exhibit 3-5 shows the organizational structure approved in January 2001.

¹ The concept of Economic Recovery Plan was introduced by FADDS in its October 2000 report and provides specific strategies to enhance efficiency and strengthen the district's financial status.

For Fiscal Year 2000-01, the district had an operating budget of over \$156.2 million dollars. Exhibit 3-3 shows the comparison of the district and its peer districts based on their budgets. The per pupil expenditures for the major educational programs (i.e., *Vocational, Exceptional, At-Risk and Regular*) in the district were in line with the peer districts for the year 1999-2000, as shown in Exhibit 3-4. Additionally, the operating costs (*per student cost for school operations*) of the district were comparable to that of for the year 1999-2000, also shown in Exhibit 3-4.

Exhibit 3-3

Lake County's Total Operating Budget Was Comparable to That of Peers For Year 1999-2000

District	Fund Sources				Total Operating Budget	Total Student Membership
	Federal	State	Local	Fund Balance		
Lake	\$ 70,000	\$91,928,979	\$48,039,176	\$ 6,026,421	\$146,064,576	28,544
Alachua	1,112,000	102,462,608	40,340,686	12,831,428	156,746,722	29,906
Charlotte	685,702	36,509,690	46,174,316	4,751,488	88,121,196	16,753
Okaloosa	3,384,019	97,821,038	47,199,968	15,477,685	163,882,709	30,248
Osceola	200,000	100,853,438	51,463,660	11,412,266	163,929,364	31,877
St. Johns	104,713	51,571,453	48,329,828	0	100,005,994	19,046
Santa Rosa	\$ 250,000	\$76,530,780	\$26,193,543	\$14,174,173	\$117,148,496	22,226

Source: Department of Education. Office of Funding and Financial Reporting.

Exhibit 3-4

The Per Pupil Expenditures For the Major Educational Programs and the Operational Costs in Lake County Were in Line With the Peer Districts For the Year 1999-2000

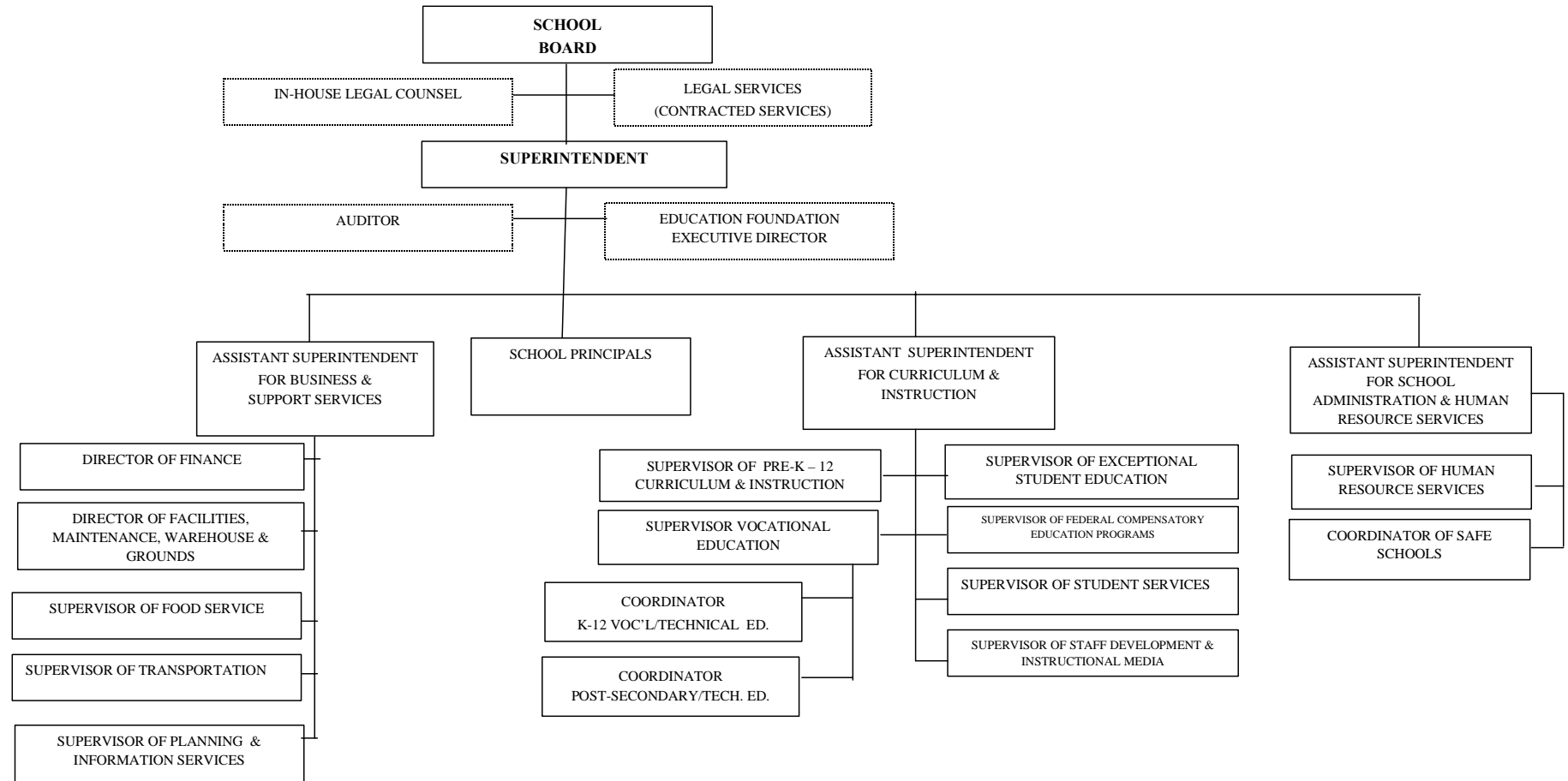
District	Per Pupil Expenditures				Operating Costs (\$)
	Exceptional (\$)	Regular (\$)	At-Risk (\$)	Vocational (\$)	
Lake	6,411	3,813	6,004	4,484	4,363
Alachua	6,416	4,252	6,161	4,635	4,834
Charlotte	7,257	4,056	7,573	4,381	4,749
Okaloosa	6,482	4,227	7,717	4,865	4,679
Osceola	7,094	3,916	3,619	3,695	4,379
St. Johns	7,088	4,054	4,352	3,951	4,592
Santa Rosa	6,510	3,710	3,921	4,514	4,295
Average Without Lake County	6,808	4,036	5,557	4,340	4,588

¹ Operating costs defined as the per-student cost for school operations, shown in dollar amount.

Source: Department of Education. School Indicators Report 1999-2000.

Exhibit 3-5

Lake County School District – Organizational Structure 2001-2002



Source. Lake County School District.

Methodology

ValienteHernandez P.A. used different methods in assessing the district's performance in relation to the best practices for management structures. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the self-assessment instruments completed by seven staff members and conducted interviews and made inquiries of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents, key staff members and the five members of the school board. ValienteHernandez P.A. also used information collected at a public forum held during the course of the review. Associated evidence was examined and analyzed. Compliance with rules and regulations was assessed through revisions of existing policies and procedures and consultation with related organizations such as the Florida Department of Education and the Florida School Boards Association. ValienteHernandez P.A. also obtained information from the group of peer districts chosen for this project (Alachua, Charlotte, Okaloosa, Osceola, St. Johns, and Santa Rosa County school districts). To receive program input from school administrators and district staff ValienteHernandez P.A. designed and administered surveys to principals and assistant principals, teachers, and district administrative staff. The questions varied from group to group and the survey results have been incorporated in different sections of this chapter.

Findings and Recommendations

Relationship Between the Superintendent and the School Board

Goal A: **The district's school board and Superintendent have established clearly delineated responsibilities and the policies and practices they need to effectively manage the district.**

1 The interaction between the board and the Superintendent is supported by clear policies, and significant steps have been taken to improve communications. The district should continue its efforts to maintain the effectiveness of this working relationship.

The district has a history of poor communications between the board and the Superintendent and staff. Specifically during the past administration, trust levels were far from optimal and interference with system functions and related policies was not uncommon. Aware that this situation obstructs adequate flow of the operations, the new administration is taking major steps to improve the working relationships between board and staff. For example, the school board and Superintendent have jointly participated in several programs with the Florida School Boards Association such as the Annual Board Conference and

the Orientation Conference. Additionally, all school board members have recently agreed and started training to attain the FSBA Master Board Certification.²

In essence, the role of the school board is to formulate policy, and the role of the school superintendent is to carry out policies. The board is responsible for guiding the district's budgeting, planning, and policy making. Board policy 2.20 defines responsibilities and authority of the school board. A section of the policy declares, "*The School Board is responsible for the organization and control of the public schools of the District and is empowered to determine the policies necessary for the effective operation and the general improvement of the school system.*"

The superintendent is responsible for the daily operations of the district. The policy manual defines the responsibilities of the superintendent in 3.20. In part the policy states, "*The Superintendent shall be responsible for the administration of the entire school system as provided by the law, State board of Education and School Board rules. The Superintendent shall keep the School Board informed regarding all phases of the District school system.*"

To overcome the communication barriers built up in the past, the new administration has given high priority to streamlining communications and delineating responsibilities as an essential means of gaining improvements for the school system. The new administration is also striving to make the interaction between district staff and the board more efficient and effective. Through conversations held with four of the five school board members, we concluded that in general the board has responded positively to the superintendent's efforts and that there exists a highly cooperating atmosphere to work with the superintendent in reaching common goals.

The District Can Use the Experience of the Board for Improvements

Membership on the Lake County School Board has been rather stable with minimal turnover for over four years. This characteristic should be utilized at maximum for the organization's benefit. School board members are elected every four years. Only one member is serving for the first time. One board member was elected for the first time almost 20 years ago and is presently serving a third term. Another board member is also serving a third term after initially being elected 15 years ago and a third board member is serving a second consecutive term. Exhibit 3-6 shows the length of time board members have served and their area of expertise.

² The Master Board Certification is a distinction granted by the Florida School Boards Association (FSBA). The program is designed for a leadership team (i.e., school board and superintendent) to engage in a formalized curriculum that develops skills and techniques to create and sustain an effective governance team. Skills and techniques addressed include consensus building, managing change, team self-evaluation, ethical management, conflict resolution, listening, and team learning. The program provides leadership teams with an opportunity to discuss and improve or enhance those important interpersonal issues which are essential to team functioning.

*Exhibit 3-6***Lake County School Board Has Had Minimum Turnover Over the Past Four Years**

	Board Member 1	Board Member 2	Board Member 3	Board Member 4	Board Member 5
Year elected	1996-2000 2000-2004	1982-1986 1994-1998 1998-2002	1986-1990 1990-1994 1998-2002	1998-2002	2000-2004
Length of service	½ year (current term)	2 ½ years (current term)	2 ½ years (current term)	2 ½ years (current term)	½ year
Profession	Insurance Agent	Supervisor of Treatment Alternative for Safer Communities Program for LifeStream Behavioral Center	School Psychologist and Advisor (Broward County)	Commercial Real Estate	Electrical Contractor

Source: Lake County Schools.

The New Administration Has Placed Major Emphasis on Improving Communication Throughout the District

The new administration is making conscious efforts to create a better working climate and to carry out roles in adherence to policy. There has been a concerted effort by the Leadership Team in conjunction with the school board, principals, and department heads to improve communication. Since December 2000, the following actions have taken place

- the Superintendent now attends all principal meetings;
- department head meetings are now held regularly;
- regular meetings are held with assistant principals and deans;
- departmental meetings are held regularly;
- the Superintendent meets weekly with her Leadership Team;
- the Superintendent and the Leadership Team meet quarterly with principals in one of five areas of the school district to provide an area focus and opportunity for more informal communication;
- the Superintendent meets monthly with her teacher advisory panel;
- the Superintendent meets monthly with her corporate advisory committee.

Additionally, the Superintendent is working to improve communication with the media and is taking steps to improve communication with the Lake County Board of County Commissioners. Effort is also under way to secure a district public relations/media person to assist in communicating issues related to the organization, schools, parents, the media, and the community at large.

Lack of effective communications between the board and the Superintendent and district staff during previous administrations was pointed throughout several interviews as a major contributing factor that made the system inefficient. Survey results confirmed this opinion. A clear example was the manner in which the staffing formula was repeatedly circumvented and despite the existence of an approved staffing system, personnel units were granted at both the board and at the district staff level. Both the OPPAGA report of August 2000 and the FADSS report of October 2000 raised serious concerns in this regard. By adopting these new practices the district administration attempts to improve its management practices by ensuring that communication problems are minimized.

Current Perceptions of Effective Management Practices at the District Staff Level Should Be Addressed

Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2000 disclosed several opportunities for improving management practices as shown in Exhibit 3-7. Overall, district level employees surveyed did not see much clarity related to basic management principles such as understanding of the mission, goals and objectives of the district. Also while they agreed that the policies manual is readily accessible to employees, they did believe it was being updated properly. There is also a need for more information on the procedures that support the different operations (refer to Action Plan 3-4, Recommendation 1). Most of the district employees surveyed (71%) did not view communications within the district as effective; however, 76% thought the level of communication within their own departments is good.

District level employees' general perception of management and the need to build more positive attitudes was also discussed with the Superintendent, assistant superintendents and various administrators. Overall, the district is aware of the need to address different managerial issues and has started dealing with them as is the case of the development of a strategic plan or, has made plans to concentrate on them in the near future as for example, updating standard operating procedures.

An added obstacle to good communication is the manner in which the district's administrative offices are separated geographically in the district. The main administration building is located at 201 West Burleigh Boulevard in Tavares, but other departments, such as the Learning Resources Center, Testing and Evaluation, and Student Services operate out of a building in Howey-in-the-Hills, nine miles from Tavares. In addition, Information Services is located on Bryan Street in Tavares, and the Facilities Maintenance and Transportation departments are housed separately on the same property about a mile from the district administrative office on Burleigh Boulevard. The physical separation of the departments tends to hinder the flow of communication and make networking among administrators difficult at times. The required five-year plant survey completed in June 2001 has recommended, pending the availability of funds, that the long range plans for the district include a building to centralize administrative operations. The Capital Projects Task Force is in the process of prioritizing all recommended projects.

Exhibit 3-7

Survey Results Show That District Staff's Perception of Effective Management Can Be Improved

SURVEY GROUP (s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
District Staff (s= 45; n= 19)	The district's mission, goals and objectives are known by all district staff.	31.3%	62.5%	6.3%
	District staff strives to achieve district's goals and objectives.	46.7%	26.7%	26.7%
	Communication is effective within the school district.	28.6%	71.4%	0.0%
	New or revised district policies and procedures are provided in a timely manner to all staff.	62.5%	25.0%	12.5%
	Procedural manuals are updated on a continuing basis.	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%
	The level of communication is good within my department.	76.5%	23.5%	0.0%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

The District Has Procedures in Place for How Board Members Are to Contact Staff and for District Staff to Respond to Constituent Inquires

Two school board policies—*Grievance procedure for personnel* and *Complaints against employees*—regulate the steps district employees and other stakeholders should take to execute a complaint. In addition, the district also has provisions in each of the two existing union contracts regarding grievance procedures. At board meetings, the district also makes provisions for members of the public to give their input and voice their opinions.

The current administration has improved the process by which board members contact staff to resolve constituents' inquires by routing these through the designated assistant superintendent who acts as a liaison. The main purpose of this practice is to ensure timely responses to the public and maximize accountability. When a board member receives a complaint from a parent, district employee or other community member, he/she generally contacts the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services by phone or in writing if the situation is considered serious. This assistant superintendent in turn contacts the pertinent staff member to provide the needed answer.

District management has also provided guidelines to the secretaries of the Superintendent and assistant superintendents to better route complaint phone calls. When a parent contacts the district's office the secretaries must sort the calls and as much as possible persuade the parent to contact the respective school principal in an attempt to resolve the problem at that level. If the problem is not resolved, the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services gets involved. The Superintendent's approach however, has been not to interfere with school principals' authority if at all possible.

The District Should Continually Review Committees to Ensure Focus Is on Key Areas and Committees Remain Effective

Both the board and the district have developed and use a committee system that allows board members to concentrate on key issues. Dividing the workload into effective committees allows board members to study and discuss issues in greater depth and creates a positive working relationship between the board and district staff, fostering trust and confidence among board members. Exhibit 3-8 shows a list of the committees, councils, leagues, and authorities instituted by the Lake County School District and the board.

The board should review the effectiveness of the standing committees and their purpose and structure. Additionally, the board and when appropriate district staff should jointly decide which committees should include board members in a manner that does not create conflicts of interest or interfere with staff's administrative responsibilities.

Once the possibility of conflicts of interest or administrative interference is determined, each board member, with the exception of the board chair, could continue to preside over one committee and serve on two others. Appointments can be rotated so that all board members serve at one time or another on each committee. The chairman of the board is an official member of all committees. Staff members support each committee, answering questions, conducting research at the request of the committee, and providing technical assistance as needed. Such committee structure allows in-depth analysis of issues and creates mutual trust among board members and for the work of the staff.

Fundamentally, the district should consider creating or maintaining six district-level committees: Finance, Benefits, Facilities Planning, Technology, Educational Planning and Evaluation, and Policy Making. There are other committees that could be created and that could help the district's operation.

Exhibit 3-8

Board and District Committees and Councils as of January 2001

Lake County School Board and/or District Committees/Councils	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial Oversight Committee• Allocations Committee• District Insurance Committee• Instructional Personnel Performance Assessment System (IPPAS) Committee• Human Growth & Development Committee• Human Resource Management Development (HRMD) Committee• Recruitment Committee• Student Calendar Committee• Construction Oversight Committee• SAFE Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School District Advisory Council for Vocational-Technical, Adult & Community Education• Technology Oversight Committee• District Association of Technology Advisors (DATA) Committee• Contractor Pre-Qualification Review Committee• Charter School Review Committee• School Board Policy Revision Committee (Harassment Issue)• Student Evidentiary Committee• Legislative Liaison – State• Legislative Liaison - National

Exhibit 3-8 (continued)

County and City Committees, Boards, Leagues, Councils	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of County Commissioners of Lake County (LCBCC) • Citizen's Commission for Children • Lake County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board • Value Adjustment Board • Juvenile Justice County Council • Lake County League of Cities • Lake County Prekindergarten Interagency Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial Development Authority • Lake County Comprehensive Health Care Committee • Lake County Environmental Protection Advisory Board • Lake County Impact Fee Evaluation and Review Committee • Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Advisory Board • Lake County Development Review

Source: Lake County Schools.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district continue to strengthen the effectiveness of the working relationship among the school board and the superintendent and staff. A most important action is to further the mutual understanding and appreciation of the respective authority and responsibilities of the board as a legislative body and the Superintendent as the chief executive officer of the school district. Much of this can be accomplished if the board commits to complete the training provided by the Master Board Certification procedure. Alternatively, the Superintendent and her staff should continue to hold periodic retreats and workshops with the school board as needed.*

- *In general, we recommend that school district management enhance organizational communication to overcome interdepartmental barriers at the district administrative level. A common method is to practice management by wandering around, which means interfacing directly with support staff by regularly spending time walking around and talking with them about a variety of work related issues, finding out directly what is going on. This situation would be further improved by constructing a central office building in the future that would bring all the administrative functions to one location.*

We further recommend school district management find methods of making communications within the district more effective and efficient, with the ultimate goal being to maximize the practicality of communications while maintaining reasonable efficiency in the process. Proper balance should be found and new communications strategies should constantly be tried.

While a newsletter attached to each paycheck would be a low-cost means of communication, occasional face-to-face encounters with employees would better ensure that they are being taken into account and that they clearly understand the organizational goals and objectives. These actions would also offer district employees a real sense of acknowledgement and appreciation for their area accomplishments.

- *We recommend that board and the district review the effectiveness of the standing committees, their purpose and structure. Fundamentally the district should consider creating or maintaining six committees: Finance, Benefits, Facilities Planning, Technology, Educational*

Planning and Evaluation, and Policy Making. Additionally, we recommend that the board and with input from district staff decide which committees should include board members in a manner that does not create conflicts of interest and interfere with the staff's administrative responsibilities.

Once the possibility of conflicts of interest is evaluated, we recommend that each board member, with the exception of the board chair, continue to preside over one committee and serve on two others. Appointments can be rotated so that all board members serve at one time or another on each committee. The chairman of the board is an official member of all committees. Each board member, with the exception of the board president, could chair one committee and serve on two others. Appointments can be rotated so that all board members serve at one time or another on each committee. Staff members support each committee, answering questions, conducting research at the request of the committee, and providing technical assistance as required. Such committee structure allows in-depth analysis of issues and that board members have a mutual trust for each other and the staff.

Action Plan 3-1 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 3-1

Strengthen Relationships Among the Superintendent, the School Board, and Staff

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Continue to strengthen the effectiveness of the working relations between the school board and the Superintendent and staff.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The school board commits to complete the training provided by the Master Board Certification procedure.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent and her staff continue to hold periodic retreats and workshops with the school board as needed.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and staff, and the school board.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within the existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Enhance organizational communication to overcome interdepartmental barriers at the district administrative level.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team meets to discuss different practical methods and strategies for making communications within the district both effective and efficient. One example is a newsletter attached to each paycheck.</p> <p>Step 2: The Leadership Team discusses different strategies to promote more interaction between management and support staff finding out directly what is going on and to build a more positive attitude among employees and offer district employees a real sense of acknowledgement and appreciation for their area accomplishments.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and assistant superintendents.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002

Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within the existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Review the structure of existing committees.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and staff and the board hold a workshop to review the standing committees: purpose, duration, justification, makeup, and inclusiveness of all key areas (Finance, Benefits, Facilities Planning, Technology, Educational Planning and Evaluation, and Policy Making),</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent and staff jointly decide which committees should include board members in a manner that does not create conflicts of interest or interfere with administrative responsibilities.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent and board solicit input from citizens regarding the revised list of committees.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and school board.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within the existing resources.

2 The board and superintendent have procedures in place to ensure that board meetings are efficient and that the process is as effective as possible.

Board meetings are held two times each month on Monday evenings. Any items to be placed on the agenda of a regular school board meeting are submitted in writing to the Superintendent at least eight working days prior to the scheduled meeting and copies are available to interested parties seven days prior to the meeting. Special meetings and emergency meetings are held any time either by the Superintendent's request or upon the initiative of the school board chairperson. In this case, a tentative agenda is given to board members during the notification. To keep board members informed of controversial or newsworthy events between board meetings, and depending on the nature, sensitivity, and confidentiality of the event or situation, one of the Assistant Superintendents or the Superintendent calls, e-mails or faxes information immediately to all board members.

Board Meetings Make Effective Use of Public and Staff Time

One of the recent accomplishments of the district related to board meetings has been to significantly reduce the length of the meetings from four to five hours to a current average of less than two hours. Reasons for this have been the efforts to provide as much supporting documentation to board members with ample time for them to get acquainted with the different items. When asked whether the superintendent structures board meetings to make effective use of staff and the public's time, all the board members agreed and 75% of the parents agreed that school board meetings are scheduled at a time and place convenient to the public.

Procedures to Prepare the Board Agenda Have Been Improved

The new administration gives much importance to providing the board with materials that help them make the best informed decision. The procedures related to board meeting preparation are continually being improved. An analysis of background materials provided to board members before meetings revealed that these materials are sufficient, in most cases, for the board to make informed decisions. Board agenda packets are sent to the board five working days before the board meeting. When an item for discussion comes up at the last minute, the information is either faxed or e-mailed to the board members.

The agenda packet has been improved by adding a cover page to each agenda item summarizing the issues. The cover page provides details on each staff recommendation for board action, including background, alternatives considered, recommendation and rationale of the recommendation, impact statement of the recommendation, and the source(s) of the information.

As shown in Exhibit 3-9, taken together the April 2001 survey responses show that most of the board members perceive the process as being effective. One change the district could consider making is the procedure by which board members and superintendent keep each other informed on controversial issues for administrations to come. Currently, there communication is excellent and the Superintendent and board members keep each other informed of controversial issues via telephone, fax or e-mail. A best practice however, would be that the board and superintendent develop plans for effectively dealing with controversial issues. Such plans would entail that the Superintendent and the board specifically delineate who is responsible for communicating with the board and what timelines are to occur in communicating the problem issues to the board members. Formalizing the procedure and reducing it to writing will help avoid any breakdown in communications, enable effective resolution of conflicts and improve accountability.

*Exhibit 3-9***Board Members Are Generally Satisfied With District's Support in Preparation For Board Meetings**

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
School Board (N= 5; n= 4)	The superintendent requires staff to provide the board clearly written executive summaries of board agenda items that are consistent with district goals, objectives, and the budget.	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%
	The board receives the agenda materials in ample time before the board meeting.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
	A clear procedure is in place for the board and superintendent to keep each other informed of controversial agenda issues.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
	The school board pulls items from its consent agenda for discussion and public comment when requested to do so by members of the public.	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

A District Master Calendar Has Been Drafted for the First Time in Many Years

The district has prepared a master planning calendar that shows the dates of 84 major events. The calendar has been produced with the input of key individuals from areas such as finances and information technology, and it is still in a draft stage. According to the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services the calendar will soon be posted in locations where it can be readily accessible by all district and school level administrative staff. In the near future, the calendar will be made available on line in the intranet so it can be viewed and even updated by key personnel. This calendar will help ensure that all important deadlines are met.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the planning calendar be finalized and made available on-line as soon as possible. Staff must ensure that the calendar contains dates of major events, contract expirations, and dates the board needs to take action to meet different legal requirements. Furthermore, the district should use the calendar information to ensure that matters are placed on the agenda in a timely manner.*
- *We recommend that all board members establish electronic addresses.*

Action Plan 3-2 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 3-2

Efficient and Effective Board Meetings

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Finalize the planning calendar and make it available on-line as soon as possible.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resources produces the final version of the planning calendar to include dates of major events, contract expirations, and dates the board needs to take action to meet different legal requirements.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services and the MIS Supervisor meet to discuss requirements for making the calendar available on-line. They also discuss the possibility of allowing authorized staff to update and/or modify the calendar.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resources and the MIS Supervisor.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within the existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	All school board members establish an electronic address.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent sends a communication to board members to establish an electronic address.</p> <p>Step 2: Board members create an electronic address.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and school board members.
Time Frame	May 31, 2001
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within the existing resources.

3 The board and Superintendent have established written policies that are updated regularly. In the area of procedures however, the district has been less thorough.

The district's policies are generally easy to understand and cover expected areas. The policy manual has had at least three revisions since the early 1980's. There is a master-copy kept by the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services, and there is also a tracing chart available to users to cross-reference the old policies as contained in the policy manual of 1991 and the new policies in the policy manual of 1998. All board members, assistant superintendents, department heads and school principals have a copy of the policies manual. The district maintains an Inventory Control List of the policy books with a control sheet for the receipt of the book that each employee has to sign. The district has also recently made available the policies in their intranet. As shown in Exhibit 3-10, all board members affirm that the policies are available to all district staff members.

Two events originate changes in board policies. After each annual session of the Florida Legislature, any modifications or new laws that affect education are communicated to the district by a consulting firm hired for that purpose. This firm keeps a complete copy of the district's policies manual and if a change is necessary, they draft the new or modified policy for the district. The Superintendent and staff review the drafted policy and then present a written proposal to the board for approval including an explanation of the amendment or the new policy. Individual departments within the district can also initiate a change in policies that are within their jurisdiction or that affect the area's operations.

In both cases, the revisions, updates or inclusion of new policies abides by a comprehensive board policy. After the board approves the change or addition of new policy, there is also an internal procedure by which the new or updated policies are formally distributed throughout the district.

Exhibit 3-10

Board Members Agree That Policy Books Are Accessible to District Staff

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
School Board (N= 5; n= 4)	The district's policies and procedures handbook is accessible to all district staff.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

On-Line Policies Should Be Updated and Procedures Should Be Revised, Expanded and Cross-Referenced to Policies

The district does not have formal written procedures for certain important operation areas and the district's policies are not cross-referenced to the appropriate administrative guidelines and departmental procedures. During the past administration there were initiatives to resolve this issue. All department heads were requested to draft procedures and/or to update the ones in place. This step was successful but the process was not completed due to changes in the administration. Currently, the district has planned to hire a consultant by late September 2001 who will be responsible for compiling the operating procedures in a standardized format.

The district has several procedures manuals that are up-to-date, widely known, and used routinely by district and school-based staff. Assistant Superintendents and school principals, for example, regularly refer to recently updated manuals such as the Pupil Progression Plan. However, the district does not have written procedures in several other very important areas. Most notably is the lack of procedures in the area of financial management. Without clear procedures that communicate precise guidelines to employees' actions for handling different situations, it is very difficult for the district to guide behavior and less likely to persuade employees to act uniformly on important daily matters.

The original Standard Operating Procedures manual was written in 1987. After 1987 many procedures manuals were produced independently with no relationship with the original manual. An effort was made during the last administration by which all department heads were required to update and complete all the procedures manuals existent in their areas and to describe the procedures linkage to board policy.

Over different conversations with staff from several operational areas, they manifested that procedures do not exist or in some instances, that they needed to be updated. In other cases, general procedures are taken from the board policies but detailed steps are nonexistent and also, key functions lack procedures because they are not specifically defined within the context of a department. ValienteHernandez P.A. took inventory of procedures manual by functional area in the district. We observed that important functions lack detailed, complete and up-to-date procedures including among many others, financial accounting, risk management, purchasing, cash/debt management, auditing, FTE reporting, school improvement, program research and evaluation, facilities planning and development, grounds and warehouse maintenance, etc.

The accessibility to the policies manual through the district's intranet is now a great advantage. Not only does it provide greater and easier access to policies, but also it ensures that the policies used by employees are the most up-to-date versions. When policy manuals are kept as hard copies, rather than on-line, every update must be copied, distributed and inserted. This is not only time-consuming, but it increases the likelihood that updates will not be made in the manual and that people will refer to out-of-date policies.

Existing Duplicative Job Classifications Need To Be Eliminated

The district has a procedure to regularly review and update job descriptions. The purpose of such a procedure is to guarantee that job responsibilities are updated at all times to enhance job performance and accountability.

As a result of efforts made in April of 2001 by the Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services and Human Resources, job descriptions have been somewhat analyzed and organized. Duplications however, still exist. For example, the Clerical Assistant II—ESE, Clerical Assistant II—Staff Development/Media and the Clerical Assistant II—Testing are essentially the same job descriptions except that the position is assigned under different areas.

Job descriptions should be reviewed systematically in conjunction with employee performance evaluations to ensure their accuracy. Ideally, this would take place regularly. If a review finds that the job description is accurate and responsibilities have not changed, there is no need to revise the job description. If changes are noticed, the job description should be changed accordingly. Accurate job descriptions are helpful not only in clarifying expectations and responsibilities for current employees, but they also make it easier for an organization to determine the need to hire new employees.

When creating a new position, the district should evaluate whether there is already a job description that in essence reflects the responsibilities of the new position. This will avoid unnecessary work and reduce the number of job descriptions needed. A current example of this situation is the existence of four different job descriptions for the position of secretary, where basically the only difference is that they work for different departments.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district revise the Inventory Control List of the policy book and update as necessary. Additionally, we recommend that the tracing chart that links the old and new policies be made available on-line.*
- *We recommend the district continue with its plans to hire a consultant to develop and/or update operating manuals for all areas. Part of the compilation process should include cross-*

referencing the district's procedures to the originating board policy. As a step prior to the compilation, the district has to ensure that areas such as financial accounting, risk management, purchasing, cash/debt management, auditing, FTE reporting, school improvement, program research and evaluation, facilities planning and development, grounds and warehouse maintenance, develop standard operating procedures.

To the extent possible, these procedures should also be made available on-line on both the intranet and the world-wide web for the benefit of all stakeholders. As long as individuals can access procedures through the computer, updates can be made without having to distribute hard copies throughout the district.

- *We recommend the district conduct a comprehensive review of the existing job descriptions and collapse those duplicated onto single job descriptions.*

Action Plan 3-3 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 3-3

Develop And Update Operating Procedures

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Revise the Inventory Control List of the policy book and update as necessary. Make the tracing chart that links the old and new policies available on-line.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services revises and updates the inventory of policy books distributed throughout the district.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services and the MIS Supervisor discuss the requirements to make the tracing chart that links the old and new policies available on-line.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services and MIS department.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district hires a consultant to develop and/or update, and standardize procedure manuals for all functional areas.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services meets with the consultant and the supervisor of each functional area to identify all activities conducted by the department to develop a complete list of what procedures are needed.</p> <p>Step 2: The consultant reviews all documentation of procedures that exist (including those in memo format, old procedures manuals, handbooks, draft format, etc). In some cases, procedures may be sufficient in their current format. In other cases, they can serve as a basis that can be refined.</p> <p>Step 3: The consultant develops missing procedures with input from those department members most familiar with the process in question. Areas that currently do not have detailed procedures are financial accounting, risk management, purchasing, cash/debt management, auditing, FTE reporting, school improvement, program research and evaluation, facilities planning and development, grounds and warehouse maintenance.</p> <p>Step 4: The consultant compiles the results of the revisions of the operating procedures as well as the newly developed procedures into a standardized format.</p> <p>Step 5: The assistant superintendent assures the consultant cross-references the operating procedures to the originating board</p> <p>Step 6: The MIS department makes the procedures available on-line on both the intranet and the word wide web for all stakeholders' benefit.</p> <p>Step 7: The procedure manual should be updated as procedures change and reviewed annually to ensure the information in it is current and complete.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services, MIS Supervisor, and all other department supervisors and directors.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources. The district has already budgeted funds for the consultant.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	District develops a process for reviewing job descriptions on an regular basis as part of its performance evaluation process.
Action Needed	<p>Step 8: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services and the Human Resources supervisor develop and document a procedure for reviewing job descriptions as part of the evaluation process.</p> <p>Step 9: The Human Resource supervisor should train all directors, principals, and other managers in how to incorporate the job description review into the evaluation process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services, the Human Resource supervisor, all directors, principals, and other managers.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

4 The district routinely obtains legal services to gain advice on policy and to reduce the risk of lawsuits. The district also takes steps to ensure that its legal costs are reasonable.

The district's legal structure has changed over the last several years. From 1998 to 2000, the district had a staff attorney who reported to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, in addition to using outside legal counsel. The staff attorney position was eliminated in 2000 and since then all the legal matters of the district have been handled by outside counsel.

In January 2001 the school board decided to seek an in-house attorney to handle the legal matters of the district. The individual filling this position would report to both the board and the Superintendent. A job description was subsequently developed and approved by the board, the position was advertised, but has not been filled.

The district does not produce a report that categorizes the types of legal actions, but this can be delineated using the billing from the contracted law firm. The contracted law firm also tracks legal deadlines. According to the Superintendent, at such time as in-house counsel comes on board, that office will devise an internal tracking system. The Superintendent has been in touch with the in-house counsel from a neighboring school district, and has obtained samples of tracking systems as it relates to costs and legal deadlines, to implement at a later time.

The Number of Lawsuits Has Been Minimal for the Last Two Years and District's Legal Costs Are Reasonable

According to the Superintendent and the opinion of the current contracted law firm, over the past two years there have been two lawsuits of any significance. The first of these is the Roseborough litigation, which was a result of the board's decision to demolish an old elementary school. Various administrative, circuit court and appellate cases arose in that matter. The second lawsuit was a result of a Superintendent/school board conflict, which arose during the previous administration. During the summer of 2000, the previous Superintendent sued the board over the board's refusal to accept his

recommendation on certain principal transfers within the district. The matter was resolved within a week of filing and the associated costs for the Superintendent/school board conflict were \$6,849. The associated costs for the Roseborough matter was \$21,584 dollars.

Although legal cost are dependent on many variables which makes conclusions based on comparison with other districts difficult, as reflected in Exhibit 3-11, the legal costs of the Lake County School District are line in with those of its peers. On a monthly basis, legal costs are reviewed by both the by Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support and the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services. Each year in January and according to policy, the school board has conducted an evaluation of the legal services to determine whether or not legal counsel should be retained for an additional year based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, information provided to them at that time by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support, and the school board's experience and interaction with counsel.

Exhibit 3-11

Legal Costs of the Lake County School District Are Reasonable When Compared Against Peers

District	Amount Paid		
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Lake	\$97,641	\$160,348	\$137,019
Alachua	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Charlotte	159,960	114,046	148,576
Okaloosa	116,057	119,085	163,361
Osceola	722,915	670,203	827,304
St. Johns	336,738	228,057	165,380
Santa Rosa	\$57,828	\$66,155	\$40,666

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. Telephone Survey May-June 2001.

An In-House Attorney Responding to Both the Board and Superintendent May Cause Controversy

Because Lake County School District has an elected school board and an elected Superintendent, it is likely that the in house attorney the district is planning to hire will experience encounters of conflict of interest when attempting to serve both entities. There will be times when the school board and the Superintendent may disagree on various legal issues and as separately elected constitutionally entities will require legal counsel. In these cases the in house attorney will not be able to serve both parties as he/she is designated to do in the job description. In cases where employee or student discipline matters are appealed to the school board, the attorney will be in conflict when attempting to serve as parliamentarian advising the school board when at the same time he/she had advised the Superintendent and/or staff in administering the discipline. If the in house attorney serves as chief negotiator for the school district and counsel for the administrative staff, he/she will also be in conflict when labor disputes are brought before the board for resolution.

Since April 2001, the Lake County School District has been in the process of advertising and interviewing for an in-house attorney. The job description for the in-house counsel requires that the attorney shall provide direct, full-time, proactive legal counsel to the school board and the Superintendent. Another essential function of this attorney would be to act as the chief negotiator for the district's collective bargain.

The following are several of the various duties assigned to counsel that because of their nature, may be of conflict in a position that reports to both the Superintendent and the board

- serve as parliamentarian at school board meetings;
- represent the school board in administrative hearings, civil constitutional, and student discipline matters;
- coordinate work performed by outside counsel;
- serve as chief negotiator for the school district; and
- serve as a source of informal, preventative legal counseling for administrative staff.

As of August 2001, the district has been unable to find a candidate that fits the profile and therefore decided not to pursue hiring an in-house attorney. Instead, the board approved re-directing the budget to hire an Employee Relations position under the purview of the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resources. Such a title used to exist in the district until November 2000 when the person that used to hold that position was promoted to Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resources but retained the responsibilities of the chief negotiator.

Hiring an Employee Relations supervisor will help improve management by avoiding this responsibility falling back and overburdening the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services who was in charge of collective bargaining before assuming the latter position. The individual in the Employee Relations position will be responsible for the collective bargaining function, labor contract administration and maintenance, and grievance procedures.

As shown in Exhibit 3-12, the chief negotiator can be someone from areas different than Human Resources. The Lake County district has to decide who will play that role, whether the new Employee Relations staff member or another administrator.

Exhibit 3-12

In Four out of Six Peer Districts the Chief Negotiator Role Is Played by a District Administrator

District	Chief Negotiator Function
Lake	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services
Alachua	<i>Information not available to the consultant</i>
Charlotte	Contracted consultant
Okaloosa	Chief Human Resource Officer
Osceola	Associate Superintendent for School Services
St. Johns	Executive Director of Facilities and Operations
Santa Rosa	Contracted consultant

Source: Florida Association of Telephone interview conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. June 2001.

Per the Superintendent's recommendation, the board also decided to continue to contract outside counsel to handle all the district's legal needs. According to the Superintendent, legal services being render by the outside firm are satisfactory and costs reasonable.

To minimize the legal conflict, should the district reconsider whether to create the position of in-house attorney, they should strongly consider that this individual report directly to the Superintendent. The in-house attorney can certainly handle most of the designated duties outlined in the existing job description, however, we recommend that he/she should be removed from being in conflict of interest by serving both

the school board and the Superintendent. When the in-house attorney does not have the necessary expertise to represent the superintendent on certain matters (such as constitutional or civil rights cases) the attorney shall recommend that the district enter into contract with outside counsel. The school board should have an independent counsel on retainer to represent it at school board meetings, disciplinary hearings, and contract disputes brought by the teacher union or employees. When the school board's independent counsel does not have the expertise to represent the school board on certain specific matter, he/she should also use a contract attorney to represent the board.

Organizational Structure, Staffing Levels and Use of Resources —

Goal B: The district regularly assesses its organizational structure, staffing levels, and use of resources to ensure that it is operating efficiently and responsibly.

5 The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority at the higher level. However, organizational charts at the departmental level need to be updated and distributed throughout the organization.

The District's Organizational Structures at the Departmental Level Need to Be Updated and Expanded to Include Functional Perspective

The district's organizational structure at the highest levels presents clearly defined units and lines of authority. The district however, needs to update and define the lines of authority more clearly at the departmental level.

The district has, through numerous restructurings in the past decade, evolved a central office organizational structure. As mentioned in the background part of this chapter, the district started a new administrative period in November 2000 and with it, the organizational structure is being modified and realigned to be more dynamic and responsive to school needs.

In November 2000, the board approved modifications at the highest levels of the organization that included the creation of the position of Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services. According to the superintendent, other changes are anticipated in the near future as the district implements recommendations made by the FADDS study of October 2000. The organizational structure approved in February 2001 is shown in Exhibit 3-5.

At the highest levels, the most recently approved organizational chart of the district (February 2001) accurately reflects organizational structures, reporting relationships, and spans of control. However, perhaps due to the shifting nature of district structure, some departments have not developed organizational charts. For this reason staff members expressed lack of clarity with respect to their reporting relationships. Examples are the Testing and the Pupil Accounting functions. Also, cafeteria managers interviewed were at times unsure if they report to the school principal or the Food Services supervisor.

The Span of Control Under the Superintendent Is Too Large to Allow Effective Management

While a reasonable span of control is considered to be 1 to 7, there are 47 persons that report directly to the superintendent in Lake County.³ The newly approved organizational structure establishes that school principals report directly to the superintendent, which is noteworthy, and can be an excellent measure to get first hand information on the condition of the district. It may, however, cause great interference to effective management. Therefore, this part of the structure must be continually monitored to determine whether it is being effective.

The purpose of having the 42 school principals reporting directly to the Superintendent is to allow the new administration to develop a strong presence and help the superintendent gain first hand information regarding the instructional leadership skills of building principals, the condition of the district, the quality of district office decisions, and the district office support of and impact on the local schools. According to the Superintendent this structure is the best way for her and the new administrative team to gauge the pulse of the district.

In addition to the Superintendent having direct input with the school principals, the assistant superintendents also assist principals with the areas they oversee. This is done because the Superintendent does not have the time needed to address all the principals' needs appropriately. The evaluations of principals are carried out by the Superintendent and co-evaluated by the assistant superintendents.

The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services handles the day-to-day functions of all principals. The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction assists in handling complaints regarding elementary school discipline and addresses all curriculum issues at the schools. When a major issue arises, the assistant superintendent involved and the principal meet with the Superintendent to discuss and resolve the issue. The current structure will continue for another year after which time it will be evaluated.

In an effort to reduce the Superintendent's span of control to a more reasonable ratio, the supervision of principals has recently been split among the three assistant superintendents with each having about 12 principals in the same geographic location. We recommend the district continue to monitor this arrangement to determine whether it meets its purpose effectively.

Exhibit 3-13 shows a comparative analysis of the span of control of the superintendents in the peer districts. Except for Osceola County, the span of control in the peer districts fluctuates between 5 and 11, which is significantly lower than in Lake County (1:46).

³ *Span of control* is defined as the number of persons reporting directly to a manager. An ideal span of control has not been established however a *span-of-control principle* has evolved: *There is a limit to the number of people one manager can effectively supervise; care should be exercised to keep the span of control within manageable limits.* (John R. Schermerhorn, Jr., *Management*, 5th Edition, 1996).

Exhibit 3-13

The Span of Control of the Lake County Superintendent Is the Largest Among the Peer Districts

Superintendents (Span of Control- by District)	Positions Reporting Directly to the Superintendent	
Lake (1:46)	3 Assistant Superintendents 42 School Principals 1 Director (Education Foundation)	
Alachua (1:11)	2 Deputy Superintendents 1 Assistant Superintendent 3 Directors 2 Chiefs	1 Supervisor 1 Staff Attorney 1 Internal Auditor
Charlotte (1:4)	3 Executive Directors 1 Director	
Okaloosa (1:6)	3 Assistant Superintendents 2 Chief Officers 1 Director	
Osceola (1:35)	1 Deputy Superintendent 2 Assistant Superintendents 1 Coordinator (Community Relations)	30 School Principals
St. Johns (1:8)	1 Assistant Superintendent 3 Executive Directors 2 Directors	1 Coordinator (Grants/ Communications) 1 Clerk
Santa Rosa (1:5)	4 Assistant Superintendents 1 Secretary	

Source: Telephone interview conducted by ValienteHernandez, P.A. April – May 2001.

Several Functions Should Be Reviewed and Revised; Other Functions Should Be Exercised in the Context of a Department

There are certain functions within the district based administrative staff that could benefit from shared information and decision making, and closer coordination of related activities. The organization currently has a *positional* structure where people are organized based on the process or service that is being provided. This structure is used in some school systems but has several disadvantages as it is not very flexible and can at times create unhealthy rivalries within departmental units. A *functional* structure proposes grouping people with similar skills that perform similar functions. *Functional* structures are gaining popularity among school districts as they allow efficient use of resources, allow skill development within functions, help improve coordination and allow better establishment of clear responsibilities.

The FADDS study of October 2000 provided an in-depth analysis of the potential benefits of organizational realignment that would benefit the district. ValienteHernandez P.A. concurs with these recommendations and encourages the district to adopt these recommendations in its continuous efforts for improvement. The following are some functions the district should realign:

- The Pupil Accounting function should continue under the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services (not transferred to the finance department as recommended by FADDS). Pupil Accounting is an administrative function.

- The allocation of instructional units to schools should be transferred from the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to the Assistant Superintendent of School Administration and Human Resource.
- The warehousing and distribution of textbooks should be moved from the supervisor of Media and Staff Development to the warehouse manager.

By organizing in the most efficient manner possible the district ensures that roles and responsibilities are aligned with the district's mission and goals

The District Should Create the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability

The district does not have a department in charge of program accountability. Generally, educational and operational programs lack clearly established goals, objectives, performance measures and evaluation processes that allow information-based assessments of the programs and promote public accountability. An analysis conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. showed that four of the six peer districts have a unit or department specifically responsible for evaluation activities. This issue is the subject of Chapter 4 of this report in which each component of the performance accountability procedures in place is discussed in ample detail.

We recommend that the makeup of an office for program accountability in Lake County be composed of one program manager, the testing coordinator, and one secretary, and estimate that it would cost approximately \$402,900 in salary and benefits over the next five-year period, as illustrated in Chapter 4. This calculation is based upon the current full-time state average salary of a manager of Research and Evaluation of \$ 75,540 and the average salary for a secretary in Lake County of \$19,378. Because we recommend the office be created by July 2002, there are no costs incurred in the first year. An annual 4% contractual increase is also considered. Detail of cost calculations, steps for implementation and related changes are presented in Action Plan 4-1, Chapter 4 of this report.

Many of the District's Key Senior Employees Will Retire Within the Next Three Years

Several of the district's employees will retire within the next five years and the district is not preparing other individuals to fill these positions once they are vacant in order to maintain the same level of work experience. Examples of positions that may become vacant due to retirement are the department heads of Media/Staff Development, Student Services, Warehouse, Management Information Systems (MIS), and even the members of the new Leadership Team (Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services).

Even though changes will more than likely occur within mid-term, the district should take the necessary steps to start developing candidates from within the organization that are prepared to fill the vacancies once they come about.

Ideally, the district should be able to prepare these backup positions from within, preferably from the existing pool of school level administrators. School principals are excellent candidates to occupy school administrative positions. Alternatively, the district should be in a position such that is able to attract individuals from outside.

A comparative analysis conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. reflects that the current salary structure of the district may pose a limitation to attracting individuals to fill district level supervisory positions. As shown in Exhibit 3-14, the average salaries of selected supervisory positions are generally below the average registered by Lake's competing peers. This is also true for school principals, where the salary for high, middle, and elementary school principals are generally below the average registered by competing school districts.

Furthermore, district-level supervisors expressed that district-level salaries are not competitive enough if the district were to fill these positions from within because school principals would not be willing to assume new responsibilities for a lesser salary. In reality, the aforementioned analysis demonstrates that this scheme is common in Florida and while the district needs to make adjustments to bring district's administrative salaries to par, the district should also present this or other similar data to administrators. This would greatly help the district overcome the prevalent belief that district-level salaries are not very competitive.

District staff said that the district is exploring the need for a job analysis and compensation study, which would enable it to determine the extent to which salaries should be increased throughout the district. We recommend the district conduct this study and in the meantime, the district should identify those positions that are in most need for an increase in starting salary. The district needs to make adjustments and raise the base salaries and this will not cost the district anything since the raised starting salaries will still be less than they pay those individuals who will be retiring. The fiscal impact of this recommendation is an estimated one-time cost of \$75,000 for the study.

Exhibit 3-14

Average Salary of District Level Supervisors and of School Level Administrators Is Generally Below Those of Competing Districts

District	Voc./Adult Education	Exceptional Education	Student Services	High School Principals	Middle School Principals	Elem. School Principals
Lake	\$67,501	\$67,701	\$68,201	\$71,870	\$67,626	\$65,419
Marion	75,079	69,304	Not Available	81,185	75,427	70,534
Orange	77,634	61,444	Not Available	80,146	69,904	68,722
Osceola	72,516	64,780	65,962	73,322	66,844	68,012
Pasco	71,220	69,977	68,022	79,584	70,522	65,925
Seminole	76,300	77,658	Not Available	78,155	72,540	67,876
Volusia	77,046	Not Available	Not Available	75,811	69,116	63,837
Average Without Lake County	\$74,966	\$68,633	\$66,992	\$78,034	\$70,726	\$67,484
State Average	\$68,510	\$63,687	\$67,860	\$77,356	\$72,205	\$70,372

Source: Florida Department of Education, Education Information and Accountability Services. District Level Administrative Staff. Salaries of Selected Positions. Survey 2 Data, October 9-13, 2000, as of April 3, 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district revise and update the organizational charts and define the lines of authority more clearly at the departmental level. The organization charts should*

clearly show the responsibilities of each of the district's organizational units. When two or more units share responsibility for the same function, the district should develop written descriptions of the limits of each unit's authority and responsibility and how the units are to interact.

- *We recommend that the district continually analyze different alternatives to maintain a reasonable span of control of upper level managers and at the same time, be able to provide appropriate support to school principals. The district should monitor the current arrangement by which the assistant superintendents have split supervision of the principals among them and determine whether it is efficient and effective.*
- *We recommend that the district create an office that concentrates specifically on program planning, research, evaluation and accountability. We recommend this new office be called office Program Evaluation and Accountability and its main function will be to fill the accountability void of the district. This office will be established under the purview of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.*

The main functions of this office are

- *district-wide planning;*
- *student testing, research, and evaluation;*
- *district-wide coordination of the School Improvement Plans' process;⁴*
- *assessment and evaluation of educational and operational program effectiveness and efficiency;*
- *evaluation of the district's strategic plan and goals;*
- *evaluation of the alignment of state, district and program goals and objectives;*
- *provide support to the school improvement process;*
- *provide reports to staff and the school board relating to educational and operational program accountability; and*
- *provide accountability information to constituents.*

The makeup of this office for a district the size of Lake should be a program manager the testing coordinator and one secretary.

Action Plan 4-1 Recommendation 1 in Chapter 3 of this report presents detailed cost calculations, related changes, and steps to implement this recommendation.

- *We recommend that the district adopt some of the recommendations made by FADSS in its in-depth assessment of the organizational alignment of the district. ValienteHernandez P.A. concurs with most of the recommendations made and encourages the district to adopt these recommendations. Additionally, we recommend that the district adopt other changes developed by ValienteHernandez P.A. To this effect we recommend that the district*

⁴ The coordination of the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) is currently a function of the Supervisor of PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction. By moving this responsibility under the proposed new office of Program Evaluation and Accountability, the Supervisor of PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction will be relieved and able to concentrate on other key managerial functions. The proposal is also justified by other findings of this report where the district needs to expand and realign the Basic K-12 Education department to be able to provide effective curricular and instructional support to schools (refer to Chapter 5, Action Plan 5-6, Recommendation 2). According to the supervisor of PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction, activities related to the SIP process can take up to 35% of her time.

- *continue to have the Pupil Accounting function under the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services (not transferred to the Finance department as recommended by FADSS);*
- *transfer the allocation of instructional units to schools from the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to the Assistant Superintendent of School Administration and Human Resource; and*
- *move the warehousing and distribution of textbooks from under the supervisor of Media and Staff Development to the warehouse manager.*
- *Moreover, we recommend that the district hire a consultant to conduct a job analysis and compensation study, which would enable it to determine the extent to which salaries should be increased throughout the district. Meanwhile, the district should identify those positions that are in most need for an increase in starting salary. The district needs to make adjustments and raise the base salaries and this will not cost the district anything since the raised starting salaries will still be less than they pay those individuals who will be retiring. The fiscal impact of this recommendation is an estimated one-time cost of \$75,000 for the study over the next five years.*
- *We recommend that the district take the necessary steps to start developing candidates from within the organization to be prepared to fill key district-level administrative positions once they become vacant. Additionally, the district should overcome the prevalent belief that district level salaries are not very competitive. For this purpose the district should present administrators with the data in Exhibit 3-14 or other similar data to illustrate that the existing salary contrast between school principals and district level administrators is not atypical in Florida.*

Action Plan 3-4 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

*Action Plan 3-4***Update Organization Charts, Make Organizational Changes, and Analyze Salary Levels**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Revise and update organizational charts at the department level describing each unit's functions and responsibilities.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The superintendent assigns the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability responsibility for working with the Human Resource department, assistant superintendents, and department directors to develop functional organizational charts.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent and assistant superintendents identify the functions of each organizational unit and develop a functional organization chart for each unit.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent, assistant superintendents, and the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability review the functional charts to ensure that they comply with the district's strategic plan and clearly delineate responsibility for implementing state directives and district initiatives.</p> <p>Step 4: The Human Resource department reviews, and if necessary revises, the job descriptions for key positions in each organizational unit to ensure that they are consistent with identified unit functions.</p> <p>Step 5: After correcting any inconsistencies, the Superintendent submits the revised job descriptions and functional organizational charts to the board for their approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Continually analyze different alternatives to maintain a reasonable span of control of upper level managers and monitor the current arrangement by which the assistant superintendents have split supervision of the principals among them and determine whether it is efficient and effective
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team assess the effectiveness of the current arrangement and seek input from a representative group of principals to determine if appropriate support is being provided.</p> <p>Step 2: Modifications are made if warranted.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent and the Leadership Team.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Continue to realign the organizational structure. <i>Note:</i> The Pupil Accounting function should continue to be under the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services (not transferred to the Finance department as recommended by FADSS).
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the assistant superintendents meet to discuss the details and approve the following organizational changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer the allocation of instructional units to schools from the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to the Assistant Superintendent of School Administration and Human Resource. • Move the warehousing and distribution of textbooks from under the supervisor of Media and Staff Development to the Warehouse manager. <p>Step 2: The team seeks input from the employees involved in each of the changes to ensure all details are considered.</p> <p>Step 3: Changes are approved and submitted to the school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: The Human Resource department updates Job descriptions and organizational charts accordingly.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and assistant superintendents, and the Human Resource department.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Hire a consultant to conduct a job analysis and compensation study. Adjust the starting salaries for district level positions to be able to attract candidates once they become vacant.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services selects a consultant to conduct a job analysis and compensation study.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent, the three assistant superintendents, and the Finance Director review the results of the study and determine the extent to which salaries could be increased throughout the district.</p> <p>Step 3: The team identifies those positions that are in most need for an increase in starting salary. Base salaries are raised for the selected district level positions. This will not cost the district anything since the raised starting salaries will still be less than they pay those individuals who will be retiring.</p> <p>Step 4: The team submits recommendations to the Superintendent for review and approval.</p> <p>Step 5: The Superintendent submits the revised salaries to the board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and assistant superintendents.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002

Fiscal Impact	One-time cost of \$75,000 over the next five years. Adjusting the salaries will not cost the district since the raised starting salaries for selected district-level positions will still be less than they pay those individuals who will be retiring.
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Recommendation 5

Strategy	Start developing candidates from within the organization to fill key district-level administrative positions once they become vacant.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team begins observing outstanding principals as potential candidates to fill district level administrative positions.</p> <p>Step 2: The Leadership Team compiles a list of individuals occupying key positions that are close to retiring. The list should include, at minimum, the department heads of Staff Development/Instructional Materials/Media, Student Services, Warehouse, Management Information Systems (MIS), and members of the Leadership Team (Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services).</p> <p>Step 3: At the same time, and after starting salaries of selected positions are adjusted (see Recommendation 5 above), the Leadership Team presents administrators with the data in Exhibit 3-14 or other similar data to illustrate that the existing salary contrast between school principals and district level administrators is typical in Florida.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership Team.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

6 **The district's new administration is making significant efforts to take its staffing to efficient levels, to improve operating efficiency and to establish procedures that guarantee these levels are maintained.**

The Lake County School District has reviewed its organizational structure and staffing levels repeatedly in the last six years, but significant changes have not occurred as a result of these studies. However, the district has made changes in the organizational structure for a variety of reasons, including budget shortfalls. As of August 2001, the district considered and approved a staffing plan for position control of district-level administrators.

School-level staffing in the district is provided through an adopted staffing plan system. Each year the plan is reviewed by an allocations committee composed of district and school-level staff members and subsequently the plan is submitted to the school board for approval. The procedure is thorough but due to general breakdown in the district's decision-making process during the previous administration, the procedure was frequently circumvented.

The new administration since its inception gave priority importance to complying with established school-based staffing levels, and thus efforts are continually being made to balance the personnel allocations, reduce overages, and transfer units to schools where growth is justified. As a result, staffing formulas have been revised and adopted for both school based staff (March 2001) and district level staff (July 2001). Additionally, any change to the adopted formulas is to be approved by the board and supported by documentation that validates the need and the availability of funding.

For the year 1999-2000, Lake County's total full-time administrative staff was 117, composed of 20 district level administrators and 97 school level administrators. As shown in Exhibit 3-15, compared to its peers Lake County School District has the lowest number of district level administrators and the highest number of school level administrators.

Exhibit 3-15

When Compared Against its Peers, Lake County Has the Highest Ratio of Students to District Level Administrators and the Lowest Ratio of Students to School Level Administrators

	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns	Santa Rosa
Total Administrative Staff	117	140	75	112	95	132	81
District-Level	20	63	32	48	26	75	22
School-Level	97	77	43	64	69	57	59
Total Student Membership	28,544	29,906	16,753	30,248	31,877	19,046	22,226
Ratio: Total Students to Total Administrative Staff	244:1	214:1	223:1	270:1	335:1	144:1	274:1
Ratio: Total Students to Total District Level Administrative Staff	1,427:1	475:1	524:1	630:1	1,226:1	254:1	1,010:1
Ratio: Total Students to Total School Level Administrative Staff	294:1	388:1	390:1	473:1	462:1	334:1	377:1

Note: ValienteHernandez P.A. rounded the calculations of the different ratios to the nearest whole number.

Source: DOE. School Indicators Report (Survey 2 demographic data, October 11-15, 1999, as of January 25, 2000).

The District Has Recently Adopted a Revised Staffing Formula and Established Effective Controls to Prevent Its Circumvention

Despite the existence of an approved staffing system for schools, the staffing formula was repeatedly circumvented in the previous administrations. Personnel units were granted at both the board and at the district staff level outside the existing rules. Staff allocations in school districts are driven by the annual budgeting process and directly linked to Full Time Equivalent (FTE) calculations. Approving staff units above the school's earned allocations has a direct negative impact over the district's financial condition because salaries are paid without provisions at the budget level.

Shortly after starting its tenure, the new administration created a Staffing Plan Committee with the purpose of implementing the staffing plan recommended by FADSS under the scheme of the district's Economic Recovery Plan. The committee was comprised of principals, assistant principals, parents, union

members, a board member and district-level staff. Its main charge was to review the district's staffing formula for all school-based staff, and to make adjustments as necessary. The staffing allocation plan was produced and approved by the school board.

As a result of the detailed revision of the staffing formula conducted in October 2000 by FADSS, it was found that there were a total of 121.66 staffing units beyond the formula that if reduced, would have translated into savings of over \$4.1 million for the district (see Exhibit 3-16). For the 2001-2002 budgeting process, several of the reductions recommended in the FADSS study were adopted, others were partially implemented and others were put on hold until next year.

We strongly recommend that the district continue to emphasize the importance of adhering to its recently adopted school-based staffing.

Exhibit 3-16

As of October 2000, the District Had a Total of 121.66 Over-Allocated Staff Units Equivalent to Over \$4.1 Million Dollars

School Level Positions	Instructors	Guidance Counselors	Instructional Aides	Clerical Staff	Custodians	Other Custodians	Nurses	Total
Number of units above the formula	55.78	7.00	19.48	23.77	6.62	1.01	8.00	121.66
Monetary Impact	\$2,398,540	\$301,000	\$311,680	\$618,020	\$139,020	\$21,210	\$344,000	\$4,133,470

Source: FADSS Report, October 2001.

District Administrative Staffing Levels Are Comparable to Those of Its Peers and the State Average

Florida Department of Education groups employees in three categories: Administrative, Instructional, and Support, and each of these categories is further broken down into subcategories. As shown in Exhibit 3-17, Lake County is close to the state and peer averages when examined at the broad category. For example, out of the total full-time employees, the district has 3.3% administrators, which is reasonably close to the peer (3.44%) and state (3.82%) averages. However, as will be verified further in this chapter, there are significant variations when closer analyses at the subcategory level are made.

Exhibit 3-17

At the Broad Category Level, District Staff as a Percentage of the Total Employees Is in Line With the State and Its Peers

District	Category			Total Employees
	Administrative	Instructional	Support	
Lake County	3.30%	52.62%	44.08%	3,435
Alachua	3.57%	49.97%	46.46%	3,987
Charlotte	3.29%	50.14%	46.57%	1,961
Okaloosa	3.41%	53.97%	42.62%	3,439
Osceola	2.81%	50.76%	46.43%	3,781
St. Johns	6.16%	53.95%	39.89%	2,179
Santa Rosa	3.67%	63.13%	33.20%	2,179
State Average	3.44%	54.73%	41.83%	
Average value without Lake County	3.82%	53.65%	42.53%	

Source: Full-Time Staff by Activity Assignment. Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services, Florida Department of Education (Survey 2 demographic data, October 11-15, 1999, as of January 25, 2000).

Lake County Has Fewer District-Level Administrators Per Student Than Its Peers

ValienteHernandez P.A. conducted a comparison of Lake County against its peer districts based on different staffing ratios as reflected in Exhibit 3-18 and generally found that staffing ratios were in most cases within peer district average. The exception was the number of students per district level administrator where Lake County registered 1,427 students per district administrator. In comparison, peer districts ratios of district level administrators to students ranged widely from 1:254 in St. John's to 1:1,226 in Osceola. In brief, Lake County has

- 1 administrator for every 14 classroom teachers and 1 for every 29 employees;
- 1 classroom teacher for every 18 students;
- 1 teacher aide for every 5 classroom teachers;
- 1 guidance counselor for every 357 students; and
- 1 administrator for every 1,427 students.

Exhibit 3-18**Staffing Ratios Are Within Peer Average Except for Students to District and School Level Administrators**

District Ratios	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns	Santa Rosa
All Administrators to Classroom Teachers	1:14	1:12	1:11	1:15	1:17	1:15	1:8
All Administrators to Total Instructional Personnel	1:16	1:14	1:13	1:17	1:20	1:17	1:9
All Administrators to Total Staff	1:29	1:28	1:26	1:31	1:40	1:27	1:17
Classroom Teachers ¹ to Students	1:18	1:17	1:20	1:18	1:19	1:18	1:17
Teachers Aides to Classroom Teachers	1:5	1:4	1:3	1:4	1:3	1:5	1:5
Guidance to Students	1:357	1:399	1:493	1:504	1:469	1:473	1:414
School-Level Administrators to Students	1:294	1:388	1:390	1:473	1:462	1:334	1:377
District-Level Administrators to Students	1:1,427	1:475	1:524	1:630	1:1,226	1:254	1:1,010

¹ The *classroom teachers* group includes classroom teachers such as elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, exceptional student education teachers, and other instructional staff. DOE defines *other instructional staff* as full-time teachers who cannot be easily classified in the elementary or secondary classroom teacher categories. This category includes full-time, permanent substitute teachers and adult education instructors.

Note: ValienteHernandez P.A. rounded the calculations of the different ratios to the nearest whole number.

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. and DOE Profiles of Florida School Districts 1999-2000 (Survey 2 demographic data, October 11-15, 1999, as of January 25, 2000). Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services.

A closer look at the makeup of the *Administrative* category into subcategories reveals that out of the six peer districts, Lake County has the smallest number of district level staff when this group is compared as a percent of the total full time employees. In contrast, the school level administrative group is the largest. The ranking is illustrated in Exhibit 3-17. This fact is further explained by Exhibit 3-19 which shows that the district has the highest ratio of students to district level administrators (1:1,427) and the lowest ratio of students to school level administrators (1:294).

This lack of condition of in balanced between district-level and school-based administrators bodies is greatly explained by two factors. First, the staffing formula has a history of being circumvented to increase school level staffing units as described earlier in this chapter, and second, the district operates a number of small schools that results in a need for additional school-level administrative staff, as described in the next discussion.

Over the years the staffing at the district level has been held at a minimum. This appears to have been greatly influenced by the generalized public perception that school district offices have too many employees.

Certainly instructional staff is most important in the school business but to operate its infrastructure, a balanced number of administrators are equally important. A very small district-level administrative staff will hamper educational success, effective leadership, quality assurance, accountability, and appropriate decision making. Three separate organizational structure studies carried out between 1995 and 2000 (two by FADSS and one by Deloitte and Touche) have reached similar conclusions.

In our opinion, the following are the areas where the district would most benefit by adding district level administrators. The first three bullets are areas the district has already addressed with which we concur; the last three are based on conclusions made by ValienteHernandez P.A.

- Filling the position for Public Information Officer (board approved in August 2001)
- Filling the position of Grants Writer (board approved in August 2001)
- Filling the position of Employee Relations supervisor (board approved in August 2001)
- Creating an Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. (See Chapter 4 Action Plan 4-1 Recommendation 1)
- Adding Program Specialists to expand the PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction department. (See Chapter 5 Action Plan 5-6 Recommendation 2)
- Reinstating the In-Service Trainer Position for TERMS System (See Chapter 6 Action Plan 6-3 Recommendation 1)
- Hiring a Fiscal Assistant to expand the internal accounts auditing function (Chapter 12 Action Plan 14-3 Recommendation 1)

Exhibit 3-19

Lake County Has the Smallest Percentage of District Level Administrative Staff and the Largest School Level Administrative Body Among Its Peers

Percentage of Total District Staff							
District	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns	Santa Rosa
District Level Administrators	0.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.4%	0.7%	3.4%	1.0%
School Level Administrators	2.8%	1.9%	2.2%	1.9%	1.8%	2.6%	2.7%

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. and DOE School Indicators Report as of January 2001 (Survey 2 demographic data, October 11-15, 1999, as of January 25, 2000).

Staffing of Small Schools Causes Excessive Overhead Costs

A factor that contributes to the Lake's rank as the highest school based staffing among its peers, is the fact that Lake opts to operate small school—schools below 400 students in membership. Staffing necessary to operate these facilities puts a financial burden over the school system as a whole. Exhibit 3-20 shows the correlation between the size of the schools—elementary schools—and the respective operating costs. As shown, the three smallest elementary schools had the highest per student operating costs and even the

largest of the elementary schools had lower per student operating costs than in the year 1999-2000.⁵ There are underlying variables that affect per student operating costs such as the age of the facility as demonstrated in Exhibit 3-20, there is a strong correlation between the size of the school and the per student operating costs.

If the district decides to continue to operate small schools, it should conduct comprehensive analyses and come up with different alternatives that could keep the operating costs at reasonable levels. These could include sharing positions among schools. Alternatively, the district could consolidate and/or close schools.

Exhibit 3-20

Elementary Schools of Less Than 400 Students Had the Highest Per Student Operating Costs in the Year 1999-2000

Elementary School	Student Membership	Operating Costs (\$) Per Student
Roseborough	321	5,947
Rimes	330	7,181
Dabney	393	4,926
Eustis	506	4,494
Astatula	528	4,071
Beverly Shores	589	4,363
Groveland	595	4,746
Clermont	602	4,379
Mascotte	610	4,244
Villages	613	4,120
Cypress Ridge	626	3,620
Tavares	628	4,643
Minneola	652	3,691
Umatilla	662	4,139
Fruitland Park	672	4,244
Triangle	683	4,856
Skeen	696	4,841
Spring Creek	733	N/a
Treadway	762	3,839
Seminole	883	4,021
Lost Lake	905	3,210
Eustis Heights	917	4,583

Source: Florida Department of Education. 1999-2000 Profiles of Florida School Districts (Survey 2 demographic data, October 11-15, 1999, as of January 25, 2000).

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district expand the group of district level administrators. The district has recently approved the creation of several district level administrative positions including*

⁵ Operating cost is the per-student cost for school operation.

a Public Information Officer, a Supervisor of Employee Relations, a Health and Safety Officer and a Safety Management Coordinator. These additions will take the district to a more reasonable level. There are other areas where the district would benefit by adding district level administrators.

- *Create an Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. Action Plan 4-1 Recommendation 1 in Chapter 4 describes the necessary steps to implement this recommendation.*
- *Add Program Specialists to expand the PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction department. Action Plan 5-6, Recommendation 2 Chapter 5 describes the necessary steps to implement this recommendation.*
- *Reinstate the In-Service Trainer Position for TERMS System. Action Plan 6-3 Recommendation 1 Chapter 6 describes the necessary steps to implement this recommendation.*
- *Hire a Fiscal Assistant to expand the internal accounts auditing function. Action Plan 14-3 Recommendation 1 Chapter 12 describes the necessary steps to implement this recommendation.*
- *We recommend that the district conduct a comprehensive assessment of operating costs to determine whether to continue to operate small schools. Different alternatives should be evaluated that could keep the operating costs at reasonable levels, sharing positions among schools for example. Alternatively, the district could consolidate and/or close schools.*
- *We recommend that the district further its efforts to share staff among campuses to reduce operating costs especially in elementary schools. The district can assign specific teachers to teach in more than one campus and / or assign teachers to teach one or more sections at a certain school level. This negates the need for full-time teachers that each campus would otherwise hire for these positions. The district can also share media specialists and nurses among several campuses. The district should consider combining services with adjoining schools or combine staff at elementary, middle and high schools, if necessary.*

Action Plan 3-5 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

*Action Plan 3-5***Take Steps to Reduce Operating Costs**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Further the assessment of the cost of operating small schools.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish a task force composed of district administrators, budget staff, school principals, teachers, parents, and community leaders.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish the rationale and parameters of the task force.</p> <p>Step 3: The task force holds public meetings and gathers input from all stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 4: Information gathered by the task force is reduced to a preliminary report.</p> <p>Step 5: The preliminary report is discussed with the board at a board workshop.</p> <p>Step 6: Report is finalized and submitted for board approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource and Assistant Superintendent for Operations.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Further efforts to share staff among campuses to reduce operating costs especially in elementary schools.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource investigate a variety of ways for the district to staff schools by sharing staff among schools.</p> <p>Step 2: A plan is developed for sharing staff positions such as media specialists and nurses so that more services can be included.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent and board review and approve the plan.</p> <p>Step 4: The plan for organizational changes is implemented.</p> <p>Step 5: The plan is monitored for effectiveness.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Time Frame	May 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation will result in a positive fiscal impact for the district. The amount of the additional revenue however, cannot be quantified at this time.

7 The Superintendent and school board should continue to refine the mechanisms by which the district's financial resources are monitored.

Overall, the district needs to improve its budget process and the board needs to exercise a more effective oversight of the district's financial resources. The board's oversight role can be improved with training on school district budgeting and finance activity. The district should contribute to the process by presenting the budget in an easy to understand, friendlier format.

Board Members Strongly Agree That Their Involvement and Understanding of the Budgetary Process Can Be Improved

Results of the survey completed by board members clearly indicate that overall they could benefit from better understanding the budgeting process and that their involvement with the budgeting activities could be more effective. Four out the five board members completed the survey. Of these, three believe the budget format is not easy to understand. When asked whether budget increases are tied to priorities, two board members could not provide an answer and the other two strongly disagreed. See Exhibit 3-21 for more detail.

Exhibit 3-21

Summary of Board Members' Opinions on Budgeting Activities

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. Size n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
School Board (N= 5; n= 4)	District school board members receive training in school district budgeting and financial practices.	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%
	The proposed school district budget is presented to the board in an easy-to-read, understandable, and concise format.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%
	The budget clearly establishes levels of operational and financial accountability.	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
	Budgets are prepared commensurate with functional responsibilities to facilitate effective budget monitoring at the program/activity level.	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
	Requests for budget increases are made in easy-to-read, understandable, and concise formats.	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. Size n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
	Requests for budget increases are tied to priorities established in the board's long-term plan for the district.	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	The board has in place a procedure for handling budget reductions and for implementing such reductions.	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%
	The district's long-range audit plans have been developed in consultation with the board and senior management.	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

The District Has Taken the Necessary Steps to Address Past Budgetary Problems

The responsibility of the district Superintendent is to prepare and submit an annual budget to the board whereas the board is responsible for approving the final budget. The special review conducted by OPPAGA in August 2000 found that the district lacked strategic planning and effective linkages between district goals and the budget. The report highlighted two key findings. First it states that: “*The district does not have consensus on strategic direction and budget priorities on which to base budget decisions. Thus, budget decisions are made without agreement on the district’s short-term and long-term goals and objectives.*” The review also found that “*officials do not communicate sufficiently with each other during budget preparation and amendment process. As a result, the budget decisions are made without always fully considering the financial implications.*”

This report was issued one month before the new superintendent was elected. The new administrative team has responded very energetically to OPPAGA’s findings and since its inception has made tremendous efforts to improve. Please refer to Action Plan 3-8 and related discussions for further explanation.

The district has taken several actions in the areas of financial planning and budgeting.

- The Finance department is developing an easier to understand budget format.
- The accounting and budgetary system has been significantly revised to allow for proper accountability aligned with line responsibility to the lowest levels of management. As a result, departments have input in developing their budgets and supervisors are accountable for their expenditures.
- Board members are involved in the process.
- A Financial Oversight Committee has been established.
- Staff allocation formula has been revised.
- Long term strategic plan is under way.
- Plan will link goals to district budget.

The Board Needs to Participate in More Budget Training

Board members expressed that the amount of budget training they have received could be increased. The district does not have an established training program. Board members generally obtain training through the Florida School Boards Association (FSBA) Master Board Training program as shown in Exhibit 3-22. However, the Master Board curriculum does not include specific training in district budgeting or educational funding unless districts specifically request for on-site assistance.

The board could improve its oversight of district resources with training on school district budgeting and finance, through workshops organized by the district's finance department in conjunction with FSBA that has that the ability to provide specific training on oversight of the district's financial resources. Exhibit 3-22 shows FSBA training undergone by board members and the Superintendent for the respective years they have been in office.

Exhibit 3-22

Board Members Have Obtained Reasonable Training During Their Tenures

FSBA Programs	Board Member 1	Board Member 2	Board Member 3	Board Member 4	Board Member 5	Spdt. of Schools
Master Board Program	1997 2001	2001	2001	2001	2001	2001
Annual Board Conference	1999 2000	1999	1999 2000 2001	1999 2000 2001	2001	2001
Orientation Conference	1997 1999		1999 2001	1999	2001	2001
School Board Academy						
Regional Legislative Review			1999			
Day in the Legislature	1999	1999 2001				
CBM Program Participation	1998 1999 2000 2001		1999 2000			
On-site Technical Assistance Workshops	1997	1997				

Source: Florida School Boards Association (FASB) records, July 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district obtain training for school board members on district budgeting and finance. The district should hire the Florida School Board Association (FSBA) to conduct the training. FSBA can provide the training in a one- or two-day workshop. School board members should also avail themselves of other FSBA services and meetings in which financial and budgeting information are covered.*

- *We recommend that the Finance department continue to conduct presentations to the school board as a group and on a one-to-one basis with the purpose of clearing up information on budgetary issues such as:*
 - *a summary of the district's operations;*
 - *historical information on revenues, expenditures and fund balance by major function over the past two or three years;*
 - *information about the district's FTE calculations;*
 - *millage information;*
 - *budget calendar; and*
 - *use of lottery funds, etc.*
- *We recommend that the district follow through with commitment to gain Master Board Certification.*

Action Plan 3-6 shows the steps necessary to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 3-6

Acquire Additional Budgeting and Finance Training for School Board Members

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Obtain budgeting and finance training for school board members.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine the specific areas in which the board should receive training. Step 2: Contact the FSBA or another suitable organization to schedule training. Step 3: Complete board training. Step 4: School board members should also avail themselves to other FSBA services and meetings in which financial and budgeting information are covered.
Who Is Responsible	School board
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Continue to conduct presentations to the school board as a group and on a one-to-one basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Finance Director organizes presentations to board members on issues such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the district's operations; • historical information on revenues, expenditures and fund balance by major function over the past two or three years; • information about the district's FTE calculations; • millage information; • budget calendar; and • use of lottery funds. <p>Step 2: The Finance Director provides this information to the board during workshops or regularly scheduled board meetings.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of the Finance Department and school board members.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Follow through with commitment to gain Master Board Certification.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Superintendent and school board members complete Master Board certification.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and school board members.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

8 The district has clearly assigned school principals the authority they need to effectively manage their schools while adhering to district-wide policies and procedures and should continue its efforts to overcome communication barriers.

The District Can Demonstrate That It Has Clearly Communicated Authority to School Administrators

The district empowers principals to effectively manage the schools. School board policy 3.10 clearly delineates the responsibility of the principals and their relationship with the district. The policy states: *"The administrative head of each school is the school principal... The District staff exists to give support and direction to the schools"*. In addition, the board-approved Human Resource Management Development plan clearly explains the responsibilities.

The district also has job descriptions in place for both the principals and assistant principals that explain the authority assigned to them. The job description of the school principal, for example, includes the following essential managerial functions:

- decision making (in the areas of personnel and school procedures);
- proactivity (in planning, directing and leading);
- management control (in supervising, evaluating and delegating authority);
- communication (providing leadership in school relations);
- achievement and development orientation;
- facilitative leadership;
- commitment to vision and mission;
- organizational skills; and
- judgment and analysis/critical thinking skills.

Steps Are Being Taken to Overcome Communication Difficulties Between School-Based Administrators and District-Level Staff

The communications between the district staff and the school administrators had a history of being ineffective. To overcome this obstacle, the new administration made two radical changes. First, in the organizational structure approved in February 2001, principals were assigned directly under the purview of the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. This action had several objectives:

- reinstate the authority of the school principals;
- gain first hand information regarding the instructional leadership skills of building principals;
- assessing the condition of the district;
- assessing the quality of district office decisions;
- gauge the quality of support rendered by the district offices to schools; and
- allow the new administration to develop a strong presence.

The assistant superintendents handle the day-to-day functions of principals and complaints regarding school issues such as discipline and all curricula. When a major issue arises, the assistant superintendent involved and the principal meet with the superintendent to discuss and resolve the issue. The current structure will continue for another year after which time it will be evaluated.

The second major action taken by the new administration to improve relationships with and among school administrators was to include school principals as part of the Leadership Team. Representatives of elementary, middle, and high schools are present at Leadership Team meetings to give insight in their particular areas of operation relating to the issues being discussed. These representatives then report back to their peers through regular meetings and e-mails.

The District Should Take Additional Steps to Improve Principals' Input in the Decision-Making Process

After analyzing the results of the *Principals and Assistant Principals Survey* conducted, various themes surfaced that point out some areas of concern (see Exhibit 3-23):

- 57% of the respondents feel the district has not given school administrators sufficient staffing and budget flexibility;
- 40% feel the district's budgeting process does not consider the needs of individual schools; and
- 36% feel that school based administrators do not have input in the FTE projection procedures.

ValienteHernandez P.A. staff conducted on-site visits to more than half of the schools in Lake County. During those visits, school principals recognized the efforts being made by the new administration to better communications. They generally already see improvements and were optimistic that improvements will continue to be made.

Exhibit 3-23

Principals and Assistant Principals Opinions

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; n= respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Principal/Assistant Principal (N= 84; n= 52)	School administrators have sufficient authority over school operations to enable them to achieve school, district, and state education goals.	77.1%	22.9%	0.0%
	The authority of school administrators has been clearly established and communicated by the district.	91.3%	8.7%	0.0%
	The district has given school administrators sufficient staffing and budget flexibility.	40.9%	56.8%	2.3%
	The district regularly assesses the authority it has assigned to school-based administrators.	63.2%	18.4%	18.4%
	The district regularly looks for ways to enhance school-based decision making.	61.9%	21.4%	16.7%
	In conducting the review of staffing levels, the district obtains feedback from its school-level staff.	67.4%	20.9%	11.6%
	The district's budgeting process considers the needs of individual schools	57.5%	40.0%	2.5%
	School based administrators have input in the FTE projection procedures.	59.6%	36.2%	4.3%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

The District Is Taking Further Steps to Increase School-Based Management and Increasing the Waivers and Provide Additional Flexibility

Presently, the district is exploring the possibility of a pilot study for school-based management involving selected schools. A school board policy is also being drafted to support such a study. The policy states: *"...(the) policy is designed to foster decision making to determine the feasibility of expanding local control and to gather data on school operations in selected schools. Site-based schools will operate under the policies of the Lake County School Board and be subject to the specific requirements of the pilot school-based management policies..."* The district has deferred the implementation of the pilot study due to the great transition burden and the current priorities established by the Finance department. As of July 2001, there has not been a formal decision made by the board however district staff will recommend that the pilot program be carried out during the 2002-2003 school year

There is also a waiver process in place under the authority of s. 229.592(9), *Florida Statutes*, through which schools can seek for approval of waivers from those statutes that relate to instruction and school operation. This process allows the district to serve as a check on the decisions and at the same time encourages the school to be innovative. Because the district wants to promote innovative ideas, it does not see an obstacle in limiting the waivers to the schools.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district give principals more responsibility in the FTE process. Refer to page 3-53 for further discussions on this subject.*

Action Plan 3-7 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-7

Increase Principal's Involvement in the FTE Process

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Assign school principals more responsibility in the FTE process.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and Leadership Team with input from the FTE administrators (see Action Plan 3-9) discuss different actions to explain and expand principals' responsibility in the FTE process. The expanded spectrum of new responsibilities could include that the school principal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is responsible for getting a satisfactory FTE review from the internal auditors; • is responsible for having in place a procedure for accurately counting and recording student attendance, and FTE-related entry data; • designates a responsible FTE administrator at his or her school; • ensures that coverage is given to the FTE administrator during the FTE counts;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes sure that he or she hires a competent data entry clerk and insures that this person is properly trained in data input; and • ensures that the data entry clerk participates in district-coordinated FTE workshops.
	Step 2: Additional principals' responsibilities are finalized. Existing job descriptions are updated accordingly.
	Step 3: The Superintendent submits modified principals' job description to the board for approval.
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent, Leadership Team, and FTE administrators.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Strategic Plan

Goal C: To ensure that the district's resources focus on district priorities, the district maintains a strategic plan and uses that plan to allocate resources.

9 Currently, the district does not have a board approved and detailed strategic plan, but has taken reasonable steps to develop this plan to include annual goals and measurable objectives.

Since OPPAGA issued its special report in October 2000, the Superintendent established the development of a comprehensive strategic plan a priority. Specifically, the new administration has placed strong emphasis in linking goals to budget and even though the existing plan is far from being comprehensive, it was presented to department heads as the guide for developing and implementing a comprehensive economic recovery plan and subsequent budget.

The first step towards strategic planning was the adoption of the concept of an Economic Recovery Plan and Strategies, designed to enhance efficiency and strengthen the district's financial status early in the tenure of the new administration. All of these strategies have been commenced and many have already been completed.

The existing strategic plan falls short of being comprehensive but has served as a basis for all business-related decisions in this administration during the economic recovery process, including the establishment of a minimum fund balance, the prioritization of capital projects, corrections to the allocation formula, school bus replacement plans, development of a district level staffing plan, and involvement of personnel in the budget development process.

The New Administration Has Reactivated the Strategic Planning Process

The 2000-01 Strategic Plan is in the form of a pamphlet and includes the district's mission statement, vision, beliefs, goals, parameters and strategies, all in a very summarized simple manner. However, the

document does not link state and district goals, and student performance, and is not connected to the budget.

In view of the importance of having a comprehensive strategic plan, the new administration is presently working to expand the plan and has hired a consultant to assist it with the development of the plan. Additionally, the Leadership Team has established the following interim goals:

- have the final, comprehensive strategic plan in place no later than December 31, 2001.;
- recommended short-term priorities based on strategic planning information will be available to the board to assist and guide them in prioritizing budget decisions, as the district continues holding budget workshops over the next several months in the preparation of the 2002-03 budget; and
- in order to ensure that spending is consistent with the district's mission, goals, and objectives, the budget must be correlated to the comprehensive strategic plan. The Superintendent often emphasizes the idea that the funding of prioritized needs is driven by the strategic plan.

The Strategic Plan Will Link the Budget to the District's Goals and Measure Progress

To assess the progress made towards achieving the district's goal quarterly reports will be provided to the school board that are based on more frequent monitoring and reporting to the Superintendent by district staff assigned to monitor particular goal. Measurement of the goals will vary from goal to goal based on data gathered and will include, but not be limited to, improvements in student achievement as measured by statewide testing. Details regarding goal assessment will be forthcoming in the strategic plan.

The new administration recognizes and stresses the importance of linking budget to goals and made it a priority. Even as early as January 2001, for example, at a Business and Support Services division meeting the existing strategic plan was presented to department heads as the guide for developing and implementing a comprehensive economic recovery plan and subsequent budget. The strategic plan that is being developed will formally link the budget to the district's goals.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district finalize its new five-year strategic plan by December 31, 2001 and ensure that the plan establishes a clear direction for the district. The district should update and adjust the plan each year, using information on achievement of the prior year's goals and input from a broad group of stakeholders. The plan should also emphasize decision making, from the board down to every administrative level in order to maintain consistency. Moreover, administrator compensation should be tied to the achievement of each plan priority.*

We also recommend that the five-year strategic plan become the natural starting point for the district's planning and management system. In developing budgets for upcoming years, the district should allocate resources according to the priorities developed in the planning process, thereby enabling the district to meet its objectives through available district funds. Expenditures also should be tracked and reported according to each priority.

- *We recommend that the district carry out certain related activities to support and enhance the strategic plan and to contribute to creating a solid and significant documented process for the allocation of resources and improvement of the entire planning system.*

Action Plan 3-8 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

*Action Plan 3-8***Finalize the Strategic Plan**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Finalize the five-year strategic plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team, with input from administrators, teachers, parents and students, finalize the five-year strategic plan. The strategic plan should emphasize on involvement and decision making, from the board to every administrative level, in order to maintain consistency.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent submits the five-year strategic plan to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: To promote accountability, compensation of district administrators should be tied to achievement of each plan priority. The Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services examine the procedure needed to link administrator compensation to the achievement of each plan priority.</p> <p>Step 4: Once the procedure is determined, the Superintendent submits it to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 5: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team employ the strategic plan as the starting point for the district's planning and management system and allocate resources according to the priorities developed in the strategic planning process.</p> <p>Step 6: The Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services devise the procedure needed to track strategic plan priorities and associated expenditures.</p> <p>Step 7: Procedure is finalized, tested and implemented.</p> <p>Step 8: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team update the plan annually, using information on achievement of the prior year's goals and input from a broad group of stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 9: Each year, the Superintendent submits district priorities to the board and demonstrates how these will help achieve the five-year goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 10: The board approves annual district priorities.</p> <p>Step 11: Each administrator in the district completes an administrative work plan, stating what the administrator will do to help achieve objectives. Administrators are evaluated and compensated in part according to the achievement of the work plan.</p> <p>Step 12: The district superintendent and assistant superintendents monitor plan implementation.</p> <p>Step 13: The Superintendent makes the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability an integral part of the strategic plan implementation and monitoring process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Leadership Team and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.

Time Frame	March 31, 2001 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Carry out certain related activities to support and enhance the strategic plan and to contribute to creating a solid and significant documented process for the allocation of resources and improvement of the district's entire planning system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and Leadership Team discuss different activities that should be undertaken to enhance the five-year strategic plan and develop the entire planning system of the district.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent assigns the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability prime responsibility in this task. The Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability should assist in and coordinate the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopting annual priorities; • writing and updating school improvement plans; • following a program development cycle to review programs in all subjects; • developing a program evaluation system; • completing and monitoring existing administrative work plans (i.e. Technology Plan, Facilities Construction Plan, etc.), and developing or reactivating work plans for those administrative areas that currently do not have one in place; • maintaining an updated personnel evaluation system; and • using a management information system to track and record district progress. <p>Step 3: Once the group of strategic plan-related activities that will be undertaken is chosen and mechanics finalized, the Superintendent submits to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: The Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability communicates results of the activities to stakeholders.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent, Leadership Team and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	September 31, 2001 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

10 The district's enrollment projections have been acceptable per state standards. However changes can be made to improve the accuracy and the effectiveness of the process.

Although the Lake County School District received an acceptable audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1998, the audit disclosed many instances of material noncompliance. These included the preparation and

maintenance of supporting documentation for Dropout Prevention students, Limited English proficient (LEP) students, and exceptional students. Records of exceptional education students were not properly and accurately prepared or were missing and could not be located. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and parent notification letters for Dropout Prevention and LEP students were not in good order. One of the contributing factors to the audit results is the fact that the district does not have an adequate structure for FTE administration or policies and procedures in place that could produce more accurate projections and more complete FTE reporting and FTE related functions.

The District Should Develop Written Procedures Pertaining to the FTE Projection Process

The district currently has no written procedures that describe the process used to project FTE enrollment and to review the accuracy of these projections. The responsibility of conducting FTE projections and reporting of the four annual counts is placed solely with one person that holds the title of FTE Specialist who reports to the district's Finance Director. FTE accounting for Work Force Development and Transportation is conducted independently by the Vocational-Technical, Adult and Community Education and the Transportation departments. According to the FTE Specialist, the data entry clerks who are responsible for entering all attendance and FTE data receive minimal training from the MIS Department. An FTE guide manual that is provided by the state is available to these data entry clerks.

An analysis conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. for three consecutive years, show wide discrepancies between the projected FTE and the actual amounts of FTE earned, especially at the individual program levels as illustrated in Exhibit 3-24. For example in Category 251 (ESE Support Level I) there were 175.60 units under projected for the year 1997-1998, 255.92 units over projected in the year 1998-1999, and 724.9 units under projected for the year 1999-2000.

FTE projections are of crucial importance to the district because they determine the weighted and unweighted FTE dollars that the district can claim from the state.⁶ When FTE projections are not met in the unweighted programs the district does not lose or gain additional revenue. When FTE projections are overestimated or underestimated in weighted FTE programs, the result could cause a financial shortfall of FTE revenue to the district from the state.

If FTE projections are overestimated, the board, based on an over-inflated budget will make plans for new programs, salary raises with money that will not materialize. Over projecting has a deeper impact on the state's education budget especially if many districts tend to over project because it may ultimately affect the revenue per FTE each district is assigned. Generally, the FTE Specialist performs the annual FTE projections by accepting one of the Computerized Projection Models provided by the Department of Education that best fits Lake County, and after minor adjustments submits it as the official district's projections report.

The district does not use auxiliary data such as demographic trends within the district, changes in land use, local ordinances that affect the rate of growth of the area, economic conditions reported by the private sector, availability of community services, etc. Moreover, the district does not use additional statistical enrollment techniques such as cohort survival methodology. Including this data is an integral part of the FTE projections and should be a standard practice in all school districts to obtain a clear and

⁶ The unweighted FTE is the base allocation given by the state to a basic unit (\$3,278.35 for each student for the year 2000-2001, for example). The weighted FTE is the basic unit amount multiplied by a factor the state assigns to certain programs. The reason why the state assigns this multiplier factor is because some programs cost more to operate than the normal basic unit.

more complete projection of the number and type (i.e., students with special needs) of students that are expected to attend the school district.

Pupil accounting and FTE analysis are both administrative functions that are very similar in nature except that the FTE analysis has financial implications. In the Lake County School District for example, pupil accounting is responsible for conducting a district wide study to identify current and potential growth. However, such a study has not been conducted in four years and therefore this information is not available to refine FTE calculations. (Refer to Chapter 10, Facilities Construction, Page 11-23, for additional information on demographic studies in the district). Furthermore, comparisons of FTE counts versus enrollment to verify FTE participation is not conducted either.

The district should institute specific procedures for conducting FTE projections, for collecting and reporting FTE data, and for training and supervising all staff who have a role in the FTE reporting process. Additionally, the FTE Specialist should be designated as the district's FTE Administrator and given the responsibility of overseeing all facets of FTE and pupil accounting. The district should also establish a District Level FTE Committee and that the FTE Administrator be the committee's chairperson. An FTE training manual should also be developed. Further, we recommend the district's internal auditor conduct annual performance audits of the FTE process to determine the accuracy in reporting FTE projections.

*Exhibit 3-24***Year 2000–2001 FTE Projection Versus Actuals**

Category	1997-1998		1998-1999		1999-2000	
	Difference over/ (under)	Amount over/under (\$) \$2,926.61/FTE	Difference over/ (under)	Amount over/under (\$) \$3,088.34/FTE	Difference over/ (under)	Amount over/under (\$) \$3,105.41/FTE
Basic Education						
101 - K-3 Basic Education	318.03	\$930,750	172.20	\$531,812	-123.18	\$-382,524
102 - 4-8 Basic Education	6.47	18,935	88.87	274,461	-479.82	-1,490,038
103 - 9-12 Basic Education	-445.87	-1,304,888	-68.30	-210,934	-105.47	-327,528
Subtotal (110 - 118)	-121.37	-355,203	192.77	595,339	-708.47	-2,200,090
Students at Risk						
120 - Dropout Prevention	44.63	130,615	-14.10	-43,546	739.35	2,295,985
121 - Ed Alt 9-12	-352.16	-1,030,635	40.70	125,695	177.31	550,620
130 – ESOL	-885.30	-2,590,928	4.83	14,917	-42.29	-131,328
Subtotal (120 - 133)	47.57	139,219	31.43	97,067	874.37	2,715,277
Exceptional Education						
251 - ESE Support Level I	-175.60	-513,913	255.92	790,368	-724.90	-2,251,112
252 - ESE Support Level II	137.31	401,853	-52.83	-163,157	253.60	787,532
253 - ESE Support Level III	-15.60	-45,655	-113.44	-350,341	677.87	2,105,064
254 - ESE Support Level IV	-33.06	-96,754	32.57	100,587	99.78	309,858
255 - ESE Support Level V	12.67	37,080	45.06	139,161	-0.64	-1,987
Subtotal (200 - 299)	-74.28	-217,389	167.28	516,618	302.71	940,039
Vocational Ed (7 -12)						
300 – Vocational	19.33	56,571	-59.54	-183,880	52.79	163,935
Subtotal (300 - 329)	19.33	56,571	-59.54	-183,880	52.79	163,935
Grand Total	-128.75	\$-376,801	331.94	\$1,025,144	521.40	\$1,619,161

Source: DOE Forecast System Reports.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district institute specific procedures for conducting FTE projections, for collecting and reporting FTE data, and for training and supervising all staff who have a role in the FTE reporting process. The FTE Specialist should be designated as the district's FTE Administrator and given the responsibility of overseeing all facets of FTE and pupil accounting.*

- *We recommend that the district establishes a District Level FTE Committee and that the FTE Administrator be the committee's chairperson. This committee should be composed of representatives from Finance, Pupil Assignment, Unit Allocation, MIS, Professional Standards, Personnel, Pre-K, ESE, Vocational, Transportation, ESOL, Dropout Prevention, Gifted, and Charter Schools. This committee should be responsible for providing input for FTE projections and assisting in the preparation for conducting the four annual FTE counts. This committee should also be involved in identifying training needed by data entry clerks.*
- *We recommend that an FTE training manual be developed in collaboration with the FTE Administrator, MIS, and the District Level FTE committee. The manual should be updated as new FTE rules and regulations are made available.*
- *We recommend that the district's internal auditor conduct annual performance audits of the FTE process to determine the accuracy in reporting FTE projections. The performance audit should key in all the FTE rules and regulations and should be conducted independently from the FTE Committee and the FTE Administrator. These results of these performance audits will assist the District FTE Administrator to find areas in the reporting procedure that need to be corrected.*

Action Plan 3-9 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-9

Make Improvements to the FTE Projection Process

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Designate the FTE Specialist as the district's FTE Administrator and standardize the FTE process.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team draft a job description of the position of FTE Administrator. The FTE Administrator is an upgrade of the position of FTE Specialist. The FTE Specialist is then designated as the district's FTE Administrator and given the responsibility for overseeing all facets of FTE and pupil accounting. The salary level of the FTE Administrator is adjusted accordingly. An increase of approximately \$25,000 (calculated as the difference between the average salary of high school principals and the current salary of the FTE Specialist) is reasonable. However, the efforts of an effective FTE administrator will provide the district additional revenue in an amount equal to several times his or her salary. Evaluation of the FTE Administrator's performance should be based in part on the accuracy of FTE projections.</p> <p>Step 2: The job description of the position of FTE Administrator is submitted to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent assigns the FTE Administrator the responsibility of developing and instituting specific procedures for conducting FTE projections and for collecting and reporting FTE data. Procedures for training and supervising all staff who have a role in the FTE reporting process are also instituted.</p> <p>Step 4: The FTE Administrator drafts the new procedures and submits to the Superintendent for approval.</p> <p>Step 5: The Superintendent approves the procedures and submits to the board to be formalized.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Leadership Team and the FTE Administrator.

Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	The efforts of an effective FTE Administrator will provide the district additional revenue in an amount equal to several times his or her salary.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Establish a district level FTE Committee.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services and the FTE Administrator form a district level FTE Committee composed of representatives from Finance, Pupil Accounting, MIS, Personnel, Pre-K, ESE, Vocational, Transportation, ESOL, Dropout Prevention, and Charter Schools, plus one Elementary, one Middle, and one High School Principal.</p> <p>Step 2: The assistant superintendents designate the FTE Administrator to be the chair of the committee.</p> <p>Step 3: This committee will be responsible for producing accurate FTE projections and assisting in the preparation for conducting the four annual FTE counts, and also in obtaining information from other districts regarding how they specifically link programmatic goals to financial planning and budgeting, including student achievement. This committee should also be involved in identifying training needed by data entry clerks.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resources and the FTE Administrator.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Develop an FTE training manual.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Business Support Services assigns the FTE Administrator the responsibility of developing an FTE training manual. The manual is developed with input from MIS and the district level FTE Committee.</p> <p>Step 2: The manual is finalized, approved and distributed throughout the district.</p> <p>Step 3: The FTE Administrator updates the manual as new FTE rules and regulations become available.</p>
Who Is Responsible	FTE Administrator.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002, and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Develop a written procedure to formalize annual performance audits that assess the accuracy of FTE reporting.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Business Support Services with input from the FTE Administrator drafts a procedure to conduct annual performance audits of the FTE reporting process. The performance audits are to be conducted on an annual basis by the district's internal auditor and can be a sampling of 25% of the schools each year on a rotating basis.</p> <p>Step 2: Procedure is submitted to the Superintendent for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent approves the procedure and submits to the board to be formalized.</p> <p>Step 4: The internal auditor conducts the reviews annually.</p> <p>Step 5: Audit results are submitted to the FTE Administrator who in turn looks for areas in the reporting procedure that need to be corrected.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Business Support Services and the internal auditor.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002, and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

11 In the past, the district had not linked its financial plans and budgets to its priority goals. With the new administration, however, this process of accountability has begun and has been given the highest priority.

The Strategic Plan Currently Being Developed Will Link the District Goals to the Budget

The existing strategic document fails to link financial plans and budgets to priority goals and objectives including student performance, and the budgets are not adjusted to improve the district's ability to reach the goals. As will be described extensively later in this chapter, the district is in the process of developing a comprehensive long-term strategic plan. In the meantime, the new administration has placed great emphasis on linking goals to budgets, and this has been communicated to staff.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district continue the process of linking budget to the district's goals and objectives. Action Plan 3-8 addresses the necessary steps to implement this recommendation.*
- *Moreover, we recommend that once the major educational and operational programs have developed goals and objectives (refer to Action Plan 4-1, Chapter 4), the district strengthen its*

budgetary development process by including links with programmatic goals, including student achievement.

Action Plan 3-10 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-10

Link Financial Planning To Programmatic Goals and Student Achievement

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Once the major educational and operational programs have developed goals and objectives, as recommended in Action Plan 4-1, Chapter 4, the district will be able to amend its current budgetary development process to include links with programmatic goals, including student achievement.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team assign the Finance Director and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability the responsibility of strengthening the budgetary process by including links with programmatic goals.</p> <p>Step 2: The Finance Director and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability obtain information from other districts regarding how they specifically link programmatic goals to financial planning and budgeting, including student achievement. Districts that currently link programmatic goals to financial planning and budgeting include Polk and Leon.</p> <p>Step 3: The Finance Director and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability assess the current budgeting process in light of the process followed by other districts.</p> <p>Step 4: The Finance Director and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability prepare recommendations for board consideration that would alter the current financial planning and budgeting process to include linkage to district goals and objectives, including student performance.</p> <p>Step 5: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team select financial planning and budget development process alterations that suit the needs of the district, provide clear links to district goals and objectives, and provide opportunities to adjust financial planning and budgeting when warranted to meet goals.</p> <p>Step 6: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team implement a financial planning and budget development process that is linked to the district's goals and objectives, including student performance.</p> <p>Step 7: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team adopt a regular assessment process of the district's goals and objectives that includes adjusting financial planning and budgeting when warranted to meet goals.</p> <p>Step 8: The Superintendent reviews and approves the process and submits to the board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent, Leadership Team, Finance Director, and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.

Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

12 The district is considering all options to increase revenue.

The district generates revenue through grants and other forms of discretionary funding. The district's process of applying for grants has not been continuous or coordinated because district has lacked a position responsible for grant writing. The new administration has taken several steps to address this issue. For instance, the district in conjunction with the foundation, created and in August 2001 filled the in-house position of Executive Director for the Educational Foundation to increase the foundation's success in raising revenue for the school district. This revenue will be used to fund a variety of activities that support district programs such as teacher initiatives, scholarships to students, the school improvement process, and to other district initiatives. The Education Foundation will be a key factor in the district's overall economical improvement.

In addition, the district anticipates approval of a new job description in August 2001 for a grants specialist position. The district anticipates filling this position shortly after it is approved. The grant position along with the Executive Director for the Educational Foundation will enable the district to develop packets that provide information about new or better funding opportunities from state and federal sources.

Even though it has lacked a grant writer position, the district continues to apply for Medicaid reimbursement for its eligible exceptional education students. Through a contract with an outside vendor, the district has received approximately \$440,500 in Medicaid reimbursement for the year 2000-2001 as of as of July 2001. These dollars are directed to the district's general fund. Refer to Chapter 5, Action Plan 5-3, Recommendation 3, and Chapter 12, Action Plan 12-4 for further discussions and conclusions related to the Medicaid reimbursement matter.

Renewal of the Sales Tax Including the School System as a Participant Will Provide Capital Dollars

In 1987, Lake County voters approved a 15-year one cent local sales tax. In November 2001, Lake County voters approved and extension of this tax for another 15 years when it expires at the end of 2002. In the past 13 years, the Board of County Commissioners and Lake County's 14 municipalities have shared \$150 million of revenue generated from this sales tax to build parks, government buildings, sewer systems etc. The school district will receive as much as \$6-7 million per year to be used for capital projects in a three way split of the dollars generated from this tax. The school board has hired an independent architectural firm to determine the number of new schools and classrooms, remodeling and renovation needs the district needs in the next five years, as a part of the school five-year plant survey process.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the new grants specialist and Executive Director of the Educational Foundation develop information packets and guidelines to assist staff in the identification of new funding opportunities, and better or alternative funding sources, including state and federal grants. The Executive Director of the Educational Foundation should continue to assist schools with development of business partnerships. These partnerships are a source of additional revenue and in-kind contributions.*

Action Plan 3-11 shows the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-11

Identify Additional Funding Sources

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Seek out and pursue new and/or alternative funding sources, including state and federal grants.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent charges the Grants Specialist and the Executive Director of the Educational Foundation with the responsibility of developing information packets and guidelines to assist staff in the identification of alternative funding sources, including state and federal grants.</p> <p>Step 2: Information packets are submitted to Superintendent for review and approval.</p> <p>Step 3: Information packets are distributed among pertinent staff.</p> <p>Step 4: The Executive Director of the Educational Foundation should continue to assist schools with development of business partnerships as a source of additional revenue and in-kind contributions.</p> <p>Step 5: The Grants Specialist and the Executive Director of the Educational Foundation periodically monitor results attained by staff in relation to the pursue of additional funding sources.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Grants Specialist and the Executive Director of the Educational Foundation
Time Frame	March 31, 2002, and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation will result in a positive fiscal impact for the district. The amount of the additional revenue however, cannot be quantified at this time.

4 Performance Accountability Systems

The Lake County School District has several performance accountability elements in place that can be used as a starting point to develop an effective accountability system. The district needs such a system to ensure that its major programs meet their intended purpose in the most cost-efficient manner.

Conclusion

The Lake County School District has several performance accountability elements in place that can be used as a starting point to build an effective accountability system. An effective accountability system ensures that major programs and services are meeting their intended purpose in the most cost-efficient manner. The district would benefit from integrating accountability procedures under the creation of an Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.

Exhibit 4-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Performance Accountability in the Past Two Years

- The district's Curriculum and Instruction department has made progress in linking the state's accountability goals to departmental objectives.
 - The district is in the process of developing a comprehensive, five-year strategic plan that according to staff, will link district and programmatic goals to the budget. The five-year plan will be completed by December 2001.
 - Student performance has generally improved during the last three years.
 - The district has no critically low-performing schools based on state minimum standards for student performance.
 - The district did not have any D or F schools in the year 2000-01.
-

Source: Lake County School District.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Educational and Operational Program Accountability

- Overall, for each major educational and operational program the district needs to establish clearly stated goals and measurable objectives that are linked to the budget and can be systematically evaluated. (Page 4-8)
- The district should expand its use of performance and cost-efficiency measures, and interpretive benchmarks to improve program performance and reduce costs. (Page 4-28)

- The district does not adequately assess the performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs regularly to establish potential cost savings and/or outsourcing options. (Page 4-46)
- The district should expand formal evaluation of its major educational and operational programs to improve program performance and cost-efficiency. (Page 4-48)
- The district should report additional information on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational and operational programs to ensure accountability to its stakeholders. (Page 4-53)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Most recommendations in this chapter will indirectly translate into cost savings and potentially, into additional revenues to the district if implemented. Only one recommendation, the establishment of a much needed office of Program Evaluation and Accountability, has a direct, measurable fiscal impact as indicated in Exhibit 4-2.

Exhibit 4-2

Implementing the Recommendation for Performance Accountability Will Cost the District \$402,900 Over the Next Five Years

Action Plan and Strategy	Fiscal Impact: Cost Savings/Increased Revenues or (Increased Costs)					Total
	Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	
4-1 Establish an Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability	0	(\$94,900)	(\$98,700)	(\$102,600)	(\$106,700)	(\$402,900)
Total	0	(\$94,900)	(\$98,700)	(\$102,600)	(\$106,700)	(\$402,900)

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Background

School districts must be accountable to parents and other taxpayers for the performance and costs of their academic programs and support services. In addition, an effectively managed school district has an administrative team that provides leadership and accountability through an efficient, responsive organizational structure that maximizes the allocation of funds to the different instructional and operational programs. To accomplish this, district management must provide direction by establishing goals, objectives, and measures not only at a broad, strategic level but also for each significant educational or operational program.

Exhibit 4-2 shows the major functional programs of a school district, as adopted by the Florida Commissioner of Education in the Best Financial Management Practices reviews. These programs are either educational or operational in nature. This chapter will address performance accountability best practices as they apply to all of these programs.

Exhibit 4-2**There are 12 Major Programmatic Areas in a School District**

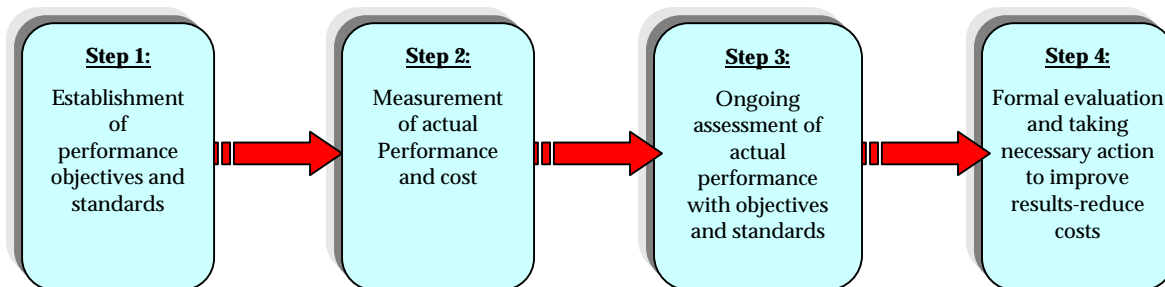
Major Educational Programs	Major Operational Programs
Basic Education (K-12)	Asset and Risk Management
Exceptional Student Education – ESE	Facilities Construction and
Vocational	Facilities Maintenance
At-Risk (Dropout Prevention,	Financial Management
Alternative Education; English for	Food Services
Speakers of Other Languages – ESOL)	Personnel
	Safety and Security
	Transportation

Source: Florida Commissioner of Education.

A performance accountability system that is program-specific is said to be effective if it enables a school district to answer the questions “How well is each major program performing?” and “How can we improve program performance and cost efficiency?” Additionally, an effective system provides clear direction and context for the daily activities of program staff by including the following:

- clearly stated goals and measurable objectives;
- appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures;
- performance and cost-efficiency benchmarks that include appropriate standards from comparable school districts, government agencies, and private industry;
- evaluation of performance and cost efficiency including the potential of cost-saving alternatives;
- public reporting of performance and cost-efficiency information; and an effective management information system to support district accountability.

Performance Accountability Systems is an examination of the extent to which the Lake County School District has implemented a comprehensive accountability system for each major program. A review of the main steps that must occur in a well-defined accountability system (establishment of performance objectives and standards; measurement of actual performance; comparison of actual performance with objectives and standards; and taking necessary action to correct the gap) as illustrated in Exhibit 4-3 will be made.

Exhibit 4-3**Necessary Steps In a Well-Defined Accountability System**

Source: ValienteHernandez, P.A.

The State of Florida Has Taken Different Actions to Strengthen Educational Accountability

School Level Accountability

As part of an effort to ensure higher levels of accountability for the districts, the State of Florida established school improvement plans (SIPs) in 1991. The initiative was designed to allow schools greater control over their individual learning environments and activities so that they could better plan to meet their specific needs. The Legislature established the state education goals (shown in Exhibit 4-4) as a framework for school improvement at the individual school level.

Florida's eight state education goals are statements of intent expressed in general terms. The eight state education goals were revised in 1999 to reflect increased emphasis on collaboration and accountability. Goal 3, Student Performance, drives school improvement and accountability efforts to transform schools into centers of excellence.

School advisory councils have been established in Florida public schools as the decision-making body for school improvement and accountability at the school level. The primary function of the school advisory council is to assist in the preparation and evaluation of the school improvement plan.

Exhibit 4-4

Florida's Education Goals

Goal 1: Readiness to Start School	Communities and schools collaborate in a statewide comprehensive school readiness program to prepare children and families for children's success in school.
Goal 2: Graduation Rate and Readiness for Postsecondary Ed. Employment	Students graduate and are prepared to enter the workforce and postsecondary education.
Goal 3: Student Performance	Students make annual learning gains sufficient to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to master state standards; successfully compete at the highest levels nationally and internationally, and be prepared to make well-reasoned, thoughtful, and healthy lifelong decisions.
Goal 4: Learning Environment	School boards provide a learning environment conducive to teaching and learning, in which education programs are based on student performance data, and which strive to eliminate achievement gaps by improving learning for all students.
Goal 5: School Safety and Environment	Communities and schools provide an environment that is drug-free and protects students' health, safety, and civil rights.
Goal 6: Teachers and Staff	The schools, districts, colleges of education, postsecondary institutions, and state work collaboratively to provide professional teachers and staff who possess the competencies and demonstrate the performance needed to maximize learning among all students.
Goal 7: Adult Literacy	Adult Floridians are literate and have the knowledge and skills needed to compete in a global economy, prepare children for success in school, and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Goal 8: Parental, Family and Community Involvement	Communities, school boards, and schools provide opportunities for involving parents, families, guardians, and other community stakeholders as collaborative partners in achieving school improvement and education accountability.
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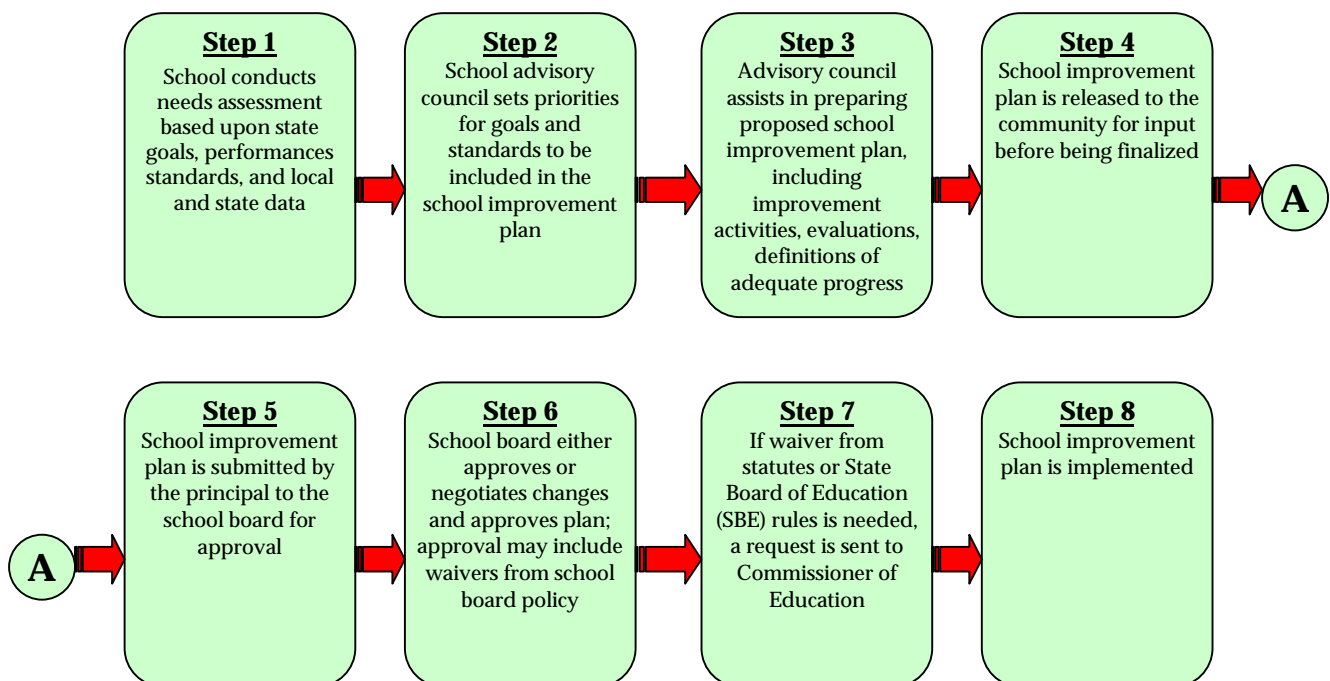
Source: Florida Department of Education. Office of Evaluation and Research.

The School Improvement Plan

The school improvement plan is an essential part of the accountability system. It represents the collective effort of the school community to reach state and local educational goals. The school improvement plan is based on an analysis of student achievement and other school performance data and includes each school's needs assessment, activities to address state goals and performance standards, evaluation methods, definitions of adequate progress, and requests for waivers. Beginning in 1999-2000, each plan also addresses issues relative to budget, training, instructional materials, technology, staffing, student support services, specific school safety and discipline strategies, and other matters of resource allocation, as determined by school board policy. Exhibit 4-5 illustrates the school improvement plan process.

Exhibit 4-5

The School Improvement Process



Source: ValienteHernandez, P.A.

School Grading and the Accountability Report

The school-grading component is an important part and the current focus of Florida's standards-based system of accountability. The 1999 legislation requires schools to be assigned a performance grade of "A" to "F" based primarily upon student achievement data in three academic areas (reading, writing, and mathematics). School grades communicate to the public how well a school is performing relative to state standards.

School grades were first designated in the summer of 1999 using results on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) from the 1998-99 school year. While FCAT performance data are the primary criteria used in calculating a school's grade, other data include the percentage of students tested, attendance and discipline data, and dropout rates. The performance grade represents the school's progress as shown in Exhibit 4-6.

Exhibit 4-6
Grading System

Performance Grades	A =	Schools making excellent progress
	B =	Schools making above average progress
	C =	Schools making satisfactory progress
	D =	Schools making less than satisfactory progress
	F =	Schools failing to make adequate progress

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Consistent with the 1999 legislation, future performance grades will be calculated using increasingly more comprehensive assessment data. Expansion of the FCAT will allow school performance criteria to be established for grades 3-10, resulting in a greater percentage of a school's student population being included in the performance designation. Ultimately, school grade designations will be based on the annual learning gains of each student toward achievement of the Sunshine State Standards appropriate for the student's grade level.

Exhibit 4-7**The District Did Not Have Any “D” or “F” Schools in the Year 2000-01**

Elementary Schools	Year		Improved Performance
	1999-00	2000-01	
Astatula	N*	C	
Beverly Shores	A	C	
Clermont	C	B	√
Cypress Ridge	B	A	√
Dabney	A	C	
Eustis	A	B	
Eustis Heights	C	C	
Fruitland Park	C	B	√
Groveland	C	C	
Lost Lake	N	A	
Mascotte	C	C	
Minneola	A	A	
Rimes	C	C	
Round Lake		N	
Seminole Spring	A	A	
Skeen	A	B	
Spring Creek	A	C	
Tavares	B	B	
The Villages	N	B	
Treadway	C	B	√
Triangle	B	A	√
Umatilla	A	C	

Middle Schools	Year		Improved Performance
	1999-00	2000-01	
Carver	C	C	
Eustis	B	A	√
Gray	B	A	√
Mt. Dora	C	B	√
Oak Park	C	B	√
Tavares	A	B	
Umatilla	C	A	√

High Schools	Year		Improved Performance
	1999-00	2000-01	
Eustis High	C	C	
Leesburg High	C	C	
Mt. Dora	C	C	
South Lake	C	C	
Tavares	C	C	
Umatilla	C	C	

Note: N* indicates new school, no grade

Source: Department of Education, School Accountability Reports.

Methodology

ValienteHernandez P.A. used various methods in assessing the district's performance related to the best practices for performance accountability systems. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the self-assessment instruments completed by staff members, conducted interviews, conducted a community forum, and made inquiries with the superintendent and assistant superintendent, and key staff members.

To receive program input from school administrators and district staff ValienteHernandez P.A. designed and administered surveys to principals and assistant principals, teachers and district administrative staff. The questions varied from group to group and the survey results have been incorporated in different sections of this chapter.

Findings and Recommendations

Educational and Operational Program Accountability

Goal A: The district is accountable to parents and other taxpayers for the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of individual educational and operational programs.

1 Overall, for each major educational and operational program the district needs to establish clearly stated goals and measurable objectives that are linked to the budget and can be systematically evaluated.

A well-defined accountability component is generally missing from the district's management structure, for both the educational and the operational programs. Whereas the previous administration made efforts to develop and adopt the notion of program accountability with emphasis on the educational programs, the district's existing goals and objectives generally need more specificity, and are not measurable, linked to a monetary figure, evaluated, or compared systematically to peer districts. Furthermore, the Special Review completed by OPPAGA in August 2000 found that in the district there is no relationship considered between program goals and the budget.

The district however, has great opportunity to expand and integrate the current practices and establish a systematic and methodic performance accountability system. The current administration is working on developing a comprehensive five-year plan that will link district and program goals to the budget. This plan will be completed by December 2001.¹ Additionally, the district is also in the process of improving budget formats to be more user friendly and to increase accuracy.

Without clear program specific goals and objectives for each major educational program, program staff can have difficulty establishing priorities for daily activities, identifying data that needs to be collected to assess whether a program or service is meeting expectations, and determining when they need to change strategies or program activities to better serve students. In addition, because each piece of a school district accountability system is interrelated, in the absence of an adequate set of program-level goals and objectives, it is difficult for program managers to provide needed direction and effective leadership that focuses on continuously improving overall program performance; creating work processes that support efficient and effective accomplishment of performance objectives; and effectively communicating values, directions, and expectations as the basis for the district's key decisions and actions.

¹ The current superintendent was elected in November 2000. Upon taking office, she made several changes to the previous administrative structure.

Clearly defined program-level goals and objectives enable senior district administrators, such as assistant superintendents who are responsible for overseeing numerous related programs, to review the performance of programs in their administrative units. This aspect of leadership is crucial because reviews help to provide rationale for and build consistency behind critical decisions such as allocation of resources. Exhibit 4-11 summarizes the basic elements of program goals and objectives.

Exhibit 4-11

Basic Elements of Program Goals and Objectives

A **program goal** is a long-range end towards which a program directs its efforts and should

- relate to the district's mission, values, goals, priorities, and expectations;
 - support state educational goals;
 - reflect the intent (purpose) of the program; and
 - incorporate state and federal program requirements.
-

A **program objective** is an action statement which defines how program goals will be achieved and should

- be either short-term (two to three years) or mid-term (four to five years);
 - support the program's goals;
 - address major aspects of the program's purpose and expenditures;
 - be specific;
 - be easily understood;
 - be challenging but achievable;
 - be measurable and quantifiable;
 - identify data needed to assess whether progress toward an objective is being made; and
 - indicate the performance outcome (result) or improvement target desired. For academic programs, objectives should be stated in terms of student outcomes (that is, the effect the program will have on participating students if the program is successful). For operational programs objectives should be stated in terms of the quality and cost of service provided.
-

Source: Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability.

District Employees Surveyed Are Divided on the Adequacy of Current Ace Mechanisms

District employees were somewhat divided on whether the district had an adequate accountability system. For instance, a considerable percentage of district staff and teachers believe the district needs to expand accountability measures. Approximately 37.5% of district staff surveyed and 37.9% of teachers surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the district has implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the overall performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its educational programs. The responses of principals were in contrast with other district employees surveyed. Approximately three-quarters of principals believed the district had appropriate measures and benchmarks.

Exhibit 4-8**Survey Results on Program Accountability**

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
District Staff (s= 45; n= 19)	Appropriate performance measures and benchmarks for evaluating the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of educational programs are in place.	18.8%	37.5%	43.8%
Principals (N= 84; n= 52)	The district has implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the overall performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its educational programs.	76.1%	21.7%	2.2%
Teachers (N= 1761; n= 850)	The district has implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the overall performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its educational programs.	57.1%	37.9%	5.1%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Major Educational Programs Have a Framework That Can Be Used to Develop Accountability Mechanisms

During the previous administration, efforts were made to develop accountability mechanisms for major educational programs. During two consecutive years, the supervisors of the six areas under the Curriculum and Instruction department met with the specific purpose of developing departmental goals and objectives that were in line with the state's eight educational goals.² The exercise was rather successful. For the first time the notion of program improvement and accountability was comprehensively addressed and the basic elements—goals and objectives—of a performance accountability mechanism were established. As will be discussed in detail further in this chapter, the downside of the initiative was that it lacked sufficient detail and the evaluation component of the performance measurement system was not formalized. In other words, the accountability cycle was not completed because the accomplishment or not of the goals and objectives was not specifically monitored.

The district can greatly benefit by taking what has already been developed as a starting point to build effective accountability mechanisms not only for its major educational programs but also for the smaller ones, and even extend the process to programs that fall under the operational category. An added advantage is that the staff initially involved in the process continue to be the department leaders and are familiar with the process used in the past.

² Exceptional Student Education, PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction, Federal Compensatory Programs, Vocational-Technical Adult and Community Education, Media and Staff Development and, Student Services.

Goals and Objectives Need to Be Improved and Expanded

As stated in the previous discussion, the Curriculum and Instruction department has developed some goals and objectives for the educational program areas under the department including Basic PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction, Exceptional Student Education, Federal Compensatory Programs, Vocational-Technical Adult and Community Education, Media and Staff Development and, Student Services. These goals and objectives however, need to be improved to address all the state's goals, incorporate district-specific goals and develop objectives that clearly reflect the purpose of the program.

The model developed during the previous administration addressed the four of the state's eight educational goals: readiness to start school, student performance, graduation rate and readiness for postsecondary education and employment, and staff development. The district did not specifically address the remainder of the goals: learning environment, school safety, adult literacy and, parental involvement. All eight state educational goals are critical components of an effective educational system. Therefore, we recommend the district address these in a specific and formal manner.

For each of the four goals addressed, the model formulated related objectives for the Curriculum and Instruction department as shown in Exhibit 4-9.

Exhibit 4-9**Four of the Eight State Educational Goals Have Been Translated Into Curriculum and Instruction Departmental Objectives**

District Educational Goal (same as State Educational Goal)	→	Curriculum and Instruction Department Objectives
Readiness to start school	# 1	Increase yearly, the percentage of students entering kindergarten with the necessary skills to be successful as evidenced by a screening instrument
Student performance	#2	By June 30, 2002, the district will provide tools, programs, materials and training to support the school-level efforts in improving student outcomes as evidenced by improvement on measures in the Florida School Indicators Report.
Graduation rate and readiness for postsecondary education and employment	#3	By June 30, 2002, a minimum of 70% of the Lake District educators will receive staff development in the strategies and instructional materials to integrate career education into all content through interdepartmental coordination as evidenced by staff development, records, and in-service sign-in sheets.
	#4	By June 30, 2002, 100% Lake District students will receive career pathway preparation in order to exit school prepared for successful employment and further education as evidenced by student career portfolios.
Staff development	#5	By June 30, 2002, 100% of school administrators and instructional personnel will be trained in the use of data analysis of student performance to establish school and classroom priorities, included in school improvement plans, individuals professional development plans, and principals' goals.
	#6	By June 30, 2002, 100% of the administrators and instructional staff will be trained in the functional use of technology in the execution of job responsibilities.
	#7	By June 30, 2002, the district will provide alternative certification programs for teachers in the major critical shortage areas.
	#8	By June 30, 2002, at least 80% of the professional development activity occurring in the district will occur during the contracted workday or participants will be compensated at the average hourly rate by job classification.

Source: Lake County School District, Curriculum and Instruction department.

Goals Should Clearly Reflect the Purpose of the Program and Provide Basis for Decision Making

The second step of the model used by the previous administration was to develop *strategic directions* and *results measures* for each of the six sections of the Curriculum and Instruction department. A great deal of effort was put into the process and as a result, over 80 pronouncements (i.e., strategic directions) were made for the department.

An examination of the pronouncements generally shows that they do not establish an adequate structure for making decisions regarding the programs or subprograms, are generally too broad, or do not reflect the purpose of the program clearly which makes it very difficult to establish measurable objectives. An analysis of the goals and objectives of the educational programs pointed out the following areas of concern:

- not all objectives are written in measurable terms;
- generally, objectives are activity-based rather than describing measurable outcomes;
- absence of program specific goals categorized by elementary and postsecondary education; and
- while the statements describe broad initiatives and activities, they do not clearly describe why program administrators are implementing each initiative, or the goal the program is trying to achieve.

Goals could be improved by describing more clearly the long-range outcome of the program, such as improve student performance, ensure that all students read at grade level, or ensure that students graduate with needed skills. Since the programs lack clear goals, administrators often develop activity-based objectives rather than objectives that describe the measurable outcomes each program is trying to accomplish by implementing each initiative. For example, an objective to develop a core of content to be required at each grade level could be improved by describing the specific effect this activity should have on students such as “By the end of 2001-02 increase by 10% the percentage of students reading at or above grade level in the fourth grade.” Thus, program administrators focus much of their time on strategies to implement each initiative rather than on outcomes.

Exhibit 4-10 shows a broad analysis of the strategic statements in place for each of the sections under the Curriculum and Instruction department. The exhibit also shows examples or actions that can be taken to improve the process.

Exhibit 4-10**Actions to Improve Goals and Objectives of Educational Programs**

Programmatic Area	Number of strategic statements	Actions for Improvement
Basic Education	26	Revise goals to describe the long-range end the program desires to achieve by implementing broad initiatives. Develop objectives that identify the measurable results or specific effect program initiatives should have particularly on students.
Exceptional Student Education	26	Develop broad goal statements that describe how the program is intended to help students. Develop measurable objectives that describe the specific effect the program should have on students and would answer the questions “If the district’s ESE Program were successful, what would one expect to be happening?” or “What would the impact be on students in the program?”
Vocational	8	Revise goals to describe the long-range end the program desires to achieve by implementing existing initiatives. Revise current objectives to reflect the specific measurable effect program initiatives should have on students. Develop goals and measurable objectives for career, technical, and adult education components. Develop measurable objectives that describe the specific effect career, technical, and adult education should have on students and would answer the questions “If the program were successful, what would one expect to be happening?” or “What would the impact be on students in the program?”
Title I (Compensatory Education)	16	Establish program-level objectives to help operationalize goals and assess how well the district is progressing toward its overall goals of improved student achievement. Develop clear goals and objectives that describe how the district will enable the district to demonstrate its success of supporting the school improvement activities of the district’s Title I schools.
Student Services	9	Develop measurable objectives that describe the specific effect different program components or activities should have on students and would answer the questions such as “If the student assessment activity were successful, what would one expect to be happening?” or “What would the impact be on students in the program?”
Media/ Staff Development/ Instructional Materials	16	Revise goals to describe the long-range end the program desires to achieve by implementing existing initiatives. Revise current objectives to reflect the specific measurable effect program initiatives should have on students. Develop goals and measurable objectives staff development, media and instructional materials components.

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. conclusions based on a review of educational goals and objectives.

Operational Programs Generally Need To Develop Goals, and Objectives

The district's operational programs generally have not developed specific goals and objectives as shown in Exhibit 4-12. Additionally, the outcomes or expectations of the objectives developed to implement operational program goals are not clearly delineated or measurable.

The division of Business Operations and Support Services has not developed division goals and thus department managers under this division have not developed objectives to implement the division goals. Without a strategic plan at the division level and related benchmarks, operational managers are unable to assess program performance in a meaningful manner or adequately plan for future program development. For instance, while the Food Services department has established short-term objectives (1) computerize school cafeterias (2) develop an education program with the children, and (3) develop new menu committee. The objectives are not program specific, and are narrowly focused on a few activities so they cannot be used as an appropriate means to measure overall program performance.

Management Information Systems (MIS) department has been rather successful in developing measurable goals for its Technology Plan. The department however needs to take several actions to update and enhance the plan and include accountability elements that assign responsibility for goal accomplishment and documentation of the process.

Goals and measurable outcome-oriented objectives for other operational programs such as Transportation, Facilities and Finance have not been clearly stated and generally, benchmarks have not been developed to evaluate program performance and cost operational programs. The lack of measurable program-level objectives does not allow staff of these programs establish priorities for daily activities, identify data to collect to assess whether a program or service is meeting expectations, and determine when they need to change strategies or program activities to better serve customers.

The district needs to establish a framework for key decisions and actions regarding operational programs and set the focus for developing program objectives. These goals should reflect the unique intent and purpose of each major operational program since they all have different purposes, state and federal mandates and customers. Lake County schools needs to revise operational program goals to better reflect the intent and purpose of each program and develop objectives that will enable the district to measure progress towards achieving these goals.

Exhibit 4-12 shows an analysis made by ValienteHernandez P.A. where suggestions for improvement are shown for each operational program.

Exhibit 4-12**Actions to Improve Goals and Objectives of Operational Programs**

Operational Program	Concerns	Actions for Improvement
Asset and Risk Management	No broad goals or measurable objectives for the program.	Develop broad goal statements that describe the desired condition the program is intended to affect. Develop measurable objectives that describe the specific effect the program should have, such as "by December 2001, 100% of district employees will have been scheduled for a cardiac risk profile screening."
Financial Management	No long-or short-range program specific goals and objectives.	Develop goals that describe the desired long-range end specific to the program. Create measurable objectives that will describe the effect the program will have, such as "increasing district office efficiency by the end of school year 2000-01 to allow for a 2% increase in funding for classrooms
Facilities Construction	No measurable long-or short-range program-specific goals or objectives.	Develop program specific objectives that will enable the district to assess progress toward reaching the goals of the five-year Facilities Plan. Develop and implement accountability mechanisms to ensure performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the program. Refer to Action Plan 10-10 and 10-11, Chapter 11. Include a mechanism to reconcile construction decisions that are not consistent with the plan; address governance regarding monitoring and implementation of the plan. Refer to Action Plan 10-5, Chapter 10.
Facilities Maintenance	No measurable long-or short-range goals or objectives.	Develop program specific goals and objectives. Develop maintenance standards for the short term and long term plans. Refer to Action Plan 11-2, Chapter 11. Develop performance standards for the maintenance function. Refer to Action Plan 11-3, Chapter 11. Develop a mission statement that is consistent with department goals and objectives.
Food Services	No program specific goals No specific objectives	Establish goal statements that describe what the program is trying to achieve regarding students. Develop adequate measurable objectives that assess the efficiency of the program, such as "by September 2001, reduce spoilage of stocked non-refrigerated food stock items to one-half of one percent of items in stock." Refer to Action Plan 13-5, Chapter 13.
Management Information Systems (MIS)	Goals in current Technology Plan are measurable but the district is unable to document the	Update and modify the Technology Plan to reflect the changes in district's needs and recent advances in technology. For example: include goals and objectives for administrative technologies; clearly identify funding sources to provide the required

Operational Program	Concerns	Actions for Improvement
	measurement of its successes	revenues; describe a mechanism to reconcile technology decisions that are not consistent with the plan; address governance regarding monitoring of the plan; assign responsibility for strategy implementation; etc. Refer to Exhibit 6-6 and Action Plan 6-2, Chapter 6.
Personnel	No broad goals or measurable objectives	Develop broad goal statements that describe the desired condition the program is intended to affect. Develop measurable objectives that describe the specific effect the program should have, such as "by August 2002, reduce the number of vacant teacher positions by 20%."
Purchasing	No program-specific goals or objectives.	Devise program-specific goals that describe what the program is trying to accomplish. Establish clear and measurable objectives that will enable managers to assess the effectiveness of the program, such as "by January 2002, 75% of purchase orders will be processed within 48 hours."
Safety and Security (operational)	No measurable goals or objectives	Establish goals that describe what the program is trying to achieve. Develop measurable objectives, such as "by the end of school year 2001-02, reduce by 5% the incidence of vandalism of school property."
Student Transportation	No measurable goals or objectives	Conceptualize a five-year plan, with obtainable objectives, documented, and incorporated into the district budgets during the period being planned. Refer to Action Plan 12-12 and 12-13, Chapter 12. Effectively track and evaluate departmental costs and make routine periodic comparative analysis between actual and budgeted amounts AP 12-14. Develop a list of performance indicators that would be useful to the school board and general public to provide accountability for student transportation performance. Each performance indicator should be associated with a performance target to evaluate performance, and a "report card" style annual report should be made to the school board. Action Plan 12-12, Chapter 12.

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. and Lake County School District.

Planning and Accountability Initiatives Developed at Different Administrative Levels Need to Be Integrated

There are several important initiatives and planning activities carried out in the district that while inherent to specific operations, should be incorporated and considered as an integral part of the improvement and the dynamics of the system as a whole. There are no educational or operational programs that are isolated; all programs have a direct or indirect impact on the performance of others. Individual initiatives developed at different educational and operational administrative levels such as

the strategic plan at the division, department, and program levels need to be better aligned and related.

On the educational side, one major initiative is the school improvement plan, which is an example of a system that can be streamlined, analyzed to establish its interfaces, and better aligned. There is not a clear link between what is contained in the plans and the goals and objectives that drive the daily activities of district-level educational program staff and because the district has not established broad program-level objectives that support the plan, employees are unclear about who is accountable for different outcomes and for ensuring that initiatives and implementation strategies are achieved. While district administrative educational staff expressed that one of their main objectives is to support school improvement activities, the district needs to take steps through which they can keep track of initiatives in school improvement plans at a more comprehensive level to ensure that priority needs are addressed.

At the operational level important existing initiatives are the district's five-year strategic plan to be completed in December 2001; the MIS department Technology Plan; and the five-year Facilities plan. In this case, the district must also establish the different interrelationships of the plans within the district.

In general, we recommend that educational and operational program goals and objectives could be improved further by clarifying their relationship and the way they interface to the district's mission, values, priorities, and expectations as well as the goals and objectives developed at other levels in the district including those contained in school improvement plans. The task of integrating existing planning and accountability initiatives can be accomplished by and with the creation of an Office of Program Evaluation of Accountability as described below.

The District Should Create an Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability

As described previously, educational, and operational programs generally lack clearly established goals, objectives, performance measures, and evaluation processes that allow information-based assessments of the programs and promote public accountability.

A significant factor contributing to a lack of accountability mechanisms is that the district does not have a department in charge of program accountability. Benchmarking analyses conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. found that most of the six peer districts have a unit or department specifically responsible for evaluation activities as shown in Exhibit 4-13. In comparison to its peer districts, Lake does not have a unit in charge of program evaluation and accountability. Four of the six peer districts have an accountability component; even smaller districts such as St. Johns, has a director for program evaluation.

Exhibit 4-13**Four of the Six Peer Districts Have a Formally Defined Accountability Component**

Program Accountability Component		
District	(Unit or Department)	Staff Make-Up
Lake	<i>Not formally identified</i>	
Alachua	Evaluation and Testing	1 professional, 3 clerical
Charlotte	Planning and Evaluation	1 director, 1 testing manager
Okaloosa	Quality Assurance	1 administrator, 1.5 non-instructional, .75 secretary
Osceola	<i>Information not available to consultant</i>	
St. Johns	Planning and Accountability	1 director, 1 secretary
Santa Rosa	<i>Not formally identified</i>	

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. Telephone survey, May 2001.

The district would benefit from the creation of an Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability that concentrates specifically on program planning, research, evaluation, and accountability and is responsible for

- district-wide Planning;
- student testing, research, and evaluation;
- district-wide coordination of the School Improvement Plans' process;
- assessment and evaluation of educational and operational program effectiveness and efficiency;
- evaluation of the district's strategic plan and goals;
- evaluation of the alignment of state, district and program goals and objectives;
- provide support to the school improvement process;
- provide reports to staff and the school board relating to educational and operational program accountability; and
- provide accountability information to constituents.

The make up of an office for program accountability for a district the size of Lake be one program manager, a testing coordinator and one secretary.

The District's School Improvement and Education Accountability Policy Needs to Be Expanded

The district has policy for school improvement and this should be expanded to address accountability issues. Board policy 2.26, School Improvement and Education Accountability, establishes the individual schools as the unit for educational accountability and focuses exclusively on the school improvement plan process and its different components. The accountability policy needs to be expanded to address responsibility for accomplishing goals and objectives established at the individual educational program level. Additionally, school board policy should clearly link the school-level goals and objectives to those developed by district administrative units and the budget.

School board policy should also describe how departments and programs within the district are to be charged with the responsibility of developing goals and objectives that relate to the district's mission, support State Education Goals, reflect the intent of the program, or incorporate state or federal requirements. Further, the policy should describe how departments and programs are to be held accountable for the success of reaching the established goals.

Action Plan 5-1, Chapter 5 specifically describes the necessary steps to establish a policy to strengthen the evaluation and accountability components of the student performance review mechanism by linking accountability to employee evaluations and pay increases.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop a formal accountability framework for the educational and operational programs with the creation of an Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. The main functions of this office should include but are not limited to*
 - district-wide Planning;
 - student testing, research, and evaluation;
 - district-wide coordination of the School Improvement Plans' process;
 - assessment and evaluation of educational and operational program effectiveness and efficiency;
 - evaluation of the district's strategic plan and goals;
 - evaluation of the alignment of state, district and program goals and objectives;
 - provide support to the school improvement process;
 - provide reports to staff and the school board relating to educational and operational program accountability; and
 - provide accountability information to constituents.

The make-up of this office for a district the size of Lake should be a program manager, the testing coordinator and one secretary.

As part of structuring this office, we also recommend that the testing function be moved under its purview. As part of this recommendation, we recommend that the district develop clear job descriptions for the program manager and testing coordinator.

- *We recommend that the district develop its accountability framework for each major educational and operational program. Ideally, the district should concentrate this effort under the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.*
- *We recommend that the district develop an accountability handbook to guide staff through the process of developing accountability components.*
- *We recommend that the district require major educational and operational programs to develop clearly stated goals and measurable objectives.*

For the educational programs, we recommend the district utilize the scheme what has already been developed and use these elements as a starting point to build effective accountability mechanisms for its major educational programs. The scheme can also be extended to the districts major operational programs.

- *We recommend that the district develop a mechanism to review and provide feedback to program staff to ensure that program-level goals and objectives meet district expectations and clearly align with those developed at the department, division, strategic, and other administrative levels. Action Plan 3-8, Chapter 3 clearly describes the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.*

Further, we recommend that the Curriculum and Instruction Department ensure all eight state educational goals are clearly addresses through department goals and objectives.

- *We recommend that educational and operational program goals and objectives be improved by clarifying their relationship to the district's mission, values, priorities, and expectations as well as the goals and objectives developed at other levels in the district including those contained in school improvement plans. We recommend that the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability be assigned the responsibility of clearly establishing the relationships between departments and programs and how the different systems interrelate and align with the district's long-term and short-term goals and objectives.*
- *We recommend that the district expand the existing accountability policy to address responsibility for accomplishing goals and objectives established at individual educational program level. Policy should also describe how departments and programs within the district are to be charged with the responsibility of developing goals and objectives that relate to the district's mission, support State Education Goals, reflect the intent of the program, or incorporate state or federal requirements. Further, the policy should describe how departments and programs are to be held accountable for the success of reaching the established goals.*

Action Plan 4-1 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 4-1

Establishment of a Framework for Program Accountability

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Create an Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent direct appropriate Personnel department staff to draft job descriptions for the positions of Manager (or Supervisor) of Program Evaluation and Accountability and for the Testing Coordinator. The job descriptions should be developed with direct input from the Superintendent's leadership team and minimally include the activities below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise all testing and evaluation that occur in the district • Serve as liaison between the Department of Education and the district in all matters concerning testing and evaluation • Serve as a resource to the districts administrators, supervisors, principals, and teachers on issues of testing and evaluation • Responsible for reviewing and evaluating all research projects and programs submitted to the school board for approval • Provide testing and evaluation for programs administered by staff development <p>Step 2: The Superintendent secures approval from the school board.</p> <p>Step 3: The position of Testing, Evaluation, and Program Accountability is advertised and applications reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.</p> <p>Step 4: Minimal qualifications to occupy this office shall include a master's degree, certification in Administration and Supervision, and at least three years experience in working with and directing professional staff. Candidate must also demonstrate both theoretical and applied knowledge of testing, evaluation, and program accountability.</p> <p>Interviews are held and an applicant is selected for the position.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Personnel Department staff at the direction of the Superintendent.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	\$402,900 over the next five years approximately (\$75,540 is the annual state average salary for a manager in Research and Evaluation plus the salary and benefits of the secretary \$19,378 average plus an annual 4% contractual increase).

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop an accountability framework for each major educational and operational program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team with input from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability, develop an accountability framework for each program to guide staff through the development of the district's program-level accountability system. The framework should contain a detailed format that reflects district expectations for program-level accountability systems and should include the items listed below and instructions to guide the development of each item.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program purpose • Unit administering the program • Person responsible for ensuring that the framework is completed and updated regularly • Program goals • Program objectives • Performance measures by program objective, including a short explanation of how each relates to the program objective • Processes by program objective—the answer to the question, “What processes will you put in place to accomplish this objective?” providing an overview of implementation strategies, the person responsible for implementation, resources needed and sources, and target date • Human resource development—the answer to the question, “What training is needed (and for whom) in order to accomplish this objective?” • Performance evaluation methods—including how often a performance assessment will be conducted, how, by whom, and the answer to the question, “How will you know you have progressed toward or successfully completed the objective (your evaluation criteria)?” • Administrative unit(s) responsible for implementing goals, objectives, and strategies and reporting results <p>Step 2: The district should make use of the information in Exhibit 4-11 to guide this process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Develop and distribute accountability handbook.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team with help from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability develop an accountability handbook that covers the topics below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basic concepts of program accountability including developing goals, outcome-based objectives, performance measures, and routine assessment techniques. • The use of the district accountability framework. • The relationship between program goals and objectives and those developed at various other administrative levels. This includes a description of the process that staff should follow to ensure that there is a logical, specific linkage rather than a loose, general association between program-level accountability systems and those included in documents such as the strategic plan, school improvement plans, and the district budget. • The district budget development process including district budget priorities and the connection between program goals and objectives and the allocation of program resources. <p>Step 2: Distribute the document the document to each department head and to appropriate program staff to enable them to develop accountability systems for their programs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Newly create Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability under the direction of the superintendent and her leadership team.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Develop adequate goals and objectives for major educational and operational programs and services.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent charge the director or supervisor of each educational and operational program with the responsibility of developing adequate goals and objectives for their respective program. The accountability framework and the accountability handbook described in Recommendations (2) and (3) above should be used as a foundation. Primary areas to develop goals and objectives include those below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offices of the three assistant superintendents and other areas reporting directly to the Superintendent such as the Education Foundation • Basic Education (K-3, 4-8, and 9-12) • Exceptional Student Education • Vocational • At-Risk (Dropout Prevention, Educational Alternatives, English for Speakers of Other Languages) • Facilities Construction and Facilities Maintenance • Personnel • Asset and Risk Management • Financial Management • Purchasing • Transportation • Food Services • Safety and Security <p>Step 2: Program director or supervisor identify the purpose of each major program (from federal or state law, grant specifications, etc.) and the primary services provided by the district.</p> <p>Step 3: Program director or supervisor identify district priorities, the strategic plan, existing goals and objectives, and major activities/initiatives that relate to each program.</p> <p>Step 4: Program director or supervisor develops broad goal statements that describe the primary outcomes (such as high student performance, efficient transportation services, etc.) the district expects each program to achieve. Goal statements should reflect the intent of each program, support school-based needs, provide a context for major program initiatives and activities, and clearly support goals and objectives developed at other administrative levels. Staff should use information in Exhibit 4-11 as a guideline.</p> <p>Step 5: Program director or supervisor develops short-term and mid-term objectives for each educational and operational program goal. Objectives should be based on the specific, measurable outcomes the district would like program to achieve. Each objective should relate to the program's goals, the program's intent and resources, children served, school needs, district-wide goals, and the district's expectations for the program.</p> <p>Step 6: Program director or supervisor identifies major initiatives and</p>

	key strategies that the district will implement to achieve each program objective. These strategies will be later used to set priorities for day-to-day operations.
	Step 7: All program goals and objectives are finalized and submitted to the Leadership Team for review. The Leadership Team seeks input from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability to assure each system is aligned with the district's strategic plan.
Who Is Responsible	Program directors supervisors, supported by the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability, and at the direction of the superintendent and her leadership team.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 5

Strategy	Review and align all the goals and objectives, and develop a mechanism to review and provide feedback to program staff.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team with help from the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability review program-level goals and objectives with staff of each major program to ensure that they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet district expectations set forth in the accountability handbook (refer to Recommendations 1 and 2 above) and • clearly and logically relate to the district's vision and mission statements, and goals and objectives developed at various other district administrative levels such as those in the strategic plan and those developed as part of the budget process. <p>Step 2: The Leadership Team with help from the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability review school improvement plans to identify school-based needs as they relate to specific programs. This information is also used to develop, refine, and align program-level goals and objectives to support school needs and improvement initiatives. (Refer to Action Plan 5-8, Chapter 5 for additional recommendations related to school improvement plans.)</p> <p>Step 3: The Leadership Team ensures the Curriculum and Instruction department clearly addresses all eight state educational goals through department goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 4: The Leadership Team provides specific feedback to program staff to revise and resubmit goals and objectives that do not meet district expectations or do not clearly align with those developed at other administrative levels.</p>

Who Is Responsible	<p>Superintendent, Leadership Team, and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.</p> <p>Alternatively, the Leadership team could form ad hoc working committees to review specific program areas. Each committee could include a representative from the Leadership Team and may include appropriate staff members from other district program areas to ensure that goals and objectives are realistic, related, and coordinated with other programs' goals and objectives. For instance, operational support areas such as Finance, Transportation, and Facilities could be included as members of the ad hoc working committees that review and provide feedback on educational program goals and objectives.</p>
Time Frame	September 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 6

Strategy	Clarify the relationship between program-level goals and objectives with the district's mission, values, priorities, and administrator performance expectations.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and her Leadership Team establish a committee made up of program directors/supervisors and supported by the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. The committee would be responsible for analyzing the goals and objectives of all educational and operational programs to clearly establish existing interactions between departments and programs. Secondly, the evaluation should concentrate on how the different systems interrelate and align with the district's long-term and short-term goals and objectives, mission and priorities. Lastly, the committee should review the relationship between goals and objectives and goals and objectives of school improvement plans.</p> <p>Step 2: The committee should make recommendations to the Superintendent and her Leadership Team to strengthen the linkages of all staff.</p> <p>Step 3: The Leadership Team should review the committees recommendations and direct program staff to revise the goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 4: Goals and objectives are finalized and implemented.</p> <p>Step 5: Program director or supervisor reassess goals and objectives two times each year based on legislative changes, changes in district goals, student needs, resources, needs identified in school improvement plans, etc.</p> <p>Step 6: At the end of each school year management evaluates the results of each program and administrator compensation is tied to achievements.</p>

Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent and her Leadership team and program directors or supervisors, supported by the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	January 31, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 7

Strategy	Revise and expand the existing accountability policy to address responsibility for accomplishing goals and objectives established at individual educational program level and to emphasize accountability.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and her Leadership Team, with input from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability draft an expanded accountability policy to describe how departments and programs within the district are to be charged with the responsibility of developing annual goals and objectives that relate to the district's mission, support State Education Goals, reflect the intent of the program, or incorporate state or federal requirements.</p> <p>The policy also should describe how departments and programs are to be held accountable for the success of reaching the established goals.</p> <p>Step 2: Updated policy is submitted to the board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Leadership Team, and school board.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

2 The district should expand its use of performance and cost-efficiency measures, and interpretive benchmarks to improve program performance and reduce costs

While the district has established performance measures for the educational programs to some extent, the district has not established performance and cost-efficiency measures for most of its operational programs. The lack of a meaningful set of performance measures makes it very difficult for district administrators to assess program performance and make informed decisions regarding resource allocation. Additionally, performance measurement systems are developed based on sound goals and objectives and because this is a weak area in the district, it is expected that the performance measurement activity needs to be strengthened.

Measurement of performance and cost-efficiency is a powerful means by which program managers, the school board, and other stakeholders are able to determine whether the district's major educational and operational programs are meeting district expectations. Performance and cost-efficiency measures define the performance and cost data and info to be collected needed to assess whether goals and objectives have been achieved in the most economical way possible. Developing

and implementing an adequate set of performance measures for each major program would allow the district to make better informed decisions regarding issues such as

- increasing or decreasing the funds allocated to different programs;
- continuing or eliminating programs due of low performance levels;
- outsourcing programs or services under a program;
- co-locating services;
- implementing new programs; and
- determining whether services are being provided in the most cost-effective manner.

The District Has Framework That Can Be Used to Develop Educational Programs Performance Measures

As mentioned earlier, the previous administration took the initiative to develop accountability mechanisms for the six programmatic areas under the Curriculum and Instruction department and while this mechanism is not fully used, the district can use it as a starting point. The system included the establishment of close to 140 *results measures* (i.e., performance measures) as a means to assure that objectives were met. The system and the associated performance measures, however, presented the following weaknesses:

- the results measures generally lacked depth and each was not clearly differentiated as being an input, output, or outcome measure;
- the system did not have a clearly defined accountability component. As a result, there was little consistency in the follow up of the result of performance measurements;
- the performance measures generally did not have associated benchmarks or appropriate standards against which performance data could be composed to determine whether performance was acceptable; and
- none of the 140 results measures developed linked program performance to program costs. Generally, educational programs do not have adequate performance measures such as per pupil cost, to determine whether program activities should be reviewed to reduce costs;

Exhibit 4-15 shows one example of performance measures developed by each programmatic area.

Exhibit 4-15**Examples of Performance (Results) Measures of the Different Programmatic Areas**

Strategic Direction	Results Measures
Basic PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction	
Make available the <i>Kindergarten Readiness</i> brochure and the <i>Welcome to Kindergarten</i> brochure to all incoming parents.	Number of brochures distributed
Exceptional Student Education	
Increase the number of placements into Prekindergarten Programs for Children with Disabilities.	Data collection
Federal Compensatory Programs	
Implement a <i>Take Home Literacy</i> Program for Migrant/ESOL students and increase the emphasis on advocacy.	Reduction in Dropout rate of Migrant Students. Number of students attending HEP/Camp. Number of students attending Summer Institute
Vocational-Technical Adult and Community Education	
Lake District students will receive career pathway preparation in order to exit school prepared for successful employment and further education	Student career portfolios
Media and Staff Development	
Provide, through school site media centers, videos and reading materials on child development for parents and staff.	Checkout records Number of titles requested
Student Services	
A profile of early leavers in Lake County will be developed using the early reports completed by the Occupational Therapists.	Schools will be able to better identify early leavers and develop appropriate interventions

Source: Lake County School, May 2001.

The district has several strengths that it can use to develop a sound performance measurement system. For example, the current management information system allows for data analysis and comparisons. The data on educational programs includes grades, attendance, and test scores. The district demonstrated that its management information system contains performance measurement data that is routinely collected, compiled, and reported to DOE. Management should evaluate different ways to improve the existing information system to make it easier for use by district administrators, school administrators, and teachers to assess program performance and results. Another advantage of the educational programs is that a series of performance measures has already been developed that could be refined and used as a starting point.

In summary, while some programs in the district track performance to a certain extent, the district needs to expand and improve its systematic performance measurement mechanism through a formal, consistent and comprehensive procedure. The recommended Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (Action Plan 4-1, Recommendation 1) should play a key role in carrying out this task. Critical performance measures should be included in the district's strategic plan and the revised set of performance measures should include appropriate benchmarks from comparable school districts, government agencies, and private industry. They should also be up-to-date, in writing, easy to identify, and located in a single document.

The programs should also incorporate and find appropriate balance between the different types of performance measures. Exhibit 4-16 presents the definition of each type of measure. And lastly, performance measures link program performance to program costs.

An added advantage of an adequate set of performance measures is that it ultimately enables the district to assess district-wide educational performance and determine whether decisions to fund particular initiatives and programs or services have met their individual goals or should be discontinued, reduced, or expanded. Performance measurement however, also needs to be tied to program-level goals and objectives and, thus allow individual staff to assess whether they are meeting the specific performance and cost-efficiency expectations for individual programmatic areas and their contribution to district-wide educational performance.

Exhibit 4-16

Purpose of Different Types of Performance Measures

Type of Performance Measures	Purpose
Input	Measure any demands or resources, which affect outputs or outcomes. Inputs include staff, financial resources, equipment, and supplies.
Output	Measures products or services produced by a program or number of entities receiving services. Outputs include the actual number of students receiving educational program services, number of applications processed, gross square footage monitored for security purposes, and miles of school bus service traveled. Output measures can be used to assess efficiency and work load issues.
Outcome	Measure of the extent to which a program is resulting in the consequences or public benefit intended. Outcomes include percentage of students who showed mastery of writing skills through their scores on FCAT, percentage of vocational certificate completers who were placed in a job related to their education, and percentage of graduating seniors who needed no remediation upon entry into a college or university. Outcome measures can be used to evaluate the actual impact of a program or service and identify potential improvements in program design and processes.

Source: Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability (OPPAGA).

Information Available Databases Should Be Used More

The state Department of Education's School Indicators Report annually makes available data at the district and school level on a total of 21 performance indicators. This information can be useful in comparing program performance against similar districts. Exhibits 4-17 through 4-22 show the results of a benchmarking exercise conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. to illustrate the usefulness of the data in assessing the district's performance to program managers. Additional information and recommendations on use of more extensive use of nonacademic indicators is presented in Chapter 5 Action Plan 5-1 and related discussions.

The comparison is made against the group of peer districts selected for this review. The selected academic indicators are:

- mobility rate,
- absentee rate,

- gifted students rate,
- dropout rate,
- graduation rate, and
- class size.

Exhibit 4-17

Mobility Rate

District	Mobility (%)		
	Elementary	Middle	High
Lake	57.1	30.5	26.2
Alachua	32.7	27.8	32.0
Charlotte	27.6	25.3	22.7
Okaloosa	31.1	21.5	30.3
Osceola	38.7	32.9	33.0
St. Johns	24.2	20.2	21.0
Santa Rosa	25.5	23.0	19.4
Average without Lake County	30.0	25.1	26.4

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Report for the Year 2000.

Exhibit 4-18

Absentee Rate

District	Students Absent 21 or More Days (%)		
	Elementary	Middle	High
Lake	4.7	9.5	NA
Alachua	6.6	10.5	18.5
Charlotte	5.3	5.4	11.5
Okaloosa	3.0	5.1	10.0
Osceola	7.1	15.8	10.2
St. Johns	4.4	9.1	11.3
Santa Rosa	5.4	7.9	10.6
Average without Lake County	5.3	9.0	12.0

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Report for the Year 2000.

*Exhibit 4-19***Gifted Students Rate**

District	Gifted Students (%)		
	Elementary	Middle	High
Lake	1.4	3.5	4.9
Alachua	9.8	18.5	Not Available
Charlotte	3.1	6.1	4.0
Okaloosa	3.1	8.1	4.0
Osceola	0.6	2.2	1.6
St. Johns	2.1	6.5	0.9
Santa Rosa	3.4	5.8	2.7
Average without Lake County	3.7	7.9	2.6

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Report for the Year 2000.

*Exhibit 4-20***Dropout Rate**

District	Dropout Rate (%)		
	Elementary	Middle	High
Lake	4.30	4.30	4.30
Alachua	6.30	6.30	6.30
Charlotte	3.70	NA	3.70
Okaloosa	4.10	4.10	4.10
Osceola	5.50	5.50	5.50
St. Johns	2.30	2.30	2.30
Santa Rosa	2.00	2.00	2.00
Average without Lake County	3.98	4.04	3.98

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Report for the Year 2000.

*Exhibit 4-21***Graduation Rate**

District	High School Graduation Rate (%)
Okaloosa	77.5
St. Johns	74.9
Santa Rosa	73.5
Charlotte	71.7
Lake	66.3
Alachua	63.7
Osceola	58.9
Average without Lake County	66.8

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Report for the Year 2000.

Exhibit 4-22

Class Size

District	Level	K-5	Language Arts	Math
Lake	Elementary	21.9		
	Middle (Grades 6-8)		25.7	27.1
	High (Grades 9-12)		26.3	25.6
Alachua	Elementary	21.8		
	Middle		23.1	21.3
	High		25.1	24.9
Charlotte	Elementary	22.1		
	Middle		23.1	22.2
	High		24.6	24.8
Okaloosa	Elementary	23.2		
	Middle		23.2	22.9
	High		24	23.7
Osceola	Elementary	30		
	Middle		26	28.4
	High		23.4	24.2
St. Johns	Elementary	21.7		
	Middle		24.4	24.8
	High		27.2	28.3
Santa Rosa	Elementary	23.3		
	Middle		25.3	24.8
	High		26.3	27.8

Note: Comparative information on Science and Social Studies class sizes is also available in the DOE database.

Source: Department of Education. School Indicators Report 1999-2000.

Operational Programs Have Not Developed Well-Defined Performance Measurement Systems

Generally, the operational programs have not developed formal performance or cost-efficiency measures, or benchmarks (e.g., industry standards) to assess operations. Furthermore, operational program staff generally do not collect performance and cost-efficiency data, needed to improve operations on a regular basis.

Some departments informally collect measurement data to assess programs but the data falls short of enabling program managers to comprehensively assess program performance providing. For example, the Transportation department collects some data but does not use this information regularly to make operational improvements nor does the department collect and assess other data such as bus driver turnover rate, bus occupancy rate, or number of courtesy riders, that would provide a comprehensive picture of the overall performance and cost of the transportation program. The Personnel department collects staffing and salary information more to defend budget requests than to determine organizational or operational improvements on to reduce costs.

Without clearly defined goals and measurable objectives, it is impossible for program leaders to know whether the current performance and cost measurements are appropriate or sufficient. Exhibit 4-23 presents examples of performance and cost measures for operational programs. Directors and supervisors can select the performance measures that are most suitable for the operation and

implement measurement to monitor performance on a continuous basis. Of the selected group, the Superintendent's Leadership Team can choose a few key measures to present to the school board or public to indicate whether district wide performance and cost are acceptable.

The current administration should also address performance and cost measurement systems for operational programs in the strategic plan currently being developed. Once the district develops goals and objectives and performance and cost measurement systems are developed for each major operational program, program leaders will be able to ensure that the performance and cost efficiency data collected fully answer the question whether programs are meeting expectations.

Exhibit 4-23

Examples of Performance and Cost Measures for Operational Programs

Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of account payable checks • Percentage of monthly journal entries • Percentage of journal coding errors • Number of audit adjustments • Percentage amount of adjustment for monthly coding errors • Percentage of transactions processed with less than x% error rate • Percentage of fund balances researched and validated monthly • Percentage of budget amendments to board within x days • Average number of working days to compile monthly financial statements and associated schedules • Percentage of vendor discounts lost due to processing delays by accounting
Purchasing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of PO's processed • Number of formal bids processed • Number of formal RFPs processed • Average time to process RFPs • Percentage Response to bids issued • Percentage of response to RFPs issued • Average rate of stock turnover • Number and percent of items received and stored within X working days of receipt of material • Percentage of cost center requests responded to within X days • Percentage of stock requisitions filled and delivered within X days • Percentage of users surveyed who rate purchasing service as satisfactory or higher on user survey • Cost per bid request processed • Minutes spent per purchase order payment processed • Cost per purchase order processed • Minutes spent per purchase order issued • Percentage of overdue orders • Dollar value of purchase orders issued

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dollar value of warehouse inventory
Plant Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of grounds work • Overtime expected • Cleaning/maintenance cost per square foot • Square feet maintained per FTE • Number of user complaints • Percentage of work orders completed within X number of days • Percentage of PMs completed on schedule • Percentage of quality checks meeting standard • Average days to institute routine repairs • Estimated savings from energy conservation measures • Percentage of emergency repairs completed within one day of notification • Amount of time spent per work order • Average, cost per maintenance request • Facilities operation cost per square foot • Maintenance and repair cost per square foot • Supervisory cost per square foot
Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average number of days for selection of design consultant from project assignment • Average number of days for selection of construction consultant from project assignment • Number of consultant engineer contracts administered • Number of in-house designs completed • Number of inspections completed • Number of construction/capital projects managed • Percentage of inspection cost to project cost • Percentage of design cost to project cost • Inspection cost per hour • Percentage of capital projects completed within estimated time • Average number of hours required to provide preliminary planning review for capital improvement projects
Student Transportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of accidents/100,000 miles • Number of preventable accidents/100,000 miles • Parent complaints per week • Percentage of trips missed • Percentage of trips on schedules • Cost per pupil trip • Percentage of breakdowns • Number of buses arriving late

Food Services

- Meals per labor hour
- Costs per meal
- Total meal participation for breakfast, lunch, and other feeding programs
- Increase or decrease in meals purchased from the previous period

Source: Previous Performance Measurement report.

The District Should Link Performance Tracking Mechanisms

In agreement with Florida law, the district's 42 School Advisory Councils are the central units for evaluating school performance. School Advisory Councils are responsible for the development of School Improvement Plans and for analyzing a variety of student and school performance measurements contained in several reports issued annually by the Department of Education for each school in the district. Currently, the performance evaluation of individual schools is not clearly linked to major educational and operational programs that have a direct or indirect impact on student performance. Furthermore, the district would benefit from having a well-defined mechanism to comprehensively evaluate district performance from a "big picture" perspective that can be used by management to give effective direction to the district.

Florida school accountability mechanisms encompass the following three well-defined instruments: the development and evaluation of *School Improvement Plans*, and the issuance of the *School Advisory Council Report* and the *School Accountability Report*. Both reports are published annually, required by Florida law and, specially the *School Advisory Council Report*, contain school-level progress on 16 performance measures related to the state's eight education goals. It would be beneficial to district administrators to use some of these indicators to evaluate the performance of educational and operational programs and their relation to school performance. Exhibit 4-24 shows the indicators developed by the state for the different state educational goals.

Action Plan 5-6, Recommendation 4, Chapter 5 presents recommendation related to linking the existing mechanisms into a district-wide accountability system.

Exhibit 4-24**Performance Indicators Established for Each State Education Goal**

State Education Goal	Indicator	State Education Goal	Indicator
Goal 1:	Number and percentage of students meeting the expectations of the state for school readiness.	Goal 5:	Number of incidents of unlawful activity and violence, including weapons violations, vandalism, substance abuse, harassment, and other incidents occurring on campus, on the bus, or at school-sponsored activities.
Goal 2:	Number and percentage of students who graduated within four years of entering ninth grade for the first time. Number and percentage of students who were reported as dropouts at the end of each school year. Number and percentage of students who meet the state levels in reading, writing, and mathematics for placement into college-level courses. Number and percentage of graduates who are followed up by the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP).	Goal 6:	Number and percentage of classes taught by out-of-field teachers. Number and percentage of teachers, administrators, and staff who receive satisfactory annual evaluations based on a district assessment system. Number and percentage of teachers in the school who have earned degrees beyond the bachelor's level.
Goal 3:	Student performance results on state-designated student assessments, including the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests (FCAT) at grades four, five, eight, and ten for Sunshine State Standards and grades 3 through 10 for the NRT component.	Goal 7:	Number of adult students served by the district earning a state of Florida high school diploma either by earning credits and meeting minimum skills requirements in math and communications by scoring high enough on the 10 th grade FCAT or the HSCT or by taking and passing the General Education Development tests.
Goal 4:	Results of a locally-administered school learning environment survey. Number and percentage of teachers and staff new to the school at the beginning of the school year. Number and percentage of	Goal 8:	Number and percentage of School Advisory Council members by membership type and racial/ethnic category.

State Education Goal	Indicator	State Education Goal	Indicator
	students absent 11 to 20 and 21 or more days each year. Average number of days teachers and administrators were not in attendance at the school for reasons classified as personal leave, sick leave, and temporary duty elsewhere.		

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Generally, the District Does Not Compare Program Performance and Cost Against Acceptable Standards and Benchmarks

Some programs compare their performance and cost to other school districts. Examples are transportation, food services, risk management, and personnel. In contrast, other programs and in particular major educational programs generally compare their performance to standards or benchmarks (such as other districts) on a very limited basis.

These comparisons however, do not have specific meaning as benchmarks because they generally have not defined acceptable target or standards and results are generally not reported in a formal manner. Additionally, benchmarking results are not presented to school board members on a consistent basis.

Without a comprehensive set of performance and cost-efficiency benchmarks that link to each program's purpose, goals, and objectives, district managers and school board members can have difficulty interpreting performance and cost-efficiency data to enable them to address basic questions such as those below.

- Where does the district stand in relation to others delivering similar programs and services?
- Is current program performance adequate and are program or service costs reasonable?
- Has the district met program performance and cost-efficiency expectations?
- Could the program or service operate with fewer resources?
- Are peer districts utilizing different and innovative best practices?

Once the district develops performance measures, the district should develop adequate benchmarks for each major educational and operational program. There are many sources of information for standards in both the public and private industry that can be used to assess performance of operational areas.

The District's Operational Programs Should Also Utilize Nonacademic Data Available More Extensively

Operational areas also have a great resource in the School Indicators Report. Exhibits 4-25 through 4-29 show the result of benchmarking exercise for Lake County against its peers for selected operational indicators. More than making conclusions on where Lake stands in relation to its peers, the purpose of these exhibits is to demonstrate that there is data available and readily accessible to see how the district is doing when compared against others.

Exhibit 4-25

Finance—Operating Costs

District	Finance-Operating Costs (\$)
Alachua	4,834
Charlotte	4,749
Okaloosa	4,679
St. Johns	4,592
Osceola	4,379
Lake	4,363
Santa Rosa	4,295
Average without Lake County	4,510

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Report for the Year 2000.

Exhibit 4-26

Finance—Per Pupil Expenditures

District	Finance-Per Pupil Expenditures			
	Exceptional (\$)	Regular (\$)	At-Risk (\$)	Vocational
Lake	6,411	3,813	6,004	Not Available
Alachua	6,416	4,252	6,161	Not Available
Charlotte	7,257	4,056	7,573	Not Available
Okaloosa	6,482	4,227	7,717	Not Available
Osceola	7,094	3,916	3,919	Not Available
St. Johns	7,088	4,054	4,352	Not Available
Santa Rosa	6,510	3,710	3,921	Not Available
Average without Lake county	6,808	4,036	5,607	Not Available

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Report for the Year 2000.

*Exhibit 4-27***Food Services—Free Reduced—Price Lunch rate**

District	Free Reduced-Price Lunch (%)	
	Elementary	Middle
Lake	49.3	40.2
Alachua	57.2	41.9
Charlotte	49.9	41.4
Okaloosa	38.7	27.7
Osceola	51.3	45.7
St. Johns	30.1	21.6
Santa Rosa	37.9	30.1
Average without Lake County	44.2	34.7

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Report for the Year 2000.

*Exhibit 4-28***Safety and Security—Suspensions Rate**

District	Suspensions					
	Elementary		Middle		High	
	In-School (%)	Out-of-School (%)	In-School (%)	Out-of-School (%)	In-School (%)	Out-of-School (%)
Lake	1.2	3.1	11.6	15.8	5.1	14.3
Alachua	0.6	3.0	8.3	15.1	3.3	13.7
Charlotte	0.1	0.9	0.0	10.0	0.0	8.3
Okaloosa	1.1	1.1	17.1	10.1	14.9	10.7
Osceola	1.3	3.1	8.4	18.5	2.8	15.4
St. Johns	0.0	1.8	18.7	10.6	11.1	10.8
Santa Rosa	0.4	0.4	18.1	6.4	10.0	6.0
Average without Lake County	0.6	1.7	11.8	11.8	7.0	10.8

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Report for the Year 2000.

*Exhibit 4-29***Teachers—Average Years of Experience**

District	Teachers—Average Years of Experience
Okaloosa	15.4
Alachua	14.1
Santa Rosa	13.7
Lake	12.7
Charlotte	12.6
St. Johns	12.3
Osceola	9.7
Average without Lake County	13.0

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Report for the Year 2000.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop performance and cost-efficiency measures for major programs. Developing these measures will better enable district administrators and school board members to address basic questions about program performance and cost and assess progress toward program goals and objectives.*
- *As part of performance measure development, we recommend that program staff identify and prioritize data needs. This will better ensure that data is available to assess program performance and cost.*
- *We also recommend that the district establish a mechanism to review and align performance measures with those developed at various administrative levels such as the district's strategic plan.*
- *Once the district develops performance measures, we recommend that the district develop benchmarks for each major program. This would include developing standards or targets for existing comparisons to help staff determine whether their programs have made sufficient progress toward program goals and objectives. Benchmarks should include comparisons to other similar school districts, government agencies, and private industry. Staff should use the Pathway to Excellence as a starting point to identify these benchmarks for educational programs. The district should identify who is responsible for doing this analysis and how often it should be done. This will better enable the district to assess whether the performance and cost of these programs are acceptable. District administrators and school board members also could use this information in decision-making and to identify ways to improve*

Action Plan 4-2 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 4-2

Development of Performance and Cost Efficiency Measures

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop program performance and cost-efficiency measures and identify data needs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team should assign program directors and supervisors the responsibility of identifying performance measures for the major programs/services. The newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability assists program staff in researching appropriate measures.</p> <p>Step 2: Program directors and supervisors review Exhibit 4-16 and use it as a guide in developing the performance measures. Operational supervisors should review Exhibit 4-23, common performance measures of operational programs, as a source of information.</p> <p>Step 3: Program directors and supervisors review performance measures in the district's strategic plan document. While not program specific, the strategic plan includes broad, critical measures that should provide program staff with some direction in developing program-specific performance measures.</p>

	<p>Step 4: Identify detailed input and outcome measures and indicators of efficiency and effectiveness. Focus on desired results and outcomes, not just on activities. Clearly define each measure and make sure that it measures what is intended. Avoid measures that could easily be misinterpreted.</p> <p>Step 5: Identify how performance measures link to the budget and the measures in the district strategic plan.</p> <p>Step 6: For each performance measure, identify the data needed and provide the information below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will collect performance data and how often? What is the source of the data (e.g., state or district reports)? • In what format is the data needed? • How often should the data be collected? • Who (program staff, department head, assistant superintendent, Superintendent, school board) will the data be reported to and how often? • How should the data be used? <p>Step 7: Program directors and supervisors select a few critical performance and cost-efficiency measures that should be reported periodically to school board members and the Superintendent to demonstrate how well the program is performing.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership team, program supervisors and appropriate program staff.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Identify data needs and develop a process for approving data requests.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team, the directors of MIS and Finance with input from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability identify and prioritize data needs by classifying data into the following two categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data currently available, accessible, and in the format needed to determine progress toward program goals and objectives and • data currently either not available, accessible or in the format needed to determine progress toward program goals and objectives. <p>Step 2: Establish and implement a district-wide process for approving data requests made to the MIS department. This policy may include review and signoff from department managers or assistant superintendents and how the data relates to program goals and objectives.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership team, assistant superintendents, the Management and Information Systems (MIS) department, and the new office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.

Time Frame	October 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Review and align performance measures.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign the responsibility to clearly identify the specific role and expectations for program staff to program directors and supervisors to ensure that performance measures are implemented and how they should relate to specific programs' performance measurement system. The new office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (Action Plan 4-1) is consulted as needed.</p> <p>Step 2: Review program-level performance measures with staff of each major program to ensure that they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet district expectations set forth in the accountability handbook (refer to Action Plan 4-1 Recommendation 3), the specifications outlined in Exhibit 4-11, elements of program performance and Cost-Efficiency Measures, and Exhibit 4-16, Input, Output, and Outcome Measures and • clearly and logically relate to those developed at various other district administrative levels such as those in school improvement plans and the strategic plan. <p>Step 3: Provide specific feedback to program staff to revise and resubmit performance measures that do not meet district expectations or do not clearly align with those developed at other administrative levels.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership Team, program supervisors and directors.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Develop benchmarks for each major program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team determine which major programs would benefit most from benchmarking and assign the responsibility to program supervisors and directors to develop benchmarks for the selected programs/services.</p> <p>Step 2: Program directors and supervisors of the selected programs/services identify key performance measures of cost, quality, and efficiency that should be compared.</p> <p>Step 3: For each program, a group of about five peer districts is identified using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • availability of program; • location of school district; • student population; • number of students served by program; • urban/rural nature of district; and • socioeconomic status of the district. <p>Step 4: For each program, select model organizations including government agencies or private companies that have similar programs.</p> <p>Step 5: Contact the peer districts or search for the required data in appropriate sources.</p> <p>Step 6: Identify standards, such as trend analysis data, minimally acceptable performance, or generally accepted industry standards, to judge program performance or cost-efficiency. Examples of standards might include being in the top of the state's districts, in the middle of peer districts, within 10% of the industry average, etc.</p> <p>Step 7: Determine how the data will be used to draw conclusions on the different programs. For example, whether the district will be compared to the average of the peer districts, the highest performing organization, the organization with the lowest cost, etc.</p> <p>Step 8: Set a schedule to collect performance data from benchmarking organizations, staff responsible for collecting the data, source of the benchmark data and timelines for collecting and reporting results.</p> <p>Step 9: Collect the data, measure the performance, and identify gaps between the Lake programs and the peer districts.</p> <p>Step 10: Program directors and supervisors or selected programs/services present results to the Superintendent and later, to the school board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership Team, Program supervisors and directors, and appropriate program staff with the assistance of the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	January 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

3 The district does not adequately assess the performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs regularly to establish potential cost savings and/or outsourcing options.

Without sufficient performance and cost measurement systems and benchmarks, the district does not have a mechanism in place to assess the performance and cost of major programs on an ongoing basis in order to improve the quality of education and services and to identify ways to reduce costs. As indicated in the previous section, the district collects some operations data—primarily staffing and expenditures—and maintains historical data; however, the district could use this data more effectively to analyze the cost effectiveness of its operations. Currently, the district’s assessments of its operations include a reduced number of informal internal evaluations and a few formal external evaluations. (Refer to the next section for more information on district evaluation activities.)

Periodic assessment provides a means to program staff to monitor and manage programs on a daily basis and make midcourse adjustments on an ongoing basis. Their assessments are also useful to pull together basic data on a regular, real-time, basis to determine and communicate to district management how well a program is meeting its goals and objectives. Without such information, district administrators can have difficulty determining the extent to which programs are progressing towards stated goals and objectives and identifying ways to improve.

Periodic assessments of cost-effectiveness of programs are a key component of a sound controlling system. Because the district lacks such system, goals, measurable objectives, performance measures, and benchmarks are not defined, it is impossible for district staff to assess the performance or cost of major programs on a regular, real-time basis. Once adequate performance measures and benchmarks are established (Action Plan 4-2) we recommend the district conduct ongoing assessments of programs/services on a periodic basis.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop a top-down directive for staff to conduct ongoing assessments of selected programs and services.*
- *We recommend that the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (Action Plan 4-1) and the MIS Department provide training to district administrators on performance reporting, including the benefits of it and how to do it. This training should include communicating to the administrators the reports that are currently available from TERMS as well as on how to identify other data or reporting needs.*

Action Plan 4-3 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 4-3**Periodic Assessment of Educational and Operational Programs**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a top-down directive for staff to conduct ongoing assessments of selected programs and services.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team develops a directive for staff to conduct ongoing assessments of programs and services. Program assessments should include information such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • program purpose, goals, objectives, delivery methods, and program resources (dollars and staff); • the extent to which the program achieved its annual goals and objectives using performance and cost-efficiency data and established benchmarks; • amount of workload accomplished (outputs); • numeric indicators of program results that indicate quality, effectiveness, and amount of “need” that is or is not being served (outcomes); • amount of input related to (divided by) amount of output or outcomes (efficiency); • elements substantially out of the control of the school district or program that affect program accomplishments; and • elements over which the district has significant control, such as staffing patterns <p>Step 2: The Leadership Team selects the programs and services that will be monitored on a regular basis and assigns this responsibility to program directors or supervisors. The new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability is consulted as needed.</p> <p>Step 3: Performance is monitored and results are presented as agreed.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership team, program directors, supervisors or assigned staff, and the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	October 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Provide training to district administrators on performance reporting
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of MIS and the office of Program Evaluation and Accountability jointly deliver training to administrators on performance reporting, how to identify and prioritize data needs, and on the reports already available from TERMS.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent and her Leadership team work together to establish a mechanism for soliciting ongoing input from district employees on changing data and reporting needs; prioritizing these needs; communicating them to the MIS Department; and creating performance reports.</p> <p>Step 3: The MIS Director establishes a mechanism for encouraging and soliciting ongoing input from district employees on changing data and reporting needs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership Team; director of MIS, and the office of Program Evaluation and Accountability
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

4 The district should expand formal evaluations of its major educational and operational programs to improve program performance and cost-efficiency.

The district does not have well-defined evaluation mechanisms in place to examine whether educational or operational programs are meeting their intended purpose, goals, and objectives in the most efficient manner. Consequently, the district is not able to evaluate the cost-effectiveness and cost-efficiency of educational and operational programs in a formal or consistent manner.

As with periodic assessment, because the district generally lacks a structure of goals, objectives and performance measures, there is no basis upon which the programs can be formally evaluated. Evaluation has no meaning if the district has not defined goals and objectives each program is expected to achieve.

Evaluation of school district program performance is an essential component of not only effective management, but also public accountability. When done well, evaluations ensure that overall directions of individuals and groups are consistent with the short-range and long-range of the district. It also helps ensure that that objectives and accomplishments are consistent with one another throughout the organization in proper means-end fashion. And, it helps maintain compliance with essential district policies.

The evaluation process as practiced by managers is typically conducted much less frequently and is more formal and comprehensive than assessments. Formal evaluation is one of the four necessary steps in a well-defined accountability system as previously described in Exhibit 4-3. And as shown in Exhibit 4-30, there are several types of formal evaluations.

Exhibit 4-30

Types of Formal Evaluations

Evaluation Type	Principle
Cost – Benefit	<p>Evaluation focuses on what an alternative will cost in relationship to the expected benefits. Typical criteria for evaluating alternatives include these below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the <i>benefits</i> of using the alternative to solve a performance deficiency or take advantage of an opportunity? • What are the <i>costs</i> to implement the alternatives, including direct resource investments as well as any potential negative side effects? • What is the <i>timeliness</i> or how fast will the benefits occur and positive impact be achieved? • What is the <i>acceptability</i> of the alternative? Or, to what extent will those who must work with it support the alternative? • What is the degree of <i>ethical soundness</i> of the alternative? Does it meet acceptable ethical criteria according to the different stakeholders?
Evaluation Type	Principle
Process	<p>Evaluation focuses on descriptions of the different activities related to program goals and objectives, such as these below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the program provide? • How are the services provided? • Who receives the services? • What is the scope of delivery of the services? • To what extent are the services provided?
Outcome	<p>Evaluation questions focus on the effectiveness of the program as a whole or of specific activities within the program. Typical criteria for evaluating alternatives include these below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the anticipated outcomes? • Are the anticipated outcomes being met? • Are they being met in a timely manner? • With the planned resources?

Source: Prior OPPAGA reports.

The District Does Not Adequately Evaluate Its Educational and Operational Programs

The Lake County School District's evaluation of programs and services is very limited. This condition is largely due to the fact that the organization has not established clear goals and measurable objectives, performance and cost-efficiency measures, and benchmarks to evaluate programs.

For example, the district generally does not tie assessment data to the achievement of program goals and objectives and does not formally evaluate whether major programs are effective especially in increasing student achievement or whether an initiative is meeting its intended purpose.

A noticeable exception to this condition is the Title I program, funded mainly by the federal government. The program mandates that the district conduct formal evaluations of the program including school-wide projects, the migrant project, and neglected and delinquent services. These evaluations provide a large amount of data and other information about the Title I Program. However, without measurable program-level objectives established internally, these evaluations do not provide a clear answer to the broad questions of how successful is the program in meeting the Lake County School District's objectives and how can the program be improved.

The District Should Expand Its Efforts to Identify Cost Savings

The district should establish a formal mechanism to encourage staff to recommend cost savings opportunities. Ideas about cost savings opportunities could be solicited and generated at each the department level and the district level during regular decision-making meetings and budgeting processes. While a procedure to continually identify cost savings is not in place, certain district programs and services conduct cost benefit analysis of educational and operational programs whenever necessary or appropriate. Some of these cost savings measures adopted include:

- applying for Medicaid reimbursements for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services;
- obtaining additional revenue for students placed by other public agencies;
- adjusting the districts staff allocation formula;

Encouraging a broader range of district personnel to look critically at their activities to identify even more savings could generate additional ideas for cost savings.

Evaluations of Alternative Methods for Service Delivery Should Be Improved and Expanded

The district generally falls short of evaluating the prices it pays for goods and services. In addition, generally the district does not evaluate alternatives to reduce costs on a periodic basis. An exception is the monitoring of the costs related to legal services carried out by the Finance department. There are several operations that the district should evaluate to determine whether the district could reduce costs by outsourcing the services. Examples are warehouse operations, physical therapy and printing services.

The District Should Increase Evaluation Information Available to School Board Members and Top-Level Administrators

Often as a reaction to public concern, the district has relied on directives from the school board or the superintendent to formally evaluate programs or services. However, the district has not established proactive criteria to determine when a program or initiative should undergo review and report performance. The data provided to school board members on performance and cost-effectiveness of programs varies depending on the type of data requested by individual school board members and the additional performance information that staff members may provide. After clear goals and more measurable objectives are established for the different programs, administrators will have data available to determine the extent to which major educational and operational programs are meeting expectations. The implementation of district-level accountability initiatives as recommended in Action Plan 4-1, should also provide more useful performance data for school board members and the Superintendent.

School board members generally expressed that there is room for improvement in this area and could benefit from periodic reports to determine how well district programs are meeting board expectations. Critical assessment data and formal evaluation findings and recommendations should be provided on a regular basis to school board members and the superintendent. This kind of information should help school board members and the Superintendent to set district priorities and make decisions regarding the allocation of district resources.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop an evaluation model to use in reviewing major district programs. The district should identify criteria to determine when to contract for an evaluation. To do this, the district should estimate resources needed if done internally. This would provide information on the progress toward program goals and objectives using pre-established performance and cost-efficiency measures. This also would enable district administrators to project future resource and training needs.*
- *We recommend that district administrators finalize and the school board adopt a schedule to evaluate major educational and operational programs on a periodic basis, and as often as once a year. The district should consider legal requirements, funding/resources, data availability, students served, the date of the last evaluation of the program, potential for improvement or savings, risk or consequences, and public concern as factors in scheduling programs to be evaluated.*
- *The district should formalize the process for soliciting ideas about cost savings and alternative services opportunities and should track ideas and savings. The program should include a reward for the employees whose ideas save the district money. The district must also ensure that the program is well publicized*

Action Plan 4-4 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 4-4

Program Evaluation

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop an evaluation model to guide the review of major district programs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability develop an evaluation model to use in reviewing major district programs. Benchmarking with peer districts can be useful in this step.</p> <p>Step 2: The Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability work with the Leadership team to identify criteria to determine when to outsource the evaluation or when it should be conducted in-house.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent presents evaluation model is presented to the school board and communicated to district staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability in cooperation with the Superintendent's Leadership Team.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Comprehensively evaluate district educational and operational programs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability in cooperation with the leadership team develop a schedule to formally evaluate the districts major operational and educational programs on a regular basis. The schedule should be revised annually and project planned evaluations for the next two years. (It may take as many as three years to evaluate all major programs, given program complexity and availability of staff hours.) The objectives of each evaluation and the unit responsible for completing each evaluation should be determined in advance.</p> <p>Step 2: Present the list to the board annually for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: Implement evaluation schedule.</p> <p>Step 4: Each program evaluation should be in writing and address program goals and objectives described as Action Plan 4-1, using data collected for performance and cost-efficiency measures, and benchmarks as described in Action Plan 4-2. Each evaluation should include recommendations to improve program performance and reduce costs.</p> <p>Step 5: The Leadership Team and program administrators utilize evaluation results to reassess program goals and objectives, improve performance and reduce costs, revise performance measures and benchmarks (as needed), identify program resource needs, and identify program staff training needs.</p> <p>Step 6: A final report of each evaluation is issued. The report should clearly disclose the evaluation objectives and a description of the evaluation's scope and methodology. The report should be distributed to the high-level district administrators, program managers, the school board, and others responsible for taking action on report findings and recommendations. Copies of the report should be distributed to or made available for inspection by the public.</p> <p>Step 7: Recommendations for program improvement are implemented as appropriate.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability in cooperation with the Leadership Team, program supervisors, and appropriate program staff.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Implement a cost savings identification mechanism.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team with input from the new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability develop procedures for soliciting ideas about cost savings, and for alternative methods of providing services.</p> <p>Step 2: Program is publicized, including its incentives, to district employees.</p> <p>Step 3: The Leadership team and the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability collect, analyze, implement, and track the ideas generated.</p> <p>Step 4: Employees, whose ideas saved money, are recognized.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Leadership Team and the new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation has the potential of generating additional funds and/or cost savings. The fiscal impact, however, cannot be determined at this time.

5 The district should report additional information on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational and operational programs to ensure accountability to its stakeholders.

The district does not provide the public the performance and cost-efficiency information necessary to be held fully accountable to parents and other taxpayers. While the district provides to the public information that is mandated by Florida law, it does not provide sufficient information for the public to hold the school district accountable for the performance and cost of specific programs such as facility construction, transportation, and food services.

The District Should Expand Its Reporting of Performance and Cost Information to the Public

Part of compliance with the Florida accountability mechanisms for school improvement, the district mails the *School Public Accountability Report* to each parent at the beginning of November of each year. However, the district should provide additional information on the performance and cost of major programs, especially to taxpayers. The *School Accountability Report* provides parents general performance data at the school, district and state level. But, because the report does not provide information by program area, the public cannot hold the school district totally accountable for the performance of specific educational programs such as Exceptional Student Education, Vocational, and Dropout Prevention and operational programs such as Transportation, Facilities Construction, and Food Services. In addition, the district does not provide the public information on program costs. The *School Public Accountability Report* contains 16 performance indicators, including graduation rates, dropout rates, tests results, attendance rates, data on violence on campus, etc.

The District Should Provide More Opportunities for Public Input

The district has two main mechanisms available to secure stakeholder input for increasing accountability levels. School board meetings are the foremost method for public input, where

concerns and opinions are recorded into the board minutes. Additionally, board members and staff are members of several committees that are used as channels to gather public opinions. A complete list of the existing committees is illustrated in Exhibit 3-8 Chapter 3. Board meetings and committees give ample opportunity for interaction between district and taxpayers. However, public input may be limited to the information available. Without user friendly periodic reports on program performance and cost the public's ability to hold the district accountable is limited.

Recommendations

The district's implementation of Action Plans 4-1 through 4-4 should ensure the availability of additional performance and cost-efficiency information. However, to ensure this information is available to parents and to other taxpayers,

- we recommend that the district provide information in the annual report to the various district-wide committees and to other stakeholders upon request.*

Action Plan 4-5 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 4-5

Report Additional Information on The Performance and Cost-Efficiency of Major District Programs

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Publicly report additional information on the performance and cost-efficiency of major district programs.
	Step 1: The Leadership Team in cooperation with the new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability ensure that annual reports on the performance and cost efficiency of selected educational and operational programs are presented to school board, district administrators, to various district-wide committees and to others upon request.
	Refer to Action Plan 4-1 through 4-4, for more information.
Who Is Responsible	The Leadership Team and the new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability
Time Frame	June 2003
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

5

Educational Service Delivery

While the Lake County School District generally offers efficient and effective educational services and programs to its students, it could improve in several areas. The district should ensure that all major programs operate from strategic plans and are periodically evaluated so that critical decisions are based on information linked to program goals and objectives.

Conclusion

The Lake County School District (the district) generally offers students efficient and effective educational services and programs, and has had several notable accomplishments, as noted in Exhibit 5-1. At the same time, throughout this chapter, ValienteHernandez P.A. has identified a number of improvements that, if implemented, will improve educational service delivery. ValienteHernandez P.A. examined the district's educational programs based on best practice standards established in the following four broad areas:

- operations of K-12 instructional programs;
- acquisition, replacement and disposal of instructional materials;
- analysis of performance data and evaluation of educational programs; and
- library media and support services.

Exhibit 5-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in the Educational Service Delivery Area in the Past Two Years

- Under the state's accountability system, most of the district's schools are graded "B" and for two consecutive years, none has been graded as an "F" school.
 - The district increased in the number of A and B schools from 6 in 1999 to 14 in 2000, to 18 in 2001.
 - In 2001, 18 of 34 schools received grades at an A or B level.
 - FCAT Reading scale scores increased from 1998 to 1999 to 2000 in elementary, middle and high schools.
 - FCAT Mathematic scale scores increased from 1998 to 1999 to 2000 in elementary, middle and high schools.
 - FCAT Writing/Florida Writes! Combined scale scores increased from 1998 to 1999 to 2000 in elementary, middle and high schools.
-

Source: Lake County School District.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Operations of K-12 Instructional Programs

- District administrators use academic and nonacademic data to a certain extent, but need to define a more structured student performance review function and refine the process that addresses test results and strategies for educational improvement. (Page 5-8)
- The district would benefit from targeting and disseminating effective instructional practices to improve student performance. (Page 5-26)
- The district generally provides effective Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs. The programs could be further improved by refining the procedures to evaluate program performance. (Page 5-28)
- The district's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program is presently being restructured and therefore striving to improve. (Page 5-38)
- The district provides effective and cost-efficient secondary vocational and adult/technical education program that could be further improved by seeking employer feedback more formally. (Page 5-51)
- The district's curriculum framework is aligned to the Florida Accountability Standards and to the Sunshine State Standards. This framework can be improved by developing a more formal system to methodically guide curriculum development and implementation. (Page 5-57)
- The district has adopted a plan for the progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 that maximizes student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards and that could be further improved by strengthening the long-term effects of helping students that do not meet expectations. (Page 5-69)
- The district's School Improvement Plans should translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives more clearly. (Page 5-70)

Acquisition, Replacement and Disposal of Instructional Materials

- The district's process for selecting instructional materials ensures that instructional materials meet the needs of teachers and students. (Page 5-78)
- Each student has current appropriate instructional materials in core courses that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards and the district's pupil progression plan. However, the district should seek feedback from different stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of instructional materials. (Page 5-79)
- While the district has procedures for acquiring, maintaining, and disposing of instructional materials. However, the district could further improve by raising general consciousness to preserve books. (Page 5-83)

Analysis of Performance Data and Evaluation of Educational Programs

- The district needs to implement accountability mechanisms to ensure the overall performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its major educational programs. (Page 5-86)
- The district regularly reviews its organizational structure and the staffing of the central office and schools to minimize administrative layers and processes. However, the district's staffing formula has been repeatedly circumvented in the past. (Page 5-87)
- The district does not clearly report on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers. (Page 5-90)

Library, Media and Support Services

- The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction. The district can improve by expanding the library services at all schools to be accessible at all times. (Page 5-90)
- The district provides necessary support services (guidance counseling, psychological, social work, and health) to meet the needs of its students in a cost-efficient manner. (Page 5-93)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Most recommendations in this chapter have little or no fiscal impact as they can be implemented utilizing existing resources of the district. There are two action plan items that have a fiscal impact as indicated in Exhibit 5-2. One of these action plans includes costs related to adding two program specialists positions to K-12 Curriculum and Instruction department that will help the district gain operative effectiveness. Another recommendation will bring additional funds to the district by filing for Medicaid direct services reimbursement.

Exhibit 5-2

Implementing the Recommendation for Educational Service Delivery Would Have An Estimated Fiscal Impact of \$861,000 in Increased Revenues and Added Costs Over the Next Five Years

Action Plan and Strategy	Fiscal Impact: Cost Savings/Increased Revenues or (Increased Costs)					Total
	Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	
5-3 File for Medicaid Direct Services Reimbursement	\$128,000	\$256,000	\$256,000	\$256,000	\$256,000	\$1,152,000
5-6 Expand the PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction department	0	(90,900)	(94,500)	(98,300)	(102,200)	(385,900)
5-10 Strengthen accountability for lost and damaged books.	0	95,000	0	0	0	95,000
Total	\$128,000	\$260,100	\$161,500	\$157,700	\$153,800	\$861,100

Background

The Lake County School District is 24th largest in Florida and for the school year 1998-99 it ranked 202nd of the nation's 14,891 school districts. The student membership mounts to over 29,000 as of April of 2001. Of the student population approximately 74% are white, 17% are African American, 7% are Hispanic, 1% are Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% are of another ethnic background. The special education population is approximately 20%.

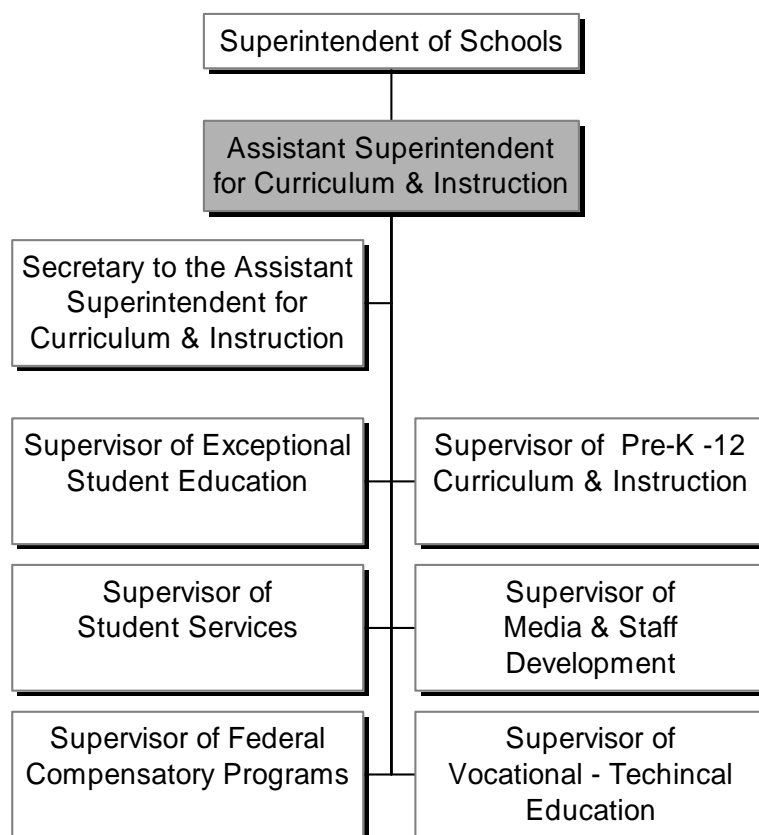
The Lake County School District has a total of 47 schools distributed throughout the county's 954 square miles as of April 2001. Appendix B shows the geographic location of the campuses. Of the 47 schools, 23 are elementary, 9 are middle, 7 are high schools, and 8 are special schools and centers. Two of the schools are magnet schools and three are charter schools (in conversion charter and two private charter). The district does not operate any of its schools on a year-round schedule and high schools operate under block schedules. For the Fiscal Year 1999-2000 the operating costs (defined as the per-student cost for school operations) was \$4,363 and within peer district average.

Under the authority of s. 229.592(9), *Florida Statutes*, 26 of Lake County's campuses have requested waivers from those statutes that relate to instruction and school operation. Mostly, the waivers awarded pertain to dress code (10 schools) and to instructional materials (9 schools).

In Lake County, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction heads the delivery of educational services. As shown in Exhibit 5-3, this sector of the organization is made up of six departments —Basic Pre-K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, Exceptional Student Education, Federal Compensatory Education, Vocational-Technical Education, Student Services and Media and Staff Development. At the time of this review, school principals reported to the Superintendent (see Chapter 3, Exhibit 3-5).

Exhibit 5-3

Organizational Structure of the Curriculum and Instruction Department



Source: Lake County School District.

Delivery of K-12 Educational Programs

The district's K-12 programs can be divided into four main areas:

- basic education,
- exceptional student education (ESE),
- compensatory education (alternative education/dropout prevention), and
- vocational education.

Subsequent paragraphs provide a brief overview of each of these areas.

Basic Education

Basic education refers to a wide-array of curriculum and instruction that is offered to pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students who do not require special educational services. Schools offer a total curriculum including the core academic areas such as English, mathematics, science, social studies, and reading, as well as fine arts and physical education courses.

Exceptional Student Education

An exceptional student is any child or youth enrolled in or eligible for enrollment in a district public school that requires special instruction or special education services. In Lake County, the programs are provided in the schools and through contracted services and there is at least one ESE program in each school.

The district currently serves close to 5,900 ESE students, which is about 20% of the total student population. Currently, the district providing special education services under 17 of the 19 existing categories of exceptionalities. Exhibit 5-4 shows the detail of the exceptional population of students in Lake County.

Exhibit 5-4

Number and Percent of Unduplicated Students by Primary Exceptionality as of February 2001

Specific Learning Disabled	Gifted	Speech Impaired	Emotionally Handicapped	Educable Mentally Handicapped	Language Impaired	Other Health Impaired	Trainable Mentally Handicapped	Severely Emotionally Disturbed
1,825	812	975	372	609	697	100	163	36
31.2%	13.9%	16.7%	6.4%	10.4%	11.9%	1.7%	2.8%	0.69%
Developmentally Delayed	Orthopedically Impaired	Autistic	Hospital/Homebound	Visually Impaired	Profoundly Mentally Handicapped	Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Traumatic Brain Injured	Totals
83	36	23	22	17	38	34	6	5,848
1.4%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.6%	0.6%	0.1%	100.0%

Source: DOE Student Database, Survey 2 data, October 11-15, 1999 as of November 10, 2000.

Compensatory Education

The Lake County School District provides programs and services that are federally funded. These funds are allocated to provide opportunities and assistance to students so they can achieve the standards in the local curriculum and acquire the educational skills developed for all children. These programs include Title I, Title I Migrant and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Title I provides ancillary support services to students who need extra assistance in reaching academic and social goals. The children that the program serves reside in school attendance areas with high concentrations of children from low income families. The federal government provides funds for the program in addition to the funding provided by the district. For a Lake County school to qualify for Title I services, 35% or more of its students must meet the criteria for free and reduced lunch.

Thirteen (13) of the district's 24 Title I schools have school wide programs that serve all students in the school. The remaining school is a targeted assistance school that serves only students in the school who meet eligibility criteria.

The district's ESOL program serves approximately 970 students, which represents 3% of the student population. ESOL is carried through English immersion in which the students are mainstreamed.

Vocational Education

The Vocational – Technical, Adult and Community Education department is aligned under the following sections:

- K-12 Vocational and Technical Education;
- Workforce Development Education that includes:
- Postsecondary Vocational Education,
- Adult General Education; and
- Community Education.

The K-12 Vocational and Technical program serves approximately 11,000 seventh through twelfth grade students with various program areas such as health assistance, automotive technology, culinary arts, digital publishing, television production, web design, veterinary assistance, etc. The Postsecondary Vocational program serves approximately 650 full-time and 2,000 part-time students at any given time and the various programs are operated through a state-of-the-art technical center. Through the Adult General Education program the district offers free, individualized or self-paced instruction to individuals who do not have a high school diploma and are not enrolled in a regular day school. Community Education is 100% self-supported and offers courses designed to meet nonacademic needs in the community with special focus on life long learning needs of society.

Student Support Services

In Lake County, the Student Services Department provides the services below.

- Psychological Services
- Social Work Services
- Guidance Services

- School Health Services

Guidance services are provided to help students who are facing problems that interfere with their health, social skills, or educational development. Examples of guidance services are career planning and education, teen pregnancy education, teen suicide, truancy, abuse, etc.

As required by the School Health Services Act, *Florida Statutes* 402.32, the school district and the Lake County Health Department jointly develop a school health services plan to appraise, protect, and promote the health of students. County health nurses periodically review student health records for compliance with state statutes and complete a records review form indicating any non-compliance issues. The nurses also provide health services to schools. There is a School Health Committee and Health Plan as required by the State Department of Health.

The services of the school psychologists in the district focus the delivery of services to students based on the needs of each individual school.

Instructional Support Services

Instructional Support Services in the district is organized under the Supervisor of Media/ Staff Development/Instructional Materials. With respect to instructional materials and media, this supervisor is responsible for overseeing the districts instructional program for selecting, processing, and evaluating textbooks and materials; for providing a professional library of books and periodicals for district-wide use and maintains a library of county adopted textbooks and related teaching aides; and for supervising overall aspects of the district's instructional media program to include multimedia (audio, visual, print and television services)

In an average school year, the district's central media center provides monitoring, technical assistance, and personnel for 42 school libraries, circulates approximately 2,115 videos to the district's schools (checkouts), and provides approximately 231 staff development hours specifically to media specialists.

Methodology

ValienteHernandez P.A. used different methods in assessing the district's performance related to the best practices for educational service delivery. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the self-assessment instruments completed by seven staff members and conducted interviews with the supervisor of the educational programs (Exceptional Student Education, Vocational/Technical and Adult Education, PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction, Federal Compensatory Education, Media and Staff Development, and Student Services) and made inquiries with the superintendent and assistant superintendent, key staff members and the five members of the school board.

Associated evidence was examined and analyzed. Compliance with rules and regulations was assessed through revisions of existing policies and procedures and consultation with related organizations such as the Florida Department of Education and the Florida School Boards Association. ValienteHernandez P.A. also obtained information from the group of peer districts chosen for this project (Alachua, Charlotte, Okaloosa, Osceola, St. Johns, and Santa Rosa County School District).

Organizations that guide and rule the administration of different educational programs were also contacted. Examples are the Office of Multicultural Student Language Education (OMSLE), Florida

Education & Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) and the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, Clearinghouse Information Center.

To obtain program input from school administrators and district staff ValienteHernandez P.A. designed and administered surveys to Principals and Assistant Principals, Teachers, School Advisory Council (SAC) members, Parents and District Administrative Staff. The questions varied from group to group and the survey results have been incorporated in different sections of this chapter.

Findings and Recommendations

Operation of K-12 Instructional Programs

Goal A: **The district operates effective and efficient K-12 educational programs.**

1 District administrators use academic and nonacademic data to a certain extent but need to define a more structured student performance review function and refine the process that addresses test results and strategies for educational improvement.

The highest priority of a school district is to improve performance of all students. To accomplish this objective, school districts must consider overall academic performance as well as the academic progress of specific subcategories of students.

Effective use of performance data assists districts in making sound decisions concerning programming and instruction. To utilize data effectively school districts should adhere to the following process:

- disaggregating data by school, program, and subpopulations of interest;
- tracking cohorts of students over time;
- disseminating results to stakeholders;
- using data to plan programming and instruction;
- comparing with peer districts; and
- re-evaluating.

The degree to which the Lake County School District adheres to this process is analyzed in the subsequent pages.

The District Has Processes in Place to Analyze the Results of State and District Student Academic Assessment Tests Gain

By May of each year, the district receives data for test results on *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)* and *High School Competency Test (HSCT)* from the Department of Education (DOE). For each assessment, the district prepares summary reports that are presented to the individual schools and curriculum staff.

At the individual school level, each principal receives a printed copy of the reports issued by DOE. Principals share the data with the instructional staff and to the extent possible, principal and staff analyze the scores at the school level. At the classroom level, each teacher receives hard copy score sheets for the school and for their students. This data is jointly analyzed with the school principal to then proceed to change instruction accordingly.

According to instructional staff, the reporting structure utilized by DOE (Florida Department of Education) makes it difficult for school administrators to analyze the scores at the school and the individual student level. Additionally, instructional staff manifested that FCAT does not provide information at the benchmark level, which makes it difficult to zero in on specific items.

In an effort to overcome the limitations and the volume of the reports presented by DOE, the district designed PACE (Performance Achievement through Curriculum Enhancement) as its own process for test results analysis and management. PACE is a two-fold process. Part of it consists on a summer workshop held each year where instructional teams from each school undergo training on test results analyses. The training is administered by outside consultants although district personnel support the instructional teams with hands-on analyses. The other part of PACE is an actual assessment software developed by the district using some products provided by DOE plus some customization. This software is the tool instructional teams utilize to manipulate and analyze the data.

The ultimate goal of the summer workshop is that each school develops the PACE Plan. During the PACE workshop analyses of the test results must be summarized through a status statement for each problem area identified. The status statement includes strategy, goals, objectives, resources, etc. necessary to address each problem area. At the conclusion of the workshop each instructional team must put together the blueprint to build the PACE Plan. The instructional teams take this blueprint to their schools and with input from school instructional staff, finalize the PACE plan. Schools are encouraged to translate and tie the plan into goal 3 of their annual School Improvement Plan.

The PACE Plans are examined by the Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction department. The curriculum from each subject area is analyzed to determine if additional materials or additional instruction need to take place. If there are “holes” in the curriculum, these are addressed with individual schools to make sure that what is being tested is being taught at the appropriate grade levels. This includes looking at textbook and supplemental materials adoptions.

The extent to which data is analyzed and disaggregated however, ultimately depends on the individual approach of each principal and his/her instructional team. The use of additional information made available by DOE is also the discretion of individual campuses. While some schools and programs are effective in using this information to evaluate educational programs other schools and programs may need more direction in using these data to make sound instructional decisions about educational programming.

To improve this process the district should refine the results evaluation and accountability components of the student performance review mechanism. The district should to adopt a policy that requires the district

to evaluate educational programs based not only on student assessment linked to the Sunshine State Standards, but on the results of the PACE Plan designed by individual schools. Current board policy contains no references to evaluation of educational programs. To accomplish this, the district must also expand training of school administrators and increase its curriculum technology base.

Generally, the Information Presented to the District and to the Schools Does Not Include Peer Comparisons or Assessments for Cohorts of Students Useful in Evaluating and Improving Student Performance

The Testing and Evaluation unit is responsible for producing summary reports of the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test* (FCAT), *High School Competency Test* (HSCT) and *Stanford Achievement Test* (SAT9). These reports show the current overall results of the district and a comparison of these against the state standards for the current year plus, a historic outlook of the results.

These summary reports however, do not contain data to allow comparisons against peer districts or within schools that have similar resources, or have students with similar social and economic characteristics. This type of information is key in establishing benchmarks, setting strategies for improvement and facilitates giving proper curricular assistance to schools.

Additionally, district and school administrators do not examine test achievement information by cohorts of students or by student subpopulations on a consistent basis.¹ The main obstacle to this is the limited technology capacity the district has to report data to schools, as is further discussed on pages 5-10. Tracking this information is useful to the district in improving student performance.

The district can provide decision makers and stakeholders key information by including peer information in the reports using data available in DOE database or school accountability reports. And as technology becomes available, the district can begin tracking information for cohort analyses useful is tracking student performance.

The District Should Make More Extensive Use of Disaggregated Student Assessment Data to Improve Performance of Subgroups of Students and to Evaluate Effectiveness of Educational Programs

The district has not concentrated on data analyses through disaggregated reporting and has rather focused on identifying low performing blocks of students. As a result, school and district administrators are unable to examine test achievement information by subpopulations on a consistent basis. District staff expressed that the reason for using this approach are the timelines and the reporting structure utilized by DOE.

DOE makes disaggregated reports available for all academic assessments, but according to district administrators, these do not arrive at a timely manner.² Typically FCAT assessment occurs in February and March with the bulk of results arriving by the middle of May. Disaggregated reports typically arrive in August and by then the district has already produced its summary reports.

¹ Cohort analysis consists on observing the test results of a group of students that stay together as they advance through school.

² Currently DOE does not include Mobility and Free or Reduced Lunch data in the disaggregated reports.

The district must provide thorough accessibility to disaggregated data to improve performance of subgroups of students and evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs on a more consistent basis. This can be accomplished by first modeling the analysis process district-wide and secondly, providing the schools with an additional electronic component to the assessment review tool. The PACE assessment review tool can have a component added that helps analyze and track disaggregated data and the district has plans to do this in the year 2002-03. Additionally, district can utilize FIRN (Florida Information Resource Network) disaggregated data to incorporate peer group information.

Examples of subgroups of students are:

- minority students;
- students in dropout prevention programs;
- students in free or reduced lunch programs;
- students with high mobility rates;
- ESE gifted students; and
- ESOL students.

District Administrators Should Use Nonacademic Data More Extensively to Further Improve the Educational Programs

Different programs within the district track and utilize nonacademic data to improve student performance. The use of nonacademic data however, needs to be expanded and linked to a district-wide accountability mechanism to improve effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the educational programs.

Examples of nonacademic data and their status in the district are:

- attendance and absenteeism rates, tracked by Student Services;
- graduation rate, tracked by Student Services department;
- disciplinary actions data is tracked by SAFE Schools program;
- dropout rate, tracking could not be verified;
- mobility rate, tracking could not be verified; and
- class size, tracking could not be verified.

Comparison of additional nonacademic data for Lake County and the peer districts is presented in Chapter 4 of this report.

We recommend that the district determine what nonacademic data currently tracked can be of use by other departments within the districts and that the district begin tracking those variables that currently are not being monitored. There are other resources available that should be used more intensively by the district such as FIRN (Florida Information Resource Network) and the School Indicators Report produced by DOE.

The District Needs to Expand Its Curriculum Technology and Integrate All the Information Systems

The Lake County School District's management information system maintains performance data from various sources, which are reported to schools as they become available. The district does not currently have the technology necessary to report data to schools in additional formats that make useful student

performance information more accessible to schools and district administrators. Several district employees stated that they have to request performance data or that they have to manipulate the data themselves.

The district does not have an interoperable electronic tool for curriculum management and planning. Because of this, the district and its instructional staff are unable to readily link its curriculum to the Sunshine State Standards, the National Content Standards and any locally defined district or school-based standards. The absence of such a tool also limits the district's capacity to track, collect and analyze student performance, make projections of future performance and conduct comparative analyses.

Additionally, the district would benefit from a mechanism that centralizes the monitoring of student performance, evaluates progress made by individual schools in a comprehensive manner and emphasizes accountability for improvement. The district relies on individual schools to evaluate student progress and provides the PACE instrument as a district-wide process to evaluate test results and establishing strategies for improvement.

Integrating all the information systems currently in place and adopting a curriculum management tool will greatly contribute to refining of the accountability component of the student performance mechanism and allow the district gain added consistency in tracking student performance.

It is noted that as another effort to expand its curriculum and instructional technology, the district has contemplated building an *Access* database in the future that makes available query processes as needed.

Results of Student Academic Assessments Indicate the Overall Performance of the Lake County School District Is Comparable to Its Peers

Analyses conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. generally reflected that the scores achieved by the district are in line with its peers and within state averages. Furthermore, overall performance is rising.

Lake County administers a series of tests to its students throughout the year to measure their performance against the Sunshine State Standards. The main tests are the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test* (FCAT) and the *High School Competency Test* (HSCT). Other tests administered in Lake County are the *Stanford Achievement Test* (SAT9), the *Otis-Lennon Ability Test* (OLSAT) plus another nine optional tests.

On the whole, Lake County Schools scored at a higher level than the state on four out of the six tests. However, when compared to average scored by the peer districts, all but one of the scores of Lake as a whole, are below the peer average. Exhibit 5-5 illustrates the most recent results of FCAT for students in Lake County and its peer districts.

- FCAT measures students' proficiency in reading and mathematics in grades 4,5, 8 and 10. The results are reported in terms of five achievement levels:
- Level 5 indicates that students have success with the most challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards. Students at this level answer most of the questions correctly, including the most challenging questions.
- Level 4 indicates that students have success with challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards. Students at this level answer most of the questions correctly, but have only some success with questions that reflect the most challenging content.
- Level 3 indicates that students have partial success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards but performance is inconsistent. Students at this level answer many questions correctly but are generally not successful with questions that are most challenging.

- Level 2 indicates that students have limited success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State standards.
- Level 1 indicates that students have little success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards.

Exhibit 5-5

District's FCAT 2000 – 01 Scores Are Comparable To Its Peers

District	Mean Scale Scores					
	Reading (Level) ¹			Mathematics (Level) ¹		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10
Lake	306 (3)	299 (2)	304 (2)	322 (2)	309 (2)	319 (3)
Alachua	302 (3)	307 (2)	319 (2)	314 (2)	318 (3)	334 (3)
Charlotte	312 (3)	312 (3)	309 (2)	324 (2)	324 (3)	329 (3)
Okaloosa	314 (3)	313 (3)	317 (2)	324 (2)	324 (3)	330 (3)
Osceola	281 (2)	285 (2)	297 (2)	293 (2)	297 (2)	316 (3)
St. Johns	313 (3)	313 (3)	322 (2)	332 (3)	320 (3)	336 (3)
Santa Rosa	323 (3)	322 (3)	319 (2)	330 (3)	333 (3)	333 (3)
Average Without Lake County	308 (3)	309 (2)	314 (2)	320 (2)	319 (2)	330 (3)
State Average	298 (2)	295 (2)	304 (2)	314 (2)	308 (2)	323 (3)

¹ Achievement levels range from the highest at level 5 to the lowest at level 1.

Source: Department of Education. District FCAT Reading and Mathematics Results 2001.

FCAT Scores of Individual Lake County Schools Have Generally Improved During the Last Three Years

Exhibit 5-6 depicts the results of FCAT for three consecutive years for all six tested grades in elementary, middle, and high schools. Analysis of the data shows that:

- The district as a whole increased the scores on the six tests. Improvements have been consistent in Reading Grade 4, Mathematics Grade 8, and Mathematics Grade 10.
- In Reading grade 4, 15 of 23 elementary schools increased their scores; 4 improved consistently.
- In Mathematics grade 5, 16 of the 23 elementary schools improved their scores; 5 did it consistently.
- In Reading grade 8, 7 of 8 of the middle schools improved the scores, and 2 did it consistently. In Mathematics grade 8, all the middle schools improved the scores and 5 did it consistently.
- In Reading grade 10, 6 high schools improved and 1 of those did it consistently. In Mathematics, all 8 high schools improved the scores, out of which 2 did it consistently.

Exhibit 5-6**FCAT Results of Elementary Schools Generally Improved Over a Three-Year Period**

Scores by Elementary School	Reading (Level) ¹			Increased Reading Scores	Math (Level) ¹			Increased Math Scores
	Grade 4				Grade 5			
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01		1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	
Astatula	-	311 (3)	304 (3)		-	315 (2)	320 (2)	√
Beverly Shores	290 (2)	297 (2)	289 (2)		299 (2)	322 (2)	316 (2)	√
Clermont Elementary	308 (3)	299 (3)	325 (3)	√	324 (2)	334 (3)	334 (3)	√
Cypress Ridge	-	-	333 (3)		-	-	341 (3)	
Dabney Elementary	303 (3)	289 (2)	284 (2)		310 (2)	332 (3)	307 (2)	
Eustis Elementary	297 (2)	320 (3)	301 (3)	√	309 (2)	329 (3)	347 (3)	√√
Eustis Heights	301 (3)	300 (3)	309 (3)	√	314 (2)	310 (2)	309 (2)	
Fruitland Park	313 (3)	287 (2)	298 (2)		312 (2)	330 (3)	316 (2)	√
Groveland	272 (1)	270 (1)	284 (2)	√	302 (2)	300 (2)	298 (2)	
Lost Lake	-	303 (3)	312 (3)	√	-	319 (2)	323 (2)	√
Mascotte	280 (2)	293 (2)	289 (2)	√	310 (2)	292 (2)	314 (2)	√
Milestones	-	-	293 (2)		-	-	286 (1)	
Minneola	290 (2)	300 (3)	309 (3)	√√	305 (2)	328 (3)	330 (3)	√√
Rimes	271 (1)	284 (2)	273 (1)	√	281 (1)	293 (2)	313 (2)	√√
Round Lake	-	-	314 (3)		-	-	321 (2)	
Seminole Spring	313 (3)	322 (3)	321 (3)	√	314 (2)	327 (3)	331 (3)	√√
Skeen	302 (3)	315 (3)	301 (3)		311 (2)	322(2)	314 (2)	√
Spring Creek	301 (3)	303 (3)	304 (3)	√√	312 (2)	334 (3)	323 (2)	√
Tavares	299 (3)	310 (3)	311 (3)	√√	314 (2)	321 (2)	331 (2)	√√
The Villages	-	302 (3)	310 (3)	√	-	336 (3)	328 (3)	
Treadway	310 (3)	308 (3)	314 (3)	√	319 (2)	332 (3)	323 (2)	√
Triangle	289 (2)	295 (2)	302 (3)	√√	312 (2)	320 (2)	313 (2)	√
Umatilla	309 (3)	319 (3)	310 (3)	√	320 (2)	339 (3)	331 (3)	√
District Mean Score	298 (2)	303 (3)	304 (3)	√√	311 (2)	323 (2)	322 (2)	√
State Mean Score	288 (2)	293 (2)	298 (2)	√√	303 (2)	314 (2)	314 (2)	√
Scores by Middle School	Reading (Level) ¹			Increased Reading Scores	Math (Level) ¹			Increased Math Scores
	Grade 8				Grade 8			
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01		1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	
Carver	303 (2)	295 (2)	298 (2)		300 (2)	304 (2)	301 (2)	√
Eustis	300 (2)	296 (2)	303 (2)	√	293 (2)	303 (2)	309 (2)	√√
Gray	297 (2)	297 (2)	300 (2)	√	297 (2)	309 (2)	310 (3)	√√
Griffin	266 (1)	278 (2)	270 (2)	√	261 (1)	281 (2)	275 (1)	√
Mt. Dora	281 (2)	297 (2)	309 (2)	√√	292 (2)	314 (3)	318 (3)	√√
Oak Park	301 (2)	305 (2)	306 (2)	√√	299 (2)	322 (3)	314 (3)	√
Tavares	300 (2)	301 (2)	301 (2)	√	302 (2)	311 (3)	316 (3)	√√
Umatilla	295 (2)	280 (2)	295 (2)	√	309 (2)	303 (2)	313 (3)	√√
District Mean Score	295 (2)	295 (2)	299 (2)	√	296 (2)	307 (2)	309 (2)	√√
State Mean Score	295 (2)	290 (2)	295 (2)	√	296 (2)	303 (2)	308 (2)	√√

Scores by High School	Reading (Level) ¹			Increased Reading Scores	Math (Level) ¹			Increased Math Scores
	Grade 10				Grade 10			
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01		1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	
Alee Academy	-	222 (1)	252 (1)	√	-	240 (1)	272 (1)	√
Eustis High	306 (2)	304 (2)	303 (2)		312 (2)	312 (2)	319 (3)	√
Lake Technical High	-	264 (1)	286 (1)	√	-	274 (1)	301 (2)	√
Leesburg High	303 (2)	302 (1)	314 (2)	√	309 (2)	314 (2)	326 (3)	√√
Mt. Dora	300 (2)	302 (2)	306 (2)	√√	313 (2)	308 (2)	322 (3)	√
South Lake	304 (2)	294 (2)	298 (2)		309 (2)	306 (2)	314 (2)	√
Tavares	305 (2)	303 (2)	312 (2)	√	303 (2)	310 (2)	324 (3)	√√
Umatilla	299 (2)	292 (2)	320 (2)	√	310 (2)	308 (2)	329 (3)	√
District Mean Score	303 (2)	298 (2)	304 (2)	√	308 (2)	312 (2)	319 (3)	√√
State Mean Score	302 (2)	298 (2)	304 (2)	√	308 (2)	311 (2)	323 (3)	√√

¹ Achievement levels range from the highest at level 5 to the lowest at level 1.

Note: One checkmark indicates that the school generally increased their scores over the three-year period. Two checkmarks are for schools that have increased their scores consistently over the three-year period.

Source: Department of Education. 1998 - 2001 FCAT Results.

Lake County's Scores on the FCAT Writing Test Are Generally Comparable to State Average

The FCAT Writing test also known as the Florida Writing Assessment Program (FWAP) is an assessment that measures student writing proficiency in Grades 4, 8, and 10. The test requires students to write responses to assigned topics in a single testing period. Prior to the year 2000, writing was assessed separately through a test called Florida Writes! The characteristics of Florida Writes! were carried into FCAT and the students are currently scored holistically by two raters on a 6-point scale ranging from 1, the lowest score to 6, the highest score. As shown in exhibit 5-7, the most recent results of Lake County Schools are similar to the state average. Lake's scores are below to those of its peers in the fourth and eighth grades.

Exhibit 5-7

District's FCAT Writing 2000-01 Results are Generally Comparable to State and Peer District Average

District	Combined Mean Score		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Lake	3.4	3.5	4.1
Alachua	3.5	3.8	3.8
Charlotte	3.8	3.9	3.6
Okaloosa	3.5	4.0	3.9
Osceola	3.0	3.4	3.6
St. Johns	3.5	3.9	4.0
Santa Rosa	3.6	4.0	3.9
Average Without Lake County	3.5	3.8	3.8
State Mean Score	3.4	3.7	3.8

Source: Department of Education.

Writing Scores in the District Have Consistently Increased At Many Campuses

Exhibit 5-8 depicts the writing scores for three consecutive years for individual schools. As the table shows

- the district as a whole has improved the Writing scores throughout the last three-year period;
- 20 of the 23 Elementary schools increased the scores over the three-year period, 7 of them consistently;
- 7 of 9 Middle schools increased their Writing scores; and
- 5 of the district's 8 high schools increased their writing scores.

Exhibit 5-8

Writing Scores of Elementary Schools Generally Increased from 1998 Through 2000

Scores by Elementary School	Grade 4			Increased Scores
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	
Astatula	-	3.3	3.4	√
Beverly Shores	3.0	2.9	3.6	√
Clermont	3.1	2.7	3.3	√
Cypress Ridge	2.9	3.1	3.6	√√
Dabney	3.0	3.2	3.2	√
Eustis	3.6	3.7	3.5	
Eustis Heights	3.0	3.0	3.5	√
Fruitland Park	3.5	3.2	3.8	√
Groveland	2.9	3.0	3.4	√√
Lost Lake	-	3.0	3.4	√
Mascotte	2.9	3.0	3.2	√√
Milestones	-	-	2.8	
Minneola	3.0	3.0	3.4	√
Rimes	2.6	2.8	3.3	√√
Round Lake	-	-	3.4	
Seminole	3.3	3.5	3.8	√√
Skeen	3.1	3.2	3.2	√
Spring Creek	3.3	3.3	3.5	√
Tavares	3.0	3.3	3.7	√√
The Villages	-	3.0	3.3	√
Treadway	3.3	3.2	3.5	√
Triangle	3.0	3.0	3.4	√
Umatilla	2.9	3.3	3.5	√√
District Mean Score	3.1	3.1	3.4	√

Scores by Middle School	Grade 4			Increased Scores
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	
Carver	3.1	3.7	3.5	√
Eustis	3.1	3.5	3.7	√√
Gray	-	3.5	-	
Griffin	2.5	3.4	3.4	√
Groveland	3.1	-	-	
Mount Dora	3.0	3.5	3.2	√
Oak Park	3.2	3.7	3.5	√
Tavares	3.2	3.9	-	√
Umatilla	3.2	3.3	3.3	√
District Mean Score	3.1	3.6	3.5	√

Scores by High School	Grade 4			Increased Scores
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	
Alee Academy		2.8	2.5	
Eustis	3.6	3.7	3.5	
Lake Technical		2.8	3.5	
Leesburg High School	3.3	3.5	3.7	√√
Mt. Dora High School	3.5	3.9	4.0	√√
South Lake High School	3.1	3.5	3.6	√√
Tavares High School	3.7	3.7	3.9	√
Umatilla High School	2.8	3.5	3.5	√
District Mean Score	3.3	3.6	3.6	√

Note: One checkmark indicates that the school generally increased their scores over the three-year period. Two checkmarks are for schools that have increased their scores consistently over the three-year period.

Source: Department of Education.

Lake County's Percentage of Students Passing the High School Competency Test Is Comparable to That of the Peers

Florida students who entered high school in 1998-1999 or earlier must pass the High School Competency Test (HSCT) in order to be eligible for a regular high school or adult school diploma. The test was administered to students in communications and mathematics in eleventh grade and if they didn't pass, they must retake it during twelfth. As the state guidelines were modified, students that were ninth graders starting year 2000-01 must take the FCAT for graduation purposes. The High School Competency Test (HSCT) measures the extent to which the state student performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics have been achieved. Exhibit 5-9 shows that Lake County students had a passing rate higher than the state and equal to the peer districts.

Exhibit 5-9**Percent of Students Passing HSCT in Lake County Is Comparable to Peer Districts and the State Average for the Year 1998-1999 ¹**

District	Grade 11: Percent Passing		
	Communications	Math	Both
Lake	82	80	74
Alachua	85	79	76
Charlotte	87	84	78
Okaloosa	85	80	76
Osceola	82	72	69
St. Johns	84	81	66
Santa Rosa	87	83	77
State Totals	81	77	72
Average Without Lake County	85	80	74

¹ 1998-1999 is the last comparable year for the HSCT test. As of fall of 2000 only retakes had to take HSCT and students that were ninth graders starting year 2000-01 must now take the FCAT for graduation purposes.

Source: Department of Education

Percentage Students Passing HSCT Generally Increased at the Individual High School Level

Exhibit 5-10 shows the percentages of students passing the HSCT test for two consecutive years for individual high schools. The table shows that

- four out of six high schools had a higher percentage of students passing the Communications portion in 1998-1999 than in 1997-98; two district schools exceeded both the state and the peer district averages in 1998-99;
- five of the six high schools increased the percentage of students passing the Mathematics portion in 1998-1999; and three of the five schools exceeded the state and the peer averages.

Exhibit 5-10**Most Lake County High School Increased HSCT Passing Rates in the School Year 1998-1999**

High School	Communications		Increased Percent Passing	Math		Increased Percent Passing
	1997-98	1998-99		1997-98	1998-99	
Eustis	77	82	√	73	86	√
Leesburg	72	85	√	70	79	√
Mt. Dora	81	81		78	84	√
South Lake	79	81	√	70	76	√
Tavares	80	85	√	81	88	√
Umatilla	82	79		81	78	
District Average	78	82	√	74	80	√
State Average	78	81	√	75	77	√

Note: One checkmark indicates that the school increased or maintained their scores.

Source: Department of Education

Most Lake County Schools Received a Grade of “A” or “B” and None Received a Grade of “D” or “F”

According to the 2000-01 School Accountability Report, none of the Lake schools received a “D” or an “F”; 8 were graded “A”, 10 schools were “B” and 16 were “C”. The Florida Department of Education has established criteria for identifying schools with similar performance characteristics through the use of letter grades, “A” through “F,” based primarily on Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) reading and writing scores. Exhibit 5-11 shows the condition of Lake County when compared to its peers. Information on grading at the individual school level can be found in Chapter 4 of this report.

Exhibit 5-11

None of the Lake Schools Was Rated “D” or “F” in the Year 2000-01

District	"A" Schools	"B" Schools	"C" Schools	"D" Schools	"F" Schools
Lake	24%	29%	47%	0%	0%
Alachua	28%	23%	36%	13%	0%
Charlotte	41%	29%	29%	0%	0%
Okaloosa	34%	42%	24%	0%	0%
Osceola	10%	7%	66%	17%	0%
St. Johns	35%	5%	55%	5%	0%
Osceola	58%	12%	31%	0%	0%

Source: Florida Department of Education. School Accountability Report 2000-01.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district strengthen the evaluation and accountability components of the student performance review mechanism currently in place. To accomplish this, the district needs to adopt a policy that requires the district to assess educational programs and to evaluate school administrators based not only on student assessment linked to the Sunshine State Standards, but on the end results of the PACE Plan designed by individual schools.*

As an integral part of this strategy, we recommend that the district increase its curriculum technology capacity and expand training of school administrators (see Recommendation 6 below).

- *We recommend that the district include peer information in the summary reports currently issued, especially for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Peer groups should not be limited to similar school districts. Comparisons should also be made within Lake county schools that have similar resources, or have students with similar social and economic characteristics. The district should use the resources available in DOE databases for this purpose.*
- *As technology becomes available and data is generated, we further recommend that the district begin tracking information to conduct student cohort analyses.*
- *We recommend that the district take the necessary steps to provide thorough accessibility to disaggregated data needed to improve performance of subgroups of students and to evaluate*

the cost-effectiveness of educational programs and/or of instructional practices. This can be accomplished by first modeling the analysis process district-wide and secondly, providing the schools with an additional electronic component to the assessment review tool. The PACE assessment review tool can have a component added that helps analyze and track disaggregated data and the district has plans to do this in the year 2002-03.

Additionally, the district should consider implementing the following steps:

- collect student performance data for selected subgroups and document in report form;*
- disseminate reports on selected subgroups to interested stakeholders; and*
- plan to develop, modify or enhance instructional programs for selected subgroups as needed*

Once disaggregated data procedures are instituted, we further recommend that the district methodically identify specific strategies for improving student performance, especially of schools with the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged (eligible for the federal free or reduce price lunch program) students. Staff should look for and identify interrelated characteristics that can be replicated by other schools. At the same time, schools should continually seek innovative ways of meeting the needs of diverse populations. This can be accomplished by developing its specific strengths through a collaborated effort including strong leadership from principals and assistant principals. Strategies for improving performance among economically disadvantaged students can include: frequent staff training, small class sizes, strong parent/school partnerships, successful grant writing efforts by a school-based team positive attitudes, and good relationships among principals and faculty.

- We recommend that the district determine what nonacademic data currently tracked by certain departments can be of use by other shops within the district to improve student performance. Additionally, we recommend that the district begin tracking those variables currently not being monitored such as dropout rate, mobility rate and class size. For this purpose, the district should use the resources available in FIRN (Florida Information Resource Network) and the School Indicators Report produced by DOE.*
- We recommend that the district further expand its curriculum technology capacity by adopting an interactive and interconnected curriculum management tool. An electronic curriculum management tool is an excellent resource for strategic planning and has the capacity of tracking student performance collecting, analyzing, and making projections about future student performance for each school. Through its use and by the individual school progress profiles and analyses that report FCAT scores, the district should adjust teaching techniques and curricula to address weak areas in the educational program on a consistent basis.*

Action Plan 6-8 Chapter 6 shows the necessary steps to implement this recommendation.

- We recommend that the district integrate all the formal and informal information systems currently in place to create a district-wide student performance review mechanism. This mechanism centralizes the monitoring of student performance, evaluates the progress made by individual schools, emphasizes accountability for improvement and can be used to establish the cost-effectiveness of the educational programs. This mechanism should be the responsibility of the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.*

The district's Curriculum and Instruction department in conjunction with the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (see Action Plan 3-4 Recommendation 2) should be responsible for creating individual school progress profiles and analyses of the scores for previous years as well as projections. The projections can be based on FCAT passing rates and involve a comparison between projected passing rates and the district's goal. The analysis should be completed for all areas tested, for different ethnic groups, and for economically disadvantaged (eligible for the federal free or reduce price lunch program) students. After that, principals and teachers can use the data and other information identified to adjust teaching techniques and curricula and to address areas of identified weaknesses. As the process develops, school administrators can be trained to overtake the process.

Action Plan 5-1 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 5-1

Increase Evaluation of Academic Performance Data

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish a policy to strengthen the evaluation and accountability components of the student performance review mechanism.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction with input from his educational program supervisors develops the draft of a policy that emphasizes evaluation based not only on the results of student assessments but on the results of the PACE Plan developed by individual schools. The policy holds school administrators accountable for the accomplishment of the PACE Plan and is tied to their yearly evaluations.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services gives input as to linking achievement to employee evaluation.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent reviews the draft and prepares for board approval.</p> <p>Step 4: The board approves the new policy.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource, and school board.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Include peer information in the summary reports issued for each assessment test.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction with input from his supervisors and the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability select peer groups that will be used for comparisons.</p> <p>Step 2: Peer groups should include peer districts and schools within the district that have similar resources or have students with similar social and economic characteristics.</p> <p>Step 3: The newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability or alternatively, the Testing Department, collects peer information available in the Florida Information Resource Network (FIRN).</p> <p>Step 4: Peer information is included in the summary reports of the different student assessment tests.</p> <p>Step 5: Based on comparisons, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor for Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction evaluate alternatives to develop, modify or enhance educational programs as needed.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction and newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (see Action Plan 3-4 Recommendation 2).
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Collect cohort student performance data of targeted subgroups as data is generated and as technology becomes available.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (the Testing Department alternatively) develop a plan to conduct cohort analyses including the types of data to be collected.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent approves the plan.</p> <p>Step 3: The newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (the Testing Department alternatively) oversees the process of collecting the cohort data by subgroup and generating reports.</p> <p>Step 4: Incumbent staff, with the support of the Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, enhances or modifies instructional programs as needed.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, and newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (see Action Plan 3-4, Recommendation 2).
Time Frame	May 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Take the necessary steps to provide thorough accessibility to disaggregated data and establish strategies to improve performance of selected subgroups of students.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, MIS and the Testing Department add the electronic component to the assessment review tool used to track and analyze disaggregated data.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction and the Testing Department model a disaggregation analysis process to be implemented district-wide.</p> <p>Step 3: Procedures are instituted and training sessions for school administrators are established.</p> <p>Step 4: Student performance data for selected subgroups is collected and documented in report form.</p> <p>Step 5: Reports are disseminated to stakeholders as needed.</p> <p>Step 6: School administrators modify or enhance programs as needed.</p> <p>Step 7: Results are reported to stakeholders as needed.</p> <p>Step 8: Once disaggregated data procedures are instituted, identify specific strategies for improving performance of subgroups (e.g., economically disadvantaged students).</p> <p>Step 9: School administrators look for and identify characteristics and practices that can be replicated at other schools and continually seek innovative ways to meet the needs of diverse populations.</p> <p>Step 10: School administrators develop strengths through a collaborated effort that can include: frequent training, targeted small class sizes, strong parent/school partnerships, good relations between school principals and faculty, successful school-based granting efforts, etc.</p> <p>Step 11: Results are reported as part of the annual evaluations.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, and newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. Consultations with the MIS department as needed.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 5	
Strategy	Further the use of nonacademic data.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction holds a session with all the program supervisors to analyze what nonacademic data currently tracked by certain departments can be of use by others.</p> <p>Step 2: The team also determines what other nonacademic data should be tracked by the district and establishes what shop should be responsible.</p> <p>Step 3: For this purpose, parties should use the resources available such as FIRN (Florida Information Resource Network) and other DOE databases.</p> <p>Step 4: Student nonacademic performance data is then collected for the selected subgroups.</p> <p>Step 5: Data is documented in report form.</p> <p>Step 6: Reports are disseminated to incumbent parties and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 7: The team resumes and based on the analysis of the reports, modifies or enhances instructional programs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, and newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. Consultations with the MIS department as needed.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 6	
Strategy	Integrate all the formal and informal information systems currently in place to create a district-wide student performance review mechanism.
Action Needed	<p><i>The purpose of this mechanism is to centralize the monitoring of student performance, evaluate the progress made by individual schools, emphasize accountability for improvement and can be used to establish the cost-effectiveness of the educational programs. This mechanism should be the responsibility of the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.</i></p> <p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in conjunction with the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability and the Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction take inventory of the different information systems currently in place that can be part of the district-wide student improvement mechanism.</p> <p>Step 2: The office of Program Evaluation and Accountability should be responsible for creating individual school progress profiles and analyses of the scores for previous years as well as projections. The projections can be based on FCAT passing rates and involve a comparison between projected passing rates and the district's goal.</p> <p>Step 3: The analysis should be completed for all areas tested, for different ethnic groups, and for economically disadvantaged (eligible for the federal free or reduce price lunch program) students.</p> <p>Step 4: Data from the previous three years is used to make projections for the next two years by subject, ethnic groups, and economically disadvantaged students for each campus.</p> <p>Step 5: The Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability prepares individual school profiles and distributes them to campuses.</p> <p>Step 6: These school profiles are to be used in conjunction with the blueprint developed during the annual PACE workshop to produce the individual PACE Plans.</p> <p>Step 7: The principals and teachers adjust teaching and curricula to address identified areas of weaknesses and monitor changes in student performance in areas of weakness.</p> <p>Step 8: The Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability routinely monitors the progress of schools in meeting the goals.</p> <p>Step 9: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability, and the incumbent school principal jointly analyze the results of the improvement process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability, and school principals. Consultations with the MIS department as needed.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

2 The district would benefit from targeting and disseminating effective instructional practices to improve student performance.

Successful educational practices are somewhat disseminated informally by some school administrators. However, there are no widespread mechanisms to consistently capture and disseminate successful instructional practices.

The District Should Explore Innovative Methods to Provide Incentives to Outstanding Teachers

Presently there are no formal mechanisms in place to recognize schools or teachers for identifying and using methods to challenge high performing student or to bring students requiring remedial instruction up to standards. Through the survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. a majority of teachers (74%) indicated that there are no incentives to identify and effectively use successful instructional practices. Refer to Exhibit 5-12.

The district has written policies to reward employees whose work performance is above average or outstanding. According to school administrators however, the district it is unable to fully implement these policies due to fiscal constraints, The district would benefit by exploring and implementing a variety of mechanisms to show appreciation for outstanding teachers and/or teachers using exemplary practices. Their most widely known recognition is the Teacher of the Year award; educators are also recognized if they accomplish the National Board classification. These teachers of outstanding merit are presented at a board meeting as a special time of recognition.

Exemplary Practices Need To Be Communicated More Effectively

As shown in Exhibit 5-12, school principals feel that school administrators communicate exemplary practices somewhat informally. Additionally, some administrators expressed that a history of poor communication between the schools and the administrative staff has been an obstacle for effective spread of good practices. The new administration, however, is working to improve communication.

There are several ways that successful practices can be shared amongst curriculum and instructional staff and communicated district-wide. These include regular meetings among the assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and directors, as well as monthly or weekly publications that can be distributed to principals and district administrators on relevant information on district events, changes in procedures, etc. Another forum for sharing best practices are the monthly curriculum contact meetings. These meetings are also a great opportunity for low-performing schools be paired with successful schools and encouraged to visit them to identify strategies that might be suitable for their operation.

Exhibit 5-12

Survey Results Indicate There Is Room to Improve the Identification and Promotion of Exemplary Educational Strategies

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; n=respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Teachers (N= 1791; n= 850)	The district provides incentives for teachers to identify and effectively use innovative instructional practices.	24.0%	73.5%	2.5%
	There is a mechanism in place to communicate exemplary educational practices and strategies.	34.9%	55.3%	9.8%
Principals (N= 84; n= 52)	The district provides incentives for teachers to identify and effectively use innovative instructional practices.	60.0%	35.0%	5.0%
	Exemplary practices are discussed informally amongst principals.	62.8%	25.6%	11.6%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the district provide incentives to and recognize exceptionally successful teachers. These can include regular meetings among the assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and directors, as well as monthly or weekly publications that can be distributed to principals and district administrators on relevant information on district events, changes in procedures, etc. Another forum for sharing best practices are the monthly curriculum contact meetings. These meetings are also a great opportunity for low-performing schools to be paired with higher performing schools and encouraged to visit them to identify strategies that might be suitable for their operation.*

As an integral part of this strategy, we recommend that the district continue to improve communication between key areas to promote and contribute to the diffusion exemplary practices. For example, the district should explore the methods of creating a unit or lesson plan data bank to share best practices.

Action Plan 5-2 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 5-2**Promotion of Exemplary Teaching Practices**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Provide incentives to and recognize exceptionally successful teachers and promote and contribute to the diffusion of their exemplary practices.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and program supervisors hold regular meetings with the purpose of looking for innovative methods to provide incentives to exceptionally successful teachers.</p> <p>Step 2: During the meeting, administrators of low performing schools are given the opportunity to be paired with higher performing schools and encouraged to visit them to identify strategies that might be suitable for their operation.</p> <p>Step 3: The monthly or weekly publications are produced and distributed to principals and district administrators on relevant information on district events, changes in procedures, etc. Another forum for sharing best practices are the monthly curriculum contact meetings.</p> <p>Step 4: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, and the MIS Department explore the alternatives for creating a unit or lesson plan data bank to share best practices.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

3 The district generally provides effective Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs. The programs could be further improved by refining the procedures to evaluate program performance.

The Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs are provided in the Lake County schools throughout the district. There is at least one ESE program in each school and there are approximately 6,000 students in Lake County who receive services through the special programs. Some highlights about the Exceptional Student Education programs administered in Lake County include those below.

- Students are served who are ages three (3) through twenty-one (21), based on the Individual Educational Plan.
- Each student has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) developed with the teacher, the parent and other professionals who have information about the student.
- The Cooperative Consultation Model provides support for exceptional students in a mainstream class through systematic identification of modifications and adaptations to instruction in order for the student to be successful. Training is provided for schools through the district office.

- The Co-Teaching Model is an educational approach in which a regular education and a special education instructor teach together in a classroom with both regular and exceptional education students.
- Students who are identified as severely emotionally disturbed (SED) are served through a contract program with LifeStream Behavioral Center. The program provides both educational and therapeutic components.
- The district takes advantage of community and social services programs to supplement district programs. There is an Interagency Agreement that is signed each year for services for specific populations (such as ARC, the Association of Retarded Citizens that serves students who have graduated and are mentally handicapped; Vocational Rehabilitation works with appropriate referrals for transition).
- An emphasis on increasing Parent Education participation by offering training, support and services. A Parent Education Program Specialist has been employed to implement this initiative. Parent workshops will be scheduled throughout the 2001-02 school year.
- A fast growing Pre-K program for students with disabilities now located at several sites throughout the district. These services have been instrumental in providing eligible children a quality learning intervention program.
- Efforts to recruit and retain ESE teachers are implemented such as using ESE Clerical Assistants to help ESE teachers and school personnel with the necessary paperwork requirements and the use of a computerized forms process to increase efficiency.

The number of students identified for exceptional education in the Lake County School District is comparable with its peers as shown in Exhibit 5-13.

Exhibit 5-13

The Exceptional Student Membership of Lake County Is In Line With Its Peers and the State Average

District	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns	Santa Rosa	State Average
Total ESE Population	5,848	7,551	4,006	5,996	5,322	3,565	4,540	467,973
ESE's As a Percent of the Total Population	19.9%	24.9%	21.9%	19.1%	15.7%	17.8%	19.9%	18.5%

Source: DOE Student Database, Survey 2 data, as of February 2001 and Profiles of Florida School Districts.

The District's Procedures Related to ESE Students Are Consistent With Federal and State Laws

The exceptional education programs are subject to federal and/or state rules and regulations that guide the delivery of educational services. Examples of these laws are Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) also referred to as Public Law 105-17, s. 612(a)(5)(A).

To ensure that the procedures are up to date and consistent with the laws, the ESE department completes the *Special Programs and Procedures* document annually and submits it to both the school board and the Department of Education, as specified by DOE. School board policies and procedures are adopted as needed based on the latest legal advice. The supervisor of the department is responsible for this process.

The District Has Incorporated Performance Standards for ESE Students and These Have Been Incorporated Into the Curriculum.

The district's ESE program uses the Sunshine State Standards for awarding a Special Diploma as the high school level academic standards. At the elementary and middle school levels, the regular Sunshine State Standards are incorporated in the curriculum with appropriate modifications on an as needed basis for each exceptional student. Regular and special education staff meets regularly to plan curriculum objectives and develop cooperative activities. There is a Curriculum department staff meeting held two times per month, where the Supervisors communicate and coordinate activities and there are also Staff Development meetings where ESE is included.

Another practice to increase effectiveness include "cross training" of individuals in the ESE program. The following takes place:

- regular education staff receive training in Special Education;
- special Education staff receive training offered for regular education;
- principals and other administrators receive training in Special Education; and to a limited extent,
- regular staff receives training in gifted and talented education.

The Average Number of Exceptional Students Per Exceptional Teacher in The District Is Within Peer District Average

Exhibit 5-14 shows that when compared to the peer districts, Lake has approximately 24 exceptional students per exceptional education teacher that is in line with the ratio of the peers at 1:24.

Exhibit 5-14

Lake County's ESE Students to ESE Teacher Ratio Is Within Peer Average

District	Exceptional Education Teachers	Exceptional Student Population	Ratio (*)
Lake	247	5,848	1:24
Alachua	329	7,551	1:23
Charlotte	160	4,006	1:25
Okaloosa	196	5,996	1:31
Osceola	239	5,322	1:22
St. Johns	169	3,565	1:21
Santa Rosa	182	4,540	1:25
Average value without Lake County	213	5,163	1:24

Note (*): The ratio of ESE Students to ESE Teacher has been rounded to zero decimals.

Source: DOE Education Information and Accountability Services, Survey 2 data, as of January 2001, DOE Profiles of Florida School Districts, and ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations.

Placement of ESE Students in the Regular Classroom Is Higher in Lake County Than Most of Its Peer Districts in the Year 2000-01

The district has in place detailed procedures to guarantee that the least restrictive environment is provided and there are various alternatives to accomplish this. On the Staffing Committee Report (MIS 52B009), the placement options are considered according to the continuum of services. The Least Restrictive Environment Guide (MIS 52B029) is used with each student as deemed appropriate.

Lake County uses the least restrictive environment (LRE) to determine appropriate educational placement for each student with a disability. According to Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), each local education agency shall ensure that “To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate school, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational, environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be reached satisfactorily.”

The LRE concept is supported by a continuum of placements ranging from the general education classroom to home/hospital care. The decision-making process concerning placement decisions for students with disabilities is unique for each student and is based on his or her need for instructional accommodations and related services. The LRE issue is not a simple issue for school districts. Decisions about how and when to include students with disabilities into regular education must consider equitable allocation of resources, effective and efficient service, vulnerability to legal challenges based on current court rulings, and philosophical beliefs about how best to balance meeting the needs of students with disabilities with those of non-disabled students.

According to district staff, most of the students with disabilities spend some part of the week in a classroom with non-disabled students. The amount of time individual students spend in the regular classroom, in resource rooms or in other education settings is determined based on the needs of the individual student. Exhibit 5-15 shows the variety of placements for students with disabilities for Lake and its peer districts.

The district has made significant progress in serving its students with disabilities in less restrictive environments. Students with disabilities spend increasing amounts of time in the regular classroom. For example, during 1999-2000 53% (2,446) students with disabilities were in the regular classroom and by 2000-01, this number increased to 2,525 or 54% (refer to Exhibit 5-15).

Principals and Teachers Generally Believe That the Assessment and Placement of ESE Students Is Not Timely

Results of a survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. indicate that most responding principals (60%) and teachers (77%) believe that the assessment and placement of ESE students is not timely, shown in Exhibit 5-46. Assessment and placement of ESE students are two different components of a process that occurs in three steps (Pre-ESE, ESE, Student Services) and that involves two departments: ESE and Student Services. These two components however, are viewed as one and the district needs to take steps to better the constituents' perception and understanding of the process as a whole. Further discussion on this issue can be found on page 5-84. Recommendation to improve how constituents perceive the process is presented in Action Plan 5-11.

Exhibit 5-15**Lake County's ESE Program Placed a Higher Percentage Students in Regular Classroom in the Year 2000-01**

**Number and Percentage of Students with Disabilities by Placement Setting
December, 1999**

Placement Setting (1999-2000)	Lake		Alachua		Charlotte		Okaloosa		Osceola		St. Johns		Santa Rosa	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Regular Class	2,446	53.35%	1,963	43.64%	1,173	41.07%	2,705	66.72%	2,169	51.58%	1,180	46.75%	1,965	61.01%
Resource Room	841	18.34%	1,494	33.21%	1,088	38.10%	825	20.35%	1,214	28.87%	865	34.27%	748	23.22%
Separate Class	1,164	25.39%	1,036	23.03%	563	19.71%	471	11.62%	737	17.53%	479	18.98%	506	15.71%
Public Separate School	1	0.02%	5	0.11%	1	0.04%	1	0.02%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Public Residential	74	1.61%	0	0%	25	1.00%	0	0%	27	0.64%	0	0%	2	0.06%
Homebound/Hospital	14	0.31%	0	0%	6	0.21%	0	0%	55	1.31%	0	0%	0	0%
Correction	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	52	1.28%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Private Separate School	45	0.98%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	0.07%	0	0%	0	0%
Private Residential	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

**Number and Percentage of Students with Disabilities by Placement Setting
December, 2000**

Placement Setting (2000-01)	Lake		Alachua		Charlotte		Okaloosa		Osceola		St. Johns		Santa Rosa	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Regular Class	2,525	53.77%	1,992	41.73%	1,172	37.66%	2,345	55.16%	2,423	52.03%	1,309	48.32%	2,011	59.64%
Resource Room	892	18.99%	1,428	29.92%	1,264	40.62%	1,129	26.56%	1,339	28.75%	795	29.35%	825	24.47%
Separate Class	1,184	25.21%	1,052	22.04%	676	21.72%	456	10.73%	773	16.60%	457	16.87%	536	15.90%
Public Separate School	0	0%	208	4.36%	0	0%	118	2.78%	0	0%	67	2.47%	0	0%
Public Residential	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.04%	0	0%
Homebound/Hospital	0	0%	53	1.11%	0	0%	55	1.30%	66	1.42%	15	0.55%	0	0%
Correction	0	0%	40	0.84%	0	0%	138	3.25%	38	0.82%	58	2.14%	0	0%
Private School (Parental Placement)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	18	0.39%	7	0.26%	0	0%
Private Separate School	95	2.02%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Private Residential	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10	0.24%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Lake County's Gifted Students Population Is Below Its Peers and the State

The percentage of gifted students in Lake County is below both its peer districts and state's average, as illustrated in Exhibit 5-16. In Lake County, gifted and talented programs are offered at the elementary and middle school levels. At the high school levels, there are options such as dual enrollment with the community college, honors and advanced placement courses.

The process to identify gifted students is described in the Special Programs and Procedures document. Basically, the screening occurs using a variety of referral sources and group achievement or IQ tests. The evaluation includes the Checklist of Characteristics, the individual intelligence test, and the statement of need for a special program. There has been a Plan B approved for use in the district for culturally different students. See the Special Programs and Procedures book. Through the use of Plan B the district's gifted program criterion support student diversity.

Exhibit 5-16

Lake County Had the Second Lowest Percentage of Gifted Students in the Year 1999 – 2000

District	Number of Gifted Students	Percent of the Total Student Population
Lake	812	13.9%
Alachua	2,468	32.7%
Charlotte	703	17.5%
Okaloosa	1,429	23.8%
Osceola	314	5.9%
St. Johns	564	15.8%
Santa Rosa	875	19.3%
Average without Lake County		19.2%
State Total	105,437	22.5%

Source: Florida Department of Education. Profiles of Florida School Districts 1999 - 2000

The District Could Increase Medicaid Reimbursement

Medicaid Reimbursement in the State of Florida

The Federal Government allows school districts that serve children with special needs to be reimbursed for part of the cost of these services. Reimbursement can be claimed for two major but separate functions. The first function requires the identification of Eligible Children. This is called Administrative Services or Administrative Outreach. The second function is providing the special instructional programs that these children are entitled to receive. This is called Direct Services or Fee for Services.

To identify eligible children, school districts must employ the services of people such as Guidance Counselors, Social Workers, School Psychologists, Nurses, and Transportation Route Coordinators. The time that these persons spend in identifying, screening, and placing these children into special educational programs can be billed as Administrative Services. Most if not all of Florida's 67 school districts are billing for administrative services reimbursement. A few school districts are billing directly themselves. Most other districts, however, are contracting this billing work with two major consulting

firms, MAXIMUS and Deloitte and Touche. School staff is in charge of gathering the preliminary data needed to submit for administrative services reimbursement while the technical and analytical part of the submittal is performed by the consulting firms.

Billing for direct services is a more complex function. For this reason all school districts that are billing for this services have utilized consulting firms. Seminole County has developed a program methodology that may allow school districts to perform their own analysis of data needed for filing for reimbursement. Recently the state has sanctioned a group of school districts to pilot this program methodology to determine if it will pass Medicaid requirements. Some of Florida's small school districts and other districts with a small incidence of Medicaid eligible student population have chosen not to file for direct services reimbursement because the small amount of revenue gained would not justify the cost of submitting the claim. The direct services that school districts can claim reimbursement for are the following: Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech and Language, Social Work Services, Behavior Modification, Guidance Services, Psychological Services, Nursing Services, Teen Parenting, Migrant Education, and Transportation.

In some districts the revenue earned from Administrative Services and from Direct Services reimbursements are placed in the district's general revenue account. In other districts, a portion of this revenue is given back to the departments that help to complete the paperwork needed to submit the reimbursement applications. Returning a portion of the reimbursement funds to the departments that assist with the filing of the applications is believed to serve as an incentive for a more complete and accurate data collection procedure maximizing the reimbursement that is attained.

Medicaid Reimbursement in the Lake County School District

The Lake County School District has been filing only for Medicaid reimbursement of Administrative Services. The district has contracted with MAXIMUS Consulting Firm for filing this Medicaid claim. In Lake County, the total revenue earned from the reimbursement of administrative services has been placed in the district's general revenue fund. District supervisors involved in the Medicaid reimbursement process believe that a portion of the revenues generated should be returned to the departments to purchase materials and supplies for classroom use. This incentive could encourage more accurate and complete documentation that the district could recover an even higher rate of reimbursement in this administrative services area. Direct Services reimbursement has never been claimed by Lake County because there is a strong feeling among staff that the district does not have the time or personnel needed to collect the information and for filing the reimbursement claim in this area. For the period of June 30, 2000, to March 31, 2000, the total amount reimbursed by Medicaid for Administrative Services was \$440,513.

According to a representative from MAXIMUS interviewed by ValienteHernandez P.A., the Lake County School district could realize as much as \$256,000 (net) annually (50% in the first year) and approximately \$1.15 million over a five-year period (Exhibit 5-17) for Direct Services reimbursement by billing for Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech, and Behavioral Modification services. At this time Lake County does not claim any reimbursement for Direct Services. Although the district presently bills and receives reimbursement for Administrative Services, it could increase its earnings in this area if they also billed for the screening and evaluative work performed by their 31 Speech and Language Pathologists, 3 Autistic Teachers, 17 teachers of the emotionally handicapped, 6 teachers of the Profoundly Mentally Handicapped, 5 teachers of the Visually or Hearing Impaired, and 16 teachers of Pre-K Handicapped.

Exhibit 5-17**The District Could Realize as Much as \$1.15 Million Over the Next Five Years for Medicaid Reimbursement of Direct Services**

	Fiscal Year				
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual Revenue Increase	\$128,000	\$256,000	\$256,000	\$256,000	\$256,000
Cumulative Cost	\$128,000	\$384,000	\$640,000	\$896,000	\$1,152,000

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Exhibit 5-18 illustrates the status of the Medicaid Reimbursement in Lake County and in the peer districts.

Exhibit 5-18**Medicaid Reimbursement Status in Lake County and Its Peers**

District	Does the district seek Medicaid Reimbursement?	Is the district billing directly OR are they contracting the billing work?	Is the district billing for Administrative AND/OR Direct services?	How many children are eligible for Medicaid reimbursement?
Lake	Yes, partial.	Contracting.	Administrative	1,339
Alachua	Yes, experimenting	Contracting	Administrative and Direct	1,892
Charlotte	Yes	Contracting	Administrative	536
Okaloosa	Yes	Contracting	Administrative	760
Osceola	Yes	Contracting.	Administrative and Direct	1,174
St. Johns	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Santa Rosa	No	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Telephone Survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. June 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district go further in the use of nonacademic measures in the Exceptional Student Education Program such as tracking the number of students with disabilities placed in the least restrictive environment.*
- *We recommend that the Student Services department in conjunction with the ESE department carry out an awareness program that facilitates the understanding of the required process for the identification and assessment of ESE students and thus improving the generalized perception that the process is too lengthy.*

Action Plan 5-11, Recommendation 2 shows the necessary steps to implement this recommendation.

- *We recommend that the district find alternative and innovative methods to boost the number of children identified as gifted. At the elementary level, screening of all students should be required utilizing the group test results. Also, the district can form an advisory committee to examine different program delivery methods.*
- *We recommend that the district start filing for Direct Services Reimbursement. Since this process is much more difficult, the district should either contract the work with a consultant or join a pilot program like the one currently being sanctioned by the state and lead by Seminole County.*

Additionally, we recommend that the district return a portion of the reimbursement for administrative services back to the Exceptional Student Education and Student Services child programs that earn these special revenues to be utilized to purchase materials and supplies. This incentive could encourage staff to document reimbursement data more accurately and more completely so to maximize the dollars that are secured.

Also, we recommend that the district continue to file for Administrative Services reimbursement. Further, a comparison should be made after data from other districts is gathered in order to ascertain if contracting out or direct filing it is more cost effective and audit proof for the district. The district has already joined a pilot study lead by Seminole County regarding the administrative services portion of the reimbursement.

- *We recommend that Exceptional Student Education develop an Advisory Council.*

Action Plan 5-3 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 5-3

Take Several Actions to Further Improve the ESE Program

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Further the use of nonacademic data related to ESE students to improve performance such as placement in the least restrictive environment.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The ESE Department uses the resources available in FIRN (Florida Information Resource Network) and the School Indicators Report produced by DOE.</p> <p>Step 2: Collect student performance data and document in report form.</p> <p>Step 3: Plan to develop, modify or enhance program as needed.</p> <p>Step 4: Report to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and instruction and other interested stakeholders.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Exceptional Student Education. Consultation with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability is made as needed.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Find alternative methods to increase the number of children identified as gifted.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the ESE Supervisor establish a procedure by which screening of all students at the elementary level be required utilizing the group test results.</p> <p>Step 2: Superintendent approves the new procedure.</p> <p>Step 3: The ESE Supervisors seeks input from the newly created Advisory Committee (see recommendation X below) to find innovative program delivery methods.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and ESE Supervisor.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Begin filing for Medicaid Direct Services Reimbursement and return a portion of the reimbursement for administrative services back to the Exceptional Student Education and Student Services child programs that earn these special revenues.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The ESE Supervisor chooses and contacts a Medicaid billing representative to review the contractual arrangements of other school districts that contract for Medicaid billing, and determine what services will maximize the district's reimbursements.</p> <p>Step 2: The ESE Supervisor director asks the Purchasing Department to submit a request for proposal for professional Medicaid billing services based on research of available services.</p> <p>Step 3: The Purchasing Department reviews and evaluates proposals, and selects a qualified vendor.</p> <p>Step 4: The board reviews the administration's proposal and approves this plan.</p> <p>Step 5: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction devises a mechanism by which a portion of the reimbursement for both administrative and direct services are to go back to the Exceptional Student Education and Student Services child programs that earn these special revenues.</p> <p>Step 6: The Superintendent reviews the mechanism and submits to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 7: The Director of the Finance Department ensures the claims are processed on an ongoing basis.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of ESE, Purchasing Department, Finance Department, and school board.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Additional revenues of as much as \$256,000 annually and approximately \$1.28 million over a five-year period.

Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Develop an Advisory Council for Exceptional Student Education.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The ESE Supervisor forms Advisory Council for Exceptional Student Education made up of teachers, parents, and other constituents.</p> <p>Step 2: The ESE Supervisor drafts the proposal for creating the council including purpose, duration, membership, frequency of meetings, etc and submits to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and instruction reviews the proposal, approves and submits to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: The school board approves the creation of the Advisory Council for Exceptional Student Education.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, ESE Supervisor, and school board.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

4 The district's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program is presently being restructured and striving to improve.

Lake County has an English immersion program for the students identified as speakers of other languages or having Limited English Proficiency (LEP). In the setting of the immersion program, LEP (or ESOL) students are mainstreamed; classes are offered in English for Speakers of Other Languages and ESOL services are provided and accommodations are made within the context of the regular classroom. The concept of ESOL is not only to teach English to students, but rather to deliver instruction in all areas in a comprehensible manner.

A second option given by the state to provide services to students that speak another language is to make funds available through grants to run a bilingual—dual language—program, where all classes are taught in the second language. However, districts must have at least 25% of their pupil population classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) to opt for this alternative. Lake County, where the LEP population is just 3% (Exhibit 5-20) does not qualify and does not have any plans in place to offer dual language instruction.

Schools with more than 15 students who speak the same second language are assigned a teaching aide who speaks the second language. By law, teachers who teach these classes must have ESOL training in the instruction and use of ESOL strategies. Training for ESOL teachers include 300 hours of in-service in ESOL instructional strategies, linguistics, and multi-cultural issues. The district's LEP Plan requires that, on the elementary level, instruction in Language Arts Through ESOL will be provided by certified teachers who either have the ESOL endorsement or are in the process of acquiring it. On the secondary level, courses in ESOL Listening and Speaking and ESOL Reading and Writing are offered as needed.

Exhibit 5-19 presents the definition of the different *LEP Status Codes* used to explain the status of the student with respect to the ESOL program.

Exhibit 5-19**Definition of the LEP Status Codes**

LEP Status Code	Definition
LY	LEP Student currently enrolled in ESOL or other program for LEP Students.
LN	LEP Student determined eligible for ESOL services but is not being served.
LY > 2	LEP Student who has been enrolled in ESOL for more than two years.
LY < 2	LEP Student who has been enrolled in ESOL for less than two years.
LF	LEP Student who has completed ESOL Courses and is being Monitored for a two-year period.
LZ	LEP Student who has completed ESOL courses and monitoring.
ZZ	Non-LEP Student (Never enrolled in ESOL).

Source: Florida Department of Education. Bureau of Equity, Safety, and Student Support. Office of Multicultural Student Language Education. 1999-2000 Annual Status Report on the Implementation of the 1990 LULAC, et al. v. State Board of Education, et al. Consent Decree.

Once classified as LY, the district automatically receives three years of funding for the ESOL program. If the student has not met the exit criteria after the three years expire, another three years of funding can be awarded. These cases are not very common, and they require committee meetings to make the determination. No additional funding is available after the six years, and if the student still doesn't meet the exit criteria, it is the district's responsibility to continue to provide ESOL services.

Students are exited from the ESOL program based on test scores of 33% or above in both reading and writing. The test utilized for LEP students is the *IDEA Proficiency Test* (ITP).

Exhibit 5-20**Lake County Has the Second Highest Percentage of LEP Students When Compared to Its Peers**

Number of Students	LY	LN	LP	LF	LZ	ZZ	TOTAL	LEP Students as a Percent of the Total Enrollment
Osceola	5,017	3	188	2,000	1,515	27,786	36,509	19.7%
Lake	770	3	6	191	348	30,971	32,289	3.0%
Alachua	464	0	0	170	112	32,130	32,876	1.9%
Charlotte	153	2	2	110	122	18,491	18,880	1.4%
St. Johns	94	3	8	23	28	19,892	20,048	0.6%
Okaloosa	101	2	3	57	47	32,911	33,121	0.5%
Santa Rosa	53	0	0	41	23	23,282	23,399	0.4%

¹ There is a major difference between these totals and the ones found in other reports such as the School Indicators and the School Advisory Department reports. The figures in the latter are from Survey 2, otherwise known as October Membership. These are 'snapshots' of students present in October. The figures for the LEP population in the ESOL reports are from Survey 5 data, which is cumulative for the entire school year, i.e., any child served, for any length of time, is counted – and students that attend more than one school are counted multiple times in other words, the students 'served' by the ESOL program. Survey 5 always appears larger than the other surveys because of its cumulative nature.

Source: Florida Department of Education. Bureau of Equity, Safety, and Student Support. Office of Multicultural Student Language Education. 1999-2000 Annual Status Report on the Implementation of the 1990 LULAC, et al. v. State Board of Education, et al. Consent Decree.

Procedures for Identifying ESOL Students Are Effective and in Line With Applicable Federal and State Rules and Regulations

In line with the *LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) et al. v. State Board of Education of Florida Consent Decree* of 1999, the district has procedures in place to provide services to LEP students. A review of the district's 2000-01 ESOL Handbook demonstrated the district has detailed procedures in place for the different phases of the ESOL process, from the identification through the post-exit monitoring of LEP students.

School administrators generally agree that the ESOL program has effective means to identify LEP students. As shown in Exhibit 5-21, 83% of the principals concur. As far as teachers, many were not familiar with the process (21%) but the majority (52%) agreed that the procedures are effective.

Exhibit 5-21**The Identification Process is Generally Considered to Be Effective**

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; s = sample size; n = respondents)		Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Principals (N= 84; n= 52)	The district's procedures for identifying students eligible for ESOL programs are efficient and effective.	82.9%	9.8%	7.3%
Teachers (s = 1761; n = 850)	The district's procedures for identifying students eligible for ESOL programs are efficient and effective.	52.0%	27.6%	20.5%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

District Has Implemented the Recommendations Made by the Office of Multicultural Student Language Education (OMSLE)

Mandated by s. 229.565 (Educational evaluation procedures) and s. 233.058 (English language instruction for limited English proficient students) of the *Florida Statutes*, the state's Office of Multicultural Student Language Education (OMSLE) conducted a review of the Lake County ESOL program during the school year 1998-99. The main purposes of the review were first, to determine compliance with state law, State Board of Education Rules, and the 1990 League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) et al. v. the State Board of Education Consent Decree; and second, to assist the district in targeting their deficiencies to operate more efficiently.

There were two sensitive issues for which the district's ESOL program was cited. First and foremost, the district did not offer students an opportunity to remain at the home school site. Prior to the 2000-01 school year, the district had magnet sites for LEP students. The students were bused to the appropriate magnet site. The main inconvenience of the set up was that students would spend extremely long periods of time riding from their homes to their home schools and from there to the magnet site. The district was also cited for not having bilingual personnel to assist the students with classroom assignments.

As a result, the district decided to eliminate the ESOL magnet sites and started to run the program at the home school level. This action created much confusion among school based staff that did not have ESOL certification. It also generated a lot of bad press, because the generalized perception was that the district had eliminated the ESOL program. The district should present to its stakeholders the improvements that are continually made with the purpose of bettering the public's perception of the ESOL program.

The Number of Teachers That Have the 300 - Hour ESOL Certification Is Comparable With the Peer Districts

In order to teach English to limited English proficient students by Florida law, primary Language Arts teachers must be ESOL certified. Language Arts teachers who do not have the endorsement are declared out-of-field when an LEP student is placed in his/her classroom and consequently are given a time frame of up to six years to obtain the endorsement. As shown in Exhibit 5-22 presently the number of teachers with this endorsement is in line with the peer districts and has a ratio of certified teachers to LEP students that is within the peer average. As a result of the changes originated by carrying out the ESOL program

from the home school level, intensive training took place for Language Arts teachers to obtain the required endorsement.

Because the LEP population is small, the district does not make the ESOL endorsement a condition of employment. As a result of the changes originated by running the ESOL program from the home schools, there was a powerful and unforeseen need for ESOL certified teachers. The Staff Development department started to offer each of the five required components for the ESOL endorsement each semester and during our summer academy providing teachers three opportunities during the year to take one of the components.

The district should take additional measures for unforeseen circumstances and guarantee that in case the LEP population boosts, and there is a high demand for certified teachers, the district can respond immediately. Such actions could include: making provisions for having immediate training availability or establishing the goal of having at least one certified teacher in each school. The district should also bear in mind that in case of unexpected demand OMSLE is a resource that can be used to initiate training for ESOL certification.

Exhibit 5-22

Lake County Had a Reasonable Ratio of LEP Students to ESOL Certified Teachers When Compared to Its Peers (as of May 2001)

District	Number of teachers that have the 300-hour ESOL endorsement. (*)	Total Number of LEP Students	Ratio of ESOL Certified Teachers: LEP Students
Lake	155	970	1 : 6
Alachua	60	634	1 : 11
Charlotte	60	267	1 : 4
Okaloosa	No Response	163	No Response
Osceola	133	7,208	1 : 54
St. Johns	30	128	1 : 4
Santa Rosa	94	137	1 : 5

Source: Florida Department of Education. (*) Telephone survey of peer districts. 2001 year end information.

The District Places Students LEP Students in a Timely Manner

Realizing 6.21 days, Lake County's average time to classify ESOL students exceeds both the state standard and the state average, as shown in Exhibit 5-23. The state standard for number of days from identification to classification of LEP students is 20 days or less and the most recent state average is 8.83 days. The time to classification reflects the average number of days between the *Home Language Survey* and the classification date.

The primary identification of bilingual students occurs during the initial ESOL screening to identify LEP students. The elementary curriculum specialist or middle school/high school counselors provide the initial assessment.

Exhibit 5-23**LEP Student Assessment and Timelines 1999-2000**

District	Number Classified	Average Time to Classification (days)
Osceola	945	13.59
Santa Rosa	11	9.64
St. Johns	10	6.40
Lake	104	6.21
Charlotte	51	3.84
Alachua	90	1.82
Okaloosa	22	1.82

Source: Florida Department of Education. Bureau of Equity, Safety, and Student Support. Office of Multicultural Student Language Education. 1999-2000 Annual Status Report on the Implementation of the 1990 LULAC, et al. v. State Board of Education, et al. Consent Decree.

The Average Length of Time A Student Must Spend in the ESOL Program Is Within State Average but Could Be Improved

LEP students of Lake County remain in the ESOL program 3.11 years which is close to the average of 2.97 years registered for the entire state. However, students in Lake County stay in the ESOL program almost twice as long as the peer average (1.62 years).

As illustrated in Exhibit 5-24, the average length of time in the program by grade is higher in Lake County for all grades (grades 1 through 12) when compared against the peer districts. Comparison against the state, reflect that averages of Lake County are higher for five grades (grades 1, 2, 8, 9, and 10) and lower or close to the state average for the remainder seven grades (grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 12)

There is no minimum or maximum time a student must spend in ESOL and both very short and very long times are flags that bear closer inspection. Tracking the length of time in the program is an excellent indicator of the effectiveness of the program and periodically compare against peer districts can provide with insight of best practices utilized outside of Lake County what is happening in the local program. The district could target reasons how ESOL students could meet the ESOL exit criteria quicker.

The District Provides Opportunities for Meaningful Integration Into All-English Instructional Environments

ESOL teachers' assistants work with students on an individual basis under the direction of certified teachers. A variety of text and software materials are provided in cooperation and conjunction with individual schools and other programs. ESOL works collaboratively with Title I, Migrant, Guidance, and ESE as there is frequent overlap or congruence with those programs. Supplemental materials coordinated with the currently adopted textbooks in the core courses are acquired on a continuing basis and provided for use by the classroom teachers, teaching assistants, and individual students. The Rosetta Stone Intensive English CD-ROM courses I and II are being provided for use during the 2001 – 2002 school year.

Accountability Mechanisms For The ESOL Program Can Be Further Improved

ESOL is a program that is largely and extensively monitored by the state's OMSLE. The district largely relies on these evaluations and does not have its own mechanisms. The ESOL program does not have formal mechanisms in place that use disaggregated data on LEP standardized test scores to evaluate student achievement over the years and of comparison against its peers. There is room for a process that would help the district gain efficiencies and increase effectiveness by closely monitoring the LEP students' progress in academic achievement as well as in non-academic performance measures.

The district's ESOL core curriculum and instructional design includes detailed benchmarks that correlate a variety of ESOL strategies with specific Florida Language Arts Curriculum Framework benchmarks. These benchmarks indicate in detail, the outcomes that can be expected from the students in the areas of Reading, Writing, Listening, Viewing and Speaking, Language and Literature. In addition to this, LULAC issues and makes available to each district an annual status report that includes student performance.

Exhibits 5-25 and 5-26 are a compilation of academic data for Lake Schools and its peer districts.

Exhibit 5-24**Length of Time (In Years) Served in ESOL Programs for the Year 1999 - 2000**

District	Total Number of Students Exiting	Average Length of Time by Grade (years)												Overall Average
		01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	
Lake	117	1.09	1.60	1.89	2.31	2.79	3.30	2.69	4.91	4.63	4.41	3.63	3.67	3.11
Alachua	109	0.60	1.31	1.63	2.10	1.76	1.55	1.91	1.39	2.09	3.34	2.16	1.92	1.86
Charlotte	70	0.56	1.09	1.47	1.13	1.06	1.24	1.36	1.80	1.82	2.65	2.04	3.09	1.51
Okaloosa	34	0.79	1.31	1.66	0.00	1.28	2.28	1.26	1.44	1.53	2.71	2.25	2.36	1.63
Osceola	1,412	0.59	1.02	1.99	2.48	2.09	2.55	2.58	2.78	2.83	2.79	2.96	3.00	2.17
St. Johns	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Santa Rosa	28	0.67	0.00	1.78	2.94	3.47	1.72	4.81	3.31	2.70	0.00	5.07	3.23	2.69
State Average	56,128	0.98	1.55	2.49	3.00	3.42	3.81	4.03	4.09	4.26	4.11	3.79	3.74	2.97
Average value without Lake County		0.54	0.79	1.42	1.44	1.61	1.56	1.99	1.79	1.83	1.92	2.41	2.27	1.64

Source: Florida Department of Education. Bureau of Equity, Safety, and Student Support. Office of Multicultural Student Language Education. 1999-2000 Annual Status Report on the Implementation of the 1990 LULAC, et al. v. State Board of Education, et al. Consent Decree.

Exhibit 5-25**1999 Assessment Data—Florida Writes!—Grades 4, 8 and 10**

District	LEP Status	Average Score Florida Writes!		
		Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Lake	LF	3.5	3.4	3.0
	LY<2	3.0	1.6	2.0
	LY>2	2.7	3.2	2.2
	ZZ	3.3	3.6	3.7
Alachua	LF	3.5	0.0	4.5
	LY<2	3.6	0.0	4.0
	LY>2	4.0	3.0	3.0
	ZZ	3.5	3.9	4.2
Charlotte	LF	2.0	0.0	3.8
	LY<2	0.0	2.8	4.0
	LY>2	0.0	3.0	3.3
	ZZ	3.9	3.9	4.2
Okaloosa	LF	0.0	0.0	0.0
	LY<2	1.6	3.2	4.0
	LY>2	0.0	3.0	2.5
	ZZ	3.4	3.9	4.3
Osceola	LF	3.1	3.3	3.8
	LY<2	2.1	2.1	2.8
	LY>2	2.7	2.3	3.0
	ZZ	3.2	3.5	3.9
St. Johns	LF	4.5	3.0	3.0
	LY<2	3.0	1.5	0.0
	LY>2	1.0	3.3	6.0
	ZZ	3.6	3.9	4.0
Santa Rosa	LF	4.0	3.5	0.0
	LY<2	3.0	0.0	0.0
	LY>2	0.0	2.5	2.0
	ZZ	3.4	3.9	4.0
State Average	LF	3.3	3.4	3.5
	LY<2	2.1	2.3	2.2
	LY>2	3.0	3.0	2.7
	ZZ	3.4	3.7	4.0

Source: Survey 3 and Florida Writes data 1999-2000.

*Exhibit 5-26***1999 Assessment Data—FCAT Reading—Grades 4, 8, and 10 for Achievement Level 1**

District	LEP Status	Percent of Students Achieving Level 1		
		Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Lake	LF	22.2%	85.7%	42.9%
	LY<2	64.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	LY>2	88.0%	72.7%	92.3%
	ZZ	19.2%	19.3%	29.9%
Alachua	LF	7.1%	0.0%	25.0%
	LY<2	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%
	LY>2	60.0%	75.0%	80.0%
	ZZ	23.0%	18.0%	23.8%
Charlotte	LF	50.0%	100.0%	25.0%
	LY<2	0.0%	60.0%	90.0%
	LY>2	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	ZZ	11.8%	10.9%	20.2%
Okaloosa	LF	0.0%	75.0%	100.0%
	LY<2	100.0%	71.4%	50.0%
	LY>2	0.0%	100.0%	83.3%
	ZZ	13.3%	14.5%	20.3%
Osceola	LF	30.4%	43.4%	61.6%
	LY<2	90.6%	80.8%	86.6%
	LY>2	71.2%	83.8%	85.7%
	ZZ	25.4%	20.4%	27.8%
St. Johns	LF	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	LY<2	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
	LY>2	50.0%	60.0%	33.3%
	ZZ	14.1%	13.7%	23.2%
Santa Rosa	LF	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	LY<2	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	LY>2	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	ZZ	10.1%	8.8%	20.9%
State Average	LF	42.1%	41.9%	59.2%
	LY<2	83.3%	82.2%	87.0%
	LY>2	67.4%	75.8%	85.6%
	ZZ	22.3%	21.6%	26.7%

Source: Florida Department of Education. Bureau of Equity, Safety, and Student Support. Office of Multicultural Student Language Education. 1999-2000 Annual Status Report on the Implementation of the 1990 LULAC, et al. v. State Board of Education, et al. Consent Decree Survey 3 and Florida Writes data 1999-2000.

District's Assessment of Effectiveness and Cost Efficiency of the ESOL Programs Could Be Improved

The supervisor of the department receives a monthly budget report on ESOL expenditures by cost center and this as close as they get to a true cost analysis. Measures such as cost per pupil for bilingual education and cost of assessment per bilingual student that would help the district increase productivity and be more effective, are not tracked by the district.

The LULAC annual report that student performance using nonacademic data. The department would benefit from formally using this information to measure improvement and compare against its peers. An example is shown in Exhibit 5-27.

Exhibit 5-27

1999 – 2000 Student Performance Indicators

District	LEP Status	Graduation Rate	Dropout Rate	Retention Rate
Lake	LF	46.2%	0.0%	6.8%
	LY	30.4%	3.1%	9.0%
	ZZ	65.2%	4.2%	5.2%
Alachua	LF	55.6%	4.3%	2.4%
	LY	41.2%	3.8%	3.4%
	ZZ	58.1%	5.9%	5.9%
Charlotte	LF	71.4%	3.1%	5.5%
	LY	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
	ZZ	73.7%	73.7%	1.5%
Okaloosa	LF	100.0%	91.0%	1.8%
	LY	20.0%	10.8%	4.0%
	ZZ	78.8%	3.4%	2.6%
Osceola	LF	54.4%	4.8%	5.4%
	LY	25.4%	7.1%	7.7%
	ZZ	60.2%	5.7%	5.8%
St. Johns	LF	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%
	LY	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%
	ZZ	81.3%	2.3%	2.9%
Santa Rosa	LF	100.0%	0.0%	2.4%
	LY	0.0%	8.3%	1.9%
	ZZ	82.2%	1.4%	3.2%
State Average	LF	52.3%	5.2%	5.9%
	LY	31.8%	6.9%	8.0%
	ZZ	65.5%	4.1%	5.9%

Source: Florida Department of Education. Bureau of Equity, Safety, and Student Support. Office of Multicultural Student Language Education. 1999-2000 Annual Status Report on the Implementation of the 1990 LULAC, et al. v. State Board of Education, et al. Consent Decree. Survey 3 and Florida Writes data 1999-2000.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish comprehensive procedures for collecting and analyzing data for ESOL program evaluations. Data can be obtained from the Office of Multicultural Student Language Education (OMSLE) from its Annual Status Report on the Implementation of the 1990 LULAC, et al. v. State Board of Education, et al. Consent Decree. The analyses conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. can be used as a guide for such data collection and analyses. The reports produced should provide summary information by grade level, school and district concerning performance of Language Enriched Pupils (LEP's).*

An example of comprehensive analysis is the district's identification of LEP students who are considered in the "danger-zone." "Danger-zone" students are those who have not progressed in oral English proficiency. Such analyses will be provided to principals and other affected personnel and is based on the number of years the student spent in the program and the level of achievement.

- *We recommend the district take additional measures for unforeseen demands for ESOL services and guarantee that in case the LEP population boosts, and there is a high demand for certified teachers, the district can respond immediately. Such actions could include making provisions for having immediate training availability or establishing the goal of having at least one certified teacher in each school. The district should also bear in mind that in case of unexpected demands OMSLE is a resource that can be used to initiate training for ESOL certification.*
- *The district should present to its stakeholders the improvements that are continually made with the purpose of bettering the public's perception of the ESOL program.*

Action Plan 5-4 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 5-4

Compile and Analyze ESOL Program Evaluations

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Use annual state reports to compile and analyze ESOL data on a continual basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction designs a system for comprehensive evaluation of ESOL program.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction develops tools and reports that summarize student performance by grade level and school.</p> <p>Step 3: The Supervisor of ESOL jointly with Testing department identifies "danger-zone" students.</p> <p>Step 4: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction provides feedback to administrators on revising teaching strategies.</p> <p>Step 5: The board adopts policy to incorporate program throughout district.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Supervisor of Federal Compensatory Programs. Consultation with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (see Action Plan 3-4, Recommendation 2) as needed.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Disaggregate and study ESOL students' standardized test scores, and adjust curriculum according to findings.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability disaggregates ESOL students' standardized test scores, disseminate results to schools, and provide assistance to help the ESOL contacts to understand the data.</p> <p>Step 2: Program modification and curriculum changes both at the district and school level should be implemented as a result of an evaluation of the scores.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Federal Compensatory Programs and office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. Consultation with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability is made as needed.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Take additional measures for unforeseen demands for ESOL services.
	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor for Federally Compensatory Programs look for methods that guarantee that in case the LEP population boosts, and there is a high demand for certified teachers, the district is able to respond immediately.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor for Federally Compensatory Programs make provisions for having immediate training availability or establishing the goal of having at least one certified teacher in each school.</p> <p>Step 3: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor for Federally Compensatory Programs maintain open communication with OMSLE as a resource that can be used to initiate training for ESOL certification in case of sudden demand.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor for Federally Compensatory Programs.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Improvements that are continually made by the ESOL Program are presented to stakeholders the with the purpose of bettering the public's perception of the program.
	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor of Federally Compensatory Programs routinely prepares progress reports of the ESOL Program.</p> <p>Step 2: The Supervisor for Federally Compensatory Education Program in conjunction with the new Public Information officer selects the best method to disseminate progress report to stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 3: Progress reports and success stories of the ESOL program are disseminated to stakeholders.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Federal Compensatory Education and Public Information Officer.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

5 The district provides effective and cost-efficient secondary vocational and adult/technical education program that could be further improved by seeking employer feedback more formally.

The district's workforce development programs are carried out under the Vocational-Technical, Adult and Community Education department. The department is aligned under three sections: K-12 Vocational and Technical; Workforce Development Education that includes Postsecondary and Adult General Education; and Community Education. Each of the sections is lead by a program coordinator.

The K-12 Vocational and Technical program employs 85 teachers to service seventh through twelfth grade students with 13 types of programs areas:

- Allied Health Assisting
- Automotive Service Technology
- Commercial Foods and Culinary Arts
- Computer Electronics Technology
- Construction Technology
- Digital Publishing
- Drafting
- Engineering Technology
- Oracle Academy
- Sports and Recreational Turf Operations
- Television Production
- Veterinary Assisting
- Web Design Services

The Postsecondary Vocational Program serves approximately 650 full-time and 2,000 part-time students at any given time and the various programs are operated through the Lake Technical Center. Examples of the programs offered include Industrial, Business Technology, Agriculture, Child Care, Cosmetology and Culinary Arts and various Information Technology programs.

The Adult General Education (AGE) program serves students who do not have a high school diploma. All services are free, the instruction is individualized or self-paced instruction and open to anyone 17 years of age and older not enrolled in a regular day school. Programs include English of Speakers of Other

Languages (ESOL), Adult Basic Education, Adult High School, and General Education Development (GED) Preparation and Testing.

Community Education is 100% self-supported and offers multiple programs throughout the district. These courses are designed to meet nonacademic needs in the community and focus on the need for life long learning of communities. In addition, Community Education offers programs through the *extended learning centers* at 21 elementary schools and 6 middle schools. These programs are offered before and after school and focus on enhancing academics and promoting the fine arts.

The district mainstreams the majority of special needs students into the regular vocational programs. By serving these students, the department meets a primary goal of serving and preparing all students to become productive citizens. The percentage of special needs students enrolled in vocational programs varies year-to-year between 15% and 25%

The department has a district-wide advisory council, a School-To-Work Focus Committee and an advisory committee for each program area, involving over 300 individuals people throughout the district.

The District Continually Updates Courses and Equipment to Meet the Level of Experience Needed by Employers

The Vocational Curriculum Frameworks and Student Performance Standards are continuously updated by the Department of Education. This process includes vocational teachers, administrators and related business/industry members. The district has a process to guarantee that courses are routinely updated to meet the needs of students and employers. Each year before the beginning of the new fiscal school year, local educational agencies are given these updated standards. Additionally, in August of each year there is a district-wide in-service meeting of all vocational-technical teachers, each teacher is given the new years standards for their individual programs.

Vocational and adult/technical education staff continuously the Vocational Enrollment Report (VER) data, visit programs, meet with teachers, administrators and advisory committee members to assure programs are at local industry standard. Additionally, staff upgrades the Vocational-Technical section of the local district-wide Course Code Directory.

As far as equipment update, the department issues an annual request for equipment needs prioritized by program and completed out by each vocational teacher. Subsequently, the school administrator takes all program list in his/her school and prioritizes them school wide. The teacher, principal and the program advisory committee chair must sign these lists. The most recent advisory committee minutes of each program area must be attached. These school level equipment needs lists are then sent to me for district wide prioritizing budgeting.

The District Would Benefit From Seeking Employers' Feedback Information More Extensively

The programs offered by the district are added, dropped or changed as the skills required by employers evolve as technology evolves. For example, what was previously called Business-Office Education has now been expanded to be Business Technology Education, with an emphasis on providing information services skills and thus, a filing clerk program is now offered in a broader context under the Information and PC Support program.

Input from business and industry is a key element the district utilizes to make decisions on programmatic modifications. To make this an effective process, the district has established a committee for 17 different

programmatic areas. The membership of each one of these committees varies from 4 to 22 business individuals engaged in related areas of expertise and together they make up a group of almost 300.

The district does not have a formal process by which input is obtained from employers that could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs offered by the district that could demonstrate that students are obtaining the required academic, vocational, and technical skill proficiencies. The district has an informal process through which they seek feedback and that can be used to build up a formal process. Such a process can be very useful in assessing program effectiveness. For example, it can help detect whether former students are making use of the training they received in other words, was the training they received appropriate. Refer to Exhibits 5-28 and 5-29 for benchmarking results based on follows up carried out by DOE.

The district should conduct an employer survey and the most effective way would be to not obtain feedback on specific students but rather ask broad performance-based questions such as “How do you feel about graduates preparedness that you have hired from the Health Science Education program?”

Lake County's *Secondary* Vocational Job Placement Rates and Postsecondary Follow-up Performance Are Mixed When Compared to Those of Its Peers

The most recent follow up study conducted by DOE's Education & Training Placement Information Program (1998-99) revealed that when compared against its peers, secondary education in Lake County registered the second highest percentage of individuals found employed with the second highest quarter earnings (\$3,847). On the other hand, the percentage of individuals found continuing their education was below the average registered by the peer districts (54%). Exhibit 5-28 illustrates these comparisons.

Analysis of similar information for postsecondary education is shown in Exhibit 5-29 where it is reflected that Lake County scored the third highest (78%) percentage of individuals employed, the highest percent of individuals employed with jobs related to their training, with the second highest average quarter earnings (\$5,871), and the percent found continuing education was above the peers district average of 26%.

Exhibit 5-28**State Level Follow-Up Outcomes for Secondary Vocational Education for the Year 1998-99**

District	Total All	Total Employed	Percent Employed	Percent Employed Min. Wage	Percent Identified as Job Related	Average Qtr. Earnings	Percent Cont. Education
Lake	413	267	65%	31%	22%	\$3,847	49%
Alachua	286	193	67%	23%	27%	\$3,596	69%
Charlotte	102	62	61%	31%	39%	\$3,860	43%
Osceola	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Okaloosa	320	203	63%	29%	29%	\$3,679	63%
St. Johns	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Santa Rosa	239	153	64%	35%	32%	\$3,640	42%

Note: Percentages are unique to each category (e.g., Percent Employed Min. Wage is based on the number of Total All found employed, etc.).

Total All = Total number unique individuals (unduplicated) reported for follow-up with valid SSNs to FETPIP.

Total Employed = Total number found employed regardless if also they are continuing education and/or in the military.

Percent Employed = Percentage of all found employed, regardless if also they are continuing education and/or in the military.

Percent employed Min. Wage = Percentage of all found employed earning at least \$2,678 (minimum wage for 13 weeks).

Percent Identified as Job Related = Percentage of all found employed with jobs related to their training.

Average Qtr. Earnings = Average quarterly earnings for those employed earning at least \$2,678.

Percent Cont. Education = Percentage of all found continuing their education.

Source: Florida Department of Education. Florida Education & Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP).

Exhibit 5-29**State Level Follow-Up Outcomes for Postsecondary Vocational Education for the Year 1998-99**

District	Total All	Total Employed	Percent Employed	Percent Employed Min. Wage	Percent Identified as Job Related	Average Qtr. Earnings	Percent Cont. Education
Lake	637	497	78%	67%	59%	\$5,871	31%
Alachua	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Charlotte	470	370	79%	63%	59%	\$4,961	23%
Osceola	341	281	82%	71%	49%	\$6,158	35%
Okaloosa	396	242	61%	76%	40%	\$5,144	27%
St. Johns	1121	791	71%	73%	55%	\$6,051	21%
Santa Rosa	233	141	61%	60%	55%	\$4,636	18%

Note: Refer to descriptions made in the chart immediately above.

Source: Florida Department of Education. Florida Education & Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP).

State Level Data Reflects That Lake County Has Been Carrying Out Its Vocational Programs Successfully When Compared Against Its Peers

When looking at the FETPIP data it is clear that the Lake County vocational secondary programs have considerably high consolidated enrollment along an equally high number of completion points.³ Similar results were found for the postsecondary vocational programs and the adult general education programs. See Exhibit 5-30. According to the program supervisor, much of the success achieved is due to their accessibility to data necessary to make effective program decisions. This issue is further discussed in this chapter.

Exhibit 5-30

Lake County Shows the Highest Number of Completion Points for the Vocational Programs and the Second Highest for the Adult General Education Programs

District	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns	Santa Rosa
Vocational Programs							
Total Consolidated Enrollment	5,306	173	1,647	885	2,483	2,732	1,000
Total Completion Points	1,275	n/a	1,133	361	872	702	n/a
Adult General Education Programs							
Total Consolidated Enrollment	2,349	3,165	1,183	425	2,631	1,390	1,316
Total Completion Points	2,665	2,759	1,063	170	1,211	1,645	1,177

Source: DOE. Office of Workforce Education and Outcome Information Services. WEOIS Report (WDIS 1030).

The District's Vocational Education Program Has Been Particularly Successful in Its Efforts to Evaluate Program Effectiveness

As reflected in the previous analysis, the vocational programs in Lake County are generally successful. According to the program supervisor, much of the success achieved has to do with the support rendered by the district's MIS department in making useful data available upon which effective program decisions can be made. Having the data readily available has expanded their ability to base decisions affecting vocational programs on an analysis of data.

The program supervisor knows at any time the number of students in each programmatic area by looking at the VER (Vocational Enrollment Report), which is generated at minimum four times a year. Most importantly, the VER report guarantees the integrity of the program by allowing the program specialists to confirm that students are following and staying within their career plans, the sequential set of courses that make up the vocational program. The department also conducts a detailed cost analysis once a year for the major programmatic areas to justify the teacher unit ratio set for a school to generate a vocational unit.

³ *Consolidated enrollment* refers to unduplicated student counts. *Completion points* refers to levels of coursework that enables students be employed in specific jobs within specific occupations.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish a team to regularly evaluate the current vocational education program from the perspective of local employers. Incorporate any regulatory requirements into program development and implement throughout the district. Evaluate program success and make changes as needed.*

Action Plan 5-5 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 5-5

Seek Employer Feedback More Formally

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Seek employer feedback more formally.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The supervisor of Vocational-Technical, Adult and Community Education establishes and leads a team made up of vocational education principals, teachers, and staff to develop a comprehensive vocational education program.</p> <p>Step 2: The vocational education improvement team reviews state requirements for vocational education and evaluates the existing program against those requirements. These teams will function at the local schools for the district is very diverse in employer needs. The employers-advisory teams in place at most schools can serve as the education improvement team.</p> <p>Step 3: The Supervisor of Vocational-Technical, Adult and Community Education implements the vocational education programs, being sure to document the results.</p> <p>Step 4: The vocational education improvement team continuously monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the vocational education programs and suggests any improvements considered necessary.</p> <p>Step 5: The survey results should be made available to the committees and improvement team continuously monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the vocational education programs and suggests any improvements considered necessary.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Vocational-Technical, Adult, and Community Education.
Time Frame	May 2003 when 2002 graduate feedback is available.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

6 The district's curriculum framework is aligned to the Florida Accountability Standards and to the Sunshine State Standards. This framework can be improved by developing a more formal system to methodically guide curriculum development and implementation.

A well-defined curriculum that is aligned to the Sunshine State Standards⁴ is essential as a systematic and logical means of constantly improving student performance. A school district must have in place a curriculum that provides focus, identifies what is essential, and connects learning to mastery within and across grade levels and schools. The curriculum must determine what students learn at each grade level and should include long and short-term goals, a description of instructional strategies, suggestions for instructional materials, textbooks and supplemental materials, and the assessments that will be used to measure progress toward learning content. The curriculum should also provide scope and sequence. Scope and sequence represent the hierarchy of skills and the order in which these skills should be taught. Scope and sequence should also describe what teachers should teach and how they should teach it.

At the district level, the PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction department is in charge of curriculum planning and implementation and this function is carried out by one supervisor and four program specialists, as illustrated in the organizational chart in Exhibit 5-31. At the school level, 20 of the 22 elementary schools have a Primary Program Specialist in charge of curriculum development while in the secondary levels there is not a specific position in charge of monitoring curriculum alignment. Principals and various instructional staff jointly carry out the function in the secondary levels.

The school principals play a very important role in assuring that the teaching/learning process is carried out appropriately. According to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, principals in Lake County are empowered and responsible for classroom instruction. Principals check teachers' lesson plans on a regular basis, even daily in some cases. By doing so, principals confirm that teachers' instruction is

- in alignment with state and local standards,
- grade specific, and
- providing enriching curriculum.

The District's Curriculum Guides and Instructional Materials Are in Alignment with the Sunshine State Standards

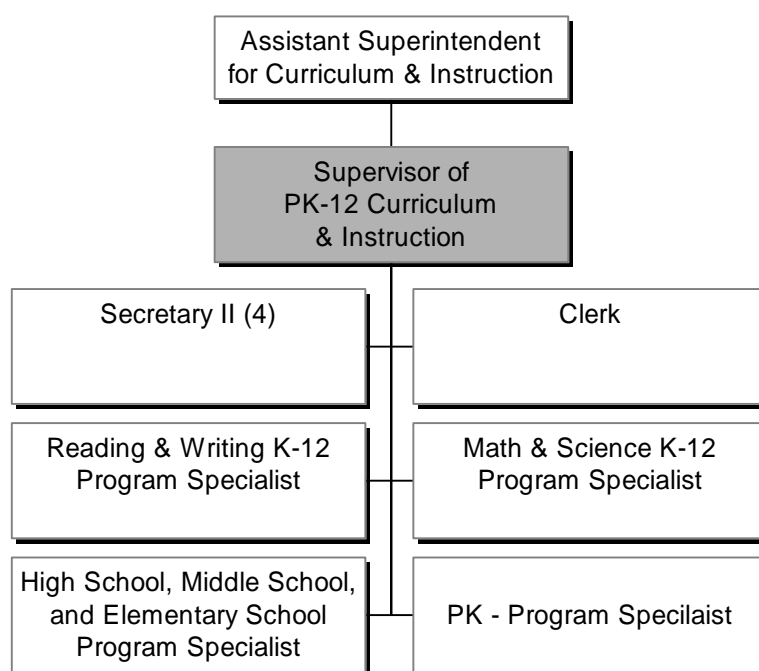
The district has adopted curriculum guides, textbooks, and other instructional materials that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards and the district's grade level benchmarks. The district's curriculum guides, curriculum frameworks, benchmarks, and pupil progression plans are in alignment with the Florida Standards since they are a direct adaptation of the State's Sunshine and Accountability Standards.

⁴ The Florida Sunshine State Standards identify what students should know and be able to do at certain stages throughout PreK-12 grade levels. Districts, schools and classroom teachers then identify what students should know and be able to do at certain grade levels within the broader timeframe. Standards that are clear, useful, verifiable statements of student learning outcomes contain at least three ingredients. First, they specify the learner; second, they describe an unambiguous and observable action; third, they specify the conditions under which these outcomes will be assessed.

The Curriculum and Instruction department provides assistance to school principals and subject area teachers to help them design instruction to meet the Sunshine State Standards. When the state benchmarks were first adopted all school administrators and subject area teachers were required to attend workshops and seminars to help them understand how to interpret the curriculum guides, apply the instructional strategies, and meet the grade level and subject area benchmarks. As changes and revisions are made to the state standards, teachers are provided refresher workshops and seminars. Subject area teachers and school administrators are provided with specific resource documents such as the curriculum frameworks, the adopted grade level benchmarks, pupil progression plan, and the state standards, to help them implement the standards and benchmarks.

Exhibit 5-31

Organizational Structure of the PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction Department



Source: The Lake County School District.

A process is in place to validate that the district is making progress toward total implementation of the Florida Sunshine State Standards and the State Accountability Standards. The district designates the school principal as responsible for monitoring the progress made by teachers in teaching the standards. Teachers are required to maintain a record of each student's progress in meeting the benchmarks appropriate to their grade level. These records are kept in check sheets and made part of the teachers planning book. The school principal and his/her administrative instructional staff periodically monitor teacher lesson plans to ensure that teaching strategies designed for meeting the standards and benchmark are being taught. The validation of progress made in meeting the standards and benchmarks is seen when test scores are reviewed and a determination is made as to which standards are not being met. A review of curriculum guides and frameworks, teacher lesson plans, teaching strategies, time on task, and other indicators are considered in making changes and revisions designed to improve student achievement.

Alignment of curriculum and instruction is crucial to success in improving education. It encourages teachers to focus on high-order, integrated skills, to communicate goals and standards, and to design

avenues to help students achieve them. When curriculum and instruction are aligned, everyone (students, teachers, parents, administrators, school boards) has a clear method for measuring progress.

While the Curriculum Guides Clearly Show Strands and Benchmarks, Clear Teaching Strategies Were Not Detected

While the district's curriculum guides clearly show strands and benchmarks, specific teaching strategies were not detected. Through the establishment of teaching strategies, the system makes available a plan of action that sets directions and guides the allocation of resources to achieve educational goals.

One fundamental goal of teaching for example, is to create a learning environment for students where learning is intrinsically rewarding and is based on teacher modeling of desired behaviors and attitudes. To accomplish this goal, districts formulate teaching strategies that recognize the individualities of students and promote learning. Examples of teaching strategies are shown in Exhibit 5-32.

The district should formulate meaningful teaching strategies for the delivery of educational service as part of the curriculum guides. By doing so the district will go a step furthering the educational process and reinforces their highest priority, student learning, with attention focused on students' engagement in meaningful learning activities.

Exhibit 5-32

Examples of Teaching Strategies Frequently Utilized By School Districts

-
- Utilize a flexible, eclectic teaching approach; incorporate multimedia and multimodality instructional activities.
 - Utilize instructional methods that demonstrate an understanding of the cross-cultural, gender and age differences in learning style preferences.
 - Assess students' preferred way(s) of learning, way(s) of receiving instruction and way(s) in which student behaviors change from situation to situation. With this knowledge provide a collaborative learning environment that promotes success.
 - Implement learning experiences that incorporate the students' preferred ways of learning, using teaching methods, incentives, materials, and situations that are planned according to student preferences.
 - Allow students to recognize their individual learning styles and reward them for their special strengths.
 - Utilize combinations of cooperative learning, individualized instruction and group instruction, as well as teacher-directed and self-directed learning activities.
 - Evaluate the learning experiences in terms of attainments of conceptual or other goals, observed student behaviors and involvement.
 - Assess students through a variety of procedures and activities.
-

Source: Florida Department of Education. Office of School Improvement: *The Wave Research Series*.

Curriculum Guides Are Updated Periodically

Updated curriculum guides increase student, teacher, and school and district productivity by clearly defining what students need to learn. They also help the district meet its educational goals and objectives.

Lake County School District revises its curriculum guides and frameworks and pupil progression plans annually to ensure that they conform to any changes or revisions to the state standards.

Each year, the district hires writing teams of teachers and district educators to examine and compare grade level and subject area instructional materials and textbook adoptions. Recommendations for changes and or revisions are made, and the adopted changes are disseminated to schools and district level instructional personnel.

The District Needs to Expand and Realign the Basic K-12 Education Department to Be Able to Provide Effective Curricular and Instructional Support to Schools

The primary role of the district-based curriculum staff is to provide leadership and support for empowering schools to maximize resources and provide quality learning programs and activities for students. However, school level staff feels that this support is not optimal and their activity could be better supported. This sentiment was corroborated by the teachers' survey response, where a large 46% (391 respondents) felt the district's curricular assistance is insufficient, as shown in Exhibit 5-33. According to the supervisor of the Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction department the situation is largely due to having a staff too small to provide effective support to schools. Refer to organizational structure of this department, Exhibit 5-31.

Exhibit 5-33

Almost Half of Lake Teachers Feel the District Does Not Provide Enough Instructional Support

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. Size; n = respondents)		Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Teachers (N= 1761 n= 850)		The district provides sufficient assistance to teachers for designing instruction programs to meet the Sunshine State Standards.	52.3%	46.0%	1.6%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Comparative analyses conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. concluded that for a district its size, the number of Lake's district based curricular staff is not in line with its peers. Staffing levels of district based curriculum specialists are not adequate in Lake as evidenced in the comparison presented in Exhibit 5-34. As a result, the district curricular staff is not large enough to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Compared to other peer districts, Lake has the lowest number (5 compared to an average of 18) of district level curriculum and instruction specialists.

Exhibit 5-34**District-Level Administrative Support for Curriculum and Instruction in Lake County Is Not in Line With Its Peer Districts**

District	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns	Santa Rosa
District Level Staff Working in Curriculum and Instruction	5	32	9	17	12	25	14

Source: Department of Education. Staff Database, Survey 3, 2001-02.

To provide appropriate curricular and instructional support to schools the district needs to expand the department to adequate levels. Based on the staffing levels in the peer districts (Exhibit 5-33), priorities established by school administration and as moneys become available, the Lake County district must bring the curriculum and instruction function to par.

Additionally, ValienteHernandez P.A. concurs with the recommendations made by the FADSS study conducted in October 2000 relating the need to revamp and expand the Curriculum and Instruction department to enhance the delivery of educational services.⁵ The main recommendations for the optimal reorganization and functioning of the instructional team made by FADSS included those below

- Establish a position of Director of Pre K-12 Curriculum, to provide leadership and direction for district curriculum development initiatives.
- Establish a Coordinator for PK-5 Programs to support and oversee district PK-5 curriculum development.
- Establish a Coordinator for Middle and High School Programs to support and oversee district's secondary schools curriculum development.
- Establish Program Specialists positions as needed to provide content or program area expertise and work with school-based personnel on the development and implementation of curriculum, identification and adoption of instructional materials to support instruction, integration of technology to enhance learning activities and opportunities for students, and planning for program evaluations. Program Specialist report to one or more of the leadership positions in the department.

Given the existing budgetary constraints and reductions however, we recommend that the district initially expand the Curriculum and Instruction department by two (2) Program Specialists, one to coordinate elementary school programs and support and oversee district K-5 curriculum development, another to coordinate middle school programs and support and oversee district's middle schools curriculum development. The current Program Specialist in charge of elementary, middle and high school programs would be left to coordinate and oversee district high school curriculum development and support.

We estimate that expanding the curriculum and instruction resources would cost approximately \$386,000 over the next five years, as illustrated in Exhibit 5-35. This cost includes salary and benefits. This calculation is based upon the average full time salary of two Program Specialists of \$69,900, a benefits package of one-third of the salaries, \$21,000, and a 4% contractual increase in salary every year. Because

⁵ Florida Association of District School Superintendents.

we recommend that the position would be added by July 31, 2002, there are no costs incurred in the first year.

By adopting this recommendation the district should improve student outcomes and enhance learning activities and opportunities for scholars by putting to work a strong district-level instructional team that is able to provide directives to teachers regarding the successful implementation of the Sunshine State Standards. In the future and as more funds become available, the district should reassess its needs to further expand the Curriculum and Instruction function (based on remainder FADSS recommendations).

Exhibit 5-35

Expanding the Curriculum and Instruction Resources Would Cost Approximately \$386,000 Over the Next Five Years

	Fiscal Year				
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual Costs	0	\$(90,900)	\$(94,500)	\$(98,300)	\$(102,300)
Cumulative Costs	0	\$(90,900)	\$(185,400)	\$(283,700)	\$(385,900)

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations.

Middle and High Schools Need to Build the Capability Necessary for the Adequate Implementation of Curricular Standards and Frameworks

While most elementary schools (20 out of 22 schools) have a Primary Program Specialist in charge of curriculum development, there is not a specific position that exercises this role in the middle and high schools. In the secondary levels, various instructional staffs perform this function. As indicated in Exhibit 5-36 however, the situation of Lake is not atypical. Santa Rosa schools also places the responsibility under the school principal and two of the six peers place the assistant principals as the lead curriculum and instruction person.

The primary function of the Primary Program Specialists assigned to each elementary school is to assist subject area teachers in meeting the state standards and benchmarks. In the district's middle and high schools the principal is the school curriculum leader that, in conjunction with other administrative instructional staff, has the responsibility for providing assistance to the subject area teachers. Five district based curriculum specialists are also available to schools in providing assistance in helping teachers learn about and implement the State Standards.

According to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, at the elementary level the Primary Specialists are doing an acceptable job in providing teachers the assistance that they need. In the middle and high schools, however, the instructional staff needed for implementation of the curriculum standards and frameworks is lacking. The school principal is primarily the instructional leader responsible for helping teachers meet the standards and benchmarks because other administrative instructional staff at the school does not have the time necessary to help teachers achieve the desired outcomes due to their many other assigned duties, the assistant principal said.

Without adequate support at the secondary school levels it is difficult for the district to do an optimal job in curriculum alignment and provide directives to teachers regarding the successful implementation of the Sunshine State Standards. The district should explore different alternatives to better support curriculum and instruction at the middle and high schools. For example, the district could maximize the

curriculum and instruction capacity of principals and/or assistant principals through effective training. This strategy is utilized and proven to be successful in Okaloosa and St. Johns school districts, where the goal is to develop principals and assistant principals to be effective instructional leaders at the secondary level. Currently there is inservice, but according to the Supervisor of Staff Development, often the participation rate is low and many school administrators do not attend. We recommend that the district consider developing a top-down directive to ensure that school administrators attend established training sessions.

Exhibit 5-36

The Individuals in Charge of Coordinating Curriculum/Instruction at the Middle and High Schools Varies Among Peer Districts

	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns	Santa Rosa
School-Level Staff That Acts As The Middle/High School Curriculum Coordinator	Principals	Assistance Principals and Guidance Counselors.	(Information Not Available to Consultant)	Assistant Principals (Assistance Principals In Charge of Curriculum)	Curriculum Resource Specialists	Curriculum Liaisons (two at each school)	Principals

Source: Telephone survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A., September 2001.

The District Would Benefit From Utilizing an Electronic Curriculum Planning/Instructional Management Tool

As mentioned earlier, the district does not have an electronic tool for curriculum planning. This type of tool allows the district and its instructional staff to link its curriculum to the Sunshine State Standards, the National Content Standards and any locally defined district or school-based standards. In addition an electronic tool lets principals and teachers monitor and report on student performance as individuals or in groups.

Approximately two years ago the district acquired and partially trained staff on the software NCS *Abacus*™. But during the second fiscal year, the district made a decision to abandon its use due to what was described by several managers during interviews as “implementation failure”. As a result this software is no longer being maintained or operated by the district’s staff and its customer support agreement has expired. Some administrators and instructional staff interview felt that this decision was premature. The district’s total costs incurred in its use were \$1,280,825 and are still licensed to use the software.

On the other hand, the state’s Department of Education also has a planning tool available: the Interdisciplinary Curriculum Planning Tool v 2.1 (CPT) that similar to NCS *Abacus*™, contains all the benchmarks for all the content areas in the appropriate grade clusters. CPT can benefit the teachers as a planning tool to support standards for the Florida System of School Improvement and Accountability, HSCT skills, connections to careers, and major learning themes. The district however, has not imparted any training on CPT.

The district needs to have an electronic curriculum planning tool in place and for this purpose, district management must evaluate different alternatives including a wide-range reassessment of its decision to

abandon NCS *Abacus*™ as its instructional management software. Further, the system should be reevaluated to determine whether it should be re-implemented on a pilot project basis. Action Plan 6-8, Chapter 6 of this report shows the steps necessary to accomplish this recommendation.

Further information on the NCS *Abacus*™ issue can be found on Chapter 6, pages 6- 34 through 6-36.

The District Would Benefit From Developing a Formal Instructional Management System That Encompasses an Electronic Planning Tool

The district is addressing many of the components of a sound management system in an unofficial manner. It would be helpful for the district to develop an Instructional Management System that would methodically guide instructional leaders responsible for curriculum development and implementation and could be applied across the district by all instructional leaders. This system would include the following specific steps:

- Is there consistency in the curriculum across the district?
- Are decisions made in a systematic way?
- Is student performance evaluated?
- Is there a schedule of implementation?
- Are specific roles and responsibilities assigned?
- Is there long range planning?
- Is the delivery of instruction monitored?
- Are decisions for improving based on verified data?

As part of establishing the Instructional Management System, the district needs to assure the written policies regarding curriculum and its evaluation are expanded to specify

- how or when the evaluations of curriculum will occur;
- specific roles and responsibilities for curriculum;
- processes for long-range planning;
- monitoring of curriculum delivery; and
- requirement for data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning.

Additionally, the management system would be supported by the use an electronic curriculum planning and instructional management tool.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district formulate specific meaningful teaching strategies for the delivery of educational service as part of the curriculum guides. By doing so the district will go a step further in the educational process and reinforce their highest priority, student learning, with attention focused on students' engagement in meaningful learning activities. As an example, the district should explore the methods of creating a unit or lesson plan data bank to share best practices (see Action Plan 5-2, Recommendation 1).*

- *We recommend that the district strengthen the PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction department by hiring additional district level curriculum staff. By realigning and expanding the department to adequate levels, the district will be able to provide appropriate curricular and instructional support to schools. Compared to other peer districts, Lake has the lowest (5 compared to an average of 18) number of district-based specialist in charge of training and assisting teachers in meeting the state standards. Because curriculum specialists are hired with soft money and job security is volatile, it is difficult to keep continuity in this position. Therefore, the district should make a financial commitment not only to hire additional instructional specialists but also make the position permanent to encourage stability and continuity.*

Additionally, ValienteHernandez P.A. concurs with the proposals made by FADSS relating to the need to realign and expand the Curriculum and Instruction department. Given the existing budgetary constraints and reductions however, we recommend that the district initially expand the Curriculum and Instruction department by two (2) Program Specialists, one to coordinate elementary school programs and support and oversee district K-5 curriculum development, another to coordinate middle school programs and support and oversee district's middle schools curriculum development. The fiscal impact of this action would be approximately \$386,000 in additional costs over the next five years.

In the future and as more funds become available, the district should reassess its needs to further expand the Curriculum and Instruction function (based on remainder FADSS recommendations, staffing comparisons (Exhibit 5-33), and staffing priorities established by school administration).

The current Program Specialist in charge of elementary, middle and high school programs would be left to coordinate and oversee district high school curriculum development and support.

- *We recommend that the district explore different alternatives to better support curriculum and instruction at the middle and high schools. One common practice is to maximize the curriculum and instruction capacity of principals and/or assistant principals through effective training. This strategy is utilized and proven to be successful in Okaloosa and St. Johns school districts, where an existing is to effectively develop principals and assistant principals to be successful instructional leaders at the middle and high schools.*

As a step necessary to accomplish the recommendation, the district should consider developing a top-down directive to ensure that school administrators attend established training sessions.

- *We recommend the district adopt an electronic curriculum planning and instructional management tool. For this purpose, district management must evaluate different alternatives including a wide-range reassessment of its decision to abandon NCS Abacus™ as its instructional management software. The system should be reevaluated to determine whether it should be re-implemented on a pilot project basis*

Action Plan 6-8, Chapter 6 of this report shows the necessary steps to implement this recommendation.

- *In line with its highest priority, the district should develop plans of action at both the district and school levels to formalize its curriculum management system to be used systematically and uniformly by all instructional leaders and staff. Immediate steps should be taken to ensure that the commitment to the instructional program would be such that systemic planning becomes a reality. Such steps must include involvement of all stakeholders in embracing a clear and compelling shared vision of schooling for the students of Lake County*

Schools, which clearly defines the instructional focus of all elementary, middle, alternative, special education, and high schools in the district:

- *how or when the evaluations of curriculum will occur;*
- *specific roles and responsibilities for curriculum;*
- *processes for long-range planning;*
- *monitoring of curriculum deliver; and*
- *requirement for data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning.*

Additionally, we recommend that as appropriate staffing levels and capacities are realized, the role of the district-level instructional team is reassessed to rightfully assume responsibility for researching curriculum trends and developments, state directions, state-of-the-art best practices, and promising instructional strategies and for disseminating this information to schools through written and verbal communication, meetings, and staff development activities. By doing so, district and staff school staff will function as a team to move the Lake County School District forward toward excellence in education for all students.

Action Plan 5-6 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 5-6

Actions to Further Improve PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Formulate specific teaching strategies.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction identify a Curriculum Committee made up of teachers and staff.</p> <p>Step 2: The committee assesses the need for curriculum development or modification to include teaching strategies.</p> <p>Step 3: Committee members draft the new curricula.</p> <p>Step 4: The assistant superintendent ensures that teachers are trained to use the new curricula.</p> <p>Step 5: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction seeks feedback from teacher so that on-going adjustments can be made.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction
Time Frame	August 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Expand the PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction department by creating two positions of Program Coordinator: one Coordinator for PK-5 Programs to support and oversee district PK-5 curriculum development, one for middle and high school programs to support and oversee district's secondary schools curriculum development.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services propose the positions and job description of Coordinator for PK-5 Programs and Coordinator for Middle and High School Programs.</p> <p>Step 2: The school board approves the position and job description.</p> <p>Step 3: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services posts the job.</p> <p>Step 4: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and the Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction interview and hire the Coordinators.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services, and Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	June 30, 2003
Fiscal Impact	\$385,900 in salary and benefits over the next five years as shown in Exhibit 5-35.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Maximize the curriculum and instruction capacity of principals and/or assistant principals through effective training with the purpose of developing principals and assistant principals to be successful instructional leaders at the middle and high schools.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of Staff Development carry out extensive research and benchmarking with peer districts to determine the type and amount of training necessary to build up curriculum and instructional skills to develop principals and assistant principals into successful instructional leaders.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of Staff Development and the Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction develop a top-down directive to ensure that school administrators attend established training sessions.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of Staff Development.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Refine and formalize a Curriculum Management Plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent assigns the responsibility for formalizing a Curriculum Management Plan to the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, with appropriate input from staff members, defines and secures approval of the roles of various stakeholders in the design and development process.</p> <p>Step 3: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction takes steps to ensure that the commitment to the instructional program would be such that systemic planning becomes a reality. Such steps must include involvement of all stakeholders in embracing a clear and compelling shared vision of schooling for the students of Lake County Schools, which clearly defines the instructional focus of all elementary, middle, alternative, special education, and high schools in the district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How or when the evaluations of curriculum will occur, • Specific roles and responsibilities for curriculum, • Processes for long-range planning, • Monitoring of curriculum delivery, and • Requirement for data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning. <p>Step 4: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction develops a plan for action at both the district and school levels to formalize the curriculum management system to be used systematically and uniformly by all instructional leaders and staff.</p> <p>Step 5: As appropriate staffing levels and capacities are realized, the role of the district-level instructional team is reassessed to rightfully assume responsibility for researching curriculum trends and developments, state directions, state-of-the-art best practices, and promising instructional strategies and for disseminating this information to schools through written and verbal communication, meetings, and staff development activities.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	December 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

7 The district has adopted a plan for the progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 that maximizes student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards and that could be further improved by strengthening the long-term effects of helping students that do not meet expectations.

The district's Pupil Progression Plan (the plan) is consistent with Florida laws. Although the plan does not specifically prohibit the use of social promotion, the published plan states on page 19 that "students who continue to score at level one on the statewide reading assessment test in grade 4 must be retained unless there is good cause" as described on page 68 of the published plan.

The Pupil Progression Plan incorporates the Sunshine State Standards and provides for the evaluation of each student performance against the standards. The plan is divided into three major sections: Elementary, Middle School and High School. The plan further establishes specific levels of performance for each grade in all subject areas.

The district's Pupil Progression Plan provides for the evaluation of students' reading level in grades 1 and 2. When students are deficient in reading the district provides intensive reading instructions and, if not remedied by grade 4, the student is retained. The district annually reports to parents their student's progress toward meeting the district's expectations, standards, and benchmarks. The district's Pupil Progression Plan further provides for accelerated graduation, and dual enrollment at post-secondary institutions. Parents are notified of these options.

Effectiveness of Activities to Remediate Students Should Be Examined

The district's Pupil Progression Plan attempts to assist all students who do not meet established expectations by providing them with intensive remediation assistance. The plan lists several school and district level programs of remediation, intervention and alternative education. Griffin Middle School provides such remediation to students who qualify and meet criterion. Education of Teen Parent Program (ETP) and GED options are also listed as remedial programs.

District staff members have indicated that although many schools have creative programs for remediation, the data is weak on the long-term effectiveness of the programs. Additionally, a majority of the surveyed believed that the remedial activity could be improved, as shown in Exhibit 5-37.

Exhibit 5-37

Survey Respondents Feel Remedial Actions Could Be Improved

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; N = respondents)		Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Teachers (N= 1761 n= 850)		The district's pupil progression plan ensures that students who do not meet established expectations receive intensive remediation.	40.6%	53.9%	5.5%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district also systematically evaluate the effectiveness of remedial programs that are now being used by district schools. When the most effective programs are identified, they should be more widely instituted.*

Action Plan 5-7 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 5-7

Enhance Existing Remedial Programs

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Systematically evaluate the long-term effects of all remedial programs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and the supervisors of Curriculum and Student Services develop a research model that collects information on the effectiveness of school based remedial plans to be used by individual schools.</p> <p>Step 2: The Supervisor of Student Services and the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction collaborate to design a mechanism to evaluate the long-term effects and impact of the existing programs of remediation, intervention and alternative education. Consultation with external sources such as peer districts is made as needed.</p> <p>Step 3: The mechanism can be focused on monitoring three or more of the following elements: test results, AIPs (Academic Improvement Plans), promotion of students from grade to grade, graduation and dropout rates.</p> <p>Step 4: Remedial programs are evaluated and when the most effective programs are identified, consideration should be given to institute effective programs more widely.</p>
Who is Responsible	Supervisor of Student Services and Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	March 31, 2003 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

8 The district's School Improvement Plans should translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives more clearly.

School Advisory Councils (SACs) Meet the Statutory Membership Requirements

School Advisory Councils assist schools in preparing and evaluating school improvement plans. State law requires all SACs to include the principal, teachers, educational support employees, students, parents, and business and community members. The variety of groups specified for SAC membership helps provide an appropriately balanced and broad-based approach to school improvement. State law also requires SACs to reflect the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school.

After conducting a needs assessment, effective councils identify long and short term goals with objectives and strategies for implementation that are aligned to the school vision. Clearly stated objectives and task-oriented strategies give the council a sense of purpose and direction which create a sense of fulfillment at the end of the school year. Each council member must be aware of his or her responsibility.

Results of a survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. indicate that most responding SAC members (84%) feel the district provides assistance in developing School Improvement Plans (SIPs), shown in Exhibit 5-38. SAC members also believe SIPs are based on analyses of student outcomes, include clear explanations of how students needs were identified, and generally contain measurable objectives and clear implementation strategies. Notably, while 79% of the SAC members responding to the survey acknowledge a follow-up procedure for implementing SIP strategies, only 54% agree that the district enforces said procedure.

The district meets the statutory requirements and has a composition review process in place to monitor the makeup of the School Advisory Councils (SACs) and assure that they meet statutory requirements as described below. One practice implemented in other school districts to further enhance SAC activity is to publicly recognize School Advisory Council. It is important that people know they are appreciated; hence, they are more willing to give of their time and continue to serve the school in this vital role.

Exhibit 5-38

Opinions from the School Advisory Councils

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
SAC members (N = 600; n = 280)	The district has developed mechanisms to ensure that SAC members are provided assistance in developing School Improvement Plans.	83.8%	8.5%	7.7%
	School Improvement Plans are based on analyses of student outcomes.	89.1%	6.1%	4.9%
	School Improvement Plans include clear explanations of how needs were identified and where the school desires to be in the future.	91.2%	6.9%	1.9%
	School Improvement Plans generally contain measurable objectives that describe desired outcomes and how outcomes will be measured.	94.2%	3.9%	1.9%

School Improvement Plans contain clear implementation strategies that identify specific actions; persons responsible for implementing actions, timelines for completing actions, and needed resources.	90.5%	5.6%	4.0%
A follow up procedure for implementing strategies is in place.	79.4%	7.3%	13.4%
The school district enforces this follow up procedure.	53.6%	16.8%	29.5%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

School Improvement Plans (SIPs) Can Be Enhanced

Every school in Florida is required to write a School Improvement Plan (SIP) stating goals, objectives and strategies designed to meet those objectives. These goals and objectives should be related, in part, to student performance data and should state how the school intends to evaluate the extent to which the goals and objectives are met. The Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) has developed criteria to review the adequacy of School Improvement Plans. Three of these criteria follow.

- Is there evidence that the SIP is based on the school's needs?
- Does the goal generally contain measurable objectives? (Are indicators of results/outcomes defined in measurable terms?)
- Does the goal generally contain clear implementation strategies (action steps)?

While most SAC members responding to the survey generally were comfortable with the quality of SIPs (Exhibit 5-38), an analysis conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. showed that there is room to further improve the process. ValienteHernandez P.A. randomly selected and analyzed the SIPs of nine (9) schools. We found that most of the documents were based on school needs assessments and while most included all the elements of an improvement plan (goals, objectives, strategies, resources, timelines, responsible persons and monitoring/evaluation procedures), many of these elements were inadequate. All SIPs analyzed included objectives but in many cases the objectives were not written in measurable terms or presented solid rationale for the chosen targets. For example, one objective was "To improve Math skills at all grades levels as measured on FCAT Math", which lacks specificity. An example of lack of rationale for chosen targets is "Fifty percent of students will score Level 3 and above on FCAT Math".

The weakest area found however, related to the SIPs implementation strategies. Only one of the nine documents analyzed (Tavares High) presented adequate implementation strategies. Exhibit 5-39 illustrates the analysis of the school improvement plans.

Exhibit 5-39**Analysis of SIPs Indicates That There Is Room for Improvement**

School	Criterion		
	The SIP is Based on School Needs	The SIP Contains Measurable Objectives	The SIP Contains Clear Implementation Strategies
Clermont Elementary	Criterion met.	Criterion partially met. Most objectives are written in measurable terms.	Criterion partially met. While some strategies are vague, most show enough detail. Timelines and resources are mostly clear. No individual strategy has a responsible person assigned to it. No clear plan on how student overall performance will be measured.
Eustis Heights Elementary	Criterion met.	Criterion met; however, no rationale for the percentages selected was mentioned.	Criterion not met. Strategies are too broad. Most of the strategies are simply a list of programs. No individual strategy has a responsible person assigned to it. Evaluation methods identified however do not contain sufficient detail.
Minneola Elementary	Criterion met.	Criterion met.	Criterion partially met. Clear, user-friendly format; well-written strategies; however, evaluation methods are vague.
Rimes Elementary	Criterion met.	Criterion partially met. Most objectives are not written in measurable terms.	Criterion partially met. Excellent, user-friendly format; well-written strategies. Each strategy has a responsible person assigned. Most of the evaluation methods are adequate; monitoring procedures however, should contain more detail.
Seminole Springs Elementary	Criterion met.	Criterion met; however, no rationale for the percentages selected was mentioned.	Criterion partially met. Strategies are notably numerous and well-written. No individual strategy has a responsible person assigned to it. Most of the evaluation methods are adequate.
Carver Middle	Criterion met.	Criterion met; however, no rationale for the percentages selected was mentioned.	Criterion partially met. Clear, user-friendly format. Most strategies are well-written. No individual strategy has a responsible person assigned to it. Most evaluation methods are adequate.
Tavares Middle	Criterion met.	Criterion met.	Criterion met. Strategies are well written and detailed. User-friendly format. Timelines nicely emphasize

School	Criterion		
	The SIP is Based on School Needs	The SIP Contains Measurable Objectives	The SIP Contains Clear Implementation Strategies
			implementation in certain months. Accomplishment of individual strategies should be assigned a responsible person. Excellent evaluation methods.
Eustis High	Criterion met.	Criterion partially met. Several objectives are not written in measurable terms and no rationale for selected targets was mentioned.	Criterion partially met. Most strategies are well-written and detailed. Individual strategies are not assigned a responsible person. Several evaluation methods are not sufficiently clear.
Mount Dora High	Criterion met.	Criterion partially met. Several objectives are not written in measurable terms and no rationale for selected targets was mentioned.	Criterion partially met. Strategies are numerous; however, they are well-written and detailed. Individual strategies are not assigned a responsible person. Evaluation documents/methods are identified but do not present sufficient clarity.

Source: ValienteHernandez, P.A. analysis of school improvement plans.

Another improvement that can be made is that the district strengthens the SACs reporting progress towards implementing strategies and meeting SIP goals. Seventeen percent (17%) of responding SAC members disagreed with the statement “The school district enforces this procedure (for implementing SIP strategies)” and 30% said they did not know, as shown in Exhibit 5-38. These results suggest that there is not enough clarity of the results evaluation process. Moreover, the district should consider linking the results of the SIP as part of the annual evaluation of school principals (refer to Action Plan 5-1, Recommendation 1 for further detail).

Additionally, future SIPs should incorporate the PACE Plan under Educational Goal No. 3 (refer to Action Plan 5-1 Recommendation 1, for further detail). Also, a section should be added where from year to year, it is explained what or how much was accomplished from the previous year.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish a district-wide commitment to publicly recognize School Advisory Council members each year for their services and to encourage them to continue serving the district in this vital role. An inexpensive method that could be used is a Certificate of Appreciation for Service.*
- *We recommend the district provide training to SAC members with the purpose of producing more adequate and meaningful School Improvement Plans.*
- *We recommend the district further strengthen the evaluation and accountability component of the School Improvement Plans. In addition to the review of results at the end of each*

school year, the district should establish a mechanism to continually evaluate SIPs to determine whether progress is being made towards the accomplishment of the goals. As a prior step, we recommend that the PACE Plan be formally incorporated in the SIP under Educational Goal No. 3 (refer to Action Plan 5-1, Recommendation 1 for further detail on this step). Moreover, we recommend the district consider linking the results of the SIP as part of the annual evaluation of school principals (also refer to Action Plan 5-1, Recommendation 1 for further detail).

To the extent possible, we recommend that School Improvement Plans should be consistently presented in a clear format that facilitates follow up and evaluation of results. Additionally, a section should be added where from year to year, it is explained what or how much was accomplished from the previous year.

Action Plan 5-8 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 5-8

Actions to Enhance the School Improvement Plan Process

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish a district wide commitment to recognize School Advisory Council members each year.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction with input from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability and school principals (refer to Action Plan 3-4 Recommendation 2) devises a mechanism to recognize the members of the district's SAC members each year. One of the inexpensive methods that could be used is a Certificate of Appreciation for Service.</p> <p>Step 2: One or more methods is implemented.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	The cost of printed certificates is immaterial.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Provide training to SAC members with the purpose of producing more adequate and meaningful School Improvement Plans.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, the office of Staff Development and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability develop a training program focused on performance measurement directed towards SAC members in charge of developing the School Improvement Plans. The purpose of the program is to deliver the basic concepts of goals, objectives, strategies and performance. As a result, future SIPs will contain short term and long term objectives and strategies that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are Measurable and quantifiable; • easy to understand; • specific; • reasonable; • are clear about the data needed to assess progress; • show reasonable deadlines; • clearly identify all the resources needed; and • indicate the performance outcome (result) or improvement desired.
Who Is Responsible	The Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, the office of Staff Development and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability
Time Frame	May 31, 2001 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Further strengthen the evaluation and accountability component of the School Improvement Plan process.
Action Needed:	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction in collaboration with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability establish the procedure needed to formally incorporate the PACE Plan onto the School Improvement Plan under Educational Goal No. 3.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction in collaboration with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability establish a mechanism to continually evaluate SIPs to determine whether progress is being made towards the accomplishment of the goals.</p> <p>Step 3: The SIP should have an additional section where from year to year, it is explained what or how much was accomplished from the previous year.</p> <p>Step 4: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services discuss the feasibility and the steps necessary to link the accomplishments or results of the SIP as part of the annual evaluation of school principals.</p> <p>Step 5: All changes are formalized, submitted to the Superintendent and subsequently to the school board for approval.</p>
Who is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction in collaboration with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	October 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Acquisition, Replacement and Disposal of Instructional Materials —

Goal B: Through cost-effective acquisition, replacement, and disposal procedures, the district ensures that all students and teachers have current instructional materials that meet the needs of teachers and students.

9 The district's process for selecting instructional materials ensures that instructional materials meet the needs of teachers and students.

The District Has a Detailed Plan in Place That Assures Adoption and Purchase of Instructional Materials Are in Accordance With Florida Law

The district's process for selecting instructional materials ensures that students' and teachers' needs are appropriately met. This process is described in the administrator handbook section on purchasing information.

All instructional materials purchased by the Lake County School District have met all the provisions of the Sunshine State Standards. The district adheres strictly to the requirement that all materials purchased are listed in the state adoption schedule.

In line with state law, the district developed and approved the *Lake County Instructional Materials Plan* with the purpose of aligning the operation with Ch.233, *Florida Statutes*, expediting the adoption of instructional materials and ensuring the effective use of funds. The plan is summarized below.

- The Supervisor of Instructional Materials/Media and Staff Development (herein "the Instructional Materials Supervisor") receives a list of state-recommended materials and proceeds to arrange committees to review materials and recommend adoptions for local use.
- Curriculum staff reviews the materials selected by the committees to assure they meet state guidelines and reports to the Instructional Materials Supervisor areas that may be controversial.
- Once the list is finalized, the Instructional Materials Supervisor recommends the materials to the Superintendent who in turn submits to the school board for approval. At this point, the school or district committee proceeds to order the materials.
- School principals receive the list of adopted materials, requests the materials and submits the order to the Instructional Materials Supervisor.
- The Instructional Materials Supervisor compiles the requests of all schools, considers availability of funds, and places the order. Materials are received at a central warehouse and then distributed to the schools. Detailed procedures exist at the school and district level to dispose of surplus or outdated instructional materials.

The district clearly identifies the flexibility schools have to make decisions regarding instructional materials. Under the authority of s. 229.592(9), *Florida Statutes*, there is a waiver process in place by which schools can request a waiver from these procedures. Currently, nine schools have a waiver for instructional materials.

The Textbook Managers' Manual and purchase order records on file in the Learning Resource Center (LCR) office validate that the district annually budgets for the cost of replenishing instructional materials and consumables.

10 Each student has current, appropriate instructional materials in core courses that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards and the district's pupil progression plan. However the district should seek feedback from different stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of instructional materials.

The District Involves Teachers and Other Stakeholders in the Review and Selection of Instructional Materials

As described earlier, the procedures contained in the *Lake County Instructional Materials Plan* assure that all students have current state-adopted textbooks and other appropriate current instructional materials in core courses. This procedure is activated each year and it starts at the state level through the Department of Education. The district requires that all reviews and the selection of instructional materials involve teachers and all other appropriate stakeholders. This is accomplished to a great extent through the committees appointed to review and recommend adoptions for local use and supported by school board policies. The committees selecting textbooks must include at least three members, two of which must be classroom teachers of three years experience who are actively teaching in the subject area. Larger committees selecting basal texts in major subject areas of reading and mathematics must have at least one lay citizen. One-half of each district committee must be composed of teachers who must be currently teaching and certified to teach in the subject area being reviewed.

A survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2000 confirmed that the existing process for adopting instructional materials captures the input from teachers and other stakeholders. The survey results also pointed out that principals, teacher and School Advisory Council members feel the district should seek feedback as to the usefulness of the adopted instructional materials more formally. For example, approximately two-thirds of teachers indicated that the district does not adequately obtain formal feedback on the usefulness of instructional materials, use feedback in future purchasing decisions or seek our suggestions on how to decrease instructional materials costs. See Exhibit 5-40.

The district should establish a procedure to seek formal feedback especially from teachers and principals as to the usefulness of the instructional materials adopted locally and use this feedback in future decisions. Discontinuing the purchase of materials that teachers indicate are not useful has the potential to save district money. In addition, using teacher feedback should enable the district to make better decision on which instructional materials to purchase. Additionally, the district should increase the awareness of existing flexibility regarding the acquisition and use of instructional materials. As mentioned earlier, there is a process in place by which schools can request a waiver from the adoption of instructional materials. Increased flexibility is important because it helps schools in their efforts to raise student achievement by providing the opportunity to customize instruction and resources according to specific needs.

Exhibit 5-40**Survey Results on Instructional Materials**

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; s = sample size; n=respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Principal (N= 84; n= 52)	The district's process for reviewing and selecting instructional materials involves teachers and other appropriate stakeholders.	96.1%	3.9%	0.0%
	The district has clearly identified the flexibility schools have to make decisions regarding instructional materials.	79.1%	20.9%	0.0%
	The district formally obtains feedback from teachers and principals as to the usefulness of instructional materials and uses this information in making future decisions on instructional materials.	74.4%	23.3%	2.3%
Teachers (N= 1761; n= 850)	The district involves teachers in the procedure for reviewing and selecting instructional materials.	64.3%	31.7%	4.0%
	The district has clearly identified the flexibility schools have to make decisions regarding instructional materials.	37.3%	48.5%	14.3%
	The district formally obtains feedback from teachers and principals as to the usefulness of instructional materials.	28.0%	62.0%	9.9%
	The district uses this feedback in future decisions on instructional materials.	17.0%	60.2%	22.8%
	The district obtains suggestions on how to decrease the costs associated with instructional material purchases and implements practical suggestions.	12.9%	65.7%	21.4%
	The district has a policy governing what students and their parents will be charged for lost, damaged, or unreturned instructional materials.	73.9%	9.2%	17.0%
	The policy regarding lost, damaged, or unreturned instructional materials is enforced.	54.1%	25.3%	20.7%

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; s = sample size; n=respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
SAC (N= 600; n= 280)	The district involves the Student Advisory Council in the procedure for reviewing and selecting instructional materials.	44.4%	34.6%	20.9%
	The district has clearly identified the flexibility schools have to make decisions regarding instructional materials.	55.0%	30.0%	15.0%
Parents (N= 485; n= 264)	The district has a policy governing what parents will be charged for lost or damaged instructional materials.	54.9%	2.9%	42.2%
	The district enforces the lost or damaged instructional materials policy energetically.	39.2%	6.0%	54.8%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district formally obtain feedback from teachers and principals as to the usefulness of instructional materials and use this feedback in future decisions on instructional materials.*
- *We recommend that the district increase the awareness of existing flexibility regarding the acquisition and use of instructional materials.*

Action Plan 5-9 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 5-9**Obtain Feedback as to The Usefulness of Instructional Materials**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Formally obtain feedback from teachers and principals as to the usefulness of instructional materials
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of Instructional Materials and the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction establish a procedure to seek feedback on effectiveness the adopted instructional materials through a survey. The survey should also seek out opinions on how to decrease instructional materials costs.</p> <p>Step 2: A sample of teachers using the selected materials is chosen to participate in the survey.</p> <p>Step 3: Results of the satisfaction with the materials are compiled, analyzed and formally provided to district instructional materials committees to be used in future adoptions.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of Instructional Materials and the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	February 28, 2002 and ongoing or within one or two years prior to the adoption.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Increase awareness on the instructional materials waiver process.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of Instructional Materials and the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction choose the most effective way to inform teachers of the flexibility they have to select and use instructional materials beyond the district's adoptions.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of Instructional Materials and the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

11

The district has procedures for acquiring, maintaining, and disposing of instructional materials. However, the district could further improve by raising general consciousness to preserve books.

The District Has a Detailed Process in Place to Dispose of Materials That Are No Longer Useful

According to district procedures, when the new materials are delivered to each school, it is the responsibility of the school administrator to exchange all outdated materials for the new ones. The *Textbook Manager's Handbook* explains in detail the steps necessary for disposal of materials. For any outdated materials remaining in the school, the principal has to justify the reasons in writing but under no circumstances shall the principal allow outdated materials to the basal adoption. According to Step 15 of the Instructional Plan cites that instructional materials that are unserviceable, surplus or no longer on state contract will be returned to the central warehouse where they will be disposed according to Ch. 233.37, *Florida Statutes*. The district does not sell but trades instructional materials that are no longer useful. The district's main book distributor offers the option of trading surplus books for a credit toward future purchases of used textbooks and other instructional materials.

In the past, the district's practice has been to post moneys received for the sale, recycling, loss, damage, or unreturned instructional materials as an expense abatement which has the practical effect of adding to the appropriation for instructional materials. The district provided documentation that demonstrated that the collections being receipted are posted as expense abatement under the instructional materials project number. For the 2001-02 fiscal year, accounting changes have been made that will better and more clearly reflect that said collections are posted to the appropriation for instructional materials.

The District Could Substantially Increase Collection for Lost or Damaged Books

The school district has a policy in place that rules what students and their parents will be charged for lost, damaged, or unreturned instructional materials. Item four (4) of school board policy 4.23 stipulates:

A student who loses or damages a book beyond normal usage shall be assessed the cost for replacing the damaged or lost book. This payment schedule shall pertain to lost or damaged books:

"A" Condition (new) – full price

"B" Condition (less than two years in use) – 75% of list price

"C" Condition (more than two years in use) – 60% of list price

"D" Condition (more than four years in use) – 20% of list price

This payment schedule demonstrates that the money collected for lost, damaged or unreturned instructional materials represents an appropriate value of the loss or the damage.

An analysis of the current annual textbook inventory report and the documentation regarding annual credits to the district's textbook account indicated that there are too many books that are lost and/or damaged and that the district is only recuperating a little over 10% of the loss. For the school year 2000-01,

\$17,425 dollars was collected from lost and damaged books whereas the total textbook loss to the district was over \$150,000 for the same period.

The amounts reimbursed by the schools are far from the actual number of lost and damaged books declared through inventory. For example, Leesburg High paid \$3,000 in lost and damaged books which would equal about 60 books (\$3,000 divided by an average of \$50 per book); the inventory however, unaccountably shows that Leesburg High claimed a total of 855 of lost and damaged for the same period. The actual textbook loss of Leesburg High was calculated as \$39,750.

The district should explore different options to increase awareness among students, parents, and teachers of the value of textbooks and the importance of preserving instructional materials for future users. In addition, the district should consider alternatives to strengthen accountability at the school level for lost and damaged books. Assuming the district could recuperate 75% of the lost and damaged books as a result of effective communication and increased accountability, the district could receive at least \$95,000 (75% times \$150,000 minus \$17,400) in additional revenue annually.

The District Needs to Improve the Process It Uses to Obtain Suggestions on Decreasing Materials' Costs

The district has mechanisms in place to obtain suggestions on how to decrease the costs associated with instructional material purchases and implements practical suggestions. For example, the Supervisor of Instructional Materials recently met with school principals and determined that for school based management purposes, it is more cost-effective to order materials centrally than school based, thus taking advantage of bulk order rates, discounts and bonuses. The Supervisor of Instructional Materials also meets frequently with other district's Instructional Materials supervisors and directors, with the district's Warehouse Supervisor and with purchasing agents to discuss and look for most cost-effective practices. However, as stated in the previous finding, the district should do more to include teacher feedback on the usefulness of instructional materials and suggestions on how to decrease instructional materials costs.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district explore new options to increase awareness among students, parents, and teachers of the value of textbooks and the importance of preserving instructional materials for users to come. In addition, the district should consider alternatives to strengthen accountability at the school level for lost and damaged books.*

Action Plan 5-10 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 5-10**Actions to Improve Protection and Disposal of Instructional Materials**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Explore new options to increase awareness among students, parents, and school-based staff of the value of textbooks and the importance of preserving instructional materials for future users. Consider alternatives to strengthen accountability at the school level for lost and damaged books.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of Instructional Materials seek input from the Leadership Team as to options to raise consciousness among students, parents, and instructional staff to preserve textbooks and other instructional materials.</p> <p>Step 2: The group also discusses different alternatives to increase school accountability for lost and damaged books.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Instructional Materials and Leadership Team.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	At least one-time additional revenue of \$95,000, setting a target to recuperate 75% of the lost and damaged books (75% times \$150,000 minus \$17,400). Assumes that the number of lost or damages books will substantially decrease as a result of the increased awareness. Therefore, no additional direct savings will accrue after the first year.

Analysis of Performance Data and Evaluation of Educational Programs

Goal C: **The district ensures accountability to its constituents by analyzing performance data and by evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of its major educational programs.**

12 **The district needs to implement accountability mechanisms to ensure the overall performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its major educational programs.⁶**

Increased Evaluation of Specific Educational Programs Is Needed

Although the district has made some effort to evaluate the overall effectiveness of its education programs and to evaluate the effectiveness of individual schools through the school improvement planning process, there are many opportunities for improvement. Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

- while the district has stated goals that address the major aspects of each major educational program, it needs to refine the related objectives and strategies;
- the district does not use appropriate performance measures and benchmarks for evaluating the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of its educational programs and uses these to make management decisions;
- the district has not implemented a schedule to formally evaluate major educational programs using regular assessments, legal requirements, and other reasonable criteria as factors in selecting programs for evaluation; and
- the district has not implemented strategies to assess the reliability of program performance and cost data for its major educational programs.

Detailed recommendations to address the above-mentioned disadvantages and improve the evaluation procedures for the educational programs are presented in Action Plans 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4 and 4-5, Chapter 4.

⁶ This issue is the focus of Chapter 4, Performance Accountability, where it is discussed in more detail. The reader should refer to Chapter 4 for a more extensive assessment of the overall performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its major educational programs.

13

The district regularly reviews the organizational structure and the staffing of the central office and schools to minimize administrative layers and processes. However the district's staffing formula has been repeatedly circumvented in the past.⁷

The district has clear procedures for the allocation of instructional and administrative staff and is in the process of developing formulas for the support staff. Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that

- the new administration has committed to regularly review the central office's organizational structure and staffing levels for its education programs to minimize administrative layers;
- analyses of the organizational structure and staffing levels indicated that the number of district level staff is inadequate compared to benchmarks;
- the district reports organizational structure and administrative staffing review findings to school board members;
- the district implements changes to the program's organizational structure and staffing levels and processes when necessary and as budget allows; and
- formal organizational charts at the departmental level need to be updated.

Detailed recommendations and action plans to address the above-mentioned disadvantages and improve the organizational structure and staffing levels are presented in Action Plans 3-2, 3-4, and 3-5, Chapter 3.

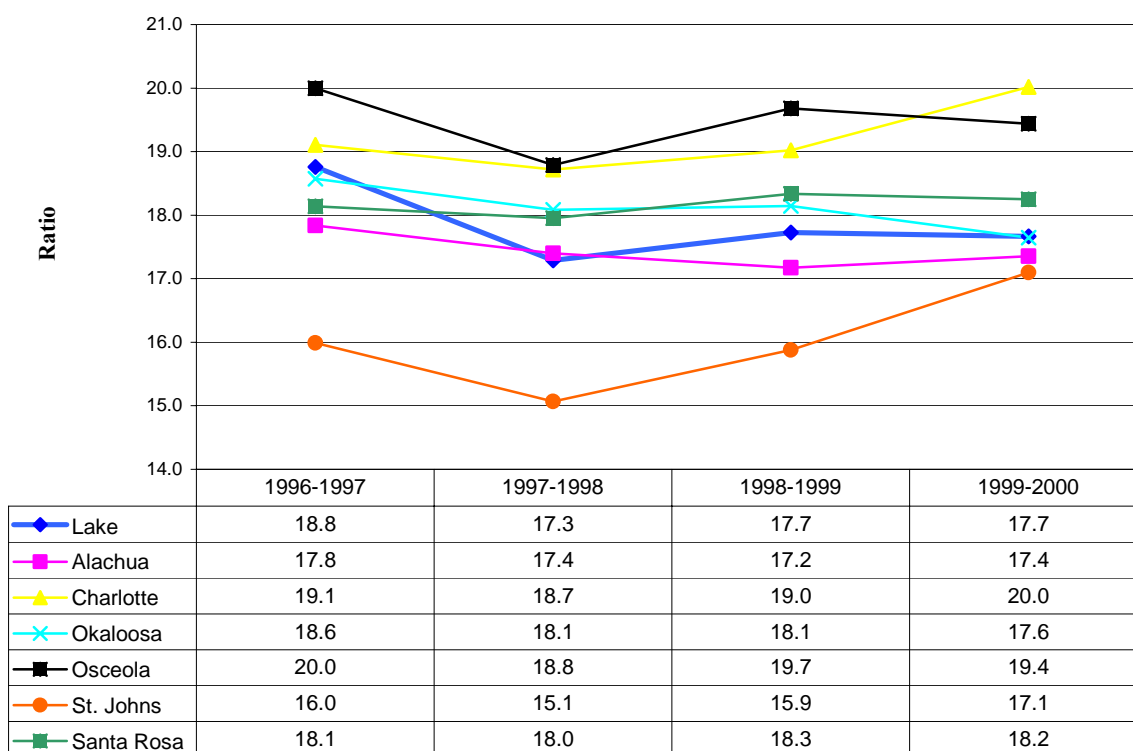
Reductions And Increases in School Staffing Levels Reflect Enrollment Changes, and Teacher/Pupil Ratios Are Comparable With Peer Districts

An analysis of the student to teacher ratios for four consecutive years conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. indicates that the district's staffing levels has generally been in agreement with changes in student membership. Additionally, the district's ratio has remained in line with that of its peers over the same period. As shown in Exhibit 5-41, for the year 1999-2000, Lake had the fourth lowest ratio of total K-12 students to total classroom teachers (17.3 students to one teacher). The peer average for that same period was 18.3 to 1.

⁷ This issue practice is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Management Structures. The reader should refer to Chapter 3 for a more extensive assessment of the district's efforts to review the organizational structure and the staffing of the central office and schools to minimize administrative layers and processes.

Exhibit 5-41

Lake Teacher/Pupil Ratios Have Been Consistent Over the Last Four Years



Source: Florida Department of Education, Profiles of Florida School Districts.

Lake County's School Staffing Levels Are in Line With Peer Districts

ValienteHernandez P.A. conducted a comparison of Lake County against its peer districts based on different staffing ratios as reflected in Exhibit 5-42 and generally found that school staffing ratios were within peer district average. In brief, Lake County has:

- 1 classroom teacher for every 18 students;
- 1 teacher aide for every 5 classroom teachers;
- 1 guidance counselor for every 361 students; and
- 1 school level administrator for every 294 students.

Exhibit 5-42**Lake County's School-Level Staffing Ratios Are Consistent With Those of Its Peers**

District Ratios	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns	Santa Rosa
Classroom Teachers to Students	1:18	1:17	1:20	1:18	1:19	1:17	1:18
Teachers Aides to Classroom Teachers	1:5	1:4	1:3	1:4	1:3	1:4	1:5
Guidance Counselors to Students	1:361	1:404	1:465	1:451	1:462	1:389	1:445
School-Level Administrators to Students	1:294	1:388	1:390	1:473	1:462	1:334	1:377
Total Number of Classroom Teachers	1,616	1,723	837	1,714	1,640	1,114	1,218
Total Student Membership	28,544	29,906	16,753	30,248	31,877	19,046	22,226
Total Aides	347	400	321	445	596	264	262
Total Guidance Counselors	79	74	36	67	69	49	50

¹ The *classroom teachers* group includes classroom teachers such as elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, exceptional student education teachers, and other instructional staff. DOE defines *other instructional staff* as full-time teachers who cannot be easily classified in the elementary or secondary classroom teacher categories. This category includes full-time, permanent substitute teachers, and adult education instructors.

Note: ValienteHernandez P.A. rounded the calculations of the different ratios to the nearest whole number.

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. and DOE Profiles of Florida School Districts 1999-2000 (Survey 2 demographic data, October 11-15, 1999, as of January 25, 2000). Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services.

14 The district does not clearly report on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers.⁸

While the district provides performance data of individual schools to the public as required by Florida law (*School Improvement Plan* and *School Accountability Report*), it should provide additional information on the performance and cost of major educational programs. Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

- The district could improve by publicly reporting on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational programs. This information should be presented through timely reports to school advisory councils, parents, and other taxpayers in a manner that is clear and understandable and does not require undue assistance to interpret its meaning or significance.
- The district can improve by providing more means to receive and respond to feedback from parents and other taxpayers as an avenue of accountability to improve poor performance and inefficiency.

Detailed recommendations and actions plans to address the above-mentioned weaknesses and improve the evaluation procedures for the educational programs are presented in Action Plan 4-5, Chapter 4.

Library, Media and Support Services

Goal D: The district provides library media and student support services that are effective and efficient in meeting the needs of its students.

15 The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction. The district can improve by expanding the library services at all schools to be accessible at all times.

The district demonstrated that school libraries and/or media centers have sufficient up-to-date resource materials to support school instructional needs. The district periodically reviews library and media services to ensure that resource materials are accessible to all students and represent current research. The district uses some informal procedures to reduce library and media costs such as coordinating orders to take advantage of bulk discounts. Also, instructional materials' budget shows items acquired through a district license, which presents a better rate.

⁸ This issue is the focus of Chapter 4, Performance Accountability where it is discussed in more detail. The reader should refer to Chapter 4 for an extensive assessment of the overall performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its major educational programs.

The primary objective of the libraries and media educational centers is to implement, enrich, and support the educational programs of the school. In the district, the media centers make available a wide range of materials that take into consideration the diverse interests, skills and age level of the students served, and are representative of the many ethnic, religious and cultural groups.

The district also has detailed criteria and standard operating procedures in place for the selection of educational media materials in line with Florida Statutes. In selecting media materials, the media specialist must consult among others, with reputable publishing companies, faculty, students and the media committee appointed by the school principal. Operation of the media centers is supported by School Board Policy 4.22.

All Media Centers in the District Are Automated

All the media centers in the district are automated and frequent in-service is provided through staff development to keep media specialists up to date in technology. A technology supervisor meets regularly with media specialists to discuss and address technology issues. On average, the district has 13.4 modem computers for each media center, which is the second highest ratio when compared to the peer districts as shown in Exhibit 5-43.

Exhibit 5-43

Lake County Has the Second Highest Average Number of Computers When Compared to the Peer Districts.

District	Number of Media Centers	Connected to Internet?	Number of Modem Computers in Media Centers ¹	Average Number of Modem Computers by Media Center
Lake	41	Yes	551	13.4
Alachua	37	Yes	248	6.7
Charlotte	20	Yes	196	9.8
Okaloosa	36	Yes	447	12.4
Osceola	29	Yes	473	16.3
St. Johns	27	Yes	310	11.5
Santa Rosa	34	Yes	344	10.1

¹ Modems are Pentium 266 or greater, or Apple McKintosh G3 or G4.

Source: Department of Education, 2000 Education Digest and ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations.

The District Can Improve by Expanding Operating Hours the Library Services at All Schools

Survey results on media center issues reflected an effective operation with the exception of the operating hours. As shown in Exhibit 5-44, 55% of the students responding to the survey disagreed with the statement "My media center and library is opened at all times during the school day". In the district, a school media specialist operates libraries and media centers. In the elementary schools, however, the media specialist is a teacher that is assigned classes and as a result, the media center is closed to the rest of the student population during those periods of time.

We recommend the district explore different options to make a person available at media centers to check out books and keep the media centers operative at all times. Options could include more extensive use of volunteers.

Exhibit 5-44

Survey Results on Views of the Libraries and Media Centers

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. Size n=respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Principals N= 84; n= 52	The district's library or media centers support instructional programs effectively and efficiently.	91.5%	8.5%	0.0%
SAC members (N = 600; n = 280)	(Same as above)	75.3%	11.9%	12.8%
Teachers N= 1761; n= 850	(Same as above)	77.7%	19.0%	3.3%
Students (N= 505; n= 373)	My media center and library is opened at all times during the school day.	41.9%	54.9%	3.2%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district evaluate different alternatives to have a person available at media centers to check out books and keep the media centers operative at all times. Possibilities could include more extensive use of volunteers.*

Action Plan 5-10 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 5-10**Evaluate Alternatives to Increase the Media Centers Hours of Operation**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Ensure that media centers are in operation during regular school hours.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of Instructional Materials seek input and evaluate different alternatives to keep media centers operative during regular school hours. Consultation with peer or adjoining districts is recommended; use of volunteer force should also be considered.
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of Instructional Materials.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

16

The district provides necessary support services (guidance counseling, psychological, social work, and health) to meet the needs of its students in a cost-efficient manner.

Student support services in the district are provided under the Student Services department. The main functions carried out by the department are Attendance Services, Psychological Services, Social Work Services, Guidance Services, School Health Services, and Home Education. The department is also in charge of preparing the district's Pupil Progression Plan. At this level, the functions and responsibilities held by the department are typical when compared to those of the peer districts shown in Exhibit 5-45. The list of functions presented in the exhibit however is not all-inclusive. In addition to the listed functions, the Student Services department in Lake County is also in charge of student records, s. 504 of the American with Disabilities Act, Underage Waiver for GED, and takes stock in the Children Scholarship Program.

Health services are offered in cooperation with the Lake County Health Department. Central Florida Health Care Development Foundation Grant from Leesburg Regional Medical Center provides funding for six school-based registered nurses in their service area. Lake County Public Health Department contracts full service funds to the school district for five school-based licensed practical nurses. Student Services contracts with the Health Department for vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening. Jeppesen VisionQuest, Inc., provides free eye exams and glasses for students that fail vision screening.

Comprehensive social services are provided by eight school social workers to 42 schools (3 of which are center/alternative schools). Job assignments are made primarily by geographic area. Work calendars are submitted on a monthly basis with a weekly schedule of school visitations. For the center/alternative schools, the assigned school social worker provides all on-site services and distributes the referrals requiring home visits to the School Social Worker who serves the geographic area in which the student lives.

The district's Dropout Prevention program was reduced after August 2000. Mainly, the Drop Out Prevention (DOP) program lost its weighted funding at the state level thus many of the district's dropout prevention programs were discontinued, significantly reduced or modified. Additionally, prior to the

1999-2000 school year procedures were in place to track and monitor students who have dropped out of school and with the changing role of the Career Specialist these procedures have become inefficient and ineffective.

Presently, Student Services is looking at ways to carry out procedures in a more effective manner, by streamlining the process using technology to provide a better tracking system. In addition to this, the district should carry out a thorough re-evaluation of the Dropout Prevention program. Action Plan 15-4, Chapter 15 presents the steps necessary to carry out this recommendation.

Exhibit 5-45

Selected Functions of the Student Services Department

Student Services Delivered	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns	Santa Rosa
Attendance Services	X		X	X	No Response	X	No Response
Code of Student Conduct		X	X	X	No Response	X	No Response
Psychological Services	X			X	No Response		No Response
Social Work Services	X		X	X	No Response	X	No Response
Dropout Prevention				X	No Response		No Response
Expulsions		X	X	X	No Response	X	No Response
Guidance Services	X	X	X	X	No Response	X	No Response
School Health Services	X	X	X	X	No Response	X	No Response
Safe and Drug Free Schools				X	No Response	X	No Response
Emergency Management		X	X	X	No Response		No Response
Testing		X		X	No Response	X	No Response
Home Education	X	X			No Response	X	No Response
Pupil Progression Plan	X			X	No Response		No Response

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. telephone survey July 2001.

The District Could Improve Its Process for Ensuring Student Support Services Are Cost-Efficient and Effective

The administration of the district's student services is generally well planned and organized. The plan for the provision of services is based upon assessment of needs. When evaluating students' needs the Student Services department considers many factors such as graduation rates, attendance, early leaver rates, college placement test scores, graduate follow up data, and placement/ promotion data. The evaluation of these factors is used to determine areas of strengths and weaknesses. District-wide meetings, at least five

times a year, with school principals and guidance counselors provide valuable information, which is also considered when developing programs and procedures.

Planning of services also includes the identification of, and coordination with, community agencies and programs. The following cooperative agreements are currently in place: Lifestream, for mental health counseling; Arnette House, a provider of Children in Need of Services (CINS) and Families in Need of Services (FINS); Dual Enrollment agreements with Lake Sumter Community College, Lake Technical Center, and Adult Education; and a cooperative truancy plan, cooperatively administered with the States Attorney Office, County Judge, Juvenile Justice and local law enforcement.

The department also takes specific actions to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery of student support services. Evaluation of effective services are monitored through dialog at district-wide meetings with principals and guidance counselors at least five times a year, the Annual Accountability of Services Form for Psychologists and Social Workers, and results of related Department of Education reports. The results of the evaluations are used to make improvements. All analysis of data is shared with all stakeholders who in return are encouraged to use data in the school improvement process.

The district has the capacity to monitor expenditures for selected program. Information provided by the department indicated the per-pupil cost for psychological and social work services are currently \$22.25 and \$8.92 respectively. District staff indicate they often review staffing and compare staffing levels against state and national benchmarks. To further improve the efficient use of resources, the district should formally compare expenditures and staffing levels to comparable districts, to state or national benchmarks and/or to benchmarks of national professional associations on a regular basis, and present the results to the school board. This formal assessment will better ensure that student support services are both effective and efficient.

The Ratio Of Students To Guidance Counselors In Lake Is Adequate

An analysis by ValienteHernandez P.A. based on the last comparable data available indicated that for the school year 1999-2000, the ratio of students to guidance counselors in the district compared favorably against peer districts for the school year 1999-2000, as shown in Exhibit 5-46. Lake had the lowest ratio (357 to 1) when compared to both the state (438 to 1) and the peer district average (459 to 1).

Exhibit 5-46

Ratio of Guidance Counselors to Student of the District Compares Favorably Against Peers and State for the 1999-2000 School Year

District	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St Johns	Santa Rosa	State
Guidance to Students	1:357	1:399	1:493	1:504	1:469	1:473	1:414	1:438

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts 1999-2000. Full-Time Staff by Activity Assignment. Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services, Florida Department of Education.

A Large Number of District Constituents Believe That the Assessment and Placement of ESE Students Is Not Timely

Results of a survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. indicated that different constituents believe teachers and other student services support staff are well trained to identify students with special needs.

Many school administrators however, expressed that the process of assessment and placement of students with special needs takes too long. Exhibit 5-47 shows that most responding principals (60%) and teachers (77%) believe that the assessment and placement of ESE (Exceptional Student Education) students is not timely. Forty-eight percent (48%) of teachers also feel there is room to improve the effectiveness of Student Services in meeting the needs of its students.

Assessment and placement of ESE students are two different components of a process that occurs in three steps (pre-referral; referral and assessment; and eligibility determination and placement) that involves two departments: ESE and Student Services. The constituents, however, view the two components as one and the district needs to take steps to better the constituents' perception and understanding of the process as a whole. According to the Student Services Supervisor from the beginning to the end, the process usually takes over six to eight weeks and no placement should take more than six months. Also, an analysis of the backlog of student assessments in the Student Services department was found to be reasonable at the time of this review.

The Lake County School District has a set of procedures in place for the different phases steps (pre-referral; referral and assessment; and eligibility determination and placement) of the process. The process begins with the teacher determining that a student is experiencing difficulty in the regular education classroom. For example, the student is

- functioning below ability level;
- manifesting a behavior detrimental to his/her own or others learning;
- functioning above grade level and needs stimulation or challenge beyond those provided in the regular education curriculum; or
- displaying problems that may be medically linked.

Each school has a Student Intervention Team (SIT) that meets on a regular basis to review available data on students and makes recommendations to meet student's needs. The SIT process is coordinated by the department of Student Services and ESE is typically not involved, unless requested. The intervention team may consist of an administrator, guidance counselor, school psychologist, mainstream consultant, ESE teacher(s), speech/language pathologist, and others as needed.

During the pre-referral phase the SIT members conduct observations to gather information and document evidence of the student's academic difficulty. Next, the School Intervention Team meets with the student's parents and develops and initiates interventions in the regular classroom. After interventions have been implemented, SIT members have a follow-up conference during which the intervention and their successes or failures are reviewed. If the problem is resolved no further action is taken. However, if the problem persists the SIT members refer students for psycho-educational evaluation. After evaluation, the staffing committee meets with the parents to determine appropriate education services and programs available for the student.

The district will benefit by carrying out an awareness program that facilitates the understanding of the required process for the identification and assessment of students. An added benefit of an awareness program is that it will help understand the importance of doing quality interventions and appropriately identifying students for special programs and protect students that should not be labeled as disadvantaged or handicapped.

In addition, the district should take steps to improve the existing assessment personnel accountability system. Presently, the district monitors the productivity of assessment personnel on a monthly basis. The system could be further improved by presenting these results to school administrators also on a monthly basis. The report should include summary of the number of evaluations and meetings assessment staff

attended and report the evaluations that are initial referrals, three-year evaluations, re-evaluations, etc. Presenting the results of student services activity to schools will further help improve constituents' opinion on the effectiveness of the assessment and placement processes.

Exhibit 5-47

Most Principals and Teachers Feel That the Assessment and Placement of ESE Students Is Not Timely

SURVEY GROUP (N = Pop. size; s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Principals (N= 84; n= 52)	The district's assessment and placement of ESE students is timely.	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%
	The district's student support services are effective and efficient in meeting the needs of students.	68.4%	31.6%	0.0%
Teachers (N = 1761; n = 850)	(Same as above)	18.6%	76.5%	5.0%
	The district provides student support services that are effective and efficient in meeting the needs of its students.	45.9%	47.9%	6.2%
Parents (s= 485; n= 264)	Teachers and other support staff are well trained to identify students with various types of special needs.	66.7%	10.3%	23.1%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district consider evaluating expenditures and staffing levels of selected services against comparable districts and/or to state or national benchmarks on a regular basis. The information gathered will be used to further improve the efficient use of resources.*
- *We recommend that the Student Services department in conjunction with the ESE department carry out an awareness program that facilitates the understanding of the required process for the identification and assessment of ESE students and thus improving the generalized perception that the process is too lengthy.*
- *To further improve constituents' opinion on the effectiveness of the assessment and placement processes, we recommend that the district take the existing assessment personnel accountability system to the next level. The system could be further improved by presenting these results to school administrators also on a monthly basis. The report should include*

summary of the number of evaluations and meetings assessment staff attended and report the evaluations that are initial referrals, three-year evaluations, re-evaluations, etc. Presenting the results of student services activity to schools.

Action Plan 5-11 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 5-11

Implement Actions to Further Improve the Provision of Student Support Services

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Formally evaluate expenditures and staffing levels of selected services against comparable districts and/or to state or national benchmarks on a regular basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor of Student Services with cooperation from the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability use available data to evaluate the expenditures and staffing levels of selected services on an annual basis. Comparisons are made against comparable districts and/or to state or national benchmarks.</p> <p>Step 2: Results of the comparison/evaluations and associated actions to fix deficiencies (if found) are presented to the Superintendent and to the school board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Supervisor of Student Services and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Carry out an awareness program that facilitates the understanding of the required process for the identification and assessment of ESE students to improve the generalized perception that the process is too lengthy.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Supervisor of Student Services and the Supervisor of ESE, with input from the Supervisor of Staff Development develop an awareness program focused on the different phases of the assessment and placemen process. The program is to be shared among administrative staff through a mini-workshop or through written material.
Who Is Responsible	The Supervisor of Student Services and the Supervisor of Exceptional Student Education.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Refine and expand accountability system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Student Services department takes the necessary steps to compile a summary report of the activity of assessment staff on a monthly basis by campus and by diagnostician. The report should include summary of the number of evaluations and meetings assessment staff attended and report the evaluations that are initial referrals, three-year evaluations, re-evaluations, etc.</p> <p>Step 2: The summary reports are presented to district schools on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Step 3: The overall results of the measurement can also be published on a bi-annual basis. One means that can be utilized is the district's website.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Student Services and assessment staff.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

6

Administrative and Instructional Technology

Lake County School District generally provides students, administrators, and instructional and non-instructional personnel with the tools needed to learn, instruct, and administrate in an efficient and effective manner. However, many opportunities to improve the district's processes exist.

Conclusion

Lake County School District (the district) generally provides students, administrators, and instructional and non-instructional personnel with the tools needed to learn, instruct, and administer in an efficient and effective manner. However, many opportunities to improve the district's processes exist. Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that in meeting the goals of the best practices

- the district needs to improve its planning processes for technology;
- the district provides “just-in-time” support for technology resources;¹
- the district needs to improve its professional development in the area of technology;
- the district needs to improve its processes for acquiring technologies;
- the district promotes and practices safe, ethical, and appropriate uses of technology; and
- the district maintains a management information system that provides needed data in a reliable, timely and cost-efficient manner.

Exhibit 6-1

The District Has Many Notable Accomplishments in Administrative and Instructional Technology

- The district connects all its 42 schools plus 7 work centers to its wide area network and 75% of the district's classrooms are connected to the Internet.
 - The district considers the total cost of ownership when acquiring its workstations.
 - The district has mostly modern computer workstations at its high schools.
 - The district has implemented websites for internal and external users.
 - The district has adopted a comprehensive acceptable use policy for its technologies.
 - Each school within the district develops a unique technology plan.
-

¹ Just-in-time is a system popularized by the productivity of Japanese industry, which involves attempts to reduce costs and improve workflows by completing tasks “just-in-time” to be efficient and effective.

- The district has established a math, science, and technology magnet school at the elementary school level.
 - The district equitably distributes Public Schools Technology Fund monies to schools based on FTEs.
 - Curriculum within the district includes advanced technology training such as, A+ Technology certification, *Cisco* router certification and, in the next school year, will include *Oracle* Internet Academy.
 - The National Association of Educational Technology Specialists has recognized district staff for their innovative programs integrating technologies, education, and business processes.
 - The district makes available 101 laptops to students through the Title I *Take Home Technology* program.
-

Source: Lake County School District.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Technology Plan

- The district has not solicited and used broad stakeholder input in developing an integrated learning system and in setting priorities for administrative and instructional technology decisions. (Page 6-7)
- While the district's technology plan meets the state requirements, it does not have the comprehensive level necessary to provide direction for adequate administrative and instructional technology decision making. (Page 6-11)

“Just-in-Time” Support

- The district's primary means of providing technology support to school instructional personnel is through in-service trainers and school-based technology facilitators. (Page 6-17)
- The district provides technical support for educational and administrative systems in the district. (Page 6-18)
- The district provides technical support for hardware, software, and infrastructure in a timely and cost-effective manner. (Page 6-22)

Professional Development

- Although the district provides technology training to its instructional and non-instructional staff, it can improve its performance. (Page 6-26)
- The district does not provide adequate professional development for the instructional technologies. (Page 6-28)

Appropriate Technologies

- The district bases its technology acquisitions on instructional needs and makes technology acquisitions based on those needs. (Page 6-34)
- While some technology acquisitions are well planned, the district needs to improve its technology acquisition methods to ensure that it makes the best informed and cost-effective decisions. (Page 6-39)

- The district has not established standards for acquiring new programs and digital content that promote the integration of technology into everyday curricular needs. (Page 6-45)
- The district has a stable and efficient infrastructure. (Page 6-48)

Uses of Technologies

- The district has established and communicated a policy stating appropriate uses of all types of technology resources, including computers, video equipment, software and the Internet. (Page 6-48)
- The district supports compliance with the established policy on safe and legal use of technology resources. (Page 6-50)

Data Access and Integrity

- The district segregates duties to reduce the risk that unauthorized transactions will be entered and not discovered quickly. (Page 6-50)
- The district's user controls ensure authorization prior to processing transactions and ensure all output represents authorized and valid transactions. (Page 6-51)
- The district's applications are designed to provide users with reliable data. (Page 6-52)
- The district has not established all the general controls needed to promote the proper functioning of the management information systems department. (Page 6-52)
- The district's management information system provides data need by administrative and instructional personnel in a reliable and timely manner. (Page 6-54)
- The district has taken steps to minimize the number of databases that are independent of its centralized computer systems. (Page 6-56)
- The district is not taking advantage of the technology available to increase efficiency through image processing systems. (Page 6-57)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations ---

Most recommendations have little or no fiscal impact as they can be implemented utilizing existing resources of the district. For the purposes of this chapter, existing resources are considered to be funded positions.

As indicated in Exhibit 6-2, three action plan items have a fiscal impact. One of these action plans includes a one-time cost avoidance through the successful implementation of the district's currently licensed instruction management software. The rationale for arriving at a cost avoidance here is that the district will inevitably need to automate its instructional management process, and it has already expended significant amounts of money and resources to acquire, install, and train staff related to this instructional management software.

The district will benefit by implementing a district-wide document imaging, storage, and retrieval system. The cost of this system is arrived at through an analysis of documenting handling costs and any benefits are contingent on a successful implementation of this system. Lastly, reinstating the position of In-Service Trainer will also help the district gain operative effectiveness.

Exhibit 6-2**Implementing the Recommendation for Administrative and Instructional Technology Will Have a Five-Year Fiscal Impact of \$1,250,000 in Increased Costs, a One-Time Cost Avoidance and in Cost Savings**

		Fiscal Impact: Cost Savings/Increased Revenues or (Increased Costs)				
Action Plan and Strategy	Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Total
6-3 Reinstated In-Service Trainer for TERMS System	\$(40,000)	\$(40,000)	\$(40,000)	\$(40,000)	\$(40,000)	\$(200,000)
6-8 Implementing existing licensed software (One-Time Cost Avoidance)	0	0	0	0	1,000,000	1,000,000
6-13 District-wide Implementation of a Document Imaging, Storage and Retrieval System	0	0	(300,000)	375,000	375,000	450,000
Total	\$(40,000)	\$(40,000)	\$(340,000)	\$335,000	\$1,335,000	\$1,250,000

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Background

As we move into a global economy, society in the 21st Century is becoming critically dependent on information and information systems. Our educational institutions need to be at the forefront of technology if we are to progress to a global economy. Successful educational institutions will be the providers of individuals that are self-directed, self-motivated, lifelong learners, productive members of the workforce, and contributing citizens. The opportunities for these individuals are virtually unlimited in a global society.

Within a school district, technology serves to meet the needs of students and teachers with its instructional technologies and meet the needs of administrators, teachers, and non-instructional staff with its administrative technologies.

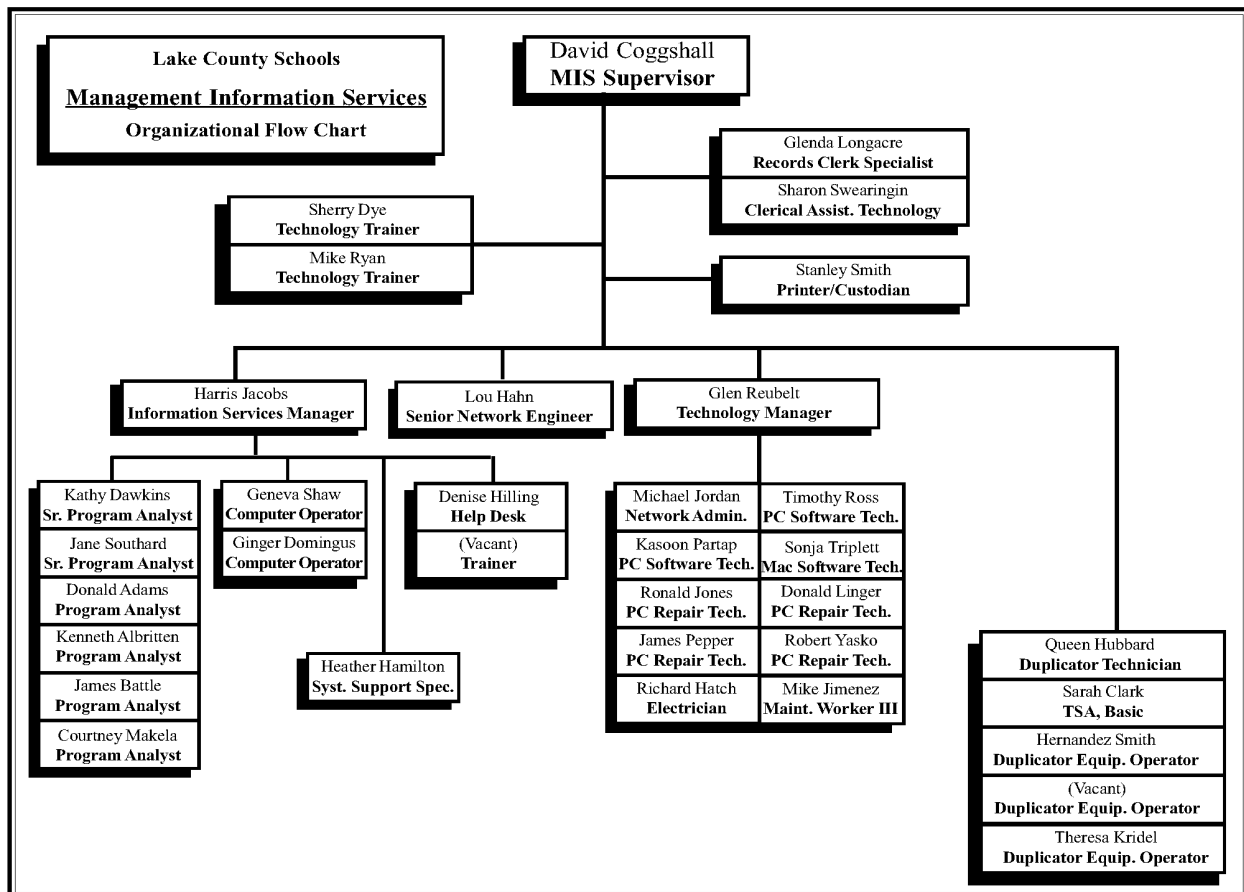
The district's instructional technology affects student performance by enabling students to access and analyze information, solve problems, collaborate with others, and effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas. Additionally, instructional technology provides teachers with tools to provide for students needs in computer literacy and by providing curriculum support.

The district depends heavily on facts, statistics, and other data from its information systems. District staff must have access to accurate and timely information in order to effectively manage the district's resources by making informed decisions. The district uses its administrative technologies to obtain and analyze this information.

For its administrative and instructional technologies, the district has assigned the responsibility for maintaining its information systems to the Management Information Systems (MIS) department, formerly known as the Lake County Schools Technology department. Exhibit 6-3 shows the organizational structure of the department. The district's organizational structure is further discussed in Chapter 3 of this report.

Exhibit 6-3

Current Organization of the Lake County School District's Management Information System (MIS) Department



Source: Lake County School District.

The mission of the department is *“to provide for the installation, support, and maintenance of technology systems, hardware, and software to assist in the education of students and the completion of administrative tasks in the Lake County School System.”* The department is currently focused on building and maintaining its infrastructure and administrative technology.

The district currently utilizes *Total Education Record Management System (TERMS)* on an older mainframe platform to meet its current administrative information needs. The department is in the process of replacing this mainframe platform with an IBM AS/400 system and will implement an upgrade to its TERMS system in two phases. The first phase will begin in the summer of 2001 and will include the

financial functions of the TERMS system. The second phase is expected to occur no later than the summer of 2002 and will upgrade the educational information system.

Instructional technologies include but are not limited to computer hardware and software; televisions; monitors; projection devices; video cassette recorders; satellite receiving stations; telecommunication equipment; calculators; assisted/adaptive devices; alternative input devices; scanners; voice generation equipment; video discs; compact discs (CD/CD-ROM); DVD players and recorders, video editing equipment and cable television.

School principals are empowered to make many instructional technology decisions for their schools using individual and unique technology plans. Instructional technologies currently being utilized in the district include computer systems that operate in an Apple *Macintosh* (MAC) environment or in a Microsoft *Windows* (Windows) networked environment. Since the district began using instructional technologies in a predominantly MAC environment, it has an abundance of licensed software for its MAC platform and is in the process of building its software library for the Windows environment.

The district has over half of its workstations wired for network access, 40 schools out of 43 schools have been connected to the district's wide-area network (WAN) and correspondingly to the Internet. However, because the district's methodology for monitoring Internet usage relies on Windows standards, many classrooms and computer labs that have computer systems operating in a MAC environment are not allowed access to the Internet.

Methodology

ValienteHernandez P.A. used a variety of methods in assess the district's performance related to the best practices for administrative and instructional technology. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed 10 self-assessment instruments and associated documentation prepared by district staff; interviewed over 30 individuals representing all areas within the district; visited five (5) operational locations, and nine (9) schools or educational centers representing all levels of education; and conducted surveys of all of the stakeholder groups.

Findings and Recommendations

Technology Plan

Goal A: The district has a school board-adopted technology plan that supports overall district educational and operational goals, is aligned with state and federal initiatives, and is supported by a budget.

1 The district has not solicited and used broad stakeholder input in developing an integrated learning system and in setting priorities for administrative and instructional technology decisions.

The District Does Not Annually Assess Its Technology Needs

The district has no committee with specific responsibility for recommending district technology priorities; reviewing and making recommendations on major information systems projects; and making recommendations for, and monitoring the development and implementation of, the district technology plan. Developing a comprehensive technology plan will include setting of priorities; currently, priorities are being decided on urgency, effect of the overall operations, budgetary constraints and availability of qualified personnel to implement the desired action(s). However, setting priorities needs to be a consequence of a comprehensive, well thought out, process with pre-determined goals and time frames to which resources are dedicated, and for which responsibilities are assigned to those best suited to carry them out. Logically, priorities need to be decided by the highest level of responsibility (the school board), with input, recommendations, and action plans flowing from a diverse representation of stakeholders.

To help guide its technology decisions, the district has established two technology committees. One, the DATA committee, comprises users; the second, the Technology Oversight Committee (TOC), comprises appointees by the school board and superintendent. The DATA committee is charged with helping allocate technology resources and overseeing the work of the MIS department; it is also responsible for updating the district's MIS plan. The TOC is charged with looking at specific issues relating to technology, such as developing the criteria to guide future workstation acquisitions.

However, neither committee is composed of members who are representative of all stakeholders. Although neither committee has roster showing all of its members, the attendees listed in committee minutes indicate that the committees do not have representation from the operational areas of, among others, curriculum, food services and transportation. In addition, neither committee has solicited or used broad stakeholder input in developing an integrated learning system and in setting priorities for administrative technology decisions.

Furthermore, neither committee conducts formal assessments of district and school level technology needs. Although schools conduct their own needs assessments, these assessments are not always comprehensive, nor are they connected to an overall, district-wide needs assessment that can be used to develop an integrated learning system and set priorities for administrative and instructional technology decisions.

Without a formal needs assessment process, committee recommendations for meeting the district's technology needs may not consider the needs of all stakeholders. It is essential that a documented and integrated process, well thought out, with district-wide representation, be implemented with district-wide coordination and set time frames, monitored at the assistant superintendent level, with periodic reporting to the Superintendent and the school board.

Based on the survey results in Exhibit 6-4, ValienteHernandez P.A. concludes that the district needs to further facilitate stakeholder input by soliciting a broad range of stakeholders. The results show that while board members and most school principals feel that their input is being considered in developing and implementing the district's technology plan, other groups of stakeholders, especially teachers (61%), gave indication that the district can improve its efforts to facilitate and gather stakeholder input.

Exhibit 6-4**The District Needs to Further Facilitate Stakeholder Input**

SURVEY GROUP (N= total population s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Board Members (N = 5; n = 4)	The district solicits your feedback when developing and implementing its technology plans.	66.7%	0%	33.3%
School Principals (N= 84; n= 52)	(Same as above)	77.6%	18.4%	4.1%
Teachers (N= 1,761; n= 850)	(Same as above)	31.4%	60.6%	7.9%
District Staff (s= 45; n= 19)	(Same as above)	31.3%	56.3%	12.5%
School Advisory Council (N= 600; n= 280)	(Same as above)	51.1%	28.7%	20.2%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that in order to insure accountability within the district, the School Board appointed Technology Oversight Committee (TOC) needs to direct the technological planning activities of the district, assist in the development of high level issues and act as liaison between the Superintendent, the School Board and the DATA Committee.*
- *We recommend that in order to provide the district with details for needs assessments, technology plans, and feedback, the DATA Committee needs to be an advisory group to the TOC Committee. This committee should be made up of representatives of a broad range of stakeholders and have subcommittees to address in detail components of the district's technology system.*
- *We recommend that prior to updating its technology plan, the district must ensure that a broad needs assessment is performed.*
- *We recommend that the district annually conduct an assessment to identify district technology needs. This process should integrate the current process for school-level needs assessment. District-wide recommendations resulting from needs assessments needs to include the items below.*
 - *Hardware, software, platform and network standards*
 - *Disaster recovery policies and procedures*
 - *Strategies for timely replacement and upgrading of hardware and software*
 - *A recommended list of software*
 - *The level of technology support available to schools*

- *A plan for distributing state technology fund allocations*
- *Equity of technology in schools*
- *Professional development needs*
- *Policies and procedures that impact technology use*
- *Advice on technology grant applications/proposals*
- *Meeting the data needs of administrators to assess program performance and cost-efficiency*
- *A schedule for updating the district technology plan*
- *To further facilitate broad stakeholder input, we recommend that the district consider publishing a draft of its updated technology plan on its website and provide for e-mail comments from all stakeholders. Notification of this solicitation of comments should also be made through traditional means using existing newsletters and other district publications.*

As an important part of meeting this recommendation, the district should consider the use of students in the vocational/technical programs to augment support. To have students carry out tasks related to the website is not sensitive to the district, and it is appropriate to students as part of a class project.
- *We recommend that the district designate a subcommittee within the DATA Committee to receive, summarize, review, and recommend comments from stakeholders.*
- *We recommend that the district modify its draft of technology plan based on valid input from all stakeholders prior to board adoption.*

Action Plan 6-1 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 6-1

Soliciting and Using Broad Stakeholder Input

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Restructure the School Board Appointed Technology Committee.
Action Needed	Step 1: Create a governance document for the committee. Step 2: Obtain board approval for the governance document. Step 3: Create regularly scheduled meetings of this committee. Step 4: Provide for subcommittees based on functional activities.
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent and the school board.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Restructure the DATA Committee.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Create a governance document for the committee that ensure representation from all technology users.</p> <p>Step 2: Obtain board approval for the governance document.</p> <p>Step 3: Create regularly scheduled meetings of this committee.</p> <p>Step 4: Provide for subcommittees based on functional activities.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent and the school board.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Perform a broad needs assessment.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish the appropriate subcommittee and assessment team.</p> <p>Step 2: Determine the scope of the needs assessment.</p> <p>Step 3: Perform the needs assessment.</p> <p>Step 4: Report on the needs assessment and solicit board approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee.
Time Frame	June 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Modify the draft version of the Technology Plan based on valid stakeholder comments.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Designated subcommittee reviews stakeholder comments for valid comments.</p> <p>Step 2: Summarize stakeholder comments to facilitate consideration by the full DATA Committee and the School Board Appointed Technology (TOC) Committee.</p> <p>Step 3: After consideration of stakeholder comments, modify the draft version of the technology plan prior to board adoption.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	October 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Recommendation 5

Strategy	Publish a draft version of the District's Technology Plan on the district's website.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Obtain necessary approval from the Superintendent to publish draft plan for comments.</p> <p>Step 2: Format draft plan to facilitate comments (number paragraphs).</p> <p>Step 3: Design a web page that includes the draft plan, comment form and a submission mechanism-e-mail or submission page.</p> <p>Step 4: Publish web page.</p>

	Step 5: Promote awareness of the web page through existing publications.
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee, the DATA Committee, and the district's webmaster.
Time Frame	August 15, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 6	
Strategy	Designate subcommittee to review stakeholder comments.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Based on the governance provisions of the DATA Committee, select members of a subcommittee that will receive, summarize, review and recommend comments from stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 2: Review and summarize the comments.</p> <p>Step 3: Prepare a summary of valid comments.</p> <p>Step 4: Recommend changes as appropriate.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The DATA Committee.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 7	
Strategy	Conduct annual assessments of the district's technology needs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Annually, review and summarize the technology assessment of needs provided by the schools.</p> <p>Step 2: Annually, create or modify technology assessment of needs for administrative purposes.</p> <p>Step 3: Annually, create or modify technology assessment of needs for district-wide purposes after considering school-level and administrative needs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	Before June 30 in each year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

2 While the district' technology plan meets the state requirements, it is not comprehensive enough to provide direction for adequate administrative and instructional technology decision making.

The district currently has a board-approved *District Technology Plan* (the Plan) with its stated purpose "to enhance learning and productivity through the use and integration of instructional technology." The Plan was created in 1995, and last updated in 1998, to include fiscal years through the 1999-2000 year. It includes estimated expenditures for the 2000-01 fiscal year. Per state's request, the plan was readopted for the 2001 calendar year. The plan describes major technology initiatives in detail and has been successfully used to obtain funding through various state and federal technology grants.

The goals stated in the plan are measurable, however, the district is unable to document the measurement of its successes. Although the district did not specifically monitor the plan's implementation, according to district staff, 56 of the 65 recommendations made by the plan were fully implemented, five (5) were

partially implemented, and four (4) were overly ambitious and, accordingly, not implemented at all. These recommendations are illustrated in Exhibit 6-5.

The district's annual budget provides funding for major technology initiatives such as school wiring and equipment acquisitions as described in the plan.

Exhibit 6-5

Recommendations Made by the District Technology Advisory Committee in the District's Technology Plan 1995-2000

Goal	Recommendations Made	Implemented	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
<u>Access</u> – to provide the education community with access to technology.	19	13	4	2
<u>Technology Competencies</u> – to develop proficiency in the use of technology for the purpose of gathering, examining, and using information.	28	28	0	0
<u>Utilization</u> – to demonstrate that traditional delivery of information can be altered and enhanced through the integration of technology.	3	2	1	0
<u>Training</u> – to provide staff development for personnel in the effective use of technology.	6	4	0	2
<u>Funding</u> – to provide funds to insure implementation of the Lake County District Technology Plan.	9	9	0	0
Totals	65	56	5	4
Percentages	100%	86%	8%	6%

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. interviews and site visits.

The district's plan contains many useful elements but, unfortunately, it does not contain many elements that would be indicative of the use of best practices. The plan has not been updated annually; it was last revised in 1998. As a result, the plan contains hardware and software standards that are outmoded. In addition, it is not comprehensive. For example, it does not address administrative technology needs. Exhibit 6-6 addresses the missing elements and areas in which the plan can be improved.

ValienteHernandez P.A. noted when reviewing the minutes for the DATA Committee's meeting in May of 2001, that the district was working on an update to the technology plan but it has re-adopted the 1995-2000 district technology plan for yet another year. The reason cited for the delay in developing a new plan was that the state had not finished its model plan. Exhibit 6-7 shows recommended elements the district should consider when developing a technology plan.

Exhibit 6-6

Improvements That Should Be Made to the District's Technology Plan

- The plan does not adequately include administrative technologies. The technology plan fails to consider mainframe strategies and is mainly focused on the primary function of the district – the delivery of educational services. Data needed to effectively manage educational and operational programs is also not considered in the district's technology plan. Administrative support technologies need to also be considered in the plan.
 - The plan is not updated annually. Annual reviews of hardware, software and data interoperability standards should be considered annually and included in the update of the plan. The plan should be updated in its entirety, at least once every three years; ideally it would be best to perform an annual update prior to the district's budget process.
 - The plan estimates expenditures needed to implement strategies, but vaguely identifies funding sources to provide the required revenues. These funding sources should be reasonably estimated and applied to the technology initiatives included in the plan.
 - The district has no mechanism in place to reconcile technology decisions that are not consistent with the plan. In the past, the district has made decisions that are not consistent with the plan and has not adequately documented the reason for these decisions. The district should install a mechanism for decisions that are inconsistent with the technology plan to be evaluated and documented.
 - The district has no governance regarding responsibility for the plan's development and monitoring activities. As discussed in Action Plan 6-1, the district should create governance documents for its technology committees. The documents should contain committee and subcommittee responsibilities, including the responsibilities for developing and monitoring the implementation of the technology plan.
 - The plan does not assign responsibility for implementing strategies. The plan should consider who is responsible for implementing its strategies.
 - The plan needs to provide better guidance relating to the implementation timeline for its major initiatives. This may be accomplished by specifying a timeframe for the implementation of each recommendation in the plan.
 - The plan does not consider advances in technology. This does not require clairvoyance; however, it does require an understanding of what technologies are emerging. An example of this is in wireless technologies, which seem to be becoming more prevalent. Wireless technologies may include discrete electronic devices that interact with each other as in *Bluetooth*™ technologies or IEEE 802.11b compliant equipment. These devices may have merit for the district. This type of planning activity is certainly easier to do on a short-term basis and probably would be an element of the technology plan that is changed annually.
 - The plan touches upon network and infrastructure concerns, but does not provide detailed information. This area could be expanded on to project future server requirements, bandwidth requirements, network wiring, routing schemes and plan for these future needs. Another example is the district will most likely convert all servers and workstations to the *Windows 2000*™ platform to take advantage of *Active Directory*™ among other features.
-

- The plan does not provide for professional development and technology support to both schools and district offices. Support and professional development need to be integral parts of the technology plan.
 - Individual school technology needs should tie back to the district-level plan and the district needs to implement a mechanism to facilitate this process.
-

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. review.

Exhibit 6-7

Elements to Consider When Developing a Technology Plan

Executive Summary. The technology plan should become a policy statement that provides guidance to all areas of the district. As such, it must have a brief summary of the salient points that will enable district leaders to quickly get an understanding of the more critical aspects of the plan.

Vision for Technology. One of the most important parts of a plan is the vision that tells district staff and community members alike what effect technology will have on the learning process and environment. The vision should be far-reaching and bold. It must describe briefly and succinctly the educational environment that is to be created through the use of technology.

Technology Goals and Objectives. Once a vision has been adopted, goals and objectives should be created as a means of achieving the vision. Both long- and short-range goals and objectives should be established. Specific goals and objectives should also be defined for various components of the plan.

Set the Scope. One of the early decisions of the planning committee should be a determination of the scope of the plan. For example, will the plan address: all technology? only administrative uses? only instructional uses?

Software. This section would outline the plans for acquiring and using various types of software resources. An initial set of software standards and an ongoing process for keeping those standards up-to-date should be established.

Hardware. This section would provide information pertaining to hardware acquisitions, upgrades, replacement schedules, maintenance and support. An initial set of hardware standards and an ongoing process for keeping those standards up-to-date should be established.

Infrastructure. Infrastructure refers to connectivity: the extent to which teachers, students and administrators have school-wide, district-wide, statewide and worldwide access to information and people. The plan should define the connections that will be established as a means of supporting technology use throughout the district. It should also address connectivity standards, both specifying an initial set of standards and identifying how standards will be kept current.

Staff Development. Investing in technology will not achieve desired results unless staff receive training in how to use it. The technology plan should include a staff training needs assessment and identify the types of training that will be made available, to whom it will be provided, and with what frequency.

Organization and Staffing. Of almost equal importance to planning for technology is the establishment of an organizational structure that will ensure that the technology plan is carried out. Adequate staffing is critical. For an effective technology program, there must be an adequate level of maintenance and support to its technology uses. The plan should include an analysis of these needs and allocate sufficient personnel resources to address them.

Cost Projection. Since funding is often the greatest challenge to implementing a technology plan, it is critical that the plan specifies the amount of funds needed to fully implement the plan. The plan

should identify sources of funding that will be used to support the technology initiatives. A technology plan without consideration of funding is not really a plan, only a wish list.

Time Lines. Just as cost schedules are needed to fully inform district leaders, so too, are implementation schedules.

Evaluation Process. If there is to be an effective means of judging the success of the plan, both an evaluation process and evaluation criteria must be established. The evaluation process should be directly related to the accomplishment of the plan's goals and objectives.

Source: Previous OPPAGA reviews.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district update its technology plan.*
- *The district's current technology plan is outdated; we recommend that the district modify its plan to reflect changes in the district's needs and to take advantage of the recent advances in technology.*

We further recommend that the district need not wait for the Florida Department of Education to develop standards, as the district requires effective planning to provide guidance and leadership district-wide in the area of technology now.

- *We recommend that the district include elements and modifications of the technology plan such as those identified in Exhibits 6-6 and 6-7.*
- *We recommend that the district design and implement a monitoring system to assess the effectiveness of the technology plan with respect to its goals and objectives.*
- *We recommend that the district annually review its technology plan in conjunction with the annual needs assessment.*

Action Plan 6-2 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 6-2

Developing, Implementing, and Monitoring the District's Technology Plan

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Draft an update to the district's Technology Plan (See also Action Plan 6-1, Recommendations 3 through 6)
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish the appropriate subcommittee and section teams. Step 2: Establish the plan framework. Step 3: Begin soliciting stakeholder input. Step 4: Write the plan in draft form.
Who Is Responsible	The DATA Committee.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002, through August 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Updating the district's Technology Plan (See also Action Plan 6-1, Recommendations 4 through 7)
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop the framework for the plan.</p> <p>Step 2: Assign manageable tasks to appropriate subcommittees.</p> <p>Step 3: Collaborate on a draft document.</p> <p>Step 4: Publish the draft document and solicit input from stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 5: Consider the stakeholders comments and revise document as necessary</p> <p>Step 6: Solicit school board approval for the technology plan.</p> <p>Step 7: Publish the technology plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee
Time Frame	August 1, 2002, through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Consider including elements from Exhibits 6-6 and 6-7 in the Technology Plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: When developing the plan's framework include consideration of these elements.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider these elements again during collaboration.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002, through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Design and implement a system to monitor outcomes and relate them back to the Technology Plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: During the design of the technology plan consider how achieving goals and objectives will be measured.</p> <p>Step 2: Design a system to monitor outcomes in relation to the technology plan.</p> <p>Step 3: Report on these outcomes.</p> <p>Step 4: Consider modifying the technology plan for those goals and objectives not be achieved.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	October 1 through May 30 of each year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 5

Strategy	Conduct an annual review of the Technology Plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Consider the monitoring reports.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider changes in technology.</p> <p>Step 3: Consider the district's annual needs assessment.</p> <p>Step 4: Propose changes to the district's technology plan as necessary.</p>

Who Is Responsible	The school board-Appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	Before May 30 of each year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

"Just-in-Time" Support

Goal B: The district provides "*just-in-time*" support for all technology resources in place and in use at the district.

3 The district's primary means of providing technology support to school instructional personnel is through in-service trainers and school-based technology facilitators.

The district provides formal and informal support to assist educators in incorporating technology into the curriculum. This is accomplished by using "*in-service trainers*" and "*school-based technology facilitators*."

The district has two teachers that serve as "*in-service trainers*." These in-service trainers provide professional development opportunities to the district's instructional personnel by providing training in instructional technology and its integration into the curriculum for the district. In addition, to help the district oversee and provide advice related to technology purchases, one of the in-service trainers reviews all technology related purchase requisitions district-wide and provides training to school-based technology facilitators in screening technology work orders and purchase orders for appropriateness and compatibility with district systems. To help with this oversight function, the MIS department updates the district's recommended hardware and pricing information web site on a regular basis.

The district provides training and equipment for "*school-based technology facilitators*" (also known as "*technology contacts*"). These facilitators are teachers who voluntarily assume the responsibility to provide instructional technology support at the school level. The objective of the technology facilitator program is to provide each campus with a trained person who can solve minor problems, provide knowledgeable advice, and assist with in-service training. Additionally, these facilitators assist and provide advice related to technology work orders. Principals, teachers, and district support staff find these individuals very useful in providing faster response to support issues thereby increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the district's technology support infrastructure.

Initially, facilitators received 60 hours of in-service training. In addition, technology facilitators are required to take update sessions at various times during the school year that amounts to an additional 6 hours of in-service training. The original 60-hour in-service technology facilitator program is described in Exhibit 6-8.

Exhibit 6-8

Original Technology Facilitator Training

Week I – Technology Facilitator Training

Introduction to *Windows 95/NT*, *Word* and *Excel*.

Introduction to the Internet and its uses in the classroom

Creating HyperStudio projects

Care and maintenance of the computer; screening of technology work orders and purchase orders

Evaluating hardware and software for purchase

Week II – Integrating Technology Into the Curriculum

Management techniques for one-computer classroom

Technology and the Sunshine State Standards

Using technology as a “*real world*” tool

Developing computer and online projects, lesson plans, and activities

- Cooperative and interdisciplinary projects
- Rubrics and other assessment techniques
- Combining the computer with other technologies

Source: Lake County School District.

4 The district provides technical support for educational and administrative systems in the district.

As mentioned under Goal B, Best Practice 1, above, the district provides technical support at both the district-level through “*in-service trainers*” and at the school level through “*school-based technology facilitators*.” Additionally, the district provides support services for its servers and workstations through a network administrator, software technicians, personal computer (PC) repair technicians, and an electrician. A senior network engineer provides support for the network infrastructure.

The district provides support for its mainframe administrative technologies through various elements: an Information Services Manager, a Systems Programmer, six Programmer Analysts, two System Operators and a help desk. Another element of support for the district’s administrative system is the Mainframe Trainer. This position however was eliminated over a year ago and administrators currently rely on previously trained individuals to provide hands-on training to new administrative staff.

In addition, the district has established procedures to ensure that the hardware and software it acquires is compatible with its standards. The district has published its recommended hardware and price lists on its internal web site and uses the Florida Department of Education (DOE) *Educational Software Catalog* for its instructional software standards. The MIS department reviews each technology related purchase requisition for compatibility with established standards and the school-based technology facilitators have been trained in reviewing these requisitions. As noted in Exhibits 6-9 and 6-10, non-conforming hardware and software may still be acquired based on the needs; however, the district notifies the users that support of these items may be their responsibility.

Exhibit 6-9

The District's Policy on Supported Hardware and Software

"The Lake County Schools Technology Department (LCTD) supports computer systems for the advancement of student learning and district wide administrative tasks. Technical support means advice and recommendations for purchasing, the report of component parts within economic limits, the installation and connection of TCP/IP networking, and installing operating system software. Nonstandard applications software and configuration is the responsibility of users. It is the purpose of this support policy to encourage the standardization of equipment, software, systems, repair parts, and techniques to facilitate the efficient operation of the department. The current recommended platform is a Pentium-based clone with Microsoft software, especially if it is to be paced on the LCSB_NET."

Source: Lake County School District.

Exhibit 6-10

The District's Policy on Donated Equipment

"Donated equipment will be supported only when prior written approval has been received from the technology department. To be approved, donated equipment must be equivalent to currently supported equipment standards. Donated equipment is also subject to applicable Lake County School Board Policies."

Source: Lake County School District.

The district has a wide range of computing platforms, which increases its technology support efforts and costs. Most of the district's mission critical data is stored on a variety of computing platforms. This district has an older IBM ES/9000 mainframe platform, its replacement IBM AS/400 system running TERMS; Windows 2000 servers and workstations; Windows NT servers and workstations; Windows 98 workstations; and Apple *Macintosh* Mac OS X, OS 9, OS 8.6, and OS 8. Currently, the district's primary data interoperability standards between its mainframe and workstations are text based. The large number of computing platforms limits the districts ability to implement other more efficient data interoperability standards. Data interoperability standards allow for information to flow from one platform to another, ideally in the most efficient manner.

For its future computer technology decisions the district has elected to use the AS/400 System with Windows 2000 servers and workstations as it primary supported platforms. The district's plan is to have the AS/400 System completely operational and all district workstations servers operating on the Windows 2000 platform during the summer of 2002. The plan calls for the Apple *Macintosh* equipment to be used only in those specialized areas where such equipment is necessary, and *Macintosh* stations will not be used to connect to the district's databases.

When the platform conversions have been completed, the district will be able to receive and store information on all of its databases in a more efficient and easily supportable manner. Potentially, the district will experience reduced support costs by backing fewer systems. The district could also potentially reduce costs by combining the help desk and some workstation support functions, and by cross-training individuals to provide more diverse support to system users.

The district maintains a traditional help desk to answer support questions for its mainframe operations as well as a PC support staff to answer support questions for its workstations. If support calls were directed

to one help desk that has sufficient expertise in mainframe as well as workstation support, the district could provide its users with better support services.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district immediately reinstate the position of Mainframe Trainer.*
- *We recommend that the district include updated versions of its hardware and software standards in its technology plan and consider annual modifications as technology progresses.*
- *We recommend that the district update its support policy presented in Exhibit 6-9 to include current hardware and software standards.*
- *We recommend that the district document its current interoperability standards and project those standards to be implemented as it consolidates its the diverse computing platforms.*
- *We recommend that the district combine the help desk and workstation support functions. Telephone support staff would need to be cross-trained to provide mainframe and PC workstation support.*

Once the help desk and workstation support functions are combined, we recommend the district assess the existing staffing needs and consider using the gained efficiency in carrying out jobs such as the maintenance of the district's website.

Action Plan 6-3 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 6-3

Developing, Implementing, and Monitoring the District's Technology Plan

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Reinstate the Mainframe Trainer position.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review and update the current job description. Step 2: Advertise the position. Step 3: Interview candidates. Step 4: Hire the most qualified individual. Step 5: Train the employee.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Human Resources and the Supervisor, MIS Department
Time Frame	May 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	The fiscal impact of this recommendation is \$40,000 per year.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Update hardware and software standards in the Technology Plan.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Document the current standards (See Action Plan 6-2).</p> <p>Step 2: Provide these standards to the subcommittee developing the plan's framework include consideration of these elements in accordance with Action Plan 6-2.</p> <p>Step 3: Consider these standards annually.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002, through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Update the district's support policy.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: As the result of recommendation 2 above, update the district's support policy.</p> <p>Step 2: Obtain approval of policy.</p> <p>Step 3: Publish the revised policy.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	March 1, 2002 through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Define the district's interoperability standards for current and future computing platforms.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Consider the monitoring reports.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider changes in technology.</p> <p>Step 3: Consider the district's annual needs assessment.</p> <p>Step 4: Propose changes to the district's technology plan as necessary.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	March 1, 2002 through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 5	
Strategy	Combine the help desk function with workstation support. Cross-train support personnel to provide better support to system users.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Cross-train individuals on basic levels of support.</p> <p>Step 2: When hiring or promoting technical support personnel ascertain the degree of potentially upgrading their knowledge; diversity in training is to be a paramount consideration for promotion of support personnel.</p> <p>Step 3: Combine selected (all if possible) workstation support functions with that of a central help desk.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Supervisor, Management Information Systems Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	The cost savings would be minimal.

5 The district provides technical support for hardware, software, and infrastructure in a timely and cost-effective manner.

The district's MIS department provides district-wide and school-based technical support for all of its administrative and instructional technology areas. The district budget properly allocates funds to utilize external and in-house support services: outside vendors perform installation and warranty services; district staff performs all other support services in-house.

The district also has the ability to maintain a high ratio of computers to technical staff as a result from a number of actions it has taken to provide technical support in an efficient manner. For example, the district has 43 school-based technology facilitators that provide initial technology support at the school level. These individuals have been trained to solve a wide range of technology problems and, in many cases, are able to clear a problem before a work order is created. These facilitators provide the district with a valuable resource and save the district from having to hire additional support staff to provide the same level of support. As a direct result of this action, the district is able to maintain a ratio of computers to district-wide technical support staff of approximately 455 to 1 (11 district-wide technical support staff that service approximately 5,000 instructional and non-instructional computers).

The district also has effective work order and communications systems. The district maintains an electronic work order process on its mainframe. This work order system allows the technology manager in charge of PC support to prioritize work orders, schedule work orders for completion, review open work order status, and provide statistical information related to service calls. Additionally, the district uses email effectively to communicate and discuss possible solutions with school-based technology facilitators prior to generation of a work order.

Since most support issues are software related, the district maintains standard images of typical workstations to restore the system to district default settings if all other options fail. Given that the district uses network drives for data storage and encourages their use, the loss of data through restoring workstation images is low. This methodology also assists the district in providing technical support in a timely and cost-effective manner.

The district has policies covering computer equipment repair and obsolete equipment. The district's computer repair policy, presented in Exhibit 6-11 provides a reasonable basis for equipment repair and solutions to situations not covered by the policy. The policy includes a table, which is updated regularly, listing the equipment to be supported. Also included is the district's obsolete equipment policy as Exhibit 6-12. This policy is appropriate for the district, it has established no time frames for the replacement or recycling of this equipment because the district feels that if the equipment is operating and providing services as its intended use, then replacement is not necessary.

Notwithstanding the efficiencies enumerated above, the district can further improve its technical support function by developing a system to monitor its services and encouraging technicians to become certified. Additionally, the district should establish support benchmarks or a system to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of its technical support services.

The district offers a variety of internal and external training opportunities for its technicians; however, not all technicians are certified in their fields. The certification process is a good way of ensuring continuing professional development and should be considered when evaluating competencies. The district will benefit by encouraging its technical support staff to obtain additional certification in their respective fields. Staff can receive training for additional certification through the districts vocational/technical school.

The district's vocational/technical school offers superior technical training. The Lake Technical Center provides training for certification in A+ Computer Repair and A+ Certified Computer Service Technician. Additionally, the center has training in CISCO Internetworking Academy, Web Design Services, and many software products used by enterprises today.

Exhibit 6-11

Lake County School District Repair of Computer Equipment Policy

"The technology department will repair computer equipment based on the age and the value of the equipment. To be repaired by the technology department, equipment must meet guidelines stated in the tables below. Equipment not meeting these guidelines will be purchased at salvage value or returned to the department or school for disposition.

Schools and departments sites that have urgent repair needs that cannot be met by the LCSD have the option of purchasing contracted services that can meet the need. The technology department must approve such purchases."

Source: Lake County School District.

Exhibit 6-12

Lake County School District Obsolete Equipment Policy

"The rapid rate of technological change in the computer industry makes the issue of obsolescence critical to the technology department. The replacement of aging equipment is primarily a school responsibility. Funds for purchasing new equipment must be used not only for additional equipment, but also for replacement of equipment.

As computers age, the economic feasibility of repairing them diminishes. For example, PC based 386 computers and Mac based LC and older equipment is not economical to repair. The Technology Department will maintain a list of obsolete equipment that may not be repaired. The list will contain computers, monitors, printers, and peripherals. The cost of new parts and technicians labor is simply too high to justify the repair.

Technicians will visit school and department sites to perform repairs. Obsolete equipment that is not readily repairable (5-10 minutes) at the school site, it will be returned to the technology ship for evaluation. If the department has new or previously salvaged parts that can renew the item in a timely fashion, repairs will be performed and the item will be returned to the school. However, if the department determines an item is beyond economical repair, the department may offer to purchase it for its salvage value (see current table)². Schools may elect to decline the salvage value and request the return of the item. If returned, the item will no longer be eligible for district support or future salvage reimbursement.

In situations where other failed machines can be used as a source for parts, and when technicians can make a quick repair, older machines may be repaired at the option of the department. The users of older systems should be budgeting for replacement equipment or repair by outside contractors."

Source: Lake County School District.

² The table referred to in *the Obsolete Equipment Policy* was omitted for the purpose of this report.

While the District Generally Provides Timely Support, There Is Room to Further Improve Responsiveness

ValienteHernandez P.A. found, through interviews and analysis of service calls, that computer support service calls rarely exceeded five working days for non-critical issues and that critical issues were generally handled immediately. Survey results however, indicate there is room for improvement. As shown in Exhibit 6-13, approximately one third of responding teachers and principals felt that the district did not provide technical response in a timely manner. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the district staff that responded to the survey gave a similar response.

As mentioned earlier, the district can improve by establishing support benchmarks or a system to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of its technical support services. For example, although the district has a system to monitor the timeliness of its support staff in resolving technology problems, it does not have a system for assessing responsiveness to technical assistance requests made by schools or administrative staff. Furthermore it does not periodically assess customer satisfaction with technical assistance services.

Exhibit 6-13

There Is Room to Further Improve the Area's Responsiveness

SURVEY GROUP (N= total population s = sample size; n = respondents)		Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
School Principals (N= 84; n= 52)		The district provides technical response in a timely manner.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
Teachers (N= 1,761; n= 850)		(Same as above)	61.1%	34.3%	4.6%
District Staff (s= 45; n= 19)		(Same as above)	38.9%	55.6%	5.6%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the district encourage its support technicians to obtain certifications in their respective fields.
- We recommend that the district's MIS department establish client service goals and develop benchmarks to measure these by.
- We recommend that the district's MIS department bill out its support services to end users, this will provide a basis for determining the effectiveness of support services when coupled with a job costing system. End users will become accountable for their technology choices.

Action Plan 6-4 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 6-4**Recommendations to Improve Computer Support Services**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Encourage technicians to obtain certifications.
Action Needed	Step 1: Counsel with each uncertified technician and determine what the barriers are and ways to overcome them. Step 2: Consider incentives for certified technicians. Step 3: Consider certification as a minimum employment requirement for technical support personnel.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Supervisor, Management Information Systems Department.
Time Frame	By the summer of 2002 to coincide with Windows 2000 district-wide implementation
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented within existing resources; however, the district will have to determine the cost of incentives, which potentially may be fit within the current salary requirements.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Establish customer service goals and benchmarks to measure the results.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review services rendered. Step 2: Identify ways service can be improved within existing resources. Step 3: Create measurable client service goals. Step 4: Begin collecting measurement data. Step 5: Publish client service goals and measurement data results to stakeholders. Step 6: Look for more opportunities to improve service.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Supervisor, Management Information Systems Department; subordinate staff.
Time Frame	June 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Bill end users for support services.
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish a fee schedule based on costs. Step 2: Provide end users with a budget for these support services. Step 3: Provide bills to end users through the work order system. Step 4: Post internal activity to the general ledger. Step 5: Provide end users with usage statements.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Supervisor, Management Information Systems Department; Fiscal staff.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Professional Development

Goal C: The district provides comprehensive and appropriate professional development in the use of technologies to educators, administrators, and support staff.

6 Although the district provides technology training to its instructional and non-instructional staff, it can improve its performance.

The district provides technology training to its instructional and non-instructional staff. This professional development is aligned with the district's strategic plan and the current technology plan and is supported by a line item in the budget. District strategies for providing professional development opportunities to educators include computer lab training at the Learning Resource Center, workshops provided during the summer months, on-site and individual training as needed, and distance learning. In addition, the district maintains an outstanding professional development center with a technology lab that is equipped with state-of-the-art computer equipment and adequately staffed with technology trainers.

However, published guidelines regarding the district's training strategies do not exist. In addition to methods of delivery of this training, these guidelines should include the skill level expectation of instructional staff by grades taught and what additional technology training would benefit the instructional staff. The district should consider utilizing its web site to publish these guidelines and link users to distance learning opportunities.

As evidenced by past experiences, the district effectively plans for training prior to procuring new equipment. The district planned to train staff when implementing its instructional management (*Abacus™*) and library management (*Follett™*) systems. However, the district is currently upgrading its TERMS system and needs an in-service trainer for TERMS. It is important that the district have adequate professional development resources for all of its critical systems.

The district does not perform a district-wide annual needs assessment for technology. A component of this needs assessment should be an assessment of instructional and administrative staff's need for professional development with respect to technology.

In addition, the district does not have a professional development plan that reflects its vision of integrating technology to enhance and enrich the learning environment and to improve administrative support. This professional plan should include professional development activities for administrative, instructional, and non-instructional personnel.

Based on survey results indicated in Exhibit 6-14, over forty percent (40%) of school principals and teachers that responded to the survey indicated that the district can improve its provision of training on new equipment and technologies. Two-thirds of administrative staff responding agreed that training needs improvement. This condition will be greatly improved if the district implements the recommendation to reinstate the position of Mainframe Trainer. This recommendation is described in detail through Action Plan 6-3, Recommendation 1.

In addition to providing technology training, the district needs to assess the technology skills of its instructional and non-instructional staff. The district's teacher assessment instrument includes a technology component, however, it has not developed performance criteria for the technology skills of its administrators and non-instructional staff. Without such criteria, the district cannot target its technology training to staff whose skills need improvement.

Exhibit 6-14

The District Can Improve Its Technology Training

SURVEY GROUP (N= total population s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
School Principals (N= 84; n= 52)	The district provides adequate training on new equipment and software acquisitions.	56.8%	40.9%	2.3%
Teachers (N= 1,761; n= 850)	(Same as above)	53.6%	42.7%	3.7%
District Staff (s= 45; n= 19)	(Same as above)	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district perform a needs assessment with respect to its professional development plan. Action Plan 6-1, Recommendation 7 presents the steps necessary to accomplish this recommendation.*
- *We recommend that the district reinstate the position for in-service trainer for its TERMS System. Action Plan 6-3, Recommendation 1 presents the steps necessary to accomplish this recommendation.*
- *We recommend that the district establish performance criteria for both instructional and non-instructional staff that include technological skills. See Action Plan 6-5, Recommendation 1, below.*
- *We recommend that the district publish on its web site the professional development opportunities for the district including links to distance learning when applicable. See Action Plan 6-5, Recommendation 2, below.*

Action Plan 6-5 shows the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 6-5**Recommendations to Improve Professional Development**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish performance criteria that include technological skills.
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish performance criteria, which includes technological skills, applicable to administrators based on job descriptions. Step 2: Measure these criteria. Step 3: Provide feedback to individuals.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Director of Human Resources, and Supervisor of the Professional Development Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002, through September 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Include Professional Development Guidelines and Opportunities on the district's website.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine information to include (e.g., descriptions, times, MIP points). Step 2: Design web page. Step 3: Publish on web site.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, Professional Development Department, and the District's Web Master.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

7 The district does not provide adequate professional development for the instructional technologies.

The district has a professional development department and provides some training in instructional technologies. However, it needs to significantly improve this training in order to meet the best practice.

Professional Development Requires District Commitment

As a strategy in reaching its goals, the district has included a training element in its strategic plan. In support of this strategy, the district provides budgeted funds for professional development. The district maintains the Learning Resource Center, a centrally located professional development center. The district also provides its instructional staff several professional development opportunities in terms of method of delivery and timing. The district offers summer workshops, distance learning through Connected University, on site training, and individual training when appropriate.

However, the district does not make full use of its training resources. ValienteHernandez believes that the in-service trainers and the Learning Resource Center are under utilized resources. As illustrated in Exhibit 6-15, technology trainers are routinely assigned administrative functions within the MIS department and throughout the district. While this is a good use of excess time available by the trainers, it should not reduce the level of effort directed at performing their essential functions. These in-service trainers should be concentrating on professional development plans, planning diversified course offerings, and concentrating on the quality of the in-service training that they provide.

Exhibit 6-15

Job Description for Technology Trainer

Essential Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researches software and technology for possible application. • Provides technical assistance to facilitate the use of technology based communication networks at local schools. • Assist all staff in their use of technology. • Trains staff for the integration of technology into the total school environment. • Participates in the design, coordination, and provision of instructional technology in-service opportunities for all staff. • Models the use of technology in lessons for teachers. • Provides software training at local schools and in labs. • Assists in writing, compilation, and dissemination of curriculum at all levels. • Assists in the compilation of data to evaluate current programs and projects. • Provides assistance with minor troubleshooting of hardware and cabling. • Maintains inventory: hardware, peripheral devices, software, including licensing for district technology lab. • Participates in grant writing and grant management. • Develops written instructions/procedures for use of hardware/software. • Participates in district technology planning. • Attends/participates in technology related committees/conferences at local, state, and national levels. • Pursues training to update skills needed in technical areas. • Participates in and facilitations software selection committees. • Performs related duties as assigned.

Source: Lake County School District.

The district attempts to integrate technology into the curriculum, but it is not successful in doing so. As indicated in the background section at the beginning of this report, the district has an abundance of software for its MAC environment and is in the process of building its instructional software library for its Windows environment. Yet, as shown in Exhibit 6-16, its professional development workshops focus on Microsoft Office products. While these products are very important in real world applications, the district has many other opportunities to integrate technology into the curriculum. School-based technology facilitators represent a resource the district can draw upon to integrate technology into the curriculum.

The district should consider broadening its workshop offerings for instructional technologies. As shown in Exhibit 6-17, fifty four (54%) percent of the teachers responding to the survey disagreed with the statement “*The district provides professional development on integrating technology into the curriculum.*”

Exhibit 6-16

Professional Development Workshops for January Through May

Workshop	Day	Night or Saturday	Master In-Service Plan (MIP) Points
Word 2000 –			
Part 1	2 dates	1 date	6-9
Part 2	2 dates	1 date	6-9
Part 3	2 dates	1 date	6-9
Excel 2000 –			
Part 1	2 dates	1 date	6-9
Part 2	2 dates	1 date	6-9
Part 3	2 dates	1 date	6-9
Access 2000 –			
Part 1	2 dates		6-9
Part 2	2 dates		6-9
Part 3	2 dates		6-9
PowerPoint 2000 –			
Part 1	2 dates	1 date	6-9
Part 2	2 dates	1 date	6-9
Part 3	2 dates	1 date	6-9
FrontPage 2000 –			
Part 1	2 dates	1 date	6
Part 2	2 dates	1 date	6
Windows NT –	2 dates		6
Outlook 2000 –	2 dates		6
Internet Exploration –	1 date		6
Adobe PageMaker –	1 date		6
Microsoft Publisher 2000 –	1 date		6
HyperStudio –	1 date		6
Making the Grade –	1 date		6

Source: Lake County School District.

In addition, the district does not have an adequate mechanism to assess the effectiveness of its professional development program. Currently, the district requires trainers to keep attendance records and course exit surveys. However, exit surveys cannot measure how effective the training was in improving trainee skills or their ability to do their jobs more efficiently.

The district also needs to provide administrators and non-instructional staff with more time during the workday to learn and work together to accomplish the district’s mission and goals. Usually this type of training for administrators and non-instructional staff can be accomplished by scheduling it during non-peak workload timeframes, thereby reducing the need to hire additional staff during training. As shown in Exhibit 6-17, approximately one third and a little over one half of responding principals and district administrative staff respectively, give indication that the district needs to consider additional professional development opportunities for its administrative and non-instructional staff in technology.

In addition to the Microsoft Office products, the district has opportunities to provide for development of its administrative and non-instructional staff development. Some examples and areas that could be expanded on are:

- the TERMS System by functional area,
- the SNAPS System for food service operations, and
- work orders for maintenance and support functions.

Exhibit 6-17

The District Can Improve Its Instructional as Well as Its Non-Instructional Training

SURVEY GROUP (N= total population s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Teachers (N= 1,761; n= 850)	The district provides professional development on integrating technology into the curriculum.	21.0%	53.1%	25.6%
School Principals (N= 84; n= 52)	The district provides a variety of opportunities in terms of time, location, and delivery mode for district staff to obtain technology training.	71.4%	28.6%	0.0%
District Staff (s= 45; n= 19)	(Same as above)	38.5%	53.8%	7.7%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

We noted that the district considers sources other than in-service training. In fact, the district encourages its personnel to attend local conferences. For example, during DATA committee meetings, members are encouraged to participate in the Florida Educational Technology Conference. This conference provides an excellent forum for professional development, providing 4½ days of professional development workshops on a broad range of technology topics. The conference is usually held in Orlando, so the travel costs of district staff attending this conference should be reasonable. However, there are times when non-local conferences and meetings relative to technology are appropriate and useful.

The district supports memberships in professional organizations for its staff. Memberships in professional organizations enhance professional development by allowing individuals to interact with their peers. This facilitates discussion of relevant issues among peers that in turn broaden their knowledge of their expertise, thereby benefiting the district.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district restrict administrative functions assigned to in-service trainers.*
- *We recommend that the district improve its professional development opportunities for instructional technologies.*
- *We recommend that the district develop a system to better measure the effectiveness of in-service training. Consider exit surveys two weeks after the training has occurred ask questions such as:*
 - *Do you feel the training was helpful?*
 - *What percent of the training do you feel that you retained?*
 - *Has the training impacted positively on your job efficiency?*
 - *Would you recommend this training to your peers?*
 - *What other course offerings would benefit you, your peers, or the district?*
- *We recommend that the district increase the opportunities for professional development in technology for its instructional and non-instructional staff.*
- *We recommend that the district provide staff with more professional development time.*

Action Plan 6-6 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 6-6**Recommendations to Improve Professional Development**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Restrict administrative functions provided by In-Service Trainers.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review the administrative work performed by In-Service Trainers. Step 2: Consider reassigning these functions within existing staff. Step 3: Provide in-service trainers with more time to provide professional development opportunities within the district.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, MIS Department
Time Frame	May 1, 2002 through August 31, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Improve professional development opportunities for instructional technologies.
Action Needed	Step 1: As part of Action Plan 6-1, Recommendation 5, include in the needs assessment a section for the district's professional development, specifically on integrating technology into the curriculum. Step 2: Consider how to best meet those professional development needs. Step 3: Develop a plan to meet those needs.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, Professional Development Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002 through October 1, 2002.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Develop a better system to measure in-service training effectiveness.
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish measurable performance criteria for determining training effectiveness. Step 2: Measure these criteria. Step 3: Provide feedback to in-service trainers.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented within existing resources.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002 through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Improve professional development opportunities for administrative and non-instructional staff.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: As part of Action Plan 6-1, Recommendation 5, include in the needs assessment a section for the district's professional development of the administrative and non-instructional staff.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider how to best meet those professional development needs.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop a plan to meet those needs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, Professional Development Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002 through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 5

Strategy	Provide staff with more professional development time.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Determine ways that time that staff can work professional development into their normal work schedule.</p> <p>Step 2: Provide more professional development opportunities to the staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Supervisor, Professional Development Department.
Time Frame	June 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Appropriate Technologies

Goal D: The district identifies and acquires the appropriate technologies needed to improve educational and administrative performance.

8 The district bases its technology acquisitions on instructional needs and makes technology acquisitions based on those needs.

The District Acquires Technology That Meets Instructional Needs and Is Aligned with the Sunshine State Standards.

Individual schools base their technology acquisitions on instructional needs and make technology acquisitions based on those needs. ValienteHernandez P.A. found that each of the selected nine schools visited had a technology plan. Some plans were more comprehensive than others, but all contained an analysis of their instructional needs and used this information to apply for Educational Technology Funds.

The district uses a software evaluation form, which is included in its technology plan. The district also uses the DATA Committee and other meetings of educators as mechanisms to evaluate the result of

All items included in the catalog are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards; however, many popular software titles used by district schools are not included in this catalog. These instructional materials are aligned to the appropriate standards by the software vendor themselves or by the district subsequent to evaluation.

The District May Be Able to Make Better Use of Distance Learning Opportunities

School districts in Florida are able to take advantage of educational enhancement opportunities offered by “*distance learning*” (classes being conducted at a remote location, transmitted via satellite or similar technology to sites throughout the state). Although classroom teaching is preferable, distance learning is a cost-effective enhancement to existing educational programs when the learning experience is not being offered locally.

As illustrated in Exhibit 6-19, the district and most of its peers (with the notable exceptions of Santa Rosa and Charlotte) show a low utilization of distance learning opportunities. Possible negatives of using distance learning are that, depending on the number of participants, it may not necessarily be less expensive than classroom teaching and the district may, depending on variables, lose some FTE funding. Some examples of distance learning being used by the district include the Florida High School, cable TV programming, and satellite programming. Through Florida High School, students are able to take courses in business computer technology, computer education, English, family and consumer sciences, foreign language, mathematics, physical education, research and critical thinking, science, and social studies. Students can earn one-half to two credits depending on the course.

Additional distance learning opportunities that the district should consider include inter-school collaboration through video conferencing via in-school studios or web cams. There are also numerous distance learning opportunities on cable television and on satellite transponders. For other distance learning opportunities FIRN offers links to various distance learning instructional resources at <http://www.firn.edu/instruct/distance.html>.

Exhibit 6-19

Percentage of Students Receiving Instruction Through Distance Learning

Curriculum Area	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	Santa Rosa	St. Johns	Total Peer Group
English	11%	2%	21%	3%	1%	72%	5%	14%
Foreign Language	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	2%	3%
Language Art	11%	3%	24%	5%	6%	92%	16%	20%
Mathematics	8%	0%	22%	4%	5%	72%	13%	15%
Music and Art	6%	0%	25%	2%	4%	63%	6%	13%
Science	14%	2%	26%	6%	6%	93%	13%	20%
Social Studies	14%	3%	26%	3%	6%	98%	14%	20%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

The District Provides Many Opportunities for Students to Enter Post-Secondary Education or the Workforce in the 21st Century

Of the selected schools to be visited during our process, ValienteHernandez P.A. noted that all had a basic level of technology training with a focus on practical applications that are widely used in business and in post-secondary education today, especially at the high school level. The district has a variety of business and technical course offerings at the secondary level that are conducive to skills needed for post-secondary education. Equipment at each of the high schools visited was exceptionally up to date, and the course offerings were conducive to teach skills that would be needed for future success.

Additionally, the district has a superior vocational and technical training center. Its course offerings, use of technology, and facilities were excellent, however, as discussed earlier, utilization of the capacity of this facility could be improved.

When ValienteHernandez P.A. surveyed 600 School Advisory Committee members; 186 of the 280 respondents (66.4%) believed that the district provides opportunities for students to utilize technologies in order to graduate with skills needed for post-secondary education and employment in the 21st century.

However, ValienteHernandez P.A. noted a major deficiency in the use of technologies in the foreign language area; none of the schools visited had language labs. The district has no foreign language course offerings in the elementary schools and middle schools ValienteHernandez P.A. visited. As the world's economy becomes more integrated in the 21st century, foreign language understanding is a particularly valuable skill to possess.

In addition, the district needs to develop a process to evaluate student outcome resulting from technology. For example, the district could assess the technical skills of its graduating students. The district was unable to demonstrate that it has a process to measure outcomes resulting from technologies.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district undertakes a needs assessment of foreign language skills requirements for its current and near future students based on the realities of 21st century employment prospects and integrate the curriculum with possibilities offered by distance learning opportunities.*
- *The district needs to increase its awareness of opportunities in distance learning as an alternative to classroom delivery when the subject matter is not being offered and when costs makes distance learning a viable option. .*
- *The district needs to develop a process to measure the impact technology has on student outcomes.*

Action Plan 6-7 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 6-7

Recommendations Related to Acquisitions of Technologies

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Perform a foreign language skills needs assessment based on 21 st -century employment prospects and integrate and/or incorporate requirements with distance learning opportunities.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Determine who is best suited to perform a foreign language needs assessment and assign the task to that person, task group, or committee.</p> <p>Step 2: Determine the scope of the needs assessment.</p> <p>Step 3: Perform the needs assessment.</p> <p>Step 4: Report on the needs assessment; make necessary recommendations to remedy uncovered deficiencies.</p> <p>Step 5: Adapt curriculum to fulfill deficiencies uncovered by the needs assessment.</p> <p>Step 6: Identify opportunities for distance learning that are available where no classroom alternative is possible.</p> <p>Step 7: Include distance-learning opportunities into the curriculum to remedy uncovered deficiencies.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services; Supervisor, Curriculum Development; Instructional Staff.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Take advantage of more distance learning opportunities as alternatives to classroom delivery when this option is not available and when associated costs make it a viable alternative.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify opportunities for distance learning that are available.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify those curriculum areas that would benefit most by distance learning.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify potential number of students that be affected by the potential enhancement of curriculum offered by the distance learning opportunities.</p> <p>Step 4: Obtain costs for delivery of the distance-learning subjects.</p> <p>Step 5: Determine cost-effectiveness by obtaining the ratio of cost to number of students identified.</p> <p>Step 6: Include distance learning curriculum enhancements that are cost effective.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services; Supervisor, Curriculum Development; Principals and Curriculum Specialists.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Develop a process to measure the impact technology has on student outcomes.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review the district's strategic plan. Step 2: Review the goals and objectives in the district's technology plan. Step 3: Develop measurements for student outcomes related to technology. Step 4: Measure these outcomes. Step 5: Provide feedback to educators and administrators.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, Curriculum Department; Supervisor, Testing and Evaluation.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

9 While some technology acquisitions are well-planned, the district needs to improve its technology acquisition methods to ensure that it makes the best informed and cost effective decisions.

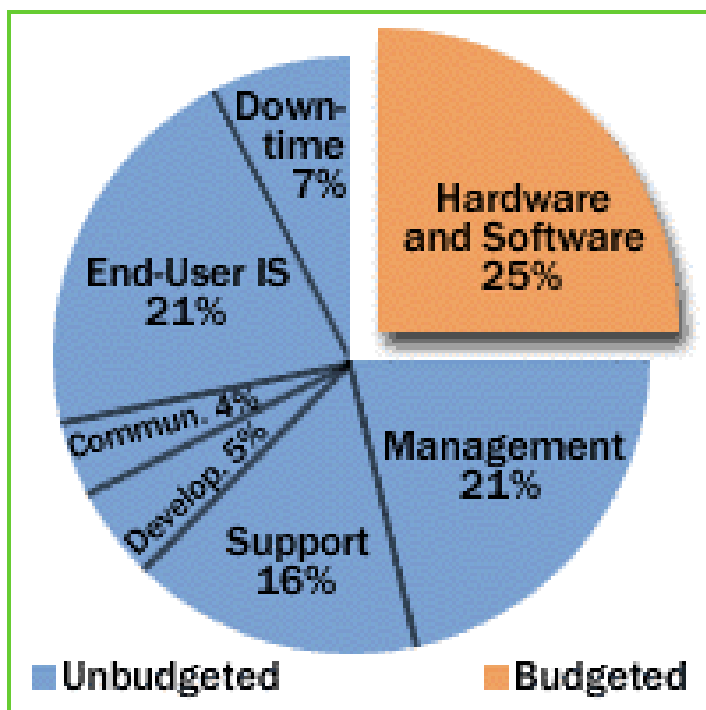
The district needs to improve its technology acquisition methods to ensure that it makes cost effective acquisitions. The district has based some of its technology decisions on solid planning and research, and its technology compares favorably with that of its peers. However, it does not consistently research the cost-effectiveness of its technology decisions and therefore has abandoned costly software.

Some Technology Decisions are Well-Planned and Cost-Effective

The district sometimes bases its technology acquisitions on the results of research, planning, and evaluation of previous technology decisions. For example, during the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the School Board appointed TOC (technology oversight committee) worked to adopt district standards for the acquisition of computing equipment. As part of this process, consideration was given to the equipment that the district had purchased in prior years and to what the total cost of ownership actually is.

The total cost of ownership involves the consideration of support and other costs, rather than just the cost of purchasing hardware and software when making decisions to acquire new technology. These other costs include professional development, support, replacement, retrofitting, and connectivity issues.

As the district decided to acquire and support the IBM AS/400 and Windows 2000 platforms, the district considered data interconnectivity issues, remote administration, and other factors to reduce the total costs of ownership. As illustrated in Exhibit 6-20, the initial costs of acquiring technology equipment is approximately one-fourth of the total cost to be considered when making these acquisitions.

Exhibit 6-20**Total Cost of Ownership Can Exceed Initial Acquisition Costs by 300%**

Source: Microsoft in Education.

The District's Technology Compares Favorably With That of Its Peers

In the area of computer technology, the district is performing much better than most of its peer group with more modern computers and less obsolete computers than the peer groups average. This is illustrated in Exhibit 6-21.

Exhibit 6-21**Distribution of Computers Within Districts**

Instructional Computers	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	Santa Rosa	St. Johns	Total Peer Group
Power Mac	10%	6%	9%	7%	22%	2%	21%	12%
iMac, G3, G4	3%	4%	14%	10%	19%	1%	27%	11%
Pentium	19%	25%	11%	28%	6%	29%	3%	17%
Pentium II/III	45%	20%	33%	32%	20%	53%	13%	31%
Older – Obsolete	23%	42%	26%	20%	28%	14%	31%	26%
Other Workstations	1%	4%	7%	4%	5%	0%	5%	4%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

The district currently acquires computer hardware that meets national standards. As the result of research and evaluation by the TOC, the district now purchases nationally recognized computer brands that are

easily supported and maintained. These systems have three-year warranties and are purchased with Microsoft *Windows NT* or *Windows 2000* and Microsoft *Office*. The district also has standards for other technology equipment. These are included in its recommended hardware list that is published on its Internet site.

The district uses different purchasing strategies to lower costs of acquiring technology and instructional learning systems and assists schools in negotiating purchase prices. The district takes advantage of state bids and requests for proposals, piggy-backs with contracts of other jurisdictions, participates in negotiation, and is able to obtain lower costs as a result of its purchasing strategies.

The district also provides assistance to individual schools in negotiating purchase prices with vendors for technology acquisitions. Negotiated prices are posted on the district's intranet site for all schools to utilize.

Technology Needs Assessments Needs to Precede Acquisition Decisions

The district does not conduct regular, systematic reviews of major technology decisions and support costs to ensure that it spends its resources appropriately and in the most cost-effective manner. Even though, as stated above, certain decisions are well-planned, such as the TOC assessed the district's workstation acquisition, the district's decision making process is inconsistent. This can be exemplified by the district's decision to abandon the use of its instructional management software without a formal, thorough, and documented assessment of what went wrong and whether if it could be remedied.

Costly Abandonment of Instructional Management Software, *Abacus*

During the prior fiscal year the district abandoned the use of its instructional management software, NCS *Abacus*[™] due to implementation failure. As a result this software is no longer being maintained or operated by the district's staff and its customer support agreement has expired. Some administrators and instructional staff interviewed felt that this decision was premature.

The district needs to reassess its decision to abandon this software. As demonstrated in Exhibit 6-22, the district heavily invested in and is currently licensed to use *Abacus*[™]. This software allows the district and its instructional staff to link its curriculum to the National Content Standards, the Sunshine State Standards, and any defined district or school-based standards. In addition it allows instructional staff to monitor and report on student performance as individuals or in groups.

It seems that, eventually, the district will need to use technology to tie its curriculum to national, state and local standards (refer to Chapter 5 Action Plan 5-6 for further discussion on this issue). There are alternatives to the NCS *Abacus*[™] system, such as the DOE's Interdisciplinary Curriculum Planning Tool v2.1 (CPT). CPT is available for Apple *Macintosh*[™] and Microsoft *Windows 95/98*[™] platforms in versions for elementary and secondary curriculum planning. However, many of the district's workstations operate on a *Windows NT*[™] or *Windows 2000*[™] platform, and CPT may not work properly.

Exhibit 6-22**Costs Incurred to Implement Abacus™**

External costs	
Software	\$ 380,993
Support	36,232
Training	123,650
Scanners	131,290
Total external costs	672,165
Internal costs	
Implementation	51,300
Training	557,360
Total internal costs	608,660
Total costs incurred	\$1,280,825

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. Review.

During our interview process we noted several barriers against the successful implementation of *Abacus™*. Comments of some of the individuals were as shown below.

- Some users believed that the product was not user-friendly thereby inhibiting district-wide implementation.
- Some users believed that the implementation schedule for the district was overly aggressive and did not provide for project slippage.
- Project slippage occurred when schools scheduled for implementation did not have the appropriate infrastructure in place for implementation (e.g., school not connected to district's WAN).
- Some users believed that the time that elapsed between the training of school staff and actual implementation of the software at the school level took too long causing users to lose the skills that they learned during training.
- Some users felt that the district's administration was not committed to implementation of the system, and it thereby failed due to lack of leadership.
- Some users felt that the district lacked the appropriate resources required to implement the system.
- Some administrators reported that at the time of implementation, communications within the district were inadequate and resulted in the inability to transfer required files to schools in a timely manner.

There are several other Florida school districts such as Seminole and Sarasota that have the NCS *Abacus™* product fully operational and are currently experiencing successful results. In Seminole, the system has been in use for approximately five years and according to their MIS Department CIO, the district is extremely satisfied with the results. He expressed that the product provides excellent curriculum management ability to the whole district where even the K-5 teachers are involved. He said it was very beneficial to implement the system using a phased approach and he believes that the key to success has been to provide effective management to the project. Seminole county was featured in the television program *60 Minutes* for the use of *Abacus™* in their high schools.

According to one of the Specialists in Professional Development of Sarasota schools, the district is very excited about current results of *Abacus™* and at the present time, all 35 schools are actively linked with the program. Sarasota is in its sixth year with the product, which has had multiple upgrades and changes in

its architecture over the years. It has been a technology challenge to MIS she said, but the results are very satisfactory and the product vendor is supportive. It was beneficial to Sarasota to start implementation using a pilot and one of the current strengths is the ability to share models with other districts using the system. Also, they have written a number of grants to be used in *Abacus*-related projects.

She also expressed that there many districts currently using *Abacus™* such as St. Lucie, Citrus, and Marion. She explained that each district uses the software in a unique manner but the commonality is they are all aligned with the Sunshine State Standards. Additionally, there is a *Florida Abacus Users Group* that is a great source of support and information.

Since the district has made a significant investment in the NCS *Abacus™* product, and several other Florida school districts are currently utilizing the product with successful results, ValienteHernandez P.A. believes that the district would be better served by implementing *Abacus™*. In order to implement this software it will be necessary to remove the barriers to successful implementation, whether real or perceived.

In implementing the *Abacus™* or any other software system, the district should consider:

- ensuring that users receive adequate training simultaneous to each school's implementation of the system;
- using a few schools to pilot the system to allow for problems to be discovered and solved before district-wide implementation;
- adopting flexible implementation schedules that are tied to the system's goals;
- completing the WAN to ensure that every classroom can be connected to the new software;
- providing sufficient leadership and support to enable the system to succeed; and
- as barriers become evident, taking appropriate actions to overcome them.

The District Should Track Its Technology Support Costs and Charge Them to Respective Cost Centers

As noted earlier, the district does not track its costs for installing and supporting technologies for its schools or other cost centers. Consequently, the district cannot charge cost centers for the technological support they receive. This would help principals and administrators make cost-effective decisions to acquire or repair new technology. For example, cost centers currently must pay for the new hardware and software they acquire, but do not pay for repairing or supporting those technologies. This could lead to a principal's decision to obtain a new component for an outmoded computer rather than purchasing a new computer, even though such a decision would not be cost effective.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district conduct annual reviews of major technology decisions.*
- *We recommend that the district's instructional management software (Abacus™) be reevaluated to determine whether it should be re-implemented on a pilot project basis.*
- *We recommend that the district modify work order system to track and report technician time by cost center.*

- Our recommendation for billing for technology support services is noted in Action Plan 6-4, Recommendation 3.

Action Plan 6-8 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 6-8

Recommendations Related to Acquisitions of Technologies

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct annual reviews of major technology decisions.
Action Needed	Step 1: Include as part of Action Plan 6-1, Recommendation 7, an assessment of the costs related to major technology decisions.
Who Is Responsible	The School Board's TOC Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	By June 30 of each year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Reevaluate the possible implementation of <i>Abacus™</i> as a pilot project.
Action Needed	Step 1: Commit to making the project successful. Step 2: Determine schools are each level that a candidates for the pilot project. Step 3: Develop a realistic project plan that considers prior implementation deficiencies as described above. Step 4: Reinstall <i>Abacus™</i> server software. Step 5: Install <i>Abacus™</i> client software a pilot sites. Step 6: Provide support, through professional development to the pilot sites. Step 7: Evaluate the project. Step 8: Determine the next step.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction; Supervisor, MIS Department; Supervisor, Professional Development Department; Supervisor, Testing and Evaluation Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002 through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	Since it is extremely likely that the district will need to utilize some sort of instructional management software as it improves its curriculum, the district will save approximately \$ 1,000,000 by keeping its current software. This is assuming that replacement software will cost an equivalent amount.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Modify work order system to track and report technician time by cost center.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine if modification is practical. Step 2: Modify work order screen to capture information. Step 3: Include data in database. Step 4: Develop management reports.

Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, MIS Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002, through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

10 The district has not established standards for acquiring new programs and digital content that promote the integration of technology into everyday curricular needs.

The district has not established standards for acquiring new programs and digital content that promote the integration of technology into everyday curricular needs. Instead, the district refers schools to the DOE's Educational Software Catalog. The software catalog is an excellent source of educational software that is aligned with the Sunshine State Standards. However, it is not a complete listing of educational software products. Additionally, this catalog does not include many other technologies that are available to educators. Therefore, the district should consider developing its own process in which it would evaluate all technologies available and provide technical support only for those technologies that it has adopted as meeting its curricula needs and being compatible with its other technologies.

Exhibit 6-23 illustrates that the district is comparable to other Florida school districts in its choices of instructional software. For example, over two thirds of its schools use Accelerated Reading Program; in its peer districts, 62% of the schools use this software.

The district should include standards for acquiring digital content in its technology plan. These standards should be reviewed periodically, as technology changes. An example of this will be in the area of videotapes, which will eventually be replaced by DVDs or streaming video feeds.

Exhibit 6-23

Percentage of Schools Using Popular Instructional Software

Educational Software Used	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	Santa Rosa	St. Johns	Total Peer Group
Accelerated Reader Program	68%	60%	50%	67%	73%	53%	52%	62%
STAR Reading	57%	8%	15%	59%	63%	39%	24%	40%
Accelerated Math	9%	3%	15%	22%	20%	8%	7%	12%
STAR Math	14%	3%	4%	26%	30%	16%	7%	15%
Computer Curriculum Corp.	2%	8%	0%	7%	50%	63%	14%	21%
Jostens/Educational System	5%	45%	19%	24%	15%	11%	14%	19%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Technology Resources Are Not Equitably Distributed Within the District

The district allocates a specific portion of its operating budget for technology acquisitions. In addition, many of these acquisitions are funded through capital projects, grants, private funding and certain district

discretionary funds. Some schools are more proactive than others in pursuing private funding for technology acquisitions. The district needs to encourage more partnerships between schools and outside resources for support in developing and delivering instructional applications and infrastructures.

As indicated by Exhibit 6-24 the number of students per computer varies widely throughout the district. The average number of students per computer in the district is approximately four (4), the least students per computer is at Mt. Dora High School with approximately two (2) students per computer and the most students per computer is at Minneola Elementary School with approximately 8.5 students per computer. Some of the reasons for these differences are that newly constructed schools have sufficient budget to acquire more computers than older schools, and as stated earlier some schools are more proactive in pursuing private resources. These two reasons were very clear when investigating technology distribution disparities during school visits.

The district needs to explore ways that it can remedy the inequitable distribution of technology resources to provide equal access to these resources to all students within the district.

Exhibit 6-24

Students per Computer Throughout the District

School Name	Students per Computer	School Name	Students per Computer
Elementary Schools		Middle Schools	
Mascotte Elementary	2.88	Umatilla Middle	2.89
Astatula Elementary	3.07	Eustis Middle	3.03
Rimes Elementary	3.11	Griffin Middle	3.15
Round Lake Elementary	3.24	Mt. Dora Middle	3.69
Villages Elementary	3.26	Gray Middle	3.97
Groveland Elementary	3.32	Windy Hill Middle	4.07
Umatilla Elementary	3.40	Oak Park Middle	4.13
Dabney Elementary	3.61	Tavares Middle	4.28
Spring Creek Elementary	3.84	Carver Middle	<u>7.90</u>
Tavares Elementary	3.88	Total	<u>3.87</u>
Cypress Ridge Elementary	4.22		
Fruitland Park Elementary	4.36	High Schools	
Lost Lake Elementary	4.72	Mt. Dora High	2.24
Seminole Springs Elementary	5.10	Umatilla High	3.04
Treadway Elementary	5.15	Tavares High	3.21
Beverly Shores Elementary	5.48	Eustis High	4.09
Eustis Heights Elementary	5.50	Leesburg High	4.72
Triangle Elementary	5.63	South Lake High	5.57
Skeen Elementary	5.86	Lake Tech High	<u>8.47</u>
Clermont Elementary	5.90	Total	<u>3.94</u>
Eustis Elementary	6.12		
Minneola Elementary	<u>8.53</u>	District-Wide Total	<u>3.94</u>
Total	<u>4.26</u>		

Source: Florida Department of Education.

The district has in place strategies for timely replacement and upgrading of hardware and software. The district plans to upgrade nearly all of its Microsoft *Windows* workstations to *Windows 2000* by the summer of 2002. The district's replacement policy is included as Exhibit 6-12.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish technical and content standards for acquiring new programs and digital content. In developing these standards, the district should consult MIS staff. Additionally, the district should publish these standards and include them on the district's website.*

As an important part of meeting this recommendation, we recommend that the district consider the use of students in the vocational/technical programs to augment support. To have students carry out tasks related to the website is not sensitive to the district and it is appropriate to students as part of class project.

- *We recommend that the district explore ways that technology can be more equitably distributed throughout the district.*
- *We recommend that the district and its schools seek more outside resources.*

Action Plan 6-9 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 6-9

Recommendations Related to Acquisitions of Technologies

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish standards for acquiring new programs and digital content.
Action Needed	Step 1: Form a subcommittee to discuss the issue. Step 2: Define these standards. Step 3: Seek board approval. Step 4: Publish these standards and include on the district's website.
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed TOC and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	October 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Explore ways to more equitably distribute technology throughout the district.
Action Needed	Step 1: Consider as part of the needs assessment process. Step 2: Discuss this issue at board meetings. Step 3: Seek input from a broad range of stakeholders. Step 4: Develop strategies.
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed TOC and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Seek more outside resources.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop strategies in which the district and individual schools can create partnerships between schools and outside resources for support.</p> <p>Step 2: Provide individual schools with ways to implement these strategies.</p> <p>Step 3: Recognize and assist in nurturing these partnerships.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

11 **The district has a stable and efficient infrastructure.**

The district has a wide area network that connects all of its schools and other district offices together. In this WAN there is built-in fault tolerance so that if one communications link is broken between distribution points the WAN can be rerouted to another distribution point. Based on interviews, ValienteHernandez P.A. noted that the district's WAN and the individual schools local area networks are up and running nearly all of the time.

Access speeds and bandwidth are adjusted based on industry standard, availability, and technical requirements of the applications.

The district provides *"just-in-time"* support for network issues as part of the district's overall support. This support is discussed on page 6-18.

Uses of Technologies

Goal E: The district promotes and practices safe, ethical, and appropriate uses of technology that comply with legal and professional standards.

12 **The district has established and communicated a policy stating appropriate uses of all types of technology resources, including computers, video equipment, software, and the Internet.**

The district has established and communicated a policy stating appropriate uses of all types of technology resources, including computers, video equipment, software, and the Internet. It also uses email to improve communication between groups such as schools, district staff, parents, and the community.

The District Has an Acceptable Use Policy Covering Technologies

The district has a board adopted acceptable use policy that all staff, teachers, students and parents must sign before being able to utilize the district's equipment for Internet access, facsimile transmission, TV/VCRs, and other technologies. Additionally, the district includes training in copyright issues regarding legal use of digital materials. The acceptable use policy is incorporated into the *Students Rights and Responsibilities Book*.

Each time users sign on to district computers they are confronted with a screen with the acceptable use policy. The users must accept the policy prior to gaining access to the district's network. In addition, interviews with instructional and MIS personnel indicate that individuals requesting access to technologies must sign applicable release forms before they are granted access to these technologies. The district maintains these forms on file in the MIS department. As shown in Exhibit 6-25, most principals and instructional staff are aware of these policies.

Exhibit 6-25

Most Principals and Instructional Staff Are Aware of the District's Acceptable Use of Technology Policies

SURVEY GROUP (N= total population s = sample size; n = respondents)		Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
	Question			
School Principals (N= 84; n= 52)	Staff, teachers, students, and parents are provided written and verbal guidelines describing the appropriate and inappropriate uses of technology.	66.6%	25.5%	8.5%
Teachers (N= 1,761; n= 850)	(Same as above)	79.5%	19.9%	0.6%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

The District Uses Internet Filtering, Supervision and Review of Proxy Logs to Assure Appropriate Use of the Internet

The district utilizes the Florida Information Resource Network (FIRN) to provide its main web page filtering to deter users from gaining access to inappropriate web pages. In most cases the district provides supervision for students accessing the Internet. Additionally, media specialists and teachers review proxy logs for accesses to web pages that may be inappropriate.

The District Encourages Email Use to Improve Communications

The district utilizes Microsoft Exchange Servers, and Microsoft Outlook 2000 clients for its email needs. All administrators and many teachers have email accounts set up. Email usage is high in the district.

13 The district supports compliance with the established policy on safe and legal use of technology resources.

The district has a system to monitor compliance with safe and legal use of technology resources and abides by software licensing agreements and copyright laws. As stated above, the district has an acceptable use policy covering technology, provides supervision for its students, utilizes FIRN for Internet filtering, and utilizes reviews of proxy logs by media specialists and teachers to monitor compliance with safe and legal use of technology resources.

The district's has a process to address instances of misuse of technology resources. The district's student rights and responsibilities policy addresses this issue and provides for remedies in the event of misuse.

The district has virus protection software and prudent procedures in place to provide protection of its information system. The district utilizes two anti-virus software protection schemes, one is server based and one is PC workstation based. Both of these are updated frequently. For the PC workstation, based updates are posted to the district's website regularly. Individual users are expected to update their own workstations. The district requires that all user files be located on a server for virus protection, backup and support reasons. Updates to virus protection are performed automatically upon the starting up process for each district workstation. Since virus technology changes there is always a possibility that the district will encounter viruses from time to time. Anti-virus schemes, routine backup procedures and the disaster recovery plan adequately address the district's computer virus issues.

Data Access and Integrity

Goal F: The district maintains management information systems that provide data needed by administrative and instructional personnel in a reliable, timely, and cost-efficient manner.

14 The district segregates duties to reduce the risk that unauthorized transactions will be entered and not be discovered quickly.

The district segregates duties to reduce the risk that unauthorized transactions will be entered and not discovered quickly.

The MIS department is physically and functionally segregated from the accounting, budget, human resources, and operating departments for which it processes transactions. The department does not initiate fiscal transactions with the exception of source documents for necessary internal functions such as, purchase requisitions and time sheets.

As illustrated in Exhibit 6-3 the functions of program analyst, computer operations and maintenance are segregated. The information systems manager closely supervises mainframe operations. Within the MIS department, application systems development, systems maintenance and operations are all distinctly separate functions performed by different individuals. The district utilizes library control software to

maintain control of source code. Programmers are required to check out source code, and all changes are recorded and reviewed by a technology manager.

Personnel policies within the MIS department include reference checks, security statements, and required annual leave for technical staff. In addition, the district has automatic controls to remove security rights from terminated or inactive employees. It does not, however, have similar controls to remove security rights for former network users. Network passwords expire on a regular basis, which effectively bar terminated or inactive employees from extended network access.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish automatic controls to remove security rights for former network users.*

Action Plan 6-10 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 6-10

Recommendations Related to Security Controls

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish automatic controls to remove security rights for former network users.
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish communications with the personnel department for reporting terminations to network administrator. Step 2: Remove security rights for terminated employees.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Personnel Department and Supervisor of MIS Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

15 The district's user controls ensure authorization prior to processing transactions and ensure all output represents authorized and valid transactions.

The district's user controls ensure that users are authorized to process transactions and that all output represents authorized and valid transactions. The district maintains three levels of security: one to access the users workstation, one to access the mainframe, and another to access specific district applications. Each application has its own security settings, and district managers, depending on their needs, request updates to security settings. Passwords are required at workstation, mainframe, and application level. Screens are customized for each user depending on the need and the authorization granted. For example, payroll clerks would not have an option on their screens to make any change to the payroll master file, but are allowed to enter time data into the system.

The district also maintains log files for all primary files. The information system manager reviews these logs. In addition, audit trails are generated on all requests for changes.

Individual departments and schools perform data entry. Based on interviews, ValienteHernandez P.A. noted that user departments review their respective outputs for reasonableness and accuracy. An example of this is each school receives a monthly financial report; and the principal and the bookkeeper review this report closely, as it indicates how much budget is available to provide for the needs of the school. This allows schools to discover and correct posting errors in a timely manner.

16 The district's applications are designed to provide users with reliable data.

The district has established application controls to help ensure data reliability. The district has been using the same major software product for many years. The TERMS systems meets the administrative needs of the district and has been consistently providing users with reliable data, as evidenced by the lack of significant financial audit findings on the reliability of the TERMS-generated data.

The district provides supervision over data entry at the office and school level. Principals and administrators are responsible for the data entry process. On-line help that is context sensitive is available for all district administrative applications. Online help screens contain up-to-date written instructions

Individual district applications contain automated edit checks to pre-validate data prior to acceptance, provide validation totals for users to compare, and generate log files that identify users and track detailed changes. These log files are reviewed by computer operators and the information systems manager.

If necessary, the district can print audit trails for any changes made to mainframe data files. Additionally, log files can be reviewed to trace computer output to data sources and vice versa.

17 The district has not established all the general controls needed to promote the proper functioning of the management information systems department.

The district has established most general controls in the areas of access, systems development and maintenance, documentation, operations, and physical security to promote the proper functioning of the Information Systems department. These controls exist for its mainframe, networking, and food service operations.

General controls help to ensure that data is not lost or corrupted by individuals gaining unauthorized access to information systems, that data processing jobs are completed promptly, that sensitive output is released only to individuals authorized to receive it, and that loss of electrical power, disasters or key personnel do not unduly disrupt district operations.

The district has a written disaster recovery plan and has made arrangements for alternative sites for processing the district's information should that become necessary. These arrangements have been made with other local jurisdictions and with the district's major software vendor.

The district maintains a tape library; procedures exist for daily, monthly annual and on demand backups. Physical access to computer operations, tape library, off site storage, and application documentation has been limited to individuals requiring access through locks. The district uses an automated job submission

system and technology manager reviews job submissions daily. Operating procedures have been developed and documented for computer operators to follow.

The district utilizes controls to limit access to and prevent release of confidential and sensitive data. An example of one control is for output with student numbers, these jobs are shrink-wrapped and delivered by interoffice delivery services. All district print jobs printed by the MIS department have cover sheets indicating distribution. The district has adequate procedures regarding backup, off site storage and equipment electrical protection.

However, the district does not have written procedures for its general controls and is in the process of developing such a manual. The district also needs to consider how it would replace key personnel if they were to no longer be available to the district.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district complete its operating and standards manual for general computer controls.*
- *We recommend that the district create a contingency plan available to replace key personnel should their services no longer be available.*

Action Plan 6-11 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 6-11

Recommendations Related to General Controls

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Complete a general computer controls operating and standards manual.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine what is to be included. Step 2: Develop an outline. Step 3: Write a draft version. Step 4: Solicit comments. Step 5: Complete manual. Step 6: Obtain required district approval. Step 7: Make manual available for systems users.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, MIS Department.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	The needs to have a contingency plan for the loss of key personnel.
Action Needed	Step 1: Cross-train technology managers. Step 2: Develop strategies to expedite the replacement of key personnel should their services no longer be available.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, MIS Department.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

18 **The district's management information system provides data needed by instructional and administrative personnel in a reliable and timely manner.**

The district's management information system generally provides reliable and timely data to administrative and instructional personnel. The district has fully implemented the TERMS system, and is the process of converting its older mainframe to an AS/400 platform and updating its TERMS system to an updated version. This comprehensive system has been in place for many years; some of the TERMS subsystems that the district uses are the Financial Information Series, the Human Resource Management Series, The Student Information Series, The Facilities Management Series, and the Textbook System.

The Student Information System provides on-line access to student and school records. The Financial Information Series provides access to budgeting reports, vendor activity reports, purchase orders, revenue reports, encumbrances, expenditures, inventory, audit trails, and many other reports that are useful to administrators. The Human Resource Management Series provides information on general employee records, teaching certificates, job applications, in-service history, earnings records, leave records, and payroll calculation and reporting. The Facility Management Series provides access to the district's fixed assets information and the food service revenues. The Textbook System provides a catalog of the district's textbooks and inventory functions for textbook management. Other systems on the mainframe that are not included in the TERMS system are an automated work order system, a volunteer tracking system, a warehouse inventory system and a juvenile justice administration system.

The district currently has no in-service trainer to provide training for its TERMS system (see Action Plan 6-3, Recommendation 1). Since the system has been in place in the district, there are many knowledgeable users. Training for the last two years has been hands-on, one-on-one training provided by experienced individuals.

The district has procedures for timely notification of errors to input personnel as well as administrators. The district relies on its users to enter and validate information entered into its systems and has no procedures to test the reliability of this information, other than built in edit checks. As with all systems, the accuracy of the information contained in its database and reported to users of the system is highly dependent on the data entry process. The district has a system that reasonably validates the data upon input, and provides edit reports for data entry individuals to check to. However, the district relies on its users to review information that is their responsibility, these users generally provide feedback when errors are noted.

The district can demonstrate that the information sent to the DOE is generally accurate and that it uses the data submitted to manage its educational and operational programs. The district maintains edit reports of data sent to DOE and reviews information received back to these edit reports.

The district has established a preset calendar for management reports production, and these reports are provided to management in a reliable and timely manner. The district can demonstrate that its management information system contains performance measurement data that is routinely collected, compiled and reported in a manner such that it can be used by district administrators, school administrators, and teachers to assess program performance and results. The data on educational programs includes grades, attendance and test scores.

As noted above the district has a comprehensive management information system. ValienteHernandez P.A. noted during site visits and interviews that the management information system provides generally accurate and timely reports. Exhibit 6-26 indicates that school principals believe that the district's management information system provides them with reliable and timely data. Some of these individuals noted that occasionally errors occur during the data entry process, and the district does not have a formal system for checking the reliability of its data.

Exhibit 6-26

School Principals Believe the District's Systems Provide Reliable and Timely Data

SURVEY GROUP (N= total population s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
School Principals (N= 84; n= 52)	The district's management information systems provide data needed by administrative and instructional personnel in a reliable and timely manner.	77.5%	22.5%	0.0%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district reinstate the position for its TERMS in-service trainer (Mainframe Trainer). Action Plan 6-3 Recommendation 1 presents the steps necessary to accomplish this recommendation*
- *We recommend that the district develop a system to test the reliability of its data. See Action Plan 6-12, below.*

Action Plan 6-12 shows the necessary steps to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 6-12**Testing Data for Reliability**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should develop a system to test the reliability of its data.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine what data needs to be tested. Step 2: Develop primary and alternate methods of validating this information. Step 3: Consider using sampling techniques. Step 4: Identify problem areas. Step 5: Provide feedback to data entry individuals and other users entering data.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, MIS Department.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

19

The district has taken steps to minimize the number of databases that are independent of its centralized computer systems.

Generally, the district utilizes one centralized database, TERMS, for all critical management and administration files. Information is downloaded from TERMS to individual terminals or other systems such as the SNAPS used by food services, but the information in its central database is exclusively maintained through TERMS.

An example of subsystems contained within TERMS and maintained centrally is one for student information, which is shown as Exhibit 6-27. This comprehensive database is made available as needed to authorized persons only.

Exhibit 6-27**Example of TERMS Subsystem: Student Records**

General Queries	Attendance	Courses
Student Name (District)	Daily Summary	Course Requests
Student Name (School)	Period Summary	Current Schedule
	Absence Detail	Interactive Scheduler
	Class/Course Absences	Current Grades
	Absence Warnings	Academic History
		Graduation Status
Basic Records	Testing	Miscellaneous
Demographics	Test Score Query	Special Programs
General Assignments	Test Score	Discipline
Contact Information	Standard Mastery	Fees and Fines
Health Information		Recognition/Achievement
Assignment History		Old Discipline
Local Data Elements		Curr Sched (FTE Summary)

Source: Lake County School District.

20 The district is not taking advantage of the technology available to increase efficiency through and image processing systems

With the exception of DOE (discussed on page 6-55), the district does not participate in data exchange transactions with other entities. No other exchange transactions are anticipated because the district has adequate resources to handle its management information systems and is generally cost effective in delivering its services. Therefore, the district has no need to outsource any of its management information systems.

However, the district is not taking advantage of efficiencies that could be gained by implementing a centralized image processing systems. ValienteHernandez P.A. found two image processing systems within the district. The Personnel department maintains images of its employees through the use of scanning equipment for photographs, and the testing and evaluation department and schools generally had test scoring equipment that processed images. The testing systems automatically read and report on test scores from standard forms and are stand-alone systems, but would have been linked to the *Abacus™* system, if fully implemented. The district has no centralized document management system.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district implement a document management system that includes a centralized imaging system for electronic storage and retrieval of its documents.*

Action Plan 6-13 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 6-13

Recommendations Related to Electronic Transactions and Document Imaging

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implement a district-wide document imaging system for electronic storage and retrieval of documents.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop a task force to study the issue. Step 2: Develop desirable system attributes based on a needs assessment. Step 3: Select a system. Step 4: Train staff and implement the system. Step 5: Review the implementation and correct problems.
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee, and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	September 30, 2003
Fiscal Impact	If implemented successfully, this system could provide savings of \$450,000 over the next five years to the district. Cost savings are primarily based on a decreased need to use photocopy equipment, thereby reducing these costs. Cost of the document imaging system is estimated at \$300,000 and annual estimated cost savings is expected to be \$375,000.



Personnel Systems and Benefits

The district's Human Resources Service Department generally practices sound personnel management. Minor improvements in a variety of personnel practices are warranted.

Conclusion

The Lake County School District (the district) recruits and hires personnel and bases employee compensation on the market value of service provided, has a comprehensive staff development program, and formally evaluates its employees to improve performance and productivity for instructional staff. The district has experienced several accomplishments in the area of personnel as illustrated in Exhibit 7-1.

Exhibit 7-1

Notable Accomplishments in Personnel Systems and Benefits

- The district has an effective collective bargaining process that includes a wide variety of team members.
 - The district has designed and implemented the Instructional Personnel Performance Appraisal System (IPPAS) and the Principal Performance Appraisal System (PPAS).
 - The district has implemented some cost containment practices for its workers' compensation program.
-

Source: Lake County Schools.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Staff Recruitment, Hiring, Retention, and Training

- The district's recruiting and application processes are adequate to ensure that qualified personnel are hired, although increased automation and district-wide coordination of applications are needed. (Page 7-6)
- The district maintains a reasonably stable work force through competitive salary and benefit packages and through district-wide efforts to address and remedy factors that contribute to increased turnover. (Page 7-8)
- The district does not provide a well-coordinated staff development program for non-instructional employees to achieve and maintain high levels of productivity and employee performance. (Page 7-12)
- The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for instructional employees to attain and maintain high quality instruction and to achieve high levels of student performance. (Page 7-15)

- The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for school-based administrators. (Page 7-17)
- The district's system for formally evaluating employees is designed to improve and reward excellent performance and productivity, and to identify and addresses performance that does not meet the district's expectations for the employee. (Page 7-18)
- The district ensures that employees who repeatedly fail to meet the district's performance expectations, or whose behavior or job performance is potentially harmful to students, are promptly removed from contact with students and if required, that the appropriate steps are taken to terminate the person's employment. (Page 7-20)

Management of Human Resources

- While the district has different ways to correspond with employees, it could further improve by implementing additional mechanisms to better the effectiveness of communications. (Page 7-21)
- The district has efficient and cost-effective policies and practices for providing substitute teachers and other substitute personnel. (Page 7-22)
- The district maintains personnel records in a highly efficient and accessible manner. (Page 7-22)
- The district uses cost containment practices for its Workers' Compensation Program. (Page 7-24)
- The district has taken important steps towards establishing accountability for the human resource program. The district could further improve by developing adequate measures and benchmarks to ensure the program's efficiency and effectiveness. (Page 7-26)
- Although the district does not have a standard periodic review of the organizational structure and staffing levels of the office of human resources, the district has made reasonable efforts to minimize administrative layers and processes within the department. (Page 7-28)
- Although the district does not conduct a standard periodic evaluation of its personnel practices, the district has taken a number of steps to improve and adjusts its practices as needed to reduce cost and/or improve efficiency and effectiveness. (Page 7-28)
- For classes of employees that are unionized, the district maintains an effective collective bargaining process. (Page 7-30)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations ---

The recommendations in the personnel systems and benefits section will improve district performance, but are neutral in terms of their fiscal impact.

Background ---

As of Fall 2000, the district employed over 3,500 persons. Exhibit 7-2 shows a breakdown of the type and number of staff employed by the district.

District employees are grouped under three categories:

- administrative staff, which includes both district level administrators and school administrators (principals and assistant principals);
- instructional staff, those responsible for teaching students at all levels, kindergarten through secondary education; and
- non-instructional or “classified,” staff, which includes clerical staff, food service workers, bus drivers, maintenance workers, custodians and other support personnel.

Exhibit 7-2**The District Had Over 3,300 Employees as of Fall 2000**

Staff Categories	Fall 1998 Number of Full- Time Staff	Fall 1999 Number of Full- Time Staff	Fall 2000 Number of Full- Time Staff
Total Administrative Staff	113	117	110
District Level	18	20	17
School Level	95	97	93
Total Instructional Staff	1,782	1,833	1,756
Total Classroom Teachers	1,569	1,616	1,559
Elementary	654	673	655
Secondary	578	586	595
Exceptional Education	249	247	226
Others	88	110	83
Total Other Instruction	213	217	197
Total Support Staff	1,426	1,485	1,471
Professional	91	98	108
Non-Professional	1,335	1,387	1,363
Total Full-Time Staff	3,321	3,435	3,337

Source: Department of Education Profiles of School Districts.

As in any other organization, the management of “human resources” (the most current and generally acceptable term for “personnel”) is a key component of the district’s operations and to the successful achievement of its goals and objectives. Principal responsibilities of the personnel function include

- helping schools and departments to plan their employment requirements by producing and updating job descriptions;
- providing the services necessary to hire persons to fill vacant and newly created positions;
- processing job applications efficiently and following established district policies;
- maintaining adequate knowledge of competitive benefits and informing all employees of these benefits;
- establishing and verifying compliance with federal, state, local and district-established policies of fair employment, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment rules and regulations;
- establishing practices and procedures for the timely, appropriate, complete and fair evaluation of employees;
- bargaining with employee unions to set salary schedules and terms of employment; and
- providing assistance with the discipline and termination of poorly performing employees, following legal parameters and district established policies and procedures.

The Personnel Services Department Seeks to Produce Well-Trained and Qualified Staff for the District

The mission of the district's Personnel Services department states:

"The mission of Lake County Schools' Personnel Services Department is to provide an atmosphere of cooperation, coordination, and facilitation for all schools, departments, and the general public while implementing official human resource methods for the upkeep, retention, and recruitment of people to enhance the goals of the District."

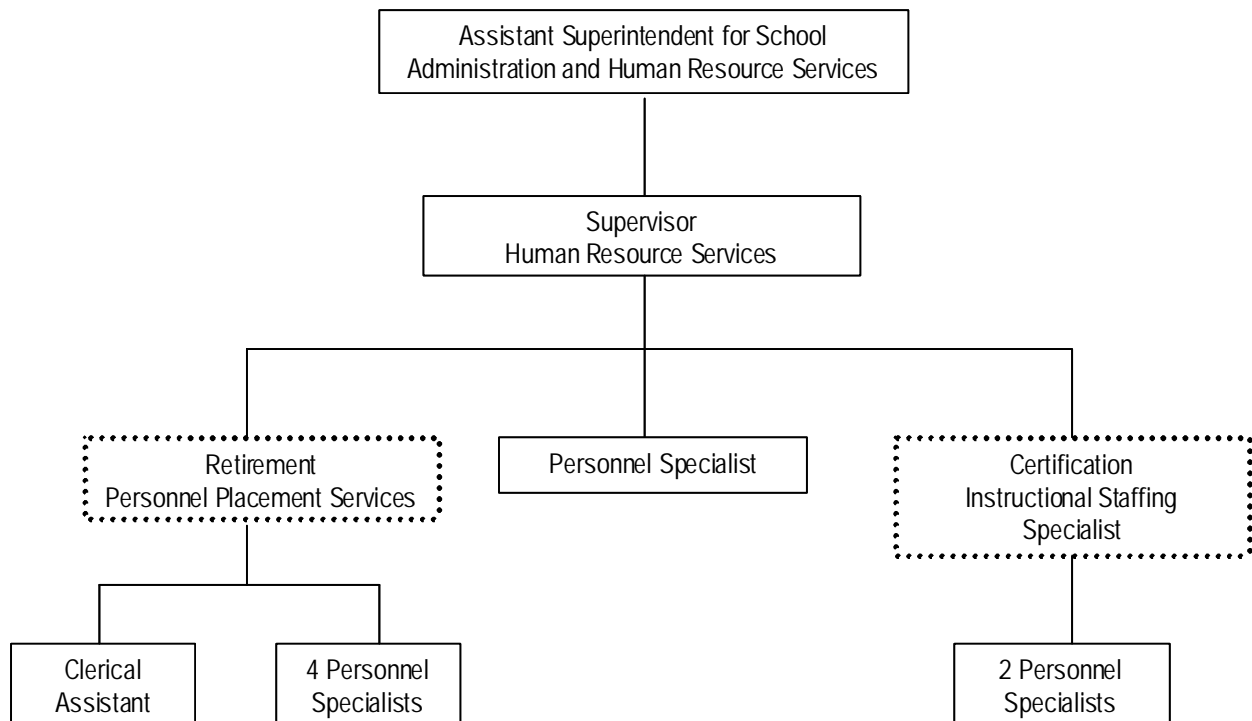
The Personnel department had established three primary goals as of 2000-01 (the department's objectives are discussed in more detail on page 7-24):

- provide the Personnel department the ability to accept employment applications with the inclusion of other processes via the world wide web by the year 2001;
- enhance the existing in-service offering for school based and potential school based administrators to satisfy the state guidelines for the district's Human Resource Management Development (HRMD) Plan; and
- develop a program of "Growing Our Own" instructional force to assist in developing and fulfilling the employment needs in the next five years.

All employees, ultimately, report to the Superintendent. Most of the personnel function covered in this chapter is within the administrative realm of the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services (see organizational chart in Exhibit 7-3), except for the workers' compensation program and staff development. The Office of Risk Management, which reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services manages the workers' compensation program. The Supervisor of Staff Development and Instructional Media, who is responsible for the district's staff development program, reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

The current Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services position was created in November 2000. The incumbent of that position has worked for the district for 30 years and is well versed in personnel matters. The current organizational structure of the Personnel department is shown as Exhibit 7-3. In addition to her personnel responsibilities, she also supervises the district's Safe Schools Program.

Exhibit 7-3

District Personnel Department Organizational Structure

Source: The Lake County School District

Methodology

ValienteHernandez P.A. conducted on-site interviews with district level managers and gathered information on the personnel system and benefit program such as the district's human resource policies and procedures. This assessment also involved research of Florida law. To receive additional input, ValienteHernandez P.A. surveyed district-level staff, principals, teachers, and classified staff. Questions varied depending on the group surveyed, and the results have been incorporated into this chapter where applicable.

Findings and Recommendations

Staff Recruitment, Hiring, Training, and Retention

Goal A: **The district recruits, hires, trains, and retains qualified staff to achieve the best value.**

1 The district's recruiting and application processes are adequate to ensure that qualified personnel are hired, although increased automation and district-wide coordination of applications are needed.

The district conducts background checks of personnel to ensure the safety of its students, uses detailed job posting and employment procedures that assure equal opportunities. The district has procedures to recruit and hire qualified personnel. However, like many Florida school districts, Lake County has hired a number of teachers to teach subjects for which they have not been certified (out-of-field teachers).

The District's Application Procedures

The district uses a combination of centralized and decentralized efforts to recruit potential applicants, process applications, and hire new employees. The district office assumes the primary responsibility for initial recruiting and for processing applications for instructional positions, while the responsibility for hiring teachers and other school-based personnel lies with the individual school principals.

The district's Personnel department maintains a complete and current list of vacancies and places notice of each vacancy on the district's website, job hotline, and position vacancies bulletin. The job postings typically identify the position title, the position control number, the posting date, salary, the physical location of the position, minimum qualifications, and application procedure.

To be considered for an instructional position, an applicant must provide a written application to the district. The district's application packet for instructional positions solicits the essential information needed from each employee. The application also requests the applicant's educational background and teaching and non-teaching work experiences. The applicant must indicate whether they have ever been arrested and whether they claim any veteran's preference. The applicant must submit a copy of school transcripts and identify three references. Although the applications are submitted to the district for processing, hiring decisions of instructional positions are made at the school level. After submitting an application to the district, applicants for instructional positions are advised to contact schools with advertised vacancies to schedule employment interviews.

Applicants for non-instructional positions are required to send completed applications directly to the supervisor listed on vacancy announcements. In an October 2000 review, the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) found that non-instructional applications were maintained in a decentralized fashion, so that managers did not have access to a district wide pool. It was recommended that the district centralize the non-instructional application process so that the personnel office would handle certain functions prior to an employee being interviewed by the managers, and that the district establish an on-line applicant tracking system for ready access to application information by all managers. These recommendations have not yet been implemented.

By placing the burden upon the applicant for contacting supervisors in order to be considered for positions at various school sites, good applicants may become discouraged without being considered for all openings. An on-line application tracking system would be useful for both instructional and non-instructional hiring processes by enabling principals to access information on all of the persons who have submitted applications for employment within the district, rather than just those who contact them.

Out-of-Field Teachers Are Utilized According to State Laws

The recruitment program for instructional personnel is fairly comprehensive, featuring printed brochures, recruitment packets, and participation in major state job fairs. The district indicated that it had sufficient numbers of applicants for non-instructional positions, but that there were shortages of applicants for some instructional positions.

If a principal is unable to find an applicant who is certified in the appropriate field to fill a vacant position, that principal can consider options as specified by Florida Law. Florida Law has established provisions to use out-of-field teachers. An “out-of-field teacher” is certified to teach, but not to teach the particular subject that is being assigned. “Out-of-field” teachers are expected to receive additional training in the subject they are teaching, and Florida law requires that the parents of a student be notified when the student is being taught by an out-of field teacher.¹

The district has a process for monitoring changes in the number of out-of-field teachers, as each out-of-field placement must be approved by the school board. The district reported it had a total of 188 out-of-field teachers employed for the school year 2000-01, including 54 who were hired as first year teachers for that year. The district has decreased the number of out-of-field teachers hired/appointed over 50% in the past three years.

Some Job Descriptions Need to Be Reviewed

Job descriptions serve the district by providing clear and succinct statements of the duties and responsibilities of each employee of the district. Based on interviews and discussions with employees at all levels and a review of existing job descriptions, the district needs to do a better job of reviewing and updating its job descriptions. ValienteHernandez P.A. found examples of job descriptions that did not appear to have been reviewed or updated within the past six years, and identified several positions in which the duties of the position did not match the job description.

Up-to-date job descriptions are important to ensure the appropriate staff is recruited, hired, or promoted to meet current needs rather than outdated needs. The district does not have a comprehensive plan or schedule for updating job descriptions, but we noted that some job descriptions were updated during the year 2000. The district’s job descriptions include a list of the required qualifications, including education and experience, desirable factors, reporting relationships, a listing of general duties, length of contract (if applicable), and applicable salary schedule.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop a schedule for routinely updating its job descriptions at least once every four years to accurately reflect the duties of the position, educational and experience requirements, required qualifications, supervisory responsibilities, and salary levels. Additionally, job descriptions could be reviewed during the annual employee evaluation.*

¹ Section 231.095, F.S., requires that parents or guardians be notified when a teacher is assigned teaching duties dealing with a subject matter that is outside the field in which the teacher is certified, outside the field that was the applicant’s minor field of study, or outside the field in which the teacher has demonstrated sufficient subject area expertise.

Action Plan 7-1 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-1

Complete Revision of Job Descriptions

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish a schedule for routinely updating all job descriptions to accurately reflect the duties of the position, educational and experience requirements, required qualifications, supervisory responsibilities, and salary levels. The district should continue to date the job descriptions when reviewed and/or revised.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Step 1: The Personnel department supervisor, or her designee, should develop, with input from department heads and appropriate staff in each department, a schedule by which all job descriptions will be routinely updated at least once every four years.</p> <p>Step 2: Step 2: This schedule designates the process for updating job descriptions (i.e., in conjunction with annual evaluations once every four years), and guidelines for the format and content of the job descriptions.</p> <p>Step 3: Step 3: A schedule should be established by June 2002, with the expectation that all job descriptions more than four years old should be initially updated by June 2003.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Personnel Services Supervisor
Time Frame	To be completed by June 30, 2003.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2 The district maintains a reasonably stable work force through competitive salary and benefit packages and through district-wide efforts to address and remedy factors that contribute to increased turnover.

Currently, the district revises salary schedules and makes overall salary adjustments annually based on available funding and collective bargaining constraints. The district's employee compensation and benefit package is similar to its peer districts. The district pays 100% of the cost of health insurance for eligible employees. Employees may add their spouse or eligible dependents to their coverage at additional cost to the employee. Also, the district conducts exit conferences and has begun to analyze the results of these conferences in order to identify factors that contribute to employee turnover.

District's Turnover Appears to Be About Average When Compared to Its Peer Districts

Teacher turnover can be measured by looking at the number of new hires as well as by evaluating the number of exits. Available data suggests that, as of June 2001, the district had hired 212 instructional personnel for the 2000-01 school year, for a new hire rate of 12%, a rate that falls in between the rates of its peer districts, but is far below the 20% rate in Osceola County (see Exhibit 7-4). In terms of teacher exits,

DOE has begun to collect statewide turnover data from the exit interviews conducted and submitted by districts, and according to preliminary data for July 1, 2000, to June 30, 2001, DOE reported that 4.8% of the district's teachers had separated from teaching, compared to a statewide average of 5.2%.

Exhibit 7-4

The District Ranks in the Middle of Its Peer Counties in Percentage of New Instructional Staff Hired in 2000-01 School Year

School District	Total Instructional Staff Hired	Total Instructional Positions	Percentage New Instructional Staff
Alachua	No Response	No Response	No Response
Charlotte	101	1,020	10%
Lake	212	1,761	12%
Okaloosa	160	1,800	9%
Osceola	408	2,048	20%
St. Johns	No Response	No Response	No Response
Santa Rosa	195	1,487	13%

Source: Lake County and Peer Districts 2000-01.

Lake Teacher Salaries Are Slightly Lower Than Average for Peer Districts

DOE collects data on the average salaries of selected positions throughout the state. Additionally, DOE does not include any comparison of duties, qualifications, or length of experience; therefore, while comparisons at individual positions are not conclusive, they can be useful in showing where the district generally stands when compared to similar others.

Exhibit 7-5 illustrates the average salaries of district teachers compared with average salaries of teachers in the peer districts for the 1999-2000 school year (the most recent year for which data is available). The average salaries of Lake County's schoolteachers with bachelor's and master's degrees, and those of specialists, fall slightly below the peer district and state average. Among teachers with doctoral degrees, the district's average salary is the lowest when compared to the peer districts.

ValienteHernandez P.A. also compared the average salaries of district teachers with those of competing (neighboring) districts in the Central Florida area, including Orange, Seminole and Volusia, and found that Lake's average salaries were again slightly lower but in this case, closer to the average teacher salaries in each of the competing districts. Refer to Exhibit 7-6.

District staff said that the district is exploring the need for a job analysis and compensation study, which would enable it to revise salaries throughout the district. We recommend the district conduct this study and in the meantime, the district should identify those positions that are in most need for an increase in salary. The necessary steps to implement this recommendation and the related fiscal impact are reflected in Chapter 3, Action Plan 3-4, Recommendation 5.

Exhibit 7-5**Lake County Average Teachers' Salaries Were Generally Lower Than Salaries in Peer Districts for the 2000-01 School Year**

District	Bachelor's	Master's	Specialist	Doctorate	All Degrees
Lake	\$32,320	\$38,341	\$43,522	\$40,698	\$34,465
Alachua	31,281	35,609	38,249	42,423	34,216
Charlotte	33,445	41,262	48,133	46,284	37,425
Okaloosa	36,815	44,018	47,463	54,330	40,082
Osceola	31,174	37,460	39,586	42,853	33,421
Santa Rosa	33,383	40,308	43,557	46,138	35,905
St. Johns	32,887	38,716	-	41,107	35,279
Average Without Lake County	\$33,164	\$39,562	\$43,398	\$45,523	\$36,055
State Average	\$35,171	\$42,115	\$50,074	\$48,910	\$38,230

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts 2000-01. Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services, Florida DOE.

Exhibit 7-6**Lake County Average Teachers' Salaries Were slightly Lower Than Nearby Competing Districts for the 2000-01 School Year**

District	Bachelor's	Master's	Specialist	Doctorate	All Degrees
Lake	\$32,320	\$38,341	\$43,522	\$40,698	\$34,465
Marion	32,978	38,517	43,905	43,250	34,850
Orange	32,390	38,323	42,835	42,217	34,604
Osceola	31,174	37,460	39,586	42,853	33,421
Pasco	33,108	38,278	40,950	40,649	35,022
Seminole	33,012	40,464	45,956	47,725	36,667
Volusia	32,940	40,264	45,547	45,382	35,995
Average Without Lake County	\$32,600	\$38,884	\$43,130	\$43,679	\$35,093
State Average	\$35,171	\$42,115	\$50,074	\$48,910	\$38,230

Source: Florida Department of Education, Profiles of Florida School Districts 2000-01.

Lake County Pays More for Employee Health Insurance Benefits Than Most Peer Districts

The district pays more for its employee health insurance coverage than all but one of its peer districts. Exhibit 7-7 shows that the total annual cost of health coverage plans in the district compared to its peers. The district pays the cost of single health coverage and requires its employees to pay the additional cost of any dependents' coverage (i.e., family coverage, employee plus one, or employee plus spouse), while the other counties vary on the amounts that they pay toward dependents' coverage. Two of the peer districts require employees to contribute some portion of the cost of the employee's health insurance benefit, but this is commonly an issue that is negotiated through collective bargaining.

Exhibit 7-7**Lake's Contribution to Health Coverage Is the Second Highest Among Its Peer Districts**

District Plan	Total Annual Cost	Single Coverage	
		Board Share	Employee Share
Alachua	\$1,793	\$1,793	\$0
Charlotte	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$0
Lake	\$3,512	\$3,512	\$0
Okaloosa	\$2,656	\$2,656	\$0
Osceola	\$3,096	3,096	\$0
Santa Rosa	\$2,965	\$2,785	\$180
St. Johns	\$3,235	\$2,617	\$618

Source: Compiled by ValienteHernandez P.A. based on information obtained from the peer districts and Lake District. Several districts offer additional health insurance options for single coverage which require an employee contribution. This chart indicates the standard cost to the district and the most favorable plan in terms of employee payroll cost.

The District Has Developed Policies to Reward Well-Performing Employees

As required by s. 231.29, *Florida Statutes*, the district established a performance pay plan for instructional employees for the 2000-01 school year. This plan has three possible performance award options, one for attendance, one for a school improvement project, and one for college credit or staff development in-service credit. Teachers become eligible for these incentive payments by receiving a qualifying score on their performance assessments. Eligible teachers may select only one of the performance award options, and receive an award of up to \$400.

The District Has Begun to Collect and Review Exit Conference Data

As required by the state of Florida, the district conducts exit interviews with employees who terminate employment and submit the information from those interviews to the state Department of Education, which posts similar information from all districts on its website. District officials have conducted some preliminary analysis of this data, and indicated that this information is used for collective bargaining and recruitment purposes. It is important that the district develop practices to routinely review this information to identify trends and potential issues that can assist the district with both the recruitment and retention of its staff.

The District Compares Selected Information With Its Peer Districts

The district periodically compares its compensation and benefit package with the same for neighboring and similar sized districts, as well as to other public and private employers in its geographic area. The district routinely exchanges cost data and benefit information with other districts. The district exchanges cost data and benefits under the workers' compensation plan with other Florida based districts. The district's insurance consultant recently performed a comparison of the district's other employee benefits with its peer group.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that, as a part of its review of the exit conference data, the district should summarize these findings annually into a document to be used as a tool in a plan to manage employee turnover, especially among instructional staff.*

Action Plan 7-2 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-2

Use Exit Conference Data in a Plan to Manage Employee Turnover

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Annually evaluate the reasons most commonly given by employees resigning their positions and summarize these findings into a document to be used as a tool in a plan to manage employee turnover, especially among the instructional staff.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services should assign the responsibility to carry out this recommendation to the personnel supervisor, assisted by others within the Personnel department.</p> <p>Step 2: The personnel supervisor, or her designee, should review data from exit interviews previously conducted, and develop baseline summaries of the information gleaned from those summaries.</p> <p>Step 3: Data from Lake County should be compared with available data from other districts to determine whether and how Lake County trends may differ from other districts within the state.</p> <p>Step 4: An annual summary report should be made to the school board to describe the magnitude of the turnover within the district, and should include recommendations as appropriate to address concerns or issues raised within the exit interviews or the review of exit interview data.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002, and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

3 The district's staff development program for non-instructional employees should be more coordinated in order to ensure that the district maintains high levels of productivity and employee performance.

The district's staff development program for non-instructional employees is somewhat fragmented, and does not include defined processes for identifying staff training needs, orienting all new employees to district goals and priorities, coordinating staff development activities among all departments, and

providing all staff members with development opportunities. The district needs to systemize the training and development of its non-instructional employees to maximize productivity.

The District's Training Program for Non-Instructional Staff Is Not Well-Coordinated

The district provides training for the non-instructional employees, but it has not had a good system for consistently and effectively managing, tracking and monitoring training. Training opportunities for non-instructional employees are fragmented and dispersed across the district. Training in some departments such as food service and transportation is provided by the department itself with limited support and coordination from the district training office. In other cases, the districts office provides some additional training for selected non-instructional staff. While it is not necessary for the district training office to direct the delivery of all training opportunities, this office should play a role in determining training needs and evaluating the adequacy of the training provided.

The staff development office has added an extensive training component for custodial and transportation staff in its Master In-service Plan 2001. The training to be offered during the upcoming year is illustrated in Exhibit 7- 8 and Exhibit 7-9.

Exhibit 7-8

Training Provided by the Learning Resource Center For Custodial Staff

Custodial Training		
New Custodians	Certified Custodian Training (61 hours) (15 Consecutive Work Days)	Certified Custodian Training (61 HOURS) (15 Consecutive Work Days)
Custodians	Master Custodian Training (39 hours) (10 Consecutive Work Days)	Custodial In Service and Recertification (Held on Teacher Workdays)

Source: Compiled by ValienteHernandez P.A. based on information obtained from the peer districts.

Exhibit 7-9

Transportation Staff Training Provided by the Learning Resource Center

Transportation Training		
Transportation	Verbal De-Escalation Skills Transportation Training (4 hours)	Reporting Student Misconduct Transportation Training (2 hours)
	Managing Student Conduct Transportation Training (4 hours)	Communication Skills Transportation Training (2 hours)
	Computer Basics Transportation Training (4 hours)	First Aid Transportation Training (8 hours)
	Conversational Spanish Transportation Training (4 hours)	ESE Transportation (Bus) Training Transportation Training (8 hours)
	CPR Refresher Training for Bus Drivers Transportation Training (4 hours)	Recognizing the Signs Transportation Training (4 hours)
	Looking at Bullying, Baiting and Abuse Transportation Training (2 hours)	Managing Student Conduct Transportation Training (4 hours)
	Effective Parent Communication Transportation Training (2 hours)	First Aid Refresher Transportation Training (2 hours)

Transportation Training	
Helping Students Handle Grief and Loss Transportation Training (2 hours)	Appreciating Different Cultures Transportation Training (4 hours)
Rules of the Road Safe Driving Skills Transportation Training (2 hours)	Reporting Student Conduct Transportation Training (2 hours)
Bloodborne Pathogens and Wellness Transportation Training (2 hours)	All Stressed up and Nowhere to Go Transportation Training (2 hours)
Fire Safety Transportation Training (2 hours)	

Source: Compiled by ValienteHernandez P.A. based on information obtained from the peer districts.

The staff development office is also responsible for maintaining in-service training records for all district staff. Currently, these records only reflect the training provided by the staff development office and selected other units. Training provided by some departments is not included in the district's training database. A strategic plan would assist the district's staff development office in organizing the district's training efforts to achieve the district goals and objectives and forming a comprehensive training program.

Non-Instructional Employees Expressed That They Know How To Do Their Jobs

Despite the lack of a well-coordinated training program, over 95% of the non-instructional employees that responded to the ValienteHernandez P.A. survey conducted in April 2000 agreed with a statement that they had been adequately trained, and 97% agreed that they knew how to do their jobs. Although the district could improve the coordination of its training program for non-instructional staff by basing non-instructional training plans on needs assessments and by evaluating training delivery, Exhibit 7-10 suggests that the needed training is occurring in most cases. While it would be in the district's best interest to have a more structured training plan for non-instructional staff, major changes in the training provided does not appear to be needed.

Exhibit 7-10

Non-Instructional Staff Agree They Have Been Trained and Know How To Do Their Jobs

SURVEY GROUP (s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Non-Instructional Staff (s = 120; n = 104)	Mission and goals of my department are clear to me	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	I have been trained properly in order to carry out my tasks.	95.2%	4.8%	0.0%
	I know exactly how to do my job.	97.6%	2.4%	0.0%
	I attended an orientation program as part of my training process.	47.5%	45.0%	7.5%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district use a coordinated effort to register all the training that is offered for non-instructional employees by all departments and the staff development office.*

Action Plan 7-3 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-3

Coordinated Non-Instructional Training Program

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a strategic plan to coordinate the training provided to non-instructional staff through the district's staff development program
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor for Staff Development and Instructional Media should develop, in conjunction with department heads, clear and succinct expectations for what should be included within the non-instructional training plans.</p> <p>Step 2: An annual needs assessment component should be included within the training plan for non-instructional staff.</p> <p>Step 3: The staff development center should work with department heads to develop tools to assist with the recording and evaluating of orientation and training received by each employee.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Staff Development and Instructional Media
Time Frame	September 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4 The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for instructional employees to attain and maintain high quality instruction and to achieve high levels of student performance.

The district's staff development program for instructional employees is comprehensive and is focused to assist staff in achieving overall district goals and established priorities. In-service activities planned by the staff development office offer many opportunities designed to enhance and augment the skill, attitudes, and knowledge of staff. Needs assessments and evaluation procedures are a part of the staff development program for instructional employees.

The District Has a Centralized Orientation Program

The district conducts orientation programs for all new instructional employees, including information on district procedures, performance expectations and evaluations, training and career opportunities, and personnel policies. According to a survey by ValienteHernandez P.A., 80.5% of district teachers strongly agree/agree the district conducts orientation programs for all new teachers that include information on district procedures, performance expectations and evaluations.

The district has implemented the Teacher Orientation Program (TOP), which takes two days to complete. On the first day of TOP, the supervisor of staff development and human resource services welcomes new teachers. Following this introduction, the participants hear from risk management, payroll department, school credit union, and student services. Finally, the new teachers hear about certification issues, special needs students, and TOP guidelines. The second day consists of training in professional ethics, district policies and procedures, management of student conduct, planning and grading, and Sunshine State Standards and the Florida Comprehensive Academic Test (FCAT).

The District Uses a Comprehensive Staff Development Program for Instructional Staff

The district has developed a comprehensive program entitled Classroom Teaching 101, a 30-hour course targeting new teachers who have little or no teaching experience, to provide them with the opportunity to learn the additional skills necessary to be successful. The six five-hour sessions focus on the best practices in classroom teaching and demonstrations of the Florida Minimum Teaching Competencies. Exhibit 7-11 shows the topics covered by these classes.

Exhibit 7-11

Classroom Teaching 101

1. Session 1:

- Professionalism
- Creating a Learning Environment
- Communication Skills

2. Session 2:

- Classroom Management

3. Session 3:

- Planning a Lesson
- Assessment

4. Session 4:

- Teaching the Lesson
- Teaching and Learning Strategies

5. Session 5:

- Classroom Visitation

6. Session 6:

- Assessing Analyzing School Work
-

Source: Compiled by ValienteHernandez P.A based on information obtained from the district.

The district staff development program includes a mentoring component for new teachers. Mentors are assigned to each new teacher to provide guidance and advice as the new employee learns the various aspect of the job.

The district has established, implemented, and published an annual staff development plan for its instructional employees. The plan includes clearly identified objectives for district-provided training, including improved student performance. Three times a year, the district issues in-service schedules for all departments, including objectives for student performance and other goals. Additionally, the district has

procedures to evaluate individual in-service training activities, based on its impact on student outcomes. Training for instructional staff includes the following components:

- research-based teaching strategies in student learning and development;
- strategies for assessing student performance;
- follow-up necessary to ensure improvement;
- a variety of training approaches (e.g., lecture, simulation of techniques, observation, classroom practice and feedback).

5 The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for school-based administrators.

The district's staff development program for school-based administrators is comprehensive. It is focused on assisting managers and potential managers to achieve overall district goals and priorities. The Supervisor of Human Resource Services is responsible for tracking the progress of potential leaders through the leadership training program. In-service activities offer varied opportunities designed to improve and augment the skills, attitudes, and knowledge of both potential and existing leaders.

Four Levels of Managerial Training

The leadership development program for potential school leaders provides these individuals with information that will enable them to acquire additional job-related experience prior to applying for a school leadership position. An employee with a valid teaching certificate who wishes to learn more about the principalships in the district may participate in the Managerial Awareness Training component on a voluntary basis.

After completion of the prerequisite, Managerial Awareness Training component, the individual is eligible for selection into the principal internship program. Trained and qualified individuals are assigned to either the Assistant Principal Pool, the Dean Pool, or the Principal Pool. Applications for these pools are taken at least once each year. To be eligible for the Principal Pool individuals must have been a Principal, an interim Principal, or an Assistant Principal. Any person interested in being considered as a candidate for Assistant Principal must complete all requirements within the established time line. The administrative internship program is designed to teach new skills and refine the abilities of potential school principals. The program includes on-the-job training for assistant principals and deans, and enables the district to select new principals from a pool of persons who have been through structured training and an internship program.

One component of the leadership training program for administrators and school-based managers is the district's Administrative Academy. The Administrative Academy is composed of four groups and each group has a set schedule of hours and classes as listed below

Group 1 (Managerial Awareness for Aspiring Administrators)

- 6 hours Instructional Personnel Performance Appraisal System (IPPAS) Training
- 12 hours Clinical Education
- 12 hours Managerial Awareness
- 14 hours Customer Relations

- 18 hours Florida Performance Management System (FPMS)

Group 2 and Group 3 (Preparing New Principals)

- 30 hours Policies and Practices (first year)
- 30 hours Instructional Leadership (second year)
- Required classes:
 - Technology Inservice; Assessment/Data Analysis; Reading, Writing, and Math Strategies; Teacher Evaluation; Special Populations; School Safety; Management Training Institute Inservice; District IPPAS Update

Group 4 (Veteran Administrators)

- 15 hours Budgets, Leadership, Time Management/Delegation; Goal Setting/School Improvement; Community Involvement, Hot Topics/The National Perspective; IPPAS Update; and Any Policies and Practices.

6

The district's system for formally evaluating employees is designed to improve and reward excellent performance and productivity, and to identify and address performance that does not meet the district's expectations for the employee.

The district has in place a process whereby all district employees should be formally evaluated at least once a year. Written procedures direct the evaluation of instructional employees through a system known as the Instructional Personnel Performance Appraisal System (IPPAS). The Principal Performance Appraisal System and District Administrative Performance Appraisal System guide administrative, professional, and supervisory personnel in leadership positions through the appraisal process. Both of these systems have measures and standards that relate to the performance of the employee.

As part of the appraisal system, the district requires that suggestions for improvement be part of the evaluation process, and if a performance or disciplinary concern is noted, it is defined in writing and due process ensured. The district has a policy for terminating poorly performing teachers and other employees.

The District Has a System That Guides Efforts to Improve the Performance of Its Employees

Instructional and Administrative Personnel

The district has written procedures for the evaluation of the performance of instructional personnel. As required by state law, the district has tied student achievement to its performance evaluations. DOE has approved the district's performance appraisal system; all requirements and conditions established by the State of Florida have been met. Data and indicators of student performance are used as a part of the evaluation of instructional personnel and administrators.

The comment sections of all evaluation instruments are provided for specific feedback and comments about an employee's performance. If an employee's performance falls in either the unsatisfactory or needs improvement category, the evaluation instrument provides written notice to the employee, a conference is held, a written assistance plan is provided, and a specific and reasonable period of time given to correct deficiencies. When an unsatisfactory rating is given to an instructional employee, a professional development plan must be provided to the employee. Specific strategies, suggestions, and/or improvement recommendations in the areas noted as deficient are enumerated. In some cases as defined by labor contracts, an employee may be placed on probationary status.

If management determines that dismissal of an employee may be necessary, specific due process is followed. A written notice is provided to the employee that states that specific deficiencies, if not corrected, could lead to dismissal. The deficiencies are explained and suggestions given to correct the deficiencies. A written description of assistance is offered, and a written, specified timeframe is provided to correct the deficiencies.

The process used in the evaluation of instructional personnel is laid out in the IPPAS which clearly details the orientation, observation, performance ratings, professional development, career counseling, employee coaching, evaluator training, and professional performance standards. The appraisal system uses data and indicators of student performance as part of the evaluation of instructional personnel.

The personnel services office monitors the evaluation process and is responsible for ensuring that all employees are evaluated. Supervisory staff is notified as to when the appraisals must be completed and returned to the Personnel department. Also, the district annually compiles information on teachers' evaluations to determine what employee performance areas received unacceptable ratings.

Non-Instructional Personnel

The district has written assessment forms for non-instructional staff such as food service, clerical/teacher aids, bus drivers, maintenance, and custodial and grounds. The employee receives an assessment rating for each evaluation area. Most of the job assessments cover areas such as appearance, cooperation, dependability, health, initiative, and knowledge of the job. Some of the evaluation areas vary depending on the duties of the position. For example, safety and care are included in maintenance, bus drivers and custodial and grounds job assessments.

Also, a comment section is included in the non-instructional staff job assessments. The comment sections of all evaluation instruments are provided for specific feedback and comments about an employee's performance. The employee, the evaluator, and the department head each sign the evaluation.

The District Requires Training on How to Conduct a Personnel Evaluation

Based on the interviews and the information gathered ValienteHernandez P.A. determined that the district does provide training to all employees conducting personnel evaluations. IPPAS and/or PPAS training is provided to all administrators. Providing training to personnel helps ensure that the evaluations are objective, fact-based, timely, and consistently performed. New legislation requires school districts to evaluate administrators and supervisors on how they evaluate instructional personnel. To ensure that assessment criteria and evaluation procedures have been used effectively by the evaluator, performance appraisals are to be reviewed. If an evaluation is not completed properly or is not submitted on time, a less than effective rating may be given to the evaluator.

7 The district ensures that employees who repeatedly fail to meet the district's performance expectations, or whose behavior or job performance is potentially harmful to students, are promptly removed from contact with students and, if required, that the appropriate steps are taken to terminate the person's employment.

The district ensures that employees who repeatedly fail to meet the performance expectations and whose behavior or job performance is potentially harmful to students are terminated according to proper procedures in accordance with state law. Poorly performing employees do not appear to be repeatedly transferred among school sites in lieu of termination of their employment.

The District Takes Steps to Evaluate Reports of Employee Misconduct or Poor Job Performance

The district has procedures that provide for a prompt investigation and resolution of allegations of a district employee's behavior that is potentially harmful to students. An employee that has been reported for behavioral or job performance issues that may be potentially harmful to students may be removed from student contact, as deemed necessary. In such cases, after an allegation is made, an evaluation of the situation is conducted to determine if the employee should be reassigned.

District officials affirmed that it is their policy to keep the primary focus on delivering quality services to students while ensuring the fairness due to the employee in making personnel decisions. An investigation is launched according to school board policies and statutory requirements. The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services is responsible for the conduct of an investigation. During the investigation, a review of the formal complaint is done. After the investigation, the employee might be retained in the current position, terminated, or reassigned.

The District Takes Appropriate Steps Before Making the Decision to Terminate Staff

The district does not terminate employees who are below standards until an effort has been made to salvage the employment relationship. The district has written policies for terminating principals, teachers, and classified staff.

Prior to management coming to the point of determining that dismissal of an employee may be necessary, the district procedures provide for counseling the employee and the establishment of an individual development plan. The district uses a process called the NEAT procedure before coming to a determination about whether a staff member should be terminated, which includes:

- N - Notice of alleged deficiencies which, if not corrected, would lead to dismissal;
- E - Explanation to the teacher of alleged deficiencies and suggestions for correction;
- A - Assistance rendered by the administration to correct alleged deficiencies; and
- T - Time for alleged deficiencies to be corrected.

The district's process for monitoring the ongoing performance of marginal and poorly performing employees ensure that either performance is improved or employment is terminated.

Management of Human Resources

Goal B: The district's human resource unit functions efficiently and effectively in managing the district's human resources.

8 While the district has different ways to correspond with employees, it could further improve by implementing additional mechanisms to better the effectiveness of communications.

The district generally communicates performance expectations to its employees. Expectations are articulated through both written and verbal communications. The district conducted a climate survey of employees in May 2000. Although the district has several channels of communications in place plus others in the process of development, the district would further benefit by developing an employee handbook and/or a standard employee newsletter. Additionally, results of a survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2000 indicated that there is room for improvement in the communications with employees. (See Chapter 3 Action 3-1 Recommendation 2 for additional reference.)

Channels of Communication Exist, Electronically and in Written Form

Currently, a new employee is provided with an assortment of publications about insurance, retirement, worker's compensation, sexual harassment, blood borne pathogens, and paid holidays. The board provides a copy of the bargaining contracts at each work site, although distribution of the contract to individual members is the responsibility of the unions.

Employees have access to district personnel matters through a district maintained internet/intranet-based web site that, while still under construction, contains current detailed pertinent information for employees, including district personnel policies, a district calendar, district (headquarters) office staffing information, and other relevant district data and information.

The district has established cost-effective means of directly informing employee of district news, policy and personnel changes, and other relevant information. For example, all employees receive the insurance newsletter delivered through interoffice mail. Also, email is used to communicate with teachers and administrators.

The District Makes Efforts to Solicit Feedback From Staff

The district has periodic opportunities for staff to provide feedback and input about the attitudes, job satisfaction, support, and morale. A useful medium that provided feedback to the district is the climate survey issued May 2000 by the district for school accountability purposes. The survey was given to each staff member and 2,628 (75%) responded. The survey asked questions in regard to the learning/working environment, compensation/recognition and evaluation, resources/training, communication, and community involvement /support. In the survey, 53% of the employees agreed that "Job related information is effectively communicated," and 47% agreed that "There are appropriate methods to provide input on policies and procedures." The number disagreeing with those two statements was 26% and 27%, respectively. Although the district is doing many positive things to communicate with its employees, these responses suggest that there is room for the district to improve its efforts to

communicate with its employees. It should be noted that this survey was made in the spring of 2000, prior to the change in district administration.

9 The district has efficient and cost-effective policies and practices for providing substitute teachers and other substitute personnel.

Substitutes are routinely provided district wide, as needed. School board policy 6.145 guides the provision of substitute teachers and while there are no written policies for providing substitution for non-instructional personnel, the district's management believes that there is no shortage of non-instructional substitutes.

Substitution of Teachers Is Carried out Through an Efficient Policy

The district has an efficient policy for providing substitute teachers. Each school principal is authorized to employ a substitute when an instructional staff member is unable to perform assigned duties. The principal can obtain substitute teachers from an approved list published by the Personnel department. As of March 30, 2001, there were 388 approved substitute teachers.

The Personnel department approves applicants as substitute teachers, provided their qualifications are found to be satisfactory. For example, a potential substitute teacher must hold a high school diploma or equivalent, be at least 18 years of age, submit a complete set of fingerprints, and submit to a drug test from a board-approved testing laboratory. An applicant is not eligible for substitute teaching until approved. The compensation for substitute teaching services rendered range from a minimum of \$40 per day to a maximum of \$60 per day, based on training and experience.

Training and orientation for substitute teachers is provided at the beginning of fall and spring semesters (Substitute 101) and additional training is offered later during each semester (Substitute 201). The training is to provide them with instructional strategies in math, writing, and reading to help involve students in content learning.

10 The district maintains personnel records in a highly efficient and accessible manner.

Personnel records are maintained in an obtainable manner, which can be easily accessed in accordance with state statutes. The district does not have a sufficient, automated record-keeping system. Efficient recording allows for files to be easily updated in a timelier manner at all levels of the district.

Although Personnel Records Are Stored as Required by State Statutes, Fireproof Cabinets and Increased Imaging of Old Records Would Enhance the Safety of Those Records

The district maintains individual personnel records for all employees, as required by applicable state law. The primary reason for keeping personnel records is to maintain a work history of the employee. School board policy number 6.90 requires personnel records be maintained by the Superintendent on each employee. Records include application for employment, references, annual evaluations, letters of

recommendation, data substantiating placement on the salary schedule, teaching certificate for teachers, and any other pertinent data.

ValienteHernandez P.A. noted that the some of the file cabinets used for storage of personnel records are in offices that are not fireproof. The district needs to ensure that all records are protected from fire by providing adequate storage. The district is required to properly protect and retain specific records according to the state published schedule for maintaining archival records. According to law requirements, the district has to maintain certain records for periods ranging from a minimum of one year to twenty-five years or more.

Currently, the district is faced with limited file storage space and a growing number of records. Personnel transactions are primarily conducted via hardcopy and not electronically, resulting in an inordinate amount of paper transactions for the personnel office. Personnel files for the year of 1984 are now being imaged to ensure efficient use of space. Presently two or three people are used for a couple of hours each day to catch up on the backlog by microfilming personnel records. The district should consider contracting the imaging to relieve the backlog. Also, the consultant recommends in Chapter 6, Action Plan 6-13, Recommendation 1 that the district purchases an imaging, storage, and retrieval system. The Personnel department could benefit from this type of system.

District staff indicated that the Total Educational Records Management System (TERMS) software is projected to go on-line in December 2001. Updating the automated personnel record system will assist the district by allowing the district to access and review files more conveniently, such as determining whether evaluations have been completed or checking leave data.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that district secure fire retardant storage cabinets for the current year records. The district also needs to establish a system to identify which records need to be stored off-premises after being imaged.*

Additionally, we recommend that the district proceed with the archiving system for personnel records.

Action Plan 7-4 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-4

Storage and Archiving of Personnel Records

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Proceed with a comprehensive plan that complies with state regulation for maintaining and securing personnel records and files in a highly efficient and accessible manner. The district needs to acquire fire retardant file cabinets to store its personnel records and make increased use of imaged files for long-term filing.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor of Human Resource Services should develop a plan for the accelerated imaging of old personnel files and the storage of the remaining files in fireproof cabinets.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish a goal to have old employee records imaged by the end of the 2002-03 school year through outsourcing.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify a location and obtain a sufficient number of fire retardant file cabinets needed to secure the remaining paper personnel records. Budget for the acquisition of these cabinets.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Human Resource Services.
Time Frame	June 30, 2003
Fiscal Impact	Acquisition of fire retardant file cabinets at \$600 per cabinet is to be included in the normal budgetary process. Contracting the archiving system job would cost the district between \$5,000 and \$7,000. Total fiscal impact of this recommendations should be approximately \$10,000 to \$12,000.

11 The district uses cost containment practices for its Workers' Compensation Program.

The district's risk manager administers workers' compensation claims and expenses. He maintains original claim files, process payments, manage litigation and settlements, and controls and evaluates medical care.

Workers' compensation claims can result in significant costs to districts extending over several years, especially when more serious injuries are involved. Typically it takes several years to identify all costs associated with a claim. The district's expense history is displayed in Exhibit 7-12 below.

Exhibit 7-12

Number of Workers' Compensation Claims Increased Over the Past Three Years

	Fiscal Year		
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Total Amount Incurred	\$704,648	\$533,457	\$750,441
Total Incidents	217	178	232

Source: Compiled by ValienteHernandez P.A based on information obtained from the district.

The district has established an ongoing review of worker's compensation program to serve as a basis to evaluate how and why claims arise, and to monitor expenses. The district uses the results of these evaluations to produce a plan aiming at reducing exposure to worker's compensation claims and expenses.

Quest for Better Worker's Compensation Data

The district's risk manager was hired less than a year prior to ValienteHernandez P.A. site visit. Since assuming this role, he has taken an active role in reviewing existing workers' compensation claims and expenses. During this time, risk management staff has focused its priority on claims involving lost time

and work restrictions. District staff has identified means to facilitate employees' return to work. It would be in the district's best interest to review software packages that collect detailed data. The program should offer reports that include source of injury, number of injuries per cost center, and expenses per cost center. The information can be used to track progress for return to full duty work.

When the risk manager identifies a major change that needs to be made in the district's practices as a result of his assessment, a review of the job description and of the employee's ability to carry out the duties needs to be undertaken. He has concluded, in some instances, that certain employees incurred injuries because they were hired for jobs that they may not have the physical capabilities or stamina to perform. The risk manager cited an instance in which an employee was hired to do a job which he/she may not have been capable of doing and experienced injuries. The physical qualifications required for each job, such as the amount of weight that an employee must be able to lift, is included in district job descriptions. This information should be conveyed to the physicians who conduct the physical exams for new employees, with the expectation that the physician can determine whether the new employee can perform the tasks required for that specific job description. The desired result is to reduce, even eliminate, the risks associated with hiring a person for a specific position.

Results of Evaluations Are Used to Make Changes and Reduce Costs

The district uses the results of its evaluation of worker's compensation claims and expenses to reduce these costs, as practical. District staff cited a number of examples of how it uses the results of its evaluation of the district's worker's compensation claims and expenses.

- A review of claims indicated a time lag between the time the injuries happen and the time employees reported the injuries to his/her supervisor. To improve the effectiveness of claims management, risk management staff, enforced the completion of proper paperwork by the employee and the supervisor. Also, the injured employee has to be examined by the district's physician. If these procedures are not followed, then the claim would be denied. As a result of these procedures, the district reduced its exposure to fines or other punitive actions.
- The new risk manager has monitored lost time and restricted work claims resulted in the district staff utilizing an outside specialist to examine employees with on-the-job injuries. The district's goal is to reduce costs and to return staff to work as soon as possible.
- The district determined that a loss prevention program was needed, and one was implemented. This program is focused first to reduce the amount of the claims and to lower the number of claims.

Comparison to Other Districts

The district knows how it ranks compared to other school districts. The district is a member of the Florida School Boards Insurance Trust (FSBIT), which administers the worker's compensation claims. Losses experienced are compared to nine other members of FSBIT for possible remedial actions. Another objective of FSBIT is to pool similar small districts (Alachua, Citrus, Okeechobee, Osceola, Santa Rosa, and Taylor) together to get a better insurance rate. FSBIT now allows the district access to information on its claims that will allow the district to find patterns to reduce the frequency and cost of claims.

12

The district has taken important steps towards establishing accountability for the human resource program. The district could further improve by developing adequate measures and benchmarks to ensure the program's efficiency and effectiveness.

The district established annual objectives for the 2000-01 school year, but it has not established measures and benchmarks that can be used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the Personnel department from year to year.

Goals and Measures for Human Resource Services

As stated earlier, the district has stated three performance goals and objectives for the human resource program. While these goals are commendable, they are not sufficient to provide a basis for annual evaluation and comparison of department performance. For example, the district does not use either output or outcome performance benchmarks, such as number of applications processed, number of training hours offered, or average time for processing new hire paperwork. These measures can help the district identify areas of high or low performance, and potential areas for increased efficiency. Such performance measures should be chosen so as to enable the district to compare workload and performance across years.

Appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks would facilitate a periodic evaluation of the human resource program. Trends in performance can be noted and increases or decreases in workload can be measured. The availability of this kind of data would enable the district to periodically evaluate the performance its human resource program.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district establish and implement performance measures and benchmarks that can be used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of Personnel department functions. The use of standard measures and benchmarks can facilitate the comparison of department performance across years, and the comparison of district performance with its peer districts.*

Examples of performance measures the district could consider implementing to monitor personnel functions include

- *Percentage of retirements processed timely;*
- *Percentage of position descriptions approved within one month of final draft;*
- *Percentage of positions filled within 90 days of vacancies;*
- *Number and percentage of minorities in workforce in relationship to percent in community population;*
- *Percentage positive substance abuse screens;*
- *Number and percentage of grievances which are administered within the appropriate established time frames;*

- *Percentage of open grievance cases reviewed per month;*
- *Employee satisfaction with Personnel department;*
- *Percentage of personnel inquiries responded to same day and resolved within 2 weeks;*
- *Percentage of positions with no turnover;*
- *Percentage of performance evaluations reviewed by personnel within days of receipt;*
- *Hours spent per orientation/informational session provided.*

Action Plan 7-5 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-5

Utilization of Performance Accountability and Benchmarking

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish and implement accountability mechanisms to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Personnel department through a formal plan of action and subsequent evaluation. Select and utilize appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures and benchmarks, including comparisons to adjoining districts.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services should work with Personnel department staff to identify the most important functions performed by the department, and then to identify possible output and outcome measures of these functions. The district should utilize the list of performance measures shown above as a starting point in the selection of adequate measures.</p> <p>Step 2: Over the next year, the Personnel department should collect data on the measures identified to determine appropriate performance benchmarks, and to determine whether the most efficient means of collecting data on performance.</p> <p>Step 3: By the 2003-2004 school year, the Personnel department should develop a set of performance measures that will be used to evaluate the performance of the department.</p> <p>Step 4: At least annually, the Personnel department should report its performance on its measures to the School Board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services
Time Frame	September 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources. Potential savings created by efficiency.

13

Although the district does not have a standard periodic review of the organizational structure and staffing levels of the office of human resources, the district has made reasonable efforts to minimize administrative layers and processes within the department.

The district does not have a standard schedule or plan for periodically reviewing the staffing level of the Personnel department. According to department officials, the Personnel department's staffing patterns were most recently reviewed in 1998.

Human Resources Organizational Structure and Staffing Levels

The district's Personnel department (see Exhibit 7-3) consists of 10 staff members that perform a wide range of duties. Some functions included within the human resources function in other districts, such as staff development and risk management, are not assigned to the Personnel department in this district.

Although the district does not conduct routine reviews, the current staff complement appeared to be reasonable with the current workload and responsibilities. However, with additional automation and the increased use of electronic filing, the structure and staffing levels should be periodically reviewed. Although the district does not conduct a standard periodic evaluation of its personnel practices, the district has taken a number of steps to improve and adjusts its practices as needed to reduce cost and/or improve efficiency and effectiveness.

14

Although the district does not conduct a standard periodic evaluation of its personnel practices, the district has taken a number of steps to improve and adjusts its practices as needed to reduce cost and/or improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Note to the reader: This section includes elements already discussed under Action Plan 7-5, Recommendation 1.

The district does not have a standard schedule or plan for reviewing and adjusting its personnel practices. However, we noted several examples of efforts to identify practices that were not cost-effective, efficient or effective. Most notably, the district has recently taken steps in the right direction by adjusting its practices for cost-efficiency by issuing a request for proposal (RFP) to reduce the cost of insurance.

The District Does Not Routinely Evaluate the Overall Efficiency and Effectiveness of Its Personnel Practices

After the Personnel department has established performance measures and benchmarks as discussed in Action Plan 7-5, Recommendation 1, it is necessary to establish a system for periodically reviewing the department's performance. These periodic reviews would be designed to determine how the department can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its practices and how operational costs could be reduced.

In lieu of a system of performance measures and benchmarks, we found that the district has taken steps to identify and address selected issues of efficiency and costs. These have included

- a climate survey of staff in May 2000 and
- an RFP to select lower cost employee health insurance in March 2001. Health insurance, which represents a large cost of employment, was an increasing cost to the district. By issuing the RFP, the district was able to continue its health insurance program at a modest increase. For example, family coverage increased from \$475 to \$525 per month, rather than the increase to \$1,256 that had been proposed by the previous carrier.

The periodic review of personnel practices discussed in this best practice is different from the routine oversight provided by a manager in the day-to-day oversight of the department. A periodic review should systematically gathered input from staff and other stakeholders associated with the human resources function, as well as the consideration of alternate methods of achieving the desired goals.

Recommendation

Note: Refer to Action Plan 7-5 above, for recommendations that apply to the subject covered under this best practice.

- *We recommend that the district develop and implement a formal plan to assess the effectiveness of the district's personnel practices.*

Action Plan 7-6 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation

Action Plan 7-6

Periodically Evaluation of Personnel Practices

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and implement a formal plan and schedule periodic assessments to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's personnel practices.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: After it has established performance measures and benchmarks as set forth in Action Plan 7-5, the district should establish a plan for periodically reviewing its personnel practices to assure that services are being delivered efficiency, effectively and cost-effectively.</p> <p>Step 2: Such a plan should identify who would be responsible for these periodic reviews, whether by standing committee, special task force, or other entity.</p> <p>Step 3: Evaluation is made part of the district's policy manual, approved by the Superintendent and school board.</p> <p>Step 4: Identify areas of concern and implement changes to policies and practices as required.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; assistant superintendents; Personnel Supervisor, principals, department heads. Reporting and approval by the school board.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

15

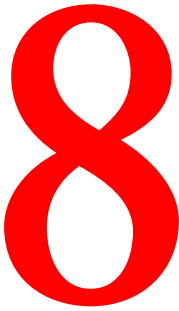
For classes of employees that are unionized, the district maintains an effective collective bargaining process.

ValienteHernandez P.A. found, based on interviews, that the district has a well-trained personnel responsible for labor relations and contract negotiations. Other team members, including an attorney, support the collective bargain designee.

The District Collective Bargaining Process

The district has appointed a senior staff member with six years experience in labor relations and trained in contract negotiations as the chief negotiator. The negotiation team (also known as the School Board Collective Bargaining Team) is composed of members based on the district needs. District staff members and lawyers are used depending on their area of expertise. Selected non-instructional department managers are included on the negotiation team for non-instructional personnel, and selected principals are included on the negotiation team for teachers. These administrators assist the negotiation process because they often have a clear knowledge of the employees' issues that may arise during negotiation. The district's chief negotiator provides or facilitates training to other team members and to administrators to enhance their knowledge of the negotiation process, issues, and legislative mandates. The district's chief negotiator attends training offered at the state level annually. Having a trained negotiator is a key component in the collective bargaining process.

The Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Human Resource Services currently serves as the district's collective bargaining chief negotiator. In addition to her responsibilities as assistant superintendent, this person performs a number of tasks such as grievances, employee discipline, collective bargaining, and labor contract maintenance that were previously performed by a person in a separate collective bargaining negotiator. Chapter 3-25 discusses the district's efforts to establish a separate position to handle some or all of these responsibilities, and makes recommendations to the district.



Use of Lottery Proceeds

In general, the district spends lottery proceeds for purposes that enhance education. The district should enhance its processes for educating and informing the School Advisory Councils of available funds and also communicate how lottery proceeds are spent on a quarterly basis.

Conclusion

The Lake County School District is using three of the five best practices for the use of lottery proceeds received from the State.

The district has processes that provide information on the expenditure of lottery proceeds to school board members and school advisory committees. District staff should enhance its procedures for communicating to school advisory committee members their duties and responsibilities, the budgetary proceeds available to them, and the acceptable uses of lottery proceeds. Finally, the district should communicate to the interested stakeholders in the community how lottery proceeds have been used to “enhance” the educational process.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Use of Lottery Proceeds

- In general, the district spends lottery money for purposes that enhance education. (Page 8-3)
- The district uses lottery money consistent with its definition of enhancement. (Page 8-5)
- The district allocates lottery proceeds to school advisory councils as required by law; however, processes for communicating financial information and appropriate uses of the proceeds should be enhanced. (Page 8-7)
- The district accounts for the use of lottery money in an acceptable manner. (Page 8-13)
- Although the district annually evaluates and reports the extent to which expenditures of lottery proceeds have enhanced student education, it should provide for the required quarterly financial reporting of lottery expenditures to the public. (Page 8-13)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

The recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.

Background

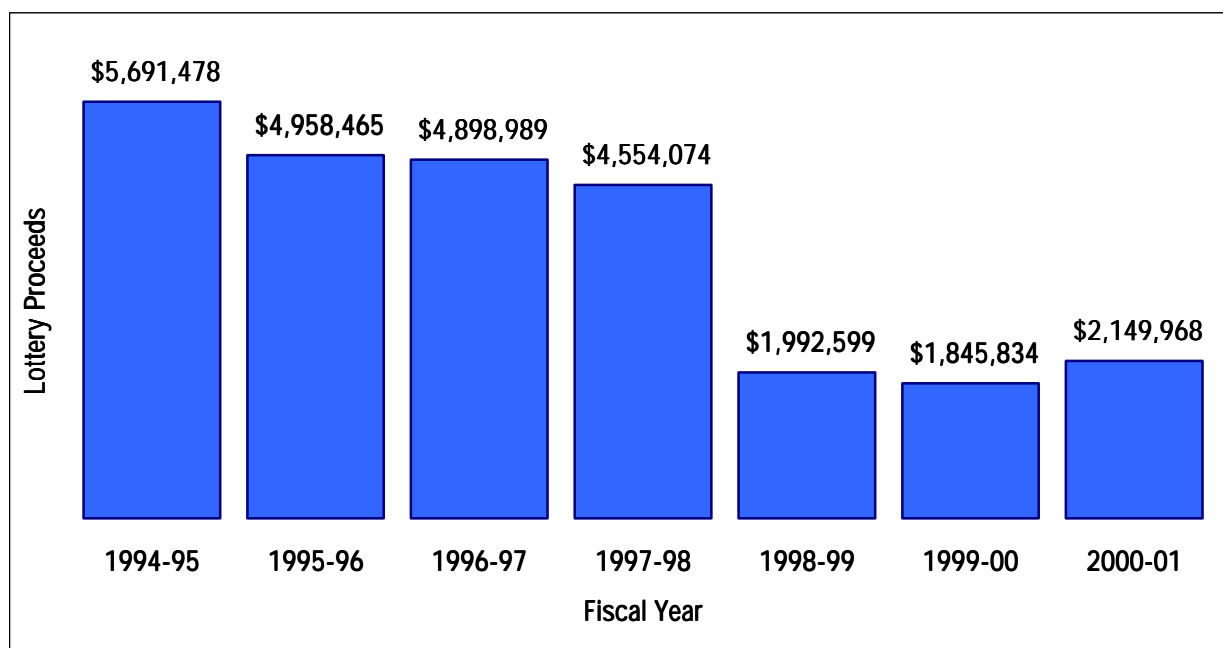
Each fiscal year, at least 38% of the gross revenue from the sale of lottery tickets and other earned revenue, excluding application processing fees, is deposited in the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund,

which is administered by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE). The Florida Legislature apportions moneys in the trust fund among public schools, community colleges, and universities. These proceeds are allocated to school districts by prorating each district's base funding to the amount of the appropriation.

Although there was an increase in lottery proceeds between Fiscal Years 1999-2000 and 2000-01, annual lottery proceeds received by the district have decreased significantly from the level received by the district during the 1994-1995 fiscal year. This decrease in lottery funding is illustrated in Exhibit 8-1.

Exhibit 8-1

Lottery Proceeds Received by the District 1995-2001



Source: OPPAGA.

Using the 1994-1995 fiscal year as the base, the district's lottery funding has decreased 62.22% during the seven- (7) year period ending with the Fiscal Year 2000-01. All school districts have experienced similar decreases in lottery funding. The decreases result primarily from the implementation of other programs (i.e. Bright Futures College Scholarship). Also, there has been a decline in the amount of instant game ticket sales since the 1996-97 fiscal year. During the 1996-97 fiscal year, these sales reached an all time high of \$707,424,000. During the 1999-2000 fiscal year, instant game ticket sales totaled \$645,256,000.

School District Lottery Fund Expenditures

Each year the General Appropriations Act has consistently required each district to establish policies and procedures that define enhancement and the types of expenditures that are considered consistent with that definition.

Each district is also required to use a unique fund source code to account for the receipt and expenditure of all lottery monies. Each district's expenditures are to be reported to the DOE within 60 days following the end of the fiscal year. Each school district is also required, on a quarterly basis, to make available to the public and to distribute in an easy-to-understand format, a report on the expenditures of lottery proceeds.

School Advisory Council Lottery Fund Expenditures

The law requires that a portion of the lottery proceeds be allocated to the school advisory council (SAC) at each school. As shown in Exhibit 8-4, during the 2000-2001 fiscal year, \$288,542 in lottery proceeds was distributed to schools for the 28,854 full time equivalent (FTE) students in the district. Each school received \$10 per unweighted full-time equivalent (UFTE) student, as required by law.

Allocations to schools ranged from \$40 for an exceptional student education (ESE) center with four UFTE, to \$21,802 for a high school with 2,180 UFTE. The General Appropriations Act provides that funding for use by the SACs should be allocated directly to the councils, should be clearly earmarked for their use, and not be subject to override by the principal or interim approvals by school district staff. A portion of the money should be used for implementing the school improvement plan, which must be based on the needs of the school. The results of our interviews, reviews of district financial reports, and responses of SAC members to our surveys, indicate that the district has complied with the provisions of the General Appropriations Act.

Methodology

ValienteHernandez P.A. conducted four site visits and interviewed the Finance Director and Assistant Finance Director to develop findings related to the best financial management practices for the use of lottery proceeds. Information on the usage of lottery proceeds by the School Advisory Councils (SACs) was obtained from the Curriculum and Instruction department.

To receive program input, ValienteHernandez P.A. surveyed the board members, district staff, school principals, teachers, SACs, and parents. The questions varied depending on the group surveyed and the results have been incorporated in this chapter where applicable.

Issues identified through interviews, site observations, and survey results were used to obtain comparable information for the usage of lottery proceeds in the six peer districts of Alachua, Charlotte, Okaloosa, Osceola, St. Johns, and Santa Rosa.

Findings and Recommendations

Use of Lottery Proceeds

Goal A: The district uses lottery proceeds to enhance educational programs.

1

In general, the district spends lottery money for purposes that enhance education.

According to the General Appropriations Act, a school district must

- establish policies and procedures to define enhancement;

- identify the types of expenditures that are consistent with its definition; and
- provide the Department of Education with a copy of all procedures that relate to the use of enhancement proceeds.

The definition contained in the district's policy manual states:

The School Board shall annually identify those enhancement expenditures, which are appropriated from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. The Superintendent or designee shall annually transmit to the Florida Department of Education any School Board rule(s) and District procedures relating to enhancement expenditures from the Fund. Expenditures from the Fund shall be consistent with the General Appropriations Act.

The definition of enhancement that the district has used each year since 1993 and has recorded with the Florida Department of Education is as follows:

Enhancement is defined as the expenditure of the District Discretionary Lottery proceeds for the following:

- for programs which were previously funded through state categorical funds or through state grants;
- to supplement partially funded state categorical program dollars;
- to fund the extended school day; and
- to develop and implement school improvement plans.

As shown in Exhibit 8-2, the district's definition of enhancement is consistent with its peers.

Exhibit 8-2

Enhancement as Defined by Lake County and Its Peer Districts

School District	Definition of Educational Enhancement
Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement is defined as the expenditure of the district discretionary lottery dollars for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for programs previously funded through state categorical funds or through state grants; • to supplement partially funded state categorical program dollars; • to fund the extended school day; and • to develop and implement school improvement plans.
Alachua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to develop and implement school improvement plans and to maintain programs previously funded through state categorical funds or state grants.
Charlotte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancements shall be defined as new or existing programs or procedures to enhance the educational outcomes of K-12 students. Expenditures of Instructional Services, Instruction and Curriculum Development Services, and Instructional Staff Training Services shall be consistent with that definition.
Okaloosa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement is defined for the purposes of appropriating District Discretionary Lottery Proceeds allocated by the Legislature as expenditures for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to fully fund programs previously funded through state categorical means;

School District	Definition of Educational Enhancement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to supplement partially funded categorical programs; to maintain employee salaries and benefits; to develop and implement school improvement plans as required by the “Accountability Law”; and to enhance existing programs by providing personnel and supply needs.
Osceola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancement is defined as the expenditure of the District Discretionary Lottery Dollars for the following purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to continue programs previously funded through state categorical funds; to supplement partially funded state categorical program dollars; to develop and implement school and district improvement plans; to provide elementary classroom teacher aides; to provide guidance counselors and deans; to provide start up supplies, books and equipment for new facilities and programs; to provide matching funds to schools; to provide school resource officers; and to provide school data entry clerks.
Santa Rosa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancement is defined as the expenditure of the district discretionary lottery dollars for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for programs previously funded through state categorical funds; to supplement partially funded state categorical program dollars; to enhance existing programs by providing cultural enrichment activities, sponsoring academic competitions, funding computer systems, and other equipment and supply acquisitions; to maintain pupil-teacher ratio as low as possible; to fund innovative programs; and to develop and implement school improvement plans.
St. Johns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lottery proceeds are used to help maintain appropriate class size and also provide school improvement moneys.

Source: Lake County School District and peer districts.

Our review of district level expenditures indicates that the largest portion of lottery expenditures were for guidance, which relates to student development services. These expenditures are for activities that enhance education.

2 The district uses lottery money consistent with its definition of enhancement.

The district has defined enhancement as those expenditures that are consistent with the General Appropriations Act. Although the district does not have a conceptual definition of enhancement, expenditures from the educational trust fund have conformed to General Appropriations Act guidelines.

Lottery Proceeds Are Used for Expenditures That Meet the District's Definition of Enhancement

Although the district has not developed a conceptual definition of enhancement, the uses of lottery proceeds in the district are in conformity with the General Appropriations Act. During the 2000-2001 fiscal year, the amounts that were budgeted for student development services by the district have been for guidance services.

Lottery proceeds allocated to the SACs for school improvement activities and SAC use have been spent for salaries, supplies, and capitalized and non-capitalized equipment.

As shown in Exhibit 8-3, the majority of Lottery Trust Fund Expenditures by the district and its peer districts during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2000, were for salaries for additional instructional personnel and other salaries.

School Board Members and Appropriate District Administrators Receive Reports on the Expenditure of Lottery Enhancement Proceeds

District staff does provide board members with reports that show lottery expenditures. Also, information summarizing each school's use of lottery proceeds can be found in The school public accountability reports, which are maintained at the school district headquarters in Tavares.

Exhibit 8-3

Lake County and Its Peer Districts Spend Most of Its Lottery Proceeds on Salaries and Benefits

School District	District Discretionary Lottery Fund Expenditures in Fiscal Year 1999-2000	Amount Expended
Lake	District Level "Enhancement Fund" (Student Development)	\$1,473,670
Alachua	PREP (Primary Education Program)-adds a curriculum resource teacher in all schools	1,563,646
Charlotte	Basic instruction classroom teacher salaries	861,766
Okaloosa	Maintain PREP, Prime, and Student Development Services to the extent possible	1,476,590
Osceola	Classroom Aides	1,646,895
Santa Rosa	Hiring of Annual Contract Teachers	1,060,231
St. Johns	Salaries and Benefits	972,083

Source: Lake County and peer districts and Florida Department of Education.

3 The district allocates lottery proceeds to school advisory councils as required by law.

Each of the Schools in the District Has an Approved School Improvement Plan

The Florida Department of Education will not release proceeds from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund to any district in which a school does not have an approved school improvement plan after one full school year of planning and development, or does not comply with SAC membership composition requirements. Each of the district's schools does have an approved school improvement plan.

Chapter 230.23(18), *Florida Statutes*, requires school boards to annually approve, and require implementation of a new, amended, or continuation school improvement plan for each school in the district. The plans should be designed to achieve state education goals and student performance standards. The district has established effective mechanisms to ensure that school improvement plans translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives and clear implementation strategies.

Each SAC Receives \$10 Per Student

As shown in Exhibit 8-4, the SAC at each district school received \$10 for each UFTE student to be used at the discretion of the SACs during the Fiscal Year 2000-01.

Lottery Proceeds Are Used to Implement School Improvement Plans

The district, until the end of Fiscal Year 2000-01, had differentiated funding to the SACs into two distinct budgeting codes. The district has allocated \$4 of the required \$10 per UFTE funding to the SACs for school improvement plans, and the remaining \$6 was allocated to the SACs for discretionary spending.

Exhibit 8-5 shows the breakdown of the lottery proceeds received by each of the district's School Advisory Councils for school improvement plans and SACs usage for the year ending June 30, 2001.

Each SAC Spends Lottery Proceeds Without Impediment from the School District and Many SACs Carried Forward Unspent Allocations to Subsequent School Years

Each SAC spends lottery proceeds without impediment from the school district, and they are not required to spend this allocation within one fiscal year. Allocated proceeds that each of the SACs do not spend within any given fiscal year are carried over to the next year's budgetary balance. This flexibility allows the SACs to spend allocations, as they believe necessary, without being constrained by an annual June 30 deadline.

As illustrated in Exhibit 8-5, many of the School Advisory Councils in the district have taken advantage of this flexibility and have carried their unspent proceeds over from prior fiscal years. These carry over amounts are included in the 1999-2000, fiscal year budgetary numbers.

The majority of expenditures of lottery proceeds that were made by a sample of school advisory councils in the district during Fiscal Year 1999-2000 were for items to enhance the skill level of students as shown in Exhibit 8-6.

Procedures Should Be Improved to Ensure That SAC Members Know Legal Requirements for the Use of Lottery Proceeds. The Process for Communicating Lottery Fund Allocations To Each Council Should Also Be Improved

According to district staff, a process has not been developed that would ensure that SAC members are provided adequate information regarding the appropriate use of lottery proceeds appropriated to the advisory councils.

District staff relies on school principals to provide information to the SACs regarding the expenditure of lottery proceeds allocated to them. However, the results of a survey that we conducted with SAC members disclosed that 40.9% of the SAC respondents did not feel that the district had established procedures to ensure that SAC members are aware of how schools used allocated lottery proceeds, and 29.8% did not feel qualified to give an opinion on the subject. In total, 70.7% of the SAC respondents had a non-positive response to the survey question relating to knowledge about appropriate uses of lottery proceeds allocated to advisory councils.

Similarly, our review of a sample of school improvement financial reports disclosed inconsistencies in the accounting for lottery proceeds allocated to the SACs. For example, two of the five (40%) school improvement financial reports that we looked at had no budgetary information showing the amount of proceeds allocated to the school; these reports summarized just the school advisory council's expenditures. One of the five reports (20%) contained budgetary information that did not include the \$4 allocation to the school improvement plan. Without accurate knowledge of the lottery proceeds available to them, the school advisory councils cannot fully and effectively implement the goals and objectives included in their School Improvement Plans.

The district should implement procedures and processes that will ensure that SAC members are aware of the appropriate uses of lottery proceeds allocated to them and are provided timely financial information relating to amounts available to them by the use of a standard form for each school.

Exhibit 8-4

The Lake County School Board Allocated \$288,542 in Lottery Proceeds to SACs in Fiscal Year 2000-01

Schools	School	Number of (UFTE) Students	SAC Allocations for Fiscal Year 2000-01
Elementary	Beverly Shores	553	\$ 5,533
	Clermont	580	5,804
	Eustis	452	4,517
	Eustis Heights	850	8,505
	Fruitland Park	600	6,000
	Village of Lady Lake	659	6,592
	Seminole Springs	625	6,252
	Round Lake Elementary	751	7,513
	Skeen	575	5,750
	Treadway	768	7,680
	Minneola	745	7,454
	Astalula	577	5,767
	Lost Lakes	828	8,283

Schools	School	Number of (UFTE) Students	SAC Allocations for Fiscal Year 2000-01
	Dabney	399	3,990
	Groveland	606	6,060
	Rimes	284	2,840
	Triangle	576	5,762
	Lake Hills	136	1,359
	Mascotte	619	6,192
	Tavares	597	5,968
	Umatilla	680	6,800
	Cypress Ridge	626	6,258
	Spring Creek	664	6,640
Middle	Cecil E. Gray	1,000	10,002
	Tavares	822	8,220
	Oak Park	732	7,323
	Carver	752	7,520
	Mt. Dora	589	5,890
	Windy Hill	1,071	10,710
	Umatilla	719	7,192
	Griffin	302	3,020
	Eustis	867	8,665
High School	Eustis	962	9,619
	Leesburg	1,711	17,107
	Mount Dora	843	8,434
	Tavares	932	9,325
	Umatilla	737	7,371
	Vocational (Secondary)	38	377
	Tech HS	155	1,547
	South Lake	2,260	22,597
Other	Lifestream-Altoona	60	600
	Scholarship School	10	95
	ESE-Lake County	4	38
	Lifestream Behavioral	72	715
	Lake County Jail School	16	155
	Non-School Pre K	47	470
	Alee Academy School	91	908
	Milestone Academy	258	2,580
	Alee Academy/ACEE	31	308
	Arnett House	24	235
Total		28,854	\$ 288,542

Source: Lake County School District.

Exhibit 8-5

Many of the School Advisory Councils in the District Chose Not to Spend All Available Lottery Proceeds in Fiscal Year 1999-2000

		1999-2000 SAC Proceeds Available (1)	1999-2000 SAC Expenditures	Percentage of Available Proceeds Spent
Elementary	Beverly Shores	\$ 12,543	\$ 1,866	14.88%
	Clermont	11,299	7,014	62.08%
	Eustis	8,887	8,887	100.00%
	Eustis Heights	12,084	6,170	51.06%
	Fruitland Park	7,347	2,948	40.12%
	Village of Lady Lake	5,120	199	3.89%
	Seminole Springs	14,981	10,919	72.89%
	Roseborough	9,563	9,306	97.32%
	Skeen	18,490	8,537	46.17%
	Umatilla	8,361	6,543	78.26%
	Treadway	8,339	6,926	83.06%
	Minneola	12,990	8,565	65.94%
	Astalula	6,850	6,951	101.47%
	Lost Lakes	7,900	3,471	43.94%
	Dabney	3,997	2,312	57.84%
	Groveland	7,400	3,969	53.64%
	Rimes	6,485	4,673	72.05%
	Triangle	15,158	4,446	29.33%
	Lake Hills	3,504	34	.97%
	Mascotte	6,465	6,489	100.37%
	Tavares	13,455	10,359	76.99%
	Cypress Ridge	6,529	5,416	82.95%
	Spring Creek	7,320	3,692	50.43%
Middle	Cecil E. Gray	12,735	8,296	65.15%
	Tavares	12,260	4,363	35.59%
	Oak Park	11,246	10,783	95.88%
	Carver	11,960	6,057	50.64%
	Mt. Dora	16,659	9,925	59.58%
	Windy Hill	13,504	11,453	84.81%
	Umatilla	8,201	6,749	82.30%
	Griffin	9,150	3,469	37.91%
	Eustis	27,908	7,515	26.93%
High	Eustis	19,440	17,637	90.73%
	Leesburg	37,366	11,150	29.84%
	Mount Dora	7,660	6,149	80.28%
	Tavares	16,654	5,912	35.50%
	Umatilla	11,831	2,933	24.79%
	Vocational (Secondary)	12,604	0	0.00%
	Tech HS	1,230	0	0.00%
	South Lake	41,587	18,031	43.36%

		1999-2000 SAC Proceeds Available (1)	1999-2000 SAC Expenditures	Percentage of Available Proceeds Spent
Schools	Other			
	Lee Education Center	2,262	0	0.00%
	Bragg Public Safety Complex	1,130	0	0.00%
Total		\$ 490,454	\$ 260,114	
Average Percentage Spent				53.07%

Note (1): Includes carryover proceeds not spent in prior fiscal years.

Source: Lake County School District.

Exhibit 8-6

Five School Advisory Councils Spent a Majority of Proceeds on Student Skills Improvement in Fiscal Year 1999-2000

School	Type of Expenditure	Amount of Expenditure
Rimes Elementary (\$4,770)	Improvement of Student Skills	\$ 1,543
	Increase Parent Involvement	1,000
	In Service Awards	800
	Increase Community Involvement	700
	Teacher and Student Incentives	627
	School Improvement Plan – Planning	100
Tavares Elementary (\$10,359)	Salary for Teaching Assistant - Improve Student Reading Skills	\$ 5,229
	SRA Reading Mastery - Improve Student Reading Skills	3,419
	Thesaurus-60 - Improve Student Writing Skills	670
	FCAT Testing Materials - Additional Materials to Improve Student Skills	625
	Incentives	164
	Safety	150
	Supplies	102
The Villages Elementary of Lady Lake (\$750)	Pace Team Members - Improve Student Skills	\$ 527
	Copy Center Handbooks - Increase Community Involvement	121
	“Make the Move to Kindergarten” – Improve Student Skills	70
	Security Cards - Increase Community Involvement	32
Carver Middle (\$7,300)	Agenda Books - Increase Student Skills	\$ 1,500
	Band Camp - Increase Student Skills	1,500
	Camp Carver - Increase Student Skills	1,400
	Summer Office Assistant - Increase Student Skills	1,300
	Writing Teams - Increase Student Skills	1,200
	Calendars and Newsletters - Increase Student Skills & Community Involvement	400
Tavares High School (\$9,623)	Computer Purchase and Installation – Improve Student Skills	\$ 5,635
	Science Department Supplies - Improve Student Skills	1,653
	Attendance Incentive Car - Improve Student Skills	1,215
	Network Drops - Improve Student Skills	760
	Cash Incentives for Perfect Attendance – Improve Student Skills	360

Source: Lake County School District.

Recommendations

- *After the election of each school's SAC each year, district staff should conduct workshops with SAC representatives to familiarize them with the laws related to SACs and expenditure of proceeds available for use by the SACs.*

We recommend that district staff provide SAC representatives with financial data, including available proceeds, expected allocations and accounting and budgeting processes at these workshops. These presentations should include information relating to standard financial reports available to the SACs for monitoring SAC uses of the proceeds.

Action Plan 8-1 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 8-1

Annually Provide SAC Members Information and/or Training Regarding Laws Applicable to the Use of Lottery Funding and the Budgetary Processes for Lottery Proceeds

Recommendation 1	
Strategies	To provide SAC members information regarding laws applicable to the SACs. Also, to inform SAC members of the total proceeds available to them and the process for budgeting and monitoring these proceeds.
Actions Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop SAC workshop agenda that includes, at a minimum, the activities below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on laws applicable to SACs and the appropriate use of proceeds available to them. This update should include applicable general appropriations act requirements. • Identification of contact sources and persons, which SAC members can use to seek interpretations and resolve issues. • Financial information for each SAC, which shows total amounts available, including carry over balances, instructions for budgeting and accounting for the proceeds and reports available to the SACs for monitoring the use of the proceeds. <p>Step 2: Conduct workshops ensuring that representatives from all SACs attend. Develop standard form that summarizes information provided at the workshops. This form should include, for each individual school's SAC, a summary of financial information, including available proceeds.</p> <p>Step 3: SAC representatives that attended the workshop should distribute the summary form to all school advisory council members. Each member should acknowledge receipt of this form by signing it.</p>
Who is responsible	Finance Director, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, and School Advisory Councils.
Time Frame	December 31, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4 The district accounts for the use of lottery money in an acceptable manner.

The district has conformed to Blueprint 2000 goals, which requires each school to have a school improvement plan. Along with the school improvement plan, procedures are to be developed to measure achievement of the desired improvements.

The district uses accounting codes to separately account for the receipt of Educational Enhancement Fund revenue and expenditures as required in the General Appropriations Act. The district can demonstrate that it properly accounts for the receipt and expenditures of all lottery proceeds. The receipt of lottery proceeds is coded to a unique revenue account. Expenditures of lottery proceeds are coded to one of two expenditure accounts. The expenditures of Enhancement Funds are further identified by the function of the expenditure (i.e., Guidance Services, Instructional Staff Training, etc.). Expenditures are also identified as to the type of expenditure (i.e., supplies, capitalized and non-capitalized equipment).

5 Although the district annually evaluates and reports the extent to which lottery fund expenditures have enhanced student education, it should provide for the required quarterly financial reporting of lottery expenditures to the public.

Annually, Within 60 Days of the End of the Fiscal Year, the District Submits a Report to FDOE Showing the Actual Expenditures of All Enhancement Proceeds

Although the report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2000, was 97 days late, the district normally files this report timely as evidenced by prior year submissions. District staff provided evidence of unusual staffing and other changes that contributed to the late filing of the report.

Also, the June 30, 2000, report showed no unspent lottery proceeds; however, the district's financial records showed that some lottery proceeds had not been spent at the end of the year. The unusual staffing and other changes discussed above contributed to these errors and such errors are unlikely to reoccur.

The District Should Ensure That It Reports Lottery Expenditures to the Public on a Quarterly Basis as Required by Law

The law requires that the district, on a quarterly basis, make available to the public and to distribute, in an easy to understand format, the expenditure of lottery proceeds. The district does not distribute information on lottery expenditures to the public on a quarterly basis. The district needs to comply with the law and report to the public, on a quarterly basis, how it is using its lottery proceeds. To distribute this information, existing information mechanisms; such as newsletters or expanded information included on its web site, could be used.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district report on a quarterly basis how it is using its lottery proceeds. This report should be distributed beyond school district staff and parents of students, including other stakeholders in the community at-large.*

Action Plan 8-2 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 8-2

Quarterly Report to the Public the Extent to Which Lottery Fund Expenditures Have Enhanced Student Education

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Distribute financial and other information to the public on a quarterly basis showing how lottery proceeds have been used.
Action Needed	Step 1: Compile financial information relating to the expenditure of lottery proceeds and distribute this information to all interested stakeholders, on a quarterly basis. The community resource officer should ensure that this financial information is distributed to the community by inclusion of financial information related to Lottery expenditures with other information that is sent to parents in the district. Step 2: Inclusion of the financial information on the school district website.
Who is responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

9

Use of State and District Construction Funds

The Lake County School District generally uses state and district construction funds appropriately and for the intended purposes, although more attention should be paid to complying with construction fund best practices. Because of the scope of school district construction spending, suggested improvements in such areas as growth projections, project planning and management, use of existing resources, and fiscal accounting present opportunities for substantial cost savings and other efficiencies.

Conclusion

The Lake County School District (the district) uses state and local construction funds in a lawful manner. It could, however, significantly improve its compliance with construction fund best practices by applying recommended cost-saving measures, pre-construction analyses of alternatives, and more efficient use of existing resources. The district's current overall student station overcapacity is 29% (9,507 excess capacity over 32,225 projected full time equivalent (FTE) student membership for the 2006-07 school year.)

Moreover, because of the unusual growth patterns in the district certain schools or geographic areas may be over-capacity, while others may lack capacity. Significant outlays may not be needed for new construction, but for other needs, such as remodeling, preventive maintenance of existing facilities, transportation, and planning, additional funding will be required.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Use of State and Local Construction Funds

- The district uses its construction funds in a lawful manner. The school board, however, should adopt a formal policy requiring the evaluation of alternatives prior to committing funds for new construction. (Page 9-3)
- The district uses capital outlay and operational funds in a lawful manner. The district, however, should consider DOE growth projections and the Florida Inventory of School Houses to determine whether facilities needs are met. (Page 9-11)
- The district should formally incorporate appropriate measures from the SMART (Soundly Made, Accountable, Reasonable and Thrifty) Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards during construction planning and development operations. (Page 9-13)
- When designing and constructing new educational facilities, the district should incorporate Life-Cycle costs into the planning process to minimize the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility. (Page 9-15)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Because capital projects are such a large part of the district's budget, improvements ValienteHernandez P.A. has recommended in the use of state and district construction funds can be expected to generate substantial savings, recouped costs, and other fiscal improvements. For example, significant new-plant construction costs will be avoided by enhanced systems for the early identification of anticipated growth patterns in the district. However, the number of variables involved in implementing this and other recommendations in this chapter mean that reliably accurate estimates of cost savings, recouped costs, and other benefits cannot yet be made.

Background

The district has not had a comprehensive and complete five-year plan, at least since 1998. As a result, projects were implemented without long range thinking of how the district will be impacted in the future. Sometimes decisions made, perhaps with good intentions, result in situations that have a negative impact on the operations of the district over a very long period of time. For example, an elementary school was built on donated land in the northwest corner of the county, an area principally inhabited by retirees. In this example, the district did not fully analyze the acceptance of this land and its impact on student station needs across the district. Nor did it consider the additional expenses, such as transportation costs, required to bring students to this new facility.

Similar improper past decisions relating to other new facilities have resulted in the district having a low utilization rate of plant capacity compared to full time equivalent (FTE) students. This past performance has a direct effect on current operations. Growth patterns in the county point to the southern portion, particularly the southeastern corner, as the focus of new construction; therefore, logic demands that attention be given to that geographic area. However, since there is plant overcapacity in the district as a whole and funds being finite, operating realities demand that the district's resources be used elsewhere. Of critical importance to the district is to prioritize its resources and establish appropriate comprehensive systems to document new construction in the overall plan to effectively and efficiently provide adequate schools to satisfy the realities of today's complex public education system.

Past actions are inflexible; but historical improper actions can teach how to act in the future. Funds that have in the past been used to build new schools could have been applied to renovating existing facilities and keeping the transportation fleet at best practice level. Growth being unavoidable, sometimes even welcomed, the district is now, and will be in the future, in a position to make decisions that will, to a great extent, mend past actions.

School districts use several documents to plan and report the use of construction funds.

- The Educational Facilities Survey, which is required a minimum of every five years by the state, defines five-year facility needs based on state standards and state enrollment projections. This document is prepared with assistance from DOE's Office of Educational Facilities. It presents what the facility needs of the district are for the next five-years.
- The Five-Year Facilities Work Program is a comprehensive list of local construction projects for a five-year period that is updated annually and approved by the board.
- The Project Priority List, a subset of the Facilities Work Program, covers a single year and includes projects funded by specific sources of funds.

- The Truth in Millage Advertisement List details projects that will be funded with a 2.0 mill property tax. Publication of the list satisfies a legal disclosure requirement.
- The Capital Budget is based on the first prospective year of the Facilities Work Program, plus or minus any adjustments approved by the board. Upon approval of the capital budget by the board, a district can assign project numbers to individual projects.

Methodology

To assess the district's performance related to the Best Financial Management Practices in the use of construction funds, ValienteHernandez P.A. interviewed the Assistant Superintendent of Support Services, Facilities Director, construction project manager, uniform building code inspector, and additional support staff. This assessment also involved research of Florida law and industry information.

Findings and Recommendations

Use of State and Local Construction Funds

Goal A: The district uses state and local education facilities construction funds to meet its five-year facilities work plan in a lawful and cost-effective manner.

1 The district uses its construction funds in a lawful manner. The school board, however, should adopt a formal policy requiring the evaluation of alternatives prior to committing funds for new construction.

The district's Finance Director, prior to the funds being spent, determines whether construction funds are to be used in compliance with the lawfully designated purpose of the funds. However, lawful use does not necessarily equal best use of these funds. A thorough analytical approach needs to be implemented to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the process used to determine the necessity for new construction.

The district has not demonstrated that it properly analyzes construction projects to determine whether a new construction project is cost efficient. It is essential that that a comprehensive, analytical system be implemented leading to a conclusion as to whether or not construction funds need to be committed, including the analysis of alternatives to new construction.

The District Has Not Adequately Analyzed Construction Alternatives

While, the district has minimally experimented with alternatives to new construction, it has not adopted a formal procedure of evaluating alternatives to reduce the demand for new construction. The district has utilized portable buildings to accommodate short-term facility needs at certain schools. However, other alternatives, including extended day schedules, changes in attendance boundaries, year-round schools, and changes in grade configuration could be further examined in order to fully utilize existing facilities, and possibly reduce the need for new construction.

The prime alternative to new constructions has been the utilization of portable classrooms, with the district currently using 375 such units. The district has established a goal of reducing the number of leased portables. As noted in its Strategic Plan, the district's intent is to reduce the leased portable inventory. Portable classrooms are a general concern of education.¹ Communities throughout the state perceive portable classrooms to be temporary solutions to overcrowding, and not considered to be a permanent solution in creating capacity. Due to this strong sentiment prevalent in the community, fiscal significances take a secondary position to political realities. The use of portables is, therefore, seen as a temporary remedy while other solutions are found.

The district has experimented with year-round schools, but only on a single-track. This method does not necessarily reduce the need for new construction. Under the single-track method, a school does not serve any more students than they would if they were on a traditional schedule.

The district has not adequately explored certain alternatives to new construction, such as changing attendance zone boundaries, alternate grade configuration, and conversion of underutilized elementary sites to middle schools. It also needs to consider the use of multi-track year-round programs in its schools as a means of addressing student growth; research in this area reveals that districts can defer new construction using this approach.²

There is no evidence that suggest the district has considered a comprehensive redistricting or extended school day when projecting future needs. The district has changed school zone boundaries to alleviate schools that were over/under capacity. However, this is not a formal alternative that is considered when planning future growth.

¹ Examples of educational articles relating to the portable classroom issue are: "Florida's School-Crowding Woes Offer Fodder for Ongoing Debate", September 24, 1997; and "Lawmakers Act To Ease Crowding" November 12, 1997. Both articles, by Kerry A. White, can be viewed in the website of *Education Week on the Web* at www.edweek.org.

² Research regarding the educational impact of year-round schooling discloses less clearly that it can have a positive impact on student achievement, or at least no negative impact.

Major costs are avoided by using a year-round multi-track approach. If the district can avoid building a new school, it avoids the cost associated with building design, engineering, construction, furnishing, as well as infrastructure. These are partly offset by additional costs associated with converting to a year-round school. These transitional costs include feasibility studies, administrative planning time, and teacher in-service training. These costs are, however, minimal compared to the cost of new construction.

Other operating costs increase in a year-round school. A typical multi-track school operating four tracks on a 45/15 schedule (students attend for 45 days, then have a vacation for 15 days, with one-fourth of all students on vacation at any one time), the school is in operation of 242 days each year, as opposed to the 180 days for a regular school. Thus, maintenance, repair, and utility expenses increase; secretaries, custodians, cafeteria workers, counselors, bus drivers, and other staff must be available for the full 12 months, with proportionate increases in compensation.

² An exception to the recommendation in the educational plant survey may be allowed if the board deems that it will be advantageous to the welfare of the educational system or that it will make possible a substantial saving of funds. The board, upon determining that an exception is warranted, must present a full statement in writing setting forth all the facts to the Commissioner of Education.

Extended-day schedules increase the capacity of individual schools by lengthening the school day for the facility, although not for the individual student. An extended-day school may have nine periods of instruction; with a group that attends school for periods one through six and another group that attends from four through nine. Implementing a version of extended-day schedules at schools experiencing substantial student enrollment increases could reduce the need for new school construction.

The district needs to routinely prepare an analysis of alternatives to construction prior to committing any funds. Alternatives could include, but are not limited to revising the timing of the school day and school year to include extended-day schedules and year-round schools; changes in how existing facilities could be used more efficiently to include revising grade-level configuration, re-districting or making changes in attendance boundaries; using relocatable facilities (portable classrooms) to help smooth out the impact of peaks and valleys in projected future student enrollment; conversion of underutilized properties to alternate uses, such as changing elementary school(s) to middle school(s).

The District Was Required to Request a Waiver From the Commissioner of Education to Have the 1998 Educational Facilities Survey Accepted by the Department of Education

An educational plant survey is conducted every five years to evaluate the current capacity of facilities and to plan the needed capacity for the next five years. In order to receive PECO (Public Education Capital Outlay Trust Fund) or CO&DS (College District Capital Outlay and Debt Services Trust Fund) funds the district must show that the proposed construction is included in the five-year plant survey. Districts are able to request waivers to the plant survey if they deem it to be advantageous to the welfare of the educational system.³

In addition, if the districts proposed spending would exceed the statutory limit the district must also request a waiver of the plant survey.⁴ Lake County faced both of these issues in 1998.

In the three years since then, the district has built six (6) schools, five (5) of which were included in the Plant Survey projections. The sixth school, Umatilla Elementary, which according to district staff was built in response to growth within the district, was not included in the projected needs of the Plant Survey. Construction of these six (6) schools added 5,528 permanent student stations. The cost for each of these schools is presented as Exhibit 9-1.

⁴ Upon request by a district school board pursuant to *Florida Statute* 235.4351, the Commissioner of Education may waive for a specific project the provisions of this paragraph which limit total cost per student station if the commissioner is satisfied that the requested waiver is justified.

Exhibit 9-1

Cost Per Student Station on the Six Schools Built Since 1998

School Name	Contractual Cost	Number of Student Stations	Cost per Student Station	Maximum Costs at Time of School Completion
Round Lake Elementary	\$ 9,119,540	830	\$10,987	\$12,045
Astatula Elementary	\$11,711,099	888	\$13,188	\$11,743
Lost Lake Elementary	\$11,113,620	888	\$12,515	\$11,743
Villages Elementary	\$11,547,497	888	\$13,004	\$11,743
Umatilla Elementary	\$ 9,100,153	829	\$10,977	\$12,045
Windy Hill Middle	\$17,799,937	1,205	\$14,772	\$13,448

Source: Lake County Schools and *Florida Statutes*.

While two of the elementary schools were under the statutory maximum (as shown in Exhibit 9-1), three others were over the maximum as well as the middle school. As a result the district had to request a waiver from the Commissioner of Education. In addition since Umatilla Elementary was not included in the plant survey the school board had to request a waiver for exception to the plant survey.

In November 1998, the district requested a waiver of the educational facilities requirements in order to get the Plant Survey accepted by the DOE. The basis for the request was to build permanent facilities to replace portable classrooms. The waiver certifies that all of the district's educational facility needs can be met from capital outlay sources that the district reasonably expects to receive during the next five (5) years. With the waiver the district can continue to build schools as available funds allow. Without the waiver, survey recommendations beyond the projected need will not be approved. The Commissioner of Education approved the waiver that same month and the Plant Survey was accepted. As part of the waiver request noted above, the district asked that they be allowed to use the local effort "two mill" money to construct, by board approved spot surveys, new construction, remodeling and renovation projects at existing and new schools.

As discussed below, the district is in the process of conducting a new Plant Survey. No new construction projects will be started until DOE accepts the new Plant Survey. The Finance Director indicated that this would not delay the ability to have schools ready in a timely manner. Current projects under way are shown in Exhibit 9-2.

Exhibit 9-2**Projects Under Way as of August 2001**

School Description	Contractual Cost	Type of Project
High School AAA (not named yet)	\$32,927,000	New Construction
Triangle Elementary	\$ 1,630,000	Building Addition
Tavares Elementary	\$ 1,645,000	Building Addition
Groveland Elementary	\$ 1,693,800	Building Addition
Eustis Elementary	\$ 1,258,000	Building Addition
Umatilla Middle	\$ 1,364,017	Building Addition
Tavares High	\$ 849,050	Media Center

Source: Lake County Schools.

Upon inquiry from ValienteHernandez P.A., both the former and current Finance Directors stated that the district has used the district school tax as defined in Florida law, ("two mill" money), for construction and renovation, or other lawfully designated purposes; no contradictory evidence was found to negate their assurances.

The District Has Ordered a Current Educational Facilities Survey (Plant Survey) to Replace the One Conducted in 1998

The educational facilities survey is a systematic study of present educational and ancillary facilities and the determination of future needs. The construction of new educational facilities is a major undertaking even in school systems where such construction is a continuous process. If a 50-year capital investment is to be protected, the location, size, type of materials, arrangement of spaces, etc., regarding each new facility or addition to an existing facility must be determined on the basis of reliable, factual data.

The purpose of an educational facilities survey is to aid in formulating plans for housing the educational activities of students and staff in a school district for the next five years. The development of the plan should be based on a careful study of all available data regarding the current status of educational and ancillary facilities in relation to Capital Outlay Full-Time Equivalency (CO-FTE) student membership and the DOE's projected changes in CO-FTE student membership. The intent of an educational facilities survey is to encourage the thoughtful, orderly development of a program for providing educational and ancillary facilities to adequately house the educational activities of the district.

A formal educational facilities survey is required by law to be conducted every five years, but may be conducted as often as necessary. It is sometimes necessary to make changes in the survey recommendations between the times of the regularly scheduled formal district wide surveys. Local school administrators are responsible for regularly examining the survey recommendations and for the initiation of necessary revisions.

The Educational Facilities Survey (Plant Survey) for Lake County School District was conducted in December 1997 and updated in June 1998. DOE did not accept the survey because the district's total number of existing, satisfactory student stations exceeded the projected capital outlay full-time equivalent (CO-FTE) for the year 2002-03. Consequently, the district was unable to justify the need for additional student stations, through new construction, as called for by the Plant Survey.

The district is in the process of approving a new plant survey. A draft of the survey was presented to the school board the week of September 24, 2001. The table in Exhibit 9-3 is based upon the draft plant survey, and compares the projected CO-FTE membership for the year 2006-2007 to the number of current, existing student stations.

Exhibit 9-3

Comparison of Projected Capital Outlay to Existing Student Stations

School Center	FTE Student Membership 2000-01	Projected FTE Student Membership 2006-07	Existing Student Stations	Utilization		Capacity Over (Under
				Percentage	Stations	
Astatula Elementary	577	595	888	100%	888	(293)
Beverly Shores Elementary	556	565	770	100%	770	(205)
Clermont Elementary		830	1,122	100%	1,122	(292)
Cypress Ridge Elementary	581	640	675	100%	675	(35)
Dabney Elementary	399	430	475	100%	475	(45)
Eustis Elementary	453	471	759	100%	759	(288)
Eustis Heights Elementary	853	865	1,152	100%	1,152	(287)
Fruitland Park Elementary	600	681	841	100%	841	(160)
Groveland Elementary	607	624	1,109	100%	1,109	(485)
Lost Lake Elementary	829	1,161	972	100%	972	189
Mascotte Elementary	623	650	684	100%	684	(34)
Minneola Elementary	747	834	853	100%	853	(19)
Rimes Elementary	286	300	618	100%	618	(318)
Round Lake Elementary	753	818	848	100%	848	(30)
Seminole Springs Elementary	630	641	933	100%	933	(292)
Skeen Elementary	576	617	858	100%	858	(241)
Spring Creek Elementary	665	674	827	100%	827	(153)
Tavares Elementary	597	621	1,353	100%	1,353	(732)
Treadway Elementary	768	778	1,227	100%	1,227	(449)
Triangle Elementary	576	651	1,305	100%	1,305	(654)
Umatilla Elementary	681	674	785	100%	785	(111)
Villages Elementary	660	743	888	100%	888	(145)
SUB TOTAL	13,017	14,863	19,942		19,942	(5,079)
C.V. Griffin Educational Center	303	-	649	90%	584	(584)
Carver Middle	751	787	882	90%	794	(7)
Cecil E. Gray Middle	1,001	720	1,925	90%	1,733	(1,013)
Eustis Middle	867	924	975	90%	878	46
Mount Dora Middle	590	714	697	90%	627	87
Oak Park Middle	732	785	854	90%	769	16
Tavares Middle	822	1,002	881	90%	793	209
Umatilla Middle	719	724	1,081	90%	973	(249)
Windy Hill Middle	1,071	1,216	1,325	90%	1,193	23
Middle School "DD" (not named)		892	832	90%	749	143
SUB TOTAL	6,856	7,764	10,101		9,093	(1,329)
Eustis High Annex	284	340	517	100%	517	(177)
Eustis Senior High	687	753	877	85%	745	8
Leesburg Senior High	1,715	1,840	1,903	95%	1,808	32

School Center	FTE Student Membership 2000-01	Projected FTE Student Membership 2006-07	Existing Student Stations	Utilization		Capacity Over (Under
				Percentage	Stations	
Mount Dora Senior High	846	1,190	967	90%	870	320
High School "AAA" (not named)		1,893	1,996	95%	1,896	(3)
Roseborough			290	90%	261	(261)
South Lake 9 th Grade Center	627		959	90%	863	(863)
South Lake Senior High	2,262	1,480	1,694	95%	1,609	(129)
Tavares Senior High	939	1,045	991	90%	892	153
Umatilla 9th Grade Center			365	90%	329	(329)
Umatilla Senior High	743	790	767	85%	652	138
SUB TOTAL	8,103	9,331	11,326		10,442	(1,111)
Public Safety Complex-Astatula			79	120%	95	(95)
Public Safety Complex-Tavares			205	120%	246	(246)
Lake County Vo-Tech Center	63	63	150	120%	180	(117)
Lake Hills School	140	155	350	100%	350	(195)
Lake Technical Center	38	49	591	120%	709	(660)
Lee Education Center			450	150%	675	(675)
SUB TOTAL	241	267	1,825		2,255	(1,988)
GRAND TOTAL	28,217	32,225	43,194		41,732	(9,507)

¹ The total satisfactory student stations at a given school center are indicative to the capacity of the center. The following utilization factors have been established by State Requirements of Educational Facilities (SREF). Elementary 100%, Middle 90%, High School 70%-95%

Source: The September 2001 Plant Survey.

The district's total number of existing, satisfactory student stations, taking into account the appropriate utilization factor, of 41,732 exceeds the projected capital outlay full time equivalent (CO-FTE) for the year 2006-2007 of 32,225 by 9,507 student stations. Consequently, the district is unable to justify the need for additional student stations through new construction.

In conjunction with the Plant Survey, the district is in the process of developing the five-year facilities work program. This document is a comprehensive list of local construction projects for a five-year period that is updated annually and approved by the school board. The board has recently appointed a planning committee responsible for prioritizing the capital projects identified in the Plant Survey. See Chapter 10 for a discussion of the five-year work plan and the role of the facilities committee.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district routinely prepare an analysis of alternatives to construction prior to committing any funds. Alternatives could include, but are not limited to: revising the timing of the school day and school year to include extended-day schedules and year-round schools; changes in how existing facilities could be used more efficiently to include revising grade-level configuration, re-districting or and making changes in attendance boundaries; using relocatable facilities (portable classrooms) to help smooth out the impact of peaks and valleys in projected*

future student enrollment; conversion of underutilized properties to alternate uses, such as changing elementary school(s) to middle school(s).

- *We further recommend that the district establish a procedure by which compliance with Chapter 235.185 Florida Statute is secured.*

Action Plan 9-1 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 9-1

Formal Evaluation of Different Alternatives to New Construction Prior to Committing Funds

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implementation of continuing procedures and a formal policy by which the district attempts to utilize existing resources and evaluates different alternatives to new construction in order to select the most cost-efficient.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The school board sets a clear policy to document this recommendation.</p> <p>Step 2: The district develops a mechanism to implement the school board policy.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent creates a team lead primarily by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and secondarily by the assistant superintendents for Curriculum and Instruction and for School Administration and Human Resource Services.</p> <p>Step 4: Additionally, the team should include the planning section, Transportation Supervisor, Finance Director, instructional staff representation, representatives from the communities that will be impacted, and representative from the Lake County government's planning department (anticipated needs should include projected growth).</p> <p>Step 5: The purpose of the team is to methodically analyze all possible alternatives to new construction. Said alternatives include but are not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revising attendance boundaries and grade configuration; • revising the timing of the school day and school year (i.e., extended day schedules and year-round schools); • using relocatable facilities (portable classroom units); and • conversion of underutilized properties to alternative uses (i.e., changing elementary schools to middle schools). <p>Step 6: The team reports the results of the analyses to the Superintendent who approves or rejects the proposed changes</p> <p>Step 7: The final result is communicated to the school board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School Board; Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Implementation may be made with existing personnel. Possible savings cannot be determined at this stage.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	As required under Ch. 235.185, <i>Florida Statutes</i> , establish a procedure to ensure compliance of proposed new construction or major rehabilitation of facilities in accordance with the district's five-year plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish procedures to ensure that any proposed project is evaluated as to compliance with the district's five-year plan.</p> <p>Step 2: Secure the involvement of the Facilities Planning Committee in monitoring the district's compliance with its five-year-plan.</p> <p>Step 3: Establish necessary procedures to ensure that the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, or his designee, who is independent of the process of selecting construction projects, act as evaluator of compliance with the district's five-year plan; this person is designated as having ultimate authority in the approval of the project.</p> <p>Step 4: Report results through established channels.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School Board; Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent; Finance Director.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

2 The district uses capital outlay and operational funds in a lawful manner. The district, however, should consider DOE growth projections and the Florida Inventory of School Houses to determine whether facilities needs are met.

Educational Facilities Construction Funds Are Used Only for New Construction, Renovation, or Upgrading Existing Facilities

The school board prior to any work starting approves projects. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the fiscal budget for 2000-01 and determined that the district's use of capital outlay funds is for district-approved facilities construction projects, including renovation, remodeling, or upgrading.

The District Should Use Formulas Developed by the Florida Legislature More Extensively to Determine Whether Facilities Needs Are Being Met

The interim Director of Facilities and Maintenance stated that the district uses "spot surveys" to determine facility needs. ValienteHernandez P.A. was not provided any documentation that would indicate that the district uses DOE growth projections or Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) data to determine whether facilities needs are met. The FISH data is used to inventory instructional areas or teaching stations. The district has not recently updated or verified its FISH data. However, indications are that such an update is being made as part of the plant update. See the discussion in Chapter 10 regarding FISH data.

The District First Maximizes the Use of Local Revenue Alternatives in Order to Increase Construction Funding

State law requires local districts to maximize their local effort. Each school board desiring to participate in the state allocation of funds for current operation shall levy on the taxable value for school purposes of the district, a millage rate not to exceed the amount certified by the Commissioner of Education as the minimum millage rate necessary to provide the district required local effort for the current year. We reviewed the district's resolution determining revenues and millages levied and noted that the district had maximized the local revenue sources to the extent the law allows. This resolution includes certification by the county property appraiser as to the non-exempt assessed valuation of the property in the county upon which the school district uses to calculate their funding requirements.

Recommendation

- We recommend that the district utilize the formulas developed by the Florida Legislature more extensively and in a more formal manner with the purpose of determining whether the district's facilities needs are being met.*

Action Plan 9-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 9-2

Utilize the Formulas Developed by the Florida Legislature More Extensively

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Utilize and document the formulas developed by the Florida Legislature in a more extensive manner.
Action Needed	Step 1: Step 1: Utilize FISH data provided in new plant survey and compare enrollment projections to 100 % of capacity at grade level in development of the five-year plan. Step 2: Step 2: Develop supporting enrollment projection schedules that show ethnicity, income status, and other available demographic data. Step 3: Step 3: Establish guidelines that require the utilization of local comprehensive plans.
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director
Time Frame	August 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Possible major savings, presently undeterminable, at little or no additional cost.

3 The district should formally incorporate appropriate measures from the SMART (Soundly Made, Accountable, Reasonable and Thrifty) Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards during construction planning and development operations.

The District Was Unable to Demonstrate the Use of Measures from the SMART Schools Clearinghouse to Minimize Construction Costs.

The Florida Legislature, during its 1997 special session, established the Soundly Made, Accountable Reasonable and Thrifty Schools Clearinghouse (SMART) as being responsible for administering several programs designed to assist and encourage Florida school districts to build SMART schools. Please see Chapter 10, page 27 for additional discussion on the SMART Schools Clearinghouse.

The intent of this program is to reduce the costs of building and maintaining schools while continuing to provide a high quality learning environment for students by following a determined and straight forward approach to designing and building SMART schools.

As part of the SMART schools initiative, the Legislature directed SMART to develop Frugal Construction Standards to develop appropriate industry standards and optimal life cycles. These may include, but are not limited to, standards for optimal size of core facility space, design-build, performance contracting, energy efficiency, and life-cycle systems costing.

SMART encourages school districts to consider the recommendations and incorporate as many as practical and possible into their schools.

Per ValienteHernandez P.A. discussions with personnel in the construction services area, the district

- consults the SMART directory for the potential use of already approved plans; however, we were not provided with any evidence that the district actually used any of the plans;
- does not evaluate the SMART school guidelines in writing; and
- has not completed a SMART school design information form.

The district should endorse and support an all-inclusive approach to implement SMART program recommendations. This may be accomplished by partnering with others to build a team where recommendations can be studied, dissected by members with differing skills. The citizens, the community at large, will benefit by the inclusion of members, including parents and non-parents that can offer positive input to the district as to how to implement SMART program recommendations. The district needs to encourage all of its design and construction team members to actively participate and work toward maintaining a positive relationship through the construction period.

The design team should be asked to comply with the practical design solutions that are functional and cost-effective. When applicable, the design team, construction manager, and district facilities staff can help control construction costs by:

- being involved in development of the educational specifications and monitoring the cost implications of decisions made by the district's educational specifications committee;
- studying the educational specifications and helping translate them into a precise program;

- being involved in site selection and helping determine the best utilization of potential school sites;
- questioning the Occupant Design Criteria Tables and looking for better and more efficient ways to allocate space within the school;
- seeking simple and straightforward architectural, civil, structural, mechanical, and electrical design solutions;
- monitoring the architectural, civil, structural, mechanical, and electrical planning and design solutions to control costs; and
- producing complete, high quality construction documents.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district formally incorporate the recommendations of the SMART Schools Clearinghouse into construction planning and development operations.*

Action Plan 9-3 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 9-3

SMART Schools Approach

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Formally incorporate the recommendations of the Soundly Made, Accountable, Reasonable and Thrifty (SMART) Schools Clearinghouse into the construction planning and development operations.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Obtain SMART recommendations from the state, and summarize those that are applicable to the district.</p> <p>Step 2: Consult the SMART schools directory for the potential use of already approved plans.</p> <p>Step 3: Establish procedures to include the SMART recommendations as an integral part of the process to select, plan and construct schools.</p> <p>Step 4: Implement a clearly defined step in the approval process to include evidentiary support that SMART recommendations were in fact included in the process.</p> <p>Step 5: Evaluate SMART schools guidelines, in writing, for each proposed construction project.</p> <p>Step 6: Document the efficiencies and/or cost savings that were considered as well as the outcomes of these considerations.</p> <p>Step 7: Establish a “Team Building” program for construction projects and ask those involved in the design and construction, including external professionals and interested citizens, to participate.</p> <p>Step 8: Obtain approval through established channels.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Manager; Fiscal Director.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002 and ongoing

Fiscal Impact	Implementation can take place with existing personnel. Fiscal impact cannot be properly measured because of the prospective nature of the recommendation and the many variables associated with it. However, based on past experiences between 1998-01, cost savings of approximately \$150 per elementary student station, depending on the number of variables, is possible for new construction. During the period mentioned, approximately \$650,000 could have been saved (based on 4,323 new elementary work stations added). Lesser amounts may be possible, again depending the variables present, for renovation projects.
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4 When designing and constructing new educational facilities, the district should incorporate Life-Cycle costs into the planning process to minimize the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility.

The District Has Not Adequately Considered Life-Cycle Costs for Efficiencies

Chapter 235.26(2)(f)(1), *Florida Statutes*, states that the district shall evaluate the performance of life-cycle cost analyses on alternative architectural and engineering designs for energy efficiencies. The life-cycle cost analyses must consist of the sum of

- the reasonably expected fuel costs over the life of the building that are required to maintain illumination, water heating, temperature, humidity, ventilation, and all other energy-consuming equipment in a facility and
- the reasonable costs of probable maintenance, including labor and materials, and operation of the building.

Per ValienteHernandez P.A. discussions with the district's responsible personnel, we found that the district:

- does not use life-cycle cost analyses to identify factors that are reasonably related to the maintenance and operations costs of new facilities (life-cycle cost analyses include acceptable industry standards, such as the district's established maintenance standards, and the district's analysis of maintenance and operations costs);
- does not use the results of the life cycle cost analyses to design, construct, select equipment for, and furnish new facilities to minimize maintenance and operations costs; and
- does not regularly assess and revise those factors to ensure the district minimizes maintenance and operations costs based on appropriate standards from comparable school districts, government agencies, and private industry.

For computation of the life-cycle costs, standards must include, but need not be limited to,

- the orientation and integration of the facility with respect to its physical site;
- the amount and type of glass employed in the facility and the directions of exposure;
- the effect of insulation incorporated into the facility design and the effect on solar utilization of the properties of external surfaces;

- the variable occupancy and operating conditions of the facility and subportions of the facility; and
- an energy consumption analysis of the major equipment of the facility's heating, ventilating, and cooling system; lighting system; and hot water system and all other major energy-consuming equipment and systems as appropriate.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district formally incorporate life-cycle costing as part of their overall construction, maintenance and operating budgets*

Further, we recommend that the factors related to the possible minimization of maintenance and operational costs be required as part of the planning of new facilities.

Action Plan 9-4 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 9-4

Incorporate Life-Cycle Costing

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Factors that tend to minimize future maintenance and operational costs of a planned new facility are enhanced by including "life-cycle costing" into the process.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Life-cycle costing is defined and incorporated into the planning process of new facility construction.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent and school board approve the concept and incorporate into the district's written policies and procedures.</p> <p>Step 3: Incorporate life-cycle costing into the five-year planning process.</p> <p>Step 4: Utilize current information as to design, systems, materials, construction processes and labor techniques that when used as part of the planning process, and if approved and implemented, will reduce future maintenance and operating costs.</p> <p>Step 5: Identify specific factors that are proven reasonable related to the maintenance and operations costs of new facilities.</p> <p>Step 6: Incorporate the results of the life-cycle analyses in design, construction, equipment selection, and furnishings to minimize maintenance and operational costs.</p> <p>Step 7: Quantify the future costs savings vs. additional construction costs to evaluate the feasibility of implementing the particular suggestion.</p> <p>Step 8: Regularly (i.e., annually) assess and revise the factors identified above against actual results and compare to other districts.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School Board; Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent; Facilities Director; Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Possible major savings, presently undeterminable, at little or no additional cost.

10

Facilities Construction

The Lake County School District has seen tremendous growth, especially in the southern portion. With this growth comes the need for additional facilities. Planning is a key to the success for the district to adequately provide the necessary facilities to meet the educational needs. The district needs to formalize and implement its Five-Year Facilities Work Program to ensure that there is a coordinated effort to plan, design, construct, and maintain quality facilities for the public school students of Lake County.

Conclusion

The facilities function in the Lake County School District (the district) has recently experienced a period of rapid growth with the construction of five elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and several classroom additions in the past three years. Based on the district's own data it is not clear whether all of these additions were needed. Results of a recently completed plant survey indicate the district is not using space effectively. Consequently, the district will need to plan for future facility needs and consider alternatives to construction, such as rezoning or transferring students.

The district also needs to improve its documentation of procedures, criteria, and standards with respect to planning construction projects, site selection and evaluation, architectural evaluations, and development of educational specifications. The recently established Long-Range Planning Committee will need to use the necessary information to plan effectively for the district's future facility needs. At the same time, the district will need to incorporate available demographic data into enrollment projections used for facility planning.

Steps are currently underway to improve the necessary framework for facilities planning. The recently established Long-Range Planning Committee for example, will facilitate the assessment of the district's evolving facility needs. However, other improvements remain to be made to ensure an effective process. The following recommendations are intended to assist in providing direction and organization to facility construction issues. Once these issues are discussed, amended and put in place, the foundation will exist for a quality construction program.

The district's accomplishments in the facilities construction area are illustrated in Exhibit 10-1.

Exhibit 10-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Facilities Construction in the Past Two Years

- The district recently established a standing facilities committee to assist in the development of long-range plans.
 - The facilities function is currently being restructured to become more efficient and effective in the construction process.
 - District staff recently performed an assessment to prioritize all facility needs.
 - Recent construction projects were built using prototype building designs.
 - The district recently established a school opening coordinating committee.
-

Source: Lake County School District.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Five-Year Facilities Work Plan

- The district has recently established a facilities planning committee. (Page 10-6)
- The district needs to improve its framework for planning based on steps currently underway. (Page 10-8)
- The five-year facilities work plan should reflect input from the facilities planning committee and fit within the district's master plan. (Page 10-11)
- The five-year facilities work plan has not incorporated thorough demographic studies into enrollment projections. (Page 10-13)
- In the past, the five-year facilities work plan was not based on an evaluation of the physical condition and the ability of facilities to meet educational needs. (Page 10-16)
- In the past, the district did not evaluate alternatives to new construction when developing the annual five-year plan, nor has adopted formal procedures for evaluating alternatives to new construction. (Page 10-18)
- District planning prioritizes construction needs. (Page 10-20)
- The district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the current laws of Florida. (Page 10-21)
- For all projects with dates of construction contracted after July 1, 2001, the district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the Florida Building Code. (Page 10-21)
- The school board ensures responsiveness to the community through open communication about the construction program and the five-year facilities work plan. (Page 10-22)

Educational Specifications

- The district has developed educational specifications for different categories of construction, but not for each individual project. (Page 10-22)
- The educational specifications for new construction, remodeling, and renovations include some, but not all of the descriptions of activity areas. (Page 10-24)
- Architectural design fulfills the building specification needs as determined by the district. (Page 10-26)

- New construction, remodeling, and renovations incorporate effective safety features. (Page 10-27)

Selection And Acquisition of School Sites

- Although the district does not begin school site selection well in advance of future needs based on expected growth patterns, they have not had construction delays as a result. (Page 10-27)
- The board considers the most economical and practical locations for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as need to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to developments, and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties. (Page 10-29)

Construction Cost

- The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the construction program. (Page 10-30)
- The district should consider and implement the general requirements recommended in the SMART Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards. (Page 10-31)
- The district minimizes construction costs through the use of prototype school designs and frugal construction practices. (Page 10-33)
- The district secures appropriate professional services to assist in facility planning, design, and construction. (Page 10-34)
- The district can demonstrate that funds collected for school projects were raised appropriately. (Page 10-37)

Completion of Projects on Time and Within Budget

- District planning has provided realistic time frames for implementation that are coordinated with the opening of schools. (Page 10-37)
- For each project or group of projects, the architect and district facilities planner develop a conceptual site plan and building specifications. (Page 10-37)
- The district follows generally accepted and legal contracting practices to control cost. (Page 10-38)
- The district has assigned one person with the authority and responsibility to keep facilities construction projects within budget and on schedule. (Page 10-41)
- The board minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to minimize project costs. (Page 10-42)
- The architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project. (Page 10-44)
- The district requires appropriate inspection of all school construction projects. (Page 10-44)

Training and Evaluation For The Construction Program

- The district should conduct a comprehensive orientation for the new facility prior to its opening so that users better understand the building design and function. (Page 10-44)

- While there is an informal walk-through at the completion of the first year of operation, the district does not perform comprehensive evaluations regularly during the next three to five years to collect information about building operation and performance. (Page 10-46)
- The district does not analyze building evaluations to determine whether facilities are fully used, operating costs are minimized, or changes in the district's construction planning process are needed. (Page 10-47)
- The district has no process in place for comparing maintenance and operations costs of recently completed projects for the purpose of identifying and implementing cost saving measures on a district-wide basis. (Page 10-48)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Most of the recommendations in the Facilities Construction chapter will improve district performance. Because capital projects, including maintenance and operations, comprise a significant part of the district's budget, improvements in performance could generate substantial dollar savings. The fiscal impacts below relate to action plans presented throughout this chapter.

- Conduct a facilities audit that formally evaluates and grades all aspects of facilities, including the school site, structural and mechanical features, plant maintainability, school building safety and security, educational adequacy and a proper environment for education. We estimate this audit will cost the district \$100,000. See Action Plan 10-5.
- The recently completed plant survey indicates an under-utilization of space throughout the district. Evaluating alternatives to new construction may enable the district to avoid the cost for construction of additional student stations. See Action Plan 10-6.
- Utilizing SMART School frugal construction standards can significantly impact the reduction of cost for construction and maintaining. Also applying frugal construction standards may assist the district in qualifying for a School Infrastructure Thrift Award (SIT Award). See Action Plan 10-11.

Exhibit 10-2

Implementing the Recommendations for Facilities Construction Will Have a Five-Year Fiscal Impact of \$100,000 in a One-Time Cost

		Fiscal Impact: Cost Savings/Increased Revenues or (Increased Costs)					
Action Plan and Strategy		Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Total Cost
10-5	Conduct a Facilities Audit	\$(100,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$(100,000)
Totals		\$(100,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$(100,000)

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Background

The district has 23 elementary, 9 middle, 6 high, and other special purpose schools, as well as administrative facilities. The district's schools contain approximately 4.1 million net square feet and serve a population of 29,280 students, or approximately 140 square feet per student. The district's square foot per student ratio is very close to the 139 average square feet per student ratio in the peer districts. (See Exhibit 10-3).

Exhibit 10-3

Square Feet Per Student Is Comparable to Peer Districts

School District	Total Net Square Feet	Total Students	Net Square Feet Per Student
Osceola	4,130,334	34,557	120
Okaloosa	4,044,757	30,335	133
Charlotte	2,336,922	17,169	136
Lake	4,097,415	29,280	140
Santa Rosa	3,213,643	22,633	142
St. Johns	2,903,359	20,069	145
Alachua	4,752,870	29,684	160

Source: Florida Inventory of School Houses, June 15, 2001.

The district has seen tremendous growth, especially in the southern part of the district. With this growth comes the need for additional facilities. Planning is a key to the success for the district to adequately provide the necessary facilities to meet the educational needs. The district needs to formalize and implement its strategic plan to ensure that there is a coordinated effort to plan, design, construct, and maintain quality facilities for the public school students of Lake County.

The mission of the typical construction department is to provide new and modernized facilities that meet the needs of the students at the lowest possible cost. The specific goals of a construction department may include:

- establishing a policy and a framework for long-range facilities planning;
- providing valid enrollment projections on which to base estimates of future needs for sites and facilities;
- selecting and acquiring proper school sites and to time their acquisition to precede actual need while trying to avoid wasting space;
- determining the student capacity and educational adequacy of existing facilities and to evaluate alternatives to new construction;
- developing educational specifications that describe the educational program and from which the architect can design a functional facility that matches the needs of the curriculum with the potential to enhance and reinforce the education the district desires for its students;
- securing architectural services to assist in planning and constructing facilities;
- developing a capital planning budget that balances facility needs, expenditures necessary to meet those needs, and how expenditures will be financed;

- translating satisfactorily the approved architectural plans into a quality school building and to do so within the budget and time scheduled; and
- establishing and carrying out an orientation program so that users of the facility can better understand the design rationale and become familiar with the way the building is supposed to work.

The mission and goals establish the framework in which the facilities function operates. The remainder of this chapter provides an assessment of facilities, as well as, recommendations for improving.

Methodology

To assess the district's performance related to the best practices for the facilities construction, ValienteHernandez P.A. conducted six site visits, interviewed the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, the interim Facilities Director, Construction Project Manager, Uniform Building Code Inspector, and additional support staff. This assessment also involved research of Florida law, and industry information.

To receive program input ValienteHernandez P.A. surveyed the board members, district staff, school principals, teachers, Student Advisory Council (SAC), parents and students. The question varied depending on the group surveyed and the results have been incorporated in this chapter where applicable.

Findings and Recommendations

Five-Year Facilities Work Plan

Goal A: The district, with community input, determine future facility needs through a systematic evaluation of enrollment projections, current capacity, budget realities, available alternatives, and current law and use this information to develop a five-year facilities work plan.

1 The district has recently established a facilities planning committee.

A district-wide standing committee typically includes representation from the business community, parents groups, city and county authorities, and district staff. When organized, such a committee provides a broad base of support for the long-range plan and help with the overall community understanding of district facility needs.

The district has recently established a facilities planning committee for the development of long-range facility needs. Each school board member and the superintendent assigned one member from the community to be on this committee. The committee also includes facility staff members from the school district. The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services facilitated a meeting on July 12, 2001, to provide orientation for the newly established committee members. The responsibility of this committee will be to assist in developing long- range facility needs.

For this task to be successfully accomplished, the district should ensure that the committee

- has its role established in writing with district goals, procedures, and processes as well as project responsibilities fully explained so members understand their role in the process;
- has board-established goals and interim reporting targets;
- has an established mechanism for documenting decisions and reporting to the board;
- addresses future business needs and the resulting future educational program needs;
- addresses alternative program solutions and the feasibility of each; and
- periodically reviews the status of work on the long-range plan for the previous year, to consider any changing parameters, and to make recommendations to the school board for adjustments to the long-range plan.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish in writing criteria and procedures that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the committee. This should be presented to the board for approval.*

Action Plan 10-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-1

Enhance the Standing Facilities Committee

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish written procedures that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the facilities committee.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent should develop criteria and procedures for the committee and present to the board for approval. The following should be addressed in the criteria and procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • committee member role established in writing with district goals, procedures, and process, as well as project responsibilities fully explained and understood; • board-established goals and interim reporting targets; • an established mechanism for documenting decisions and reporting to the board; • future business needs and the resulting future educational program needs; • alternative program solutions and the feasibility of each; and • periodic review of the status of work on the long-range plan for the previous year to consider any changing parameters, and to make recommendations to the school board for adjustments to the long-range plan. <p>Step 2: Present proposed policy to school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: Superintendent directs facilities committee activities.</p> <p>Step 4: Facilities Director coordinates committee activities.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director.
Time Frame	April 30, 2001
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

2 The district needs to improve its framework for planning based on steps currently underway.

Established authority and assigned responsibilities must first exist to provide the proper framework for planning. Effectively managing a school district's facilities requires a district to have a sound facility planning process, which includes the following:

- a standing facilities committee comprised of a broad base of stakeholders;
- written procedures that steer the development of an organizational chart;
- clearly defined lines of authority and responsibilities; and
- an organizational structure that considers facility planning and is reflected in the organizational chart.

Currently, the district's organizational chart (Exhibit 10-4.) and job descriptions do not clearly and adequately define the planning component of facilities construction. The only indication of a long-range facilities planning function is within the Facilities Director position (presently vacant and operating with an interim director). This person has the responsibility for "long-range planning and budget development for capital improvement projects in the district." No other job descriptions define responsibilities for long range planning. If certain members of the district are assigned a responsibility in developing long-range facilities plans, it should be reflected in their job descriptions.

The organizational structure includes a Facilities Director who reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services. The Maintenance Manager, Roofing Manager, Facility Management Supervisor, Construction Manager, and Warehouse/ Grounds Supervisors report directly to the Facilities Director. The lines of communications, and authority within this chart are not completely clear. For example, the Capital Outlay and Roofing Project Manager is on the same level as the other managers and supervisors, however the position's job description states that this position should report to the Facilities Management Supervisor. There also appears to be an overlap of duties performed within the facilities department with no clear definition of their responsibilities.

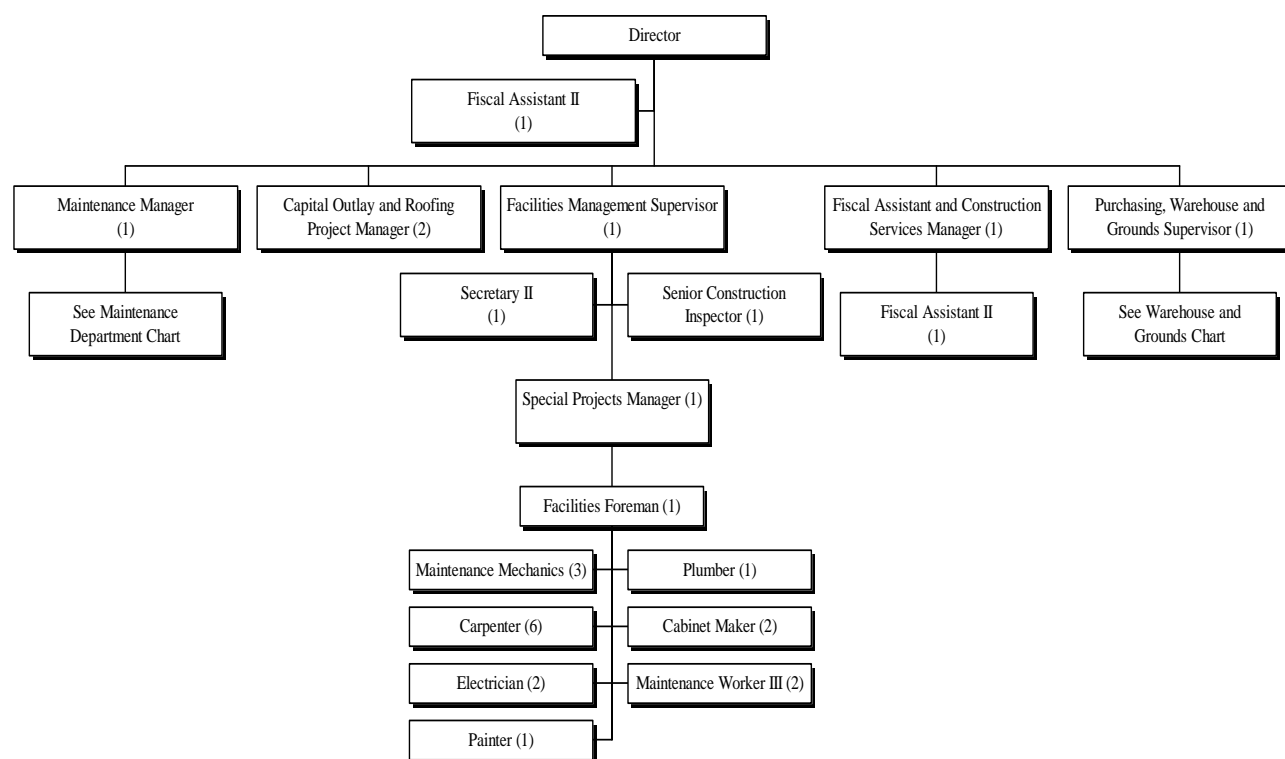
There are no formal procedures for developing long-range facilities plans in the district. As a result, when the district's former Facilities Director resigned, institutional knowledge of why past decisions were made was lost and is very difficult to ascertain whether these were based on the true needs of the district. It is very important to clearly establish written procedures for facilities planning since a variety of school officials are involved and a significant amount of district resources are at stake. The procedures should address issues such as, assessing facility needs, communicating, and coordinating with other governmental and public agencies, the site selection process, and etc. The establishment of these procedures will

- clarify the roles and responsibilities of the planning function for both staff and the school board. For example, the responsibility for assisting in the development of educational specifications or construction standards;
- provide for the implementation of the lines of responsibility as shown in the organizational chart;
- provide for regular lines of communication among the managers that report to the director of facilities; and
- provide for regular lines of communications among the directors and supervisors that report to an assistant superintendent.

As discussed in the previous section, the district has developed a standing facilities committee. During the initial meeting on July 12, 2001, the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services described the role of the committee. The committee will assist the district in the development of long range construction plans for the district. This will include utilizing the plant survey, facility priorities established by the district staff, maintenance priorities, and the current budget to prioritize and develop the long-range plans, specifically the facilities five-year plan.

Although the role of this committee was described in the meeting, the district has not established written procedures that clearly define this process. These procedures will need to clearly state how each member will function as part of the committee and how the committee will function as part of the construction planning. This issue is addressed by Action Plan 10-1.

Exhibit 10-4



Source: Lake County School District.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop an organizational chart that considers facilities planning and accurately reflects the framework of the function.*

Additionally, we recommend that the district establish written procedures for carrying out the facilities function, as shown in the organizational chart, and that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each position appearing in said chart. The procedures should also address the roles and responsibilities of the facilities planning committee.

Further, we recommend that the established procedures guide the development of job descriptions that accurately describe roles and responsibilities as shown in the organizational chart.

Action Plan 10-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-2**Establish Organizational Chart And Written Procedures For Facilities Planning**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district needs to update its organizational chart, and job descriptions to accurately reflect the desired design of the facilities planning process. Establish procedures that will provide a desired framework for carrying out the facilities planning function of the district.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish an organizational chart that considers facilities planning and accurately reflects the framework of the function</p> <p>Step 2: Prepare written procedures that will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarify the role and responsibilities of the planning function for both staff and the school board; • provide for the implementation of the lines of responsibility as show in the organizational chart; • provide for regular lines of communication among the managers that report to the director of facilities; • provide for regular lines of communications among the directors and supervisors that report to an assistant superintendent; and <p>Step 3: Periodically review policies in order to keep them current and eliminate any that are outdated</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	April 30, 2001
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

3 The five-year facilities work plan should reflect input from the facilities planning committee and fit within the district's master plan.

Previous Five-Year Plan Was Not Based on Input From Facilities Planning Committee

A school district needs to have a five-year plan that is the current work plan for the district and should implement the long-range plan identified by a facilities planning committee. The five-year plan should be based upon a plant survey the Florida Department of Education (DOE) requires school districts to conduct every five years. The purpose of the survey is to determine the district's facility needs on a school-by-school basis, and to identify which capital projects may be initiated. The previous survey completed in 1998 was not approved by the DOE because the district's total number of existing, satisfactory student stations exceeded the projected capital outlay full time equivalent (CO-FTE) for the year 2002-03. Consequently, the district was unable to justify the need for additional student stations, through new construction, as the Plant Survey suggested.

In November 1998, the district requested a waiver of the educational facilities requirements in order to get the Plant Survey accepted by the DOE. The basis for the request was to build permanent facilities to replace portable classrooms. The waiver certifies that all of the district's educational facility needs can be met from capital outlay sources that the district reasonably expects to receive during the next five years. With the waiver the district can continue to build schools as available funds allow. A "new" plant survey was conducted during the process of writing this report. A draft of this survey was presented to the board, but has yet to be approved by the DOE. No new construction projects will be started until DOE approves the new plant survey.

While the district has a five-year plan, it is not the result of long-range planning. Under the previous administration the district did not have a facilities planning committee to identify the future needs of the district. This has resulted in the building of unnecessary schools in locations that may not be ideally located. As previously discussed, the involvement of a facilities planning committee is important to effectively plan for the future needs of the district. The development of the five-year plan, based on a long-range plan, must be a top priority of the newly established facilities committee. The plan needs to be updated annually based on the committee's input regarding the district's evolving needs.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district use the facilities evaluation process and the district's facility planning committee to assist with the setting of priorities within the five-year plan. Further, the district should establish a ten- and twenty-year plan in addition to the five-year plan (capital plan).*
- *We recommend that the school district establish not-to-exceed spending levels that are consistent with the particular project and with state standards for construction.*

Action Plan 10-3 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 10-3

Development Of Five-Year Plan

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Use the facilities evaluation process and the district's facility planning committee to assist with the setting of priorities within the five-year plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Recently established committee should meet to develop long-range facility plans.</p> <p>Step 2: Committee should utilize new plant survey, and district's assessment of needs to develop five-year plan.</p> <p>Step 3: Present new five-year plan to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop a ten- and twenty-year facilities plan using the same evaluation process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

School Board Should Establish Not-to-Exceed Spending Levels

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The board should establish not-to-exceed spending levels that are consistent with state standards for construction.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop proposed “not to exceed” spending levels that are consistent with state standards for construction.</p> <p>Step 2: Draft policy establishing spending levels that are consistent with state standards.</p> <p>Step 3: Submit policy to board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School Board; Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

4 The five-year facilities work plan has not incorporated thorough demographic studies into enrollment projections.

Thorough Demographic Studies Are Not Conducted as a Part of the Five-Year Facilities Work Plan

The Educational Plant Survey (the survey) is the primary facilities planning document prepared by the school district. The State of Florida requires that this type of survey be conducted at least once every five years. The district’s most recent survey took place in 2001.

The 2001 survey includes enrollment projections that were used as the basis for facility needs between 2001-02 and 2006-07. The projected enrollment was provided by the DOE. The method used to predict the capital outlay full time equivalent (COFTE) student membership for the next five years is an adaptation of the “cohort survival technique” used by the United States Census Bureau (US Census). Research evidence and experience support this technique as the best method of predicting future COFTE student membership, which incorporates the number of live births, and uses historical trends to project enrollment by grade, or cohort, for Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) through Grade 12.

State projections are not based on a thorough demographic study, or on city/county comprehensive plans. For instance, migration is not factored into the enrollment projections, nor is demographic characteristics such as ethnicity or economic status. Utilizing city/county comprehensive plans would enable the district to consider areas of potential growth in order to plan new facilities.

The district also develops its own enrollment projections, by grade, and compares its projections to state projections. The projections have been very accurate in recent years, and DOE has allowed the district to base facility needs on its own enrollment projections. The district’s internally generated projected student enrollment has not been based on information from the U.S. Census report, projected COFTE, or land planning/development. The district’s projection is based strictly on the increase of student population in the past; not included are other available demographic information, such as ethnicity and income status.

This demographic information is useful in program planning. For example, if the Hispanic population is expected to increase, bilingual education programs may need to be expanded, and this may have facility consequences beyond those of regular program students. Furthermore, the projected increases or decreases in family incomes will directly affect the district's eligibility for federal funding programs and the size of Title I programs in particular. Since Title I schools receive additional funds for educational enhancement, a need for more classrooms could result from the use of this information in facilities planning.

Boundaries Are Not Used for Planning

Changes in school boundaries have come as a result of over capacity and under capacity rather than as a planning mechanism. A thorough analysis of over/under capacity will enable the district to mitigate capacity demands due to growth by changing school boundaries instead of planning to build new facilities or adding portables to school sites.

Enrollment Projections Are Not Based on Comprehensive Plans for Land Use and Development

Under the previous administration the local comprehensive plans were not utilized in projecting enrollment for facilities. As a result schools may have been built in wrong locations. In developing long-range plans the facilities committee and district staff should communicate with the local government on comprehensive plans. At a minimum the district will need to consider the following:

- land use,
- geographical limitations and developable land,
- local ordinances that regulate the growth of the area,
- forecast of economic conditions reported by the private sector,
- vocational opportunities in the community,
- availability of community services, and
- major highway and street networks and their probable future development.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district use the recently completed plant survey to update their FISH data. Utilize the capacity data developed so that enrollment projections may be compared to 100% of capacity.*
Further, we recommend that the district use this information to improve the contents of their five-year plan.
- *We recommend that the district include available demographic data in enrollment projections.*
- *We recommend that the district utilize local comprehensive plans in developing enrollment projections.*

Action Plan 10-4 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 10-4**Compare Enrollment Projections to 100% of Capacity**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Compare enrollment projections to 100% of capacity to determine needs.
Action Needed	Step 1: Utilize FISH data provided in new plant survey and compare enrollment projections to 100% of capacity at grade level in development of the five-year plan.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director; Planning Personnel
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Include Demographic Studies In Enrollment Projections

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should include available demographic data in enrollment projections.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop supporting enrollment projection schedules that show ethnicity, income status, and other available demographic data.
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Utilize Local Comprehensive Plans In Developing Enrollment Projections

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	The district should utilize local comprehensive plans in developing enrollment projections.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish guidelines that require the utilization of local comprehensive plans.</p> <p>Step 2: At a minimum the district will need to consider the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land use, • geographical limitations and developable land, • local ordinances that regulate the growth of the area, • forecast of economic conditions reported by the private sector, • vocational opportunities in the community, • availability of community services, and • major highway and street networks and their probable future development. <p>Step 3: Utilize this information when deciding where schools should be built.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

5 In the past, the five-year facilities work plan was not based on an evaluation of the physical condition and the ability of facilities to meet educational needs.

The recently completed plant survey updated and validated the district's FISH data. To ensure optimal use of building capacity, FISH data, in conjunction with facility site reviews, needs to be used to analyze and identify instructional areas or teaching stations and to identify buildings and/or spaces that do not count as "satisfactory areas," or, areas in which the space of a station does not exceed the normal space and occupant design established by the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF).

The district conducts a five-year plant survey and annual safety inspections. However, these processes do not collect the types of information that would be available through a formal evaluation of existing facilities (also referred to as facility audits or facility appraisals). A facilities audit applies a formal methodology in evaluating and grading all aspects of facilities, including the school site, structural and mechanical features, plant maintainability, school building safety and security, educational adequacy and a proper environment for education.

These audits are useful in identifying facility needs that are not defined through current inspection and survey programs. A facilities evaluation will provide district staff with more specific information on facility needs for each school in the district, and allow for a better information base to use in planning future maintenance projects. More frequent facility audits or assessments based on formal evaluation criteria will also provide the district with a more comprehensive list of its facility needs.

An evaluation commonly used is the *Guide for School Facility Appraisal*, adopted by the Council of Educational Facility Planners International. This evaluation instrument assigns a score of 1 to 100 to each facility based on detailed analyses of the five categories mentioned above.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district conduct a complete evaluation of facilities using a comprehensive format, to include, as a minimum:*
 - *structural design and integrity;*
 - *mechanical systems;*
 - *electrical systems;*
 - *finishes;*
 - *safety;*
 - *ADA requirements;*
 - *educational suitability;*
 - *utilization/satisfaction;*
 - *technological readiness;*
 - *site adaptability;*
 - *site size and layout;*
 - *space (size, number, utility, and flexibility of various areas in the facility and the relationships of these areas to each other);*
 - *light, heat and air;*
 - *acoustics;*
 - *aesthetics;*
 - *equipment;*
 - *availability of utilities;*
 - *hazardous materials;*
 - *maintenance;*
 - *structural adequacy;*
 - *future expandability (including adaptability to change);*
 - *fire safety;*
 - *any other health, sanitation, safety issues; and*
 - *future operational and maintenance costs considerations.*

Upon completion of the district-wide evaluation of all facilities, we recommend that the district prioritize their needs and compile a district-wide ranking for replacement and/or renovation and include in the five-year plan.

Action Plan 10-5 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 10-5

Comprehensive Evaluation and Ranking of Facilities

Recommendations 1	
Strategy	Hire a consultant to conduct a complete evaluation of facilities using a comprehensive format and develop a detailed, uniform checklist of the evaluation criteria, and utilize the results of these evaluations to prioritize needs to be included in the five-year plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Update FISH data and have verified by independent party.</p> <p>Step 2: Conduct a complete evaluation of facilities using a comprehensive checklist. The list should include items listed above.</p> <p>Step 3: This evaluation instrument should assign a score of 1 to 100 to each facility based on detailed analyses.</p> <p>Step 4: Utilize this information in preparing five-year work plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	We estimate a cost of approximately \$100,000, based on a similar evaluation study conducted in another school district (Martin).

6 In the past, the district did not evaluate alternatives to new construction when developing the annual five-year plan, nor has adopted formal procedures for evaluating alternatives to new construction.

The district has minimally experimented with alternatives to new construction. The district has not adopted a formal procedure of evaluating alternatives to reduce the demand for new construction; it has utilized portable buildings to accommodate short-term facility needs at certain schools. However, other alternatives, including extended day schedules, changes in attendance boundaries, year-round schools, and changes in grade configuration could be further examined in order to fully utilize existing facilities, and possibly reduce the need for new construction.

The district's prime alternative to new constructions has been the utilization of portable classrooms, currently using 375 such units. The district has established a goal of reducing the number of leased portables. As noted in its Strategic Plan, the district wants to reduce the leased portable inventory completely by July 1, 2001. However, as of the completion of this report, the leased portables were not completely eliminated.

The district has experimented with year-round schools, but only on a single-track. This method does not necessarily reduce the need for new construction. Under the single-track method, a school does not serve any more students than they would if they were on a traditional schedule.

The district should give consideration to the use of multi-track year-round programs in its schools as a means of addressing student growth. Research in the field clearly reveals that school districts can save construction funds through multi-track year round schooling. The research regarding the educational

impact of year-round schooling reveals somewhat less clearly that it can have a positive impact on student achievement or at least no negative impact.

Major costs are avoided by using a year-round multi-track approach. If the district can avoid building a new school, it avoids the cost associated with building design, engineering, construction, furnishing, as well as infrastructure.

There are, however, additional costs associated with operating a year-round school. These include feasibility studies, administrative planning time, and teacher in-service training. These transitional costs are minimal compared to the cost of new construction.

In a typical multi-track school operating four tracks on a 45/15 schedule (students attend for 45 days, then have a vacation for 15 days, with one-fourth of all students on vacation at any one time), the school is in operation of 242 days each year, as opposed to the 180 days for a regular school. Thus, maintenance, repair, and utility expenses increase; secretaries, custodians, cafeteria workers, counselors, bus drivers, and other staff must be available for the full 12 months, with proportionate increases in salaries.

There is no evidence that suggest the district has considered a comprehensive redistricting or extended school day when projecting future needs. The district has changed school zone boundaries to alleviate schools that were over/under capacity. However, this is not a formal alternative that is considered when planning future growth.

Extended-day schedules increase the capacity of individual schools by lengthening the school day for the facility, although not for the individual student. An extended-day school may have nine periods of instruction; with a group that attends school for periods one through six and another group that attends from three through nine. Implementing a version of extended-day schedules at schools experiencing substantial student enrollment increases could reduce the need for new school construction.

The previous five-year plan (Fiscal Year 1999-2000) included projected amounts for construction of additional student stations. However, the "new administration" stopped all plans for new construction until a new plant survey could be completed and approved by the DOE. The current five-year plan (Fiscal Year 2000-01) does not include any projected amounts for the next five-years.

The recently completed plant survey suggest that the existing, satisfactory student stations, exceeds the projected capital outlay full time equivalent (CO-FTE) for the year 2006-07. Consequently, the district is unable to justify the need for additional student stations through new construction. The district will need to formally consider a comprehensive redistricting or some other alternative to alleviate any over and under utilized student stations.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district, upon completion of the utilization review and demographic study, thoroughly examine the alternatives to new construction including an analysis of the short-term and long-term cost implications and the overall advantages and disadvantages. The alternatives should include extended-day schedules, changes in attendance boundaries, year-round schools, and changes in grade configuration could be further examined.*

Additional information on this issue is presented in Chapter 9, Use of Construction Funds.

Action Plan 10-6 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-6

Examine Alternatives To New Construction

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Upon completion of the utilization review and demographic study, the district needs to examine the alternatives to new construction, including an analysis of short-term and long-term implications.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Enumerate alternatives to new construction.</p> <p>Step 2: Breakdown the alternatives into short-term and long-term.</p> <p>Step 3: Determine cost implications of different alternatives.</p> <p>Step 4: Enumerate advantages and disadvantages of different alternatives.</p> <p>Step 5: Conduct a complete evaluation of different alternatives, giving weight to pedagogical, operational, and fiscal factors.</p> <p>Step 6: This evaluation conducted by senior personnel and professionals.</p> <p>Step 7: Utilize this information in preparing five-year work plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendents; Facilities Director; Finance Director. Approved by the school board.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	The district may avoid the cost of construction of additional student stations.

7 District planning prioritizes construction needs.

The district has recently commenced developing a facility needs table. Minutes of weekly division meetings show that the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services has directed this process and has asked different principals in the district to assist in developing the prioritization table.

The table addresses all the needs for each school, the individual making the request, the date requested, and the priority of the need. The facility table does not address the budgeted amount for each of the projects. Some examples of the needs reported throughout the district includes, but is not limited to,

- remodeled cafeteria (Carver Middle);
- construction of classrooms to replace portables (Cypress Ridge Elementary);
- new kitchen (Dabney Elementary);
- remodeled cafeteria (Eustis Elementary);
- faculty and student restrooms (Griffin Middle);
- new media center with technology lab (Lake Hills Elementary); and
- replace roof on all buildings (Rimes Elementary).

According to the Assistant Superintendent, the district's primary concern is to first address safety concerns and then all other priorities as mentioned above.

The district was able to demonstrate through the five-year plan and the facility needs list that

- projects including instructional capacity are given higher priorities than administrative or support projects and

- construction and renovation priorities are established to ensure equitable treatment of all areas within the district. The five-year plan and other priority listings clearly show a district wide equitable approach to construction. Although growth is primarily occurring in the southern portion of the district, the district has included projects for schools located in the northern part of the district.

8 The district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the current laws of Florida.

The district is required to submit annual reports to the DOE. The requirements below are met and reports are submitted to demonstrate the district's compliance with DOE's requisites.

- Survey of validation
- Project implementation for projects over \$200,000
- Certification of occupancy and final inspection
- Project priority list for use of bonds
- Twelve-month capital outlay projection and request for encumbrance authorization.
- Report of cost of construction
- FISH update. It is the responsibility of the district to update FISH online each time a new facility is added or altered.
- The district must also comply with DOE and the SREF in regards to the following three issues, which are addressed in the plant survey that is required once every five years.
- Identify the number of teaching stations in the schools.
- Determine that the number of student stations assigned to a teaching station agrees with legal requirements.
- Determine that the proposed costs of construction do not exceed the amount legally allowed per student station.
- During the course of this review the district hired independent consultants to conduct a plant survey that included all of the above requirements.

9 For all projects with dates of construction contracted after July 1, 2001, the district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the Florida Building Code.

The district demonstrates that staff will have knowledge and understanding of the Florida Building Code. The district staff provided documentation indicating their attendance at a regional workshop hosted by the DOE. These workshops are held to show the difference between the Florida Building Code and the Uniform Building Code.¹

¹ The implementation of the Florida Building Code has been delayed to January 1, 2002. Due to this delay, the district accountability for this best practice is on hold. Senate Bill 52-C, if not vetoed by the Governor, will postpone the effective date of the Florida Building Code to March 1, 2002.

10

The school board ensures responsiveness to the community through open communication about the construction program and the five-year facilities work plan.

The Board Does Provide Open Communication With the Community

The district provided board minutes of open hearings to illustrate that regular community meetings are held to discuss information regarding construction programs. The school board provides timely notice to the public of dates and agendas for upcoming meetings. During these meetings the district provides a clear explanation of each construction project in a format that allows for public response.

Educational Specifications

Goal B: The district develops educational specifications for each project to meet student education needs.

11

The district has developed educational specifications for different categories of construction, but not for each individual project.

Currently, the district has educational specifications for different categories of projects. However, there is not a unique set of specifications for each new school, project, or renovation. Therefore, the overall elements of educational specifications (i.e., general project description) are not completed. The primary purpose of the educational specifications is to relate to the design professionals what programs are to be housed in the facility and what the design implications of those programs may be.

While many of the essential components are likely discussed by district personnel and ultimately included in the project, they are not formally documented in the educational specifications. For most projects, there are no educational specifications that

- state the project rationale;
- provide a narrative description of the project;
- state the program goals and instructional philosophy;
- addresses school-community relationships;
- state whether the project will serve all or parts of the district on a open enrollment basis; or
- state whether the new facility will be a “magnet” or other special school.

It is important for each school to have a thorough project description that spells out the items listed above. Even though plans are reused, it is essential for each school or project to have its own identity and purpose. School districts may consider the development of standardized educational specifications for the various types of school plant facilities within the district, i.e., elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. Standardized specifications can augment uniformity of program from school to school

within the district and eliminate some duplication of effort. A standardized specification, however, cannot eliminate the need for an individually considered specification for specific projects, as each project will have its own unique characteristics. The educational specifications document provides the district with an opportunity to customize the specifications for the school's particular purpose. Once the final design is complete, the educational specifications can be compared against the final product to determine if all needs are addressed. Performing this activity will assist the district in minimizing the need for change orders once construction has begun.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop project-specific educational specifications for each project or group of projects.*
- *We recommend that to develop the educational specifications, the district form committees that include administrative staff, instructional staff, non-certified staff, community members, and design professionals.*
- *We further recommend that the district develop guidelines for preparing educational specifications for each new school (or group of projects if a prototype) and major renovation. The guidelines should establish standards such as a minimum classroom size and minimum-required core facilities, but still allow flexibility for educational program differences among different projects. These guidelines would then be used for the development of project-specific education specifications.*

Action Plan 10-7 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 10-7

Guidelines For Educational Specifications

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop guidelines for the development of educational specifications for each new school, or group of projects, and for major renovations to existing properties.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop guidelines regarding the general statements that are to be included in the educational specifications for each project. These will provide guidance to educational specifications committees regarding the need for project rationale, historical perspectives, etc. They will also provide district standards regarding the size of instructional spaces, square footage cost, etc.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Form Educational Specification Committee

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Form educational specification committees for each major project, which need to include administrative, instructional, other staff, community members and design professionals.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Superintendent, or designee, to select persons to form educational specification committee(s) that include staff, parents, community members, and design professionals associated with each major project that are qualified, willing and able to devote required time to this function.</p> <p>Step 2: School board appoints persons based on recommendation from the Superintendent.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; approval by school board.
Time Frame	September 30,2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Develop project specific educational specifications

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Develop educational specifications for each project (or group of projects).
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop criteria for the development of project specific educational specifications that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • state the project rationale, • provide a narrative description of the project, • state the program goals and instructional philosophy, • addresses school-community relationships, • state whether the project will serve all or parts of the district on an open enrollment basis.
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director
Time Frame	September 30,2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

12

The educational specifications for new construction, remodeling, and renovations include some, but not all of the descriptions of activity areas.

The district does not complete formal educational specifications for each project. As a result the district does not include the necessary components that define the needs of a project. The district is likely to include many of the criteria in various documents such as, the plant survey or building specifications, which could be included in the educational specification document.

The criteria listed below have been included in the educational specifications.

- Furniture and equipment needs
- Environmental variables such as acoustical needs, visual needs, thermal requirements, and special aesthetic concerns
- Utility needs including water, sewer, drainage, electrical, gas, compressed air, telephone, fire alarm, conduit cable for advanced technology, and satellite dish
- Storage requirements for individual activity areas and teacher stations
- Display areas for chalkboards, tack boards, and display areas
- Instructional support and co-curricular facilities have been addressed

The criteria listed below, however, have not been included in each of the educational specifications completed.

- From the facilities list a schedule of spaces and variances as applicable.
- Specifications address curriculum and support services
- The deriving of the space requirements from planned course offerings, staffing patterns, and planned student groupings.
- The description of space relationship requirements for the separation of large- and- small group areas and for convenient student and staff circulation.
- A planned expansion (portables) strategy.
- Joint use design concepts to accommodate security, energy conservation, and citizen safety are considered.
- Emergency shelter accommodations.

Including the above criteria is important because it provides the necessary framework for the planning of a facility. The development of the education specifications enables the district to consider how a facility will be used early on in the project and make adjustments as needed. For example, identifying the facilities as a joint use facility may initiate the need to use a different type of flooring to take into account fewer hours of cleaning time and wear due to extended facility use and tear because of increased foot traffic.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop detailed educational specifications for each project or group of projects. The above list that has not been included in the specifications should be incorporated to form a complete set of educational specifications.*

Action Plan 10-7, Recommendation 3, provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

13 Architectural design fulfills the building specification needs as determined by the district.

Architectural Plans Meet District's Building Needs

The district provided a copy of the architectural drawings for the new high school being built. The facility's plans verify that the architect has drawn schematic layouts of buildings, roads, etc. that ensure the conditions below.

- There is a description of how students, staff, and visitors will arrive at and depart from the school.
- Parking requirements are defined.
- There are provisions for emergency vehicle and service access.
- There is a provision for access by disabled persons.
- Bus loading and unloading is separate from other vehicle traffic.
- Circulation patterns, both within classrooms and between activity areas, are well planned.
- District security considerations have been incorporated into the design.
- Potential community use of the building has been considered.
- Future expansion possibilities are included.
- Descriptions of the public address, closed-circuit television, telephone, computer networking, and security systems have been included.

Architectural Plans for Construction Are Not Matched Against Educational Specifications

The educational specifications have not always provided a complete description that includes the criteria previously discussed. Since the educational specifications used on schools represent a boilerplate document, matching the architectural plans against the educational specifications does not yield a significant benefit. Once the educational specifications are customized for each project, this matching procedure would assist the district in holding the architect accountable for the predetermined needs.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop project specific educational specifications for each project or group of projects. The architectural plans should be matched against the educational specifications to verify that the final plans represent the district's educational program goals.*

Action Plan 10-8 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

*Action Plan 10-8***Compare Educational Specifications With Architectural Plan**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish a formal process of matching educational specifications against architectural plans to ensure the plans meet the district's needs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: A complete set of educational specifications for each individual project should be developed as noted in <i>Action Plan 10-7</i>.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop a formal process that will enable the planning leader, the users of the facility and the architect to match the educational specifications against the final plans to verify that the final plans represent the district's educational program goals.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

14

New construction, remodeling, and renovations incorporate effective safety features.

Safety Features Are Incorporated in New Construction

Maintaining a safe and secure environment for students as well as employees is a primary responsibility for a school district. The district has demonstrated in its architectural plans that appropriate safety features are incorporated into the design of construction. The plans included items such as fences, exit signs, lighting, security systems, etc. To ensure safety conditions, the district performs a substantial and final inspection on new construction to discover any issues that would at all pose as a safe treats. Furthermore, the district's safety inspector conducts annual safety inspections of all facilities to discover the existence of any deficiencies.

Selection and Acquisition of School Sites

Goal C: The district uses a proactive system to select and acquire appropriate school sites in a timely and economic manner.

15

Although the district does not begin school site selection well in advance of future needs based on expected growth patterns, they have not had construction delays as a result.

The District Does Not Have a Site Selection Committee

Currently, there is no representation of a number of district stakeholders in the site selection process. These stakeholders, including administrators, principals, instructional staff, local government officials, architects, real estate officials, and community members, bring a wealth of information to the process that the district may not otherwise consider. The purpose and role of this committee is to assist in selection of potential sites, help evaluate identified sites, and recommend identified sites to the board. The committee process will incorporate the requirements of Florida law and the state requirements for educational facilities concerning site acquisition. These requirements concern the consideration of the most economical and practical locations and the minimum site size needed by type of school. Due to the high amount of public funds spent, participation in the site selection and acquisition process by representatives of various stakeholders is essential, and practical, to earn necessary recognition of public accountability.

By having a long-range planning committee and a site selection committee, the school district would be better able to purchase land for construction well in advance of the need. For example if the district is aware that it will need to build an elementary school in the south end of the district in the next 3-5 years, the site selection committee can begin to consider locations now. This may enable the district to have more choices and pay a lower price for the piece of land. It would also enable the district to start building early if the need arises. Evaluating potential sites will be a responsibility of the site selection committee once implemented.

The District Cannot Demonstrate Compliance With All Legal Requirements for Site Selection

The district was unable to demonstrate that it complies with all legal requirements for site selection. Until 1997, state law required that all site purchases be approved by the state. The state no longer has this requirement, but the district is still responsible for meeting legal requirements with respect to site purchases.

Since site purchases represent major financial and long-term planning commitments for a school district, it is important that their evaluation and selection meet all legal requirements. Applicable legal requirements are defined in SREF Section 1.4. Chapter 235.054, *Florida Statutes*, requires that all sites with an estimated value between \$100,000 to \$500,000 have one independent appraisal, and that sites with an estimated value exceeding \$500,000 have two independent appraisals. The district provided the following documentation to demonstrate their compliance with the requirement below.

- Under \$500,000. The district provided an appraisal for the Lost Lake Elementary School site.
- Over \$500,000. The district provided two appraisals for a site that will eventually hold a new high school.

Chapters 235.19 and 235.193, *Florida Statutes*, define requirements for coordination with local governing bodies in site selection and require school districts to select sites that meet the educational need parameters established by the state. The district could not provide any documentation, such as notification letters, to governing bodies and other entities to support compliance with this requirement.

Environmental Studies Are Conducted

Environmental studies were conducted before site acquisition. The district provided a preliminary environmental assessment conducted by Environmental and Permitting Services. The district also provided evidence of a subsurface investigation conducted by Central Testing Laboratory on the

proposed sight of the new high school. The conclusion of this study was that the site was suitable for construction of a new school.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district form a site selection committee for acquiring sites. This committee should be separate from the facilities planning committee.*

Action Plan 10-9 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-9

Form Site Selection Committee

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Form a site selection committee for acquiring sites. People chosen should have appropriate qualifications to carry out the related tasks.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district should develop a site selection committee comprised of various stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 2: The district should provide procedures to be followed for the evaluation of sites that ensures all legal requirements are being met.</p> <p>Step 3: The district should establish criteria for the site selection process and put it into an evaluation document to be used during the evaluation process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

16 The board considers the most economical and practical locations for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as needed to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to developments, and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties.

The District Has Established Site Selection Criteria

The district demonstrated that, for a newly acquired site, an analysis was performed comparing characteristics of different appraisals. School board minutes, and the content of the appraisals, demonstrate that the district considers obstacles when selecting sites. These include issues such as transportation plans, zoning, environmental concerns, and neighborhood concerns for each site selected.

As noted in the previous section, legal requirements require two appraisals for property with a value exceeding \$500,000. Furthermore, if the contract price exceeds the average of the two appraisals, then the school board must vote unanimously to proceed with the purchase. The district provided two appraisals

reports for the future site of a high school. The appraisals provided information on factors such as location, site, size, land use, and land value comparisons. The district paid above fair market value for this site; the appraisals suggest a value of \$ 1.26 million and \$1.258 million. The actual price paid was \$1,486,635. School Board minutes suggest a complex and lengthy negotiation process for this site purchase. The negotiation involved several issues including the construction of a road by the County to provide access to the property. The board voted unanimously to accept the \$228,000 excess.

Construction Cost

Goal D: The district controls construction cost through internal and external review of the construction program.

17 The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the construction program.

The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the construction program.

These mechanisms are essential for the district to improve its facilities construction program. Accountability mechanisms will ensure that the district is building facilities in locations that best meet the need of the district. They can also ensure that the district is building in the most cost-effective manner. The process to establish accountability mechanisms need to include, as a minimum:

- development of goals and objectives to implement accountability to the public at large, to improve the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the district's construction program;
- development of performance benchmarks and cost-efficiency measures, including comparisons to similar adjoining districts, to evaluate the program and use these tools to improve management decision-making;
- set-up procedures to evaluate the performance and cost of the program, and analysis of the data to recognize potential cost savings. Consider the implementation of alternatives, such as outside contracting and privatization; and
- development, establishment, and implementation of strategies to continually assess the reliability of program performance and cost data.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district implement accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the construction program. This may be accomplished by considering the above criteria.*

Examples of performance the district could adopt for the facilities programs can be found in Chapter 3, Performance Accountability.

Action Plan 10-10 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Also, refer to Action Plans 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4 and 4-5, which include additional steps the district needs to implement this finding.

Action Plan 10-10

Implement Accountability Mechanisms

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop goals and measurable objectives to ensure the accountability for the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the construction program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district develops goals and measurable objectives and follows with a mechanism to ensure that the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its construction program be documented and accountable to the general public</p> <p>Step 2: The district designs procedures to be followed and measured to validate the site selection process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

18

The district should consider and implement the general requirements recommended in the SMART Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards.

The Florida Legislature, during its 1997 Special Session, established the SMART Schools Clearinghouse as the agency responsible for administering several programs designed to assist and encourage Florida school districts to build SMART schools. As of June 30, 2001, the SMART Schools Clearinghouse Board was sunset. However, the district is still encouraged to apply the Frugal Construction Standards that ensure appropriate industry standards and optimal life cycles and that may include, but are not limited to, standards for optimal size of core facility space, design-build, performance contracting, energy efficiency, and life-cycle systems costing.

The SMART Schools Clearinghouse encourages school districts to consider the recommendations and incorporate as many as practical and possible into their schools. By following a determined and straightforward approach to designing and building SMART schools Florida's school districts can make a significant impact on reducing the cost of building and maintaining schools while continuing to provide a high quality learning environment for students.

Per ValienteHernandez P.A., discussions with the district's Construction Services Manager, the district

- does not evaluate the SMART school guidelines in writing;
- has not completed a SMART school design information form; and

- has not used the plans included in the SMART school design.

The school district should endorse and support the implementation of Frugal Construction standards as part of the design and construction of educational facilities. The design team needs to be encouraged to comply with the practical design solutions that are functional and cost effective. When applicable, the design team, construction manager and district facilities staff can help control construction costs by:

- being involved in development of the educational specifications and monitoring the cost implications of decisions made by the district's educational specifications committee;
- studying the educational specifications and helping translate them into a precise program;
- being involved in site selection and helping determine the best utilization of potential school sites;
- questioning the Occupant Design Criteria Tables and looking for better and more efficient ways to allocate space within the school;
- seeking simple and straightforward architectural, civil, structural, mechanical, and electrical design solutions;
- monitoring the architectural, civil, structural, mechanical, and electrical planning and design solutions to control costs; and
- producing complete, high quality construction documents.

Applying such procedures may lead to the qualification for a School Infrastructure Thrift Award (SIT award). The intent of the Legislature is to provide SIT award money for school districts that use due diligence and sound business practices in the design, construction, and use of educational facilities. A school district may seek the SIT award provided that the cost per student station for new construction of educational facilities does not exceed the amounts shown in Exhibit 10-5.

Exhibit 10-5

Cost Per Student Station Limit for SIT Award

School Level	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Elementary	\$11,600	11,865	\$12,102	\$12,382	\$12,784
Middle	\$13,300	\$13,604	\$13,875	\$14,197	\$14,657
High	\$17,600	\$18,003	\$18,631	\$18,786	\$19,396

Source: *Florida Statutes*.

The cost per student station will be determined by either the Construction Contract Award Date, or the date the Construction Manager (CM) gave a signed Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) to the school board. If granted a SIT award the district shall receive up to fifty percent of such savings.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district incorporate the recommendations of the SMART Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards into construction planning and development operations.*

Action Plan 10-11 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

*Action Plan 10-11***Implement Recommendations of Frugal Construction Standards**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Adopt the SMART Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards that are considered appropriate, and endorse/support the “team building” program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district weighs the positive effects of the SMART Schools Clearinghouse and the Frugal Construction Standards. A mechanism to obtain accurate and well-developed information is established.</p> <p>Step 2: The desired information is gathered, analyzed and reported to the Superintendent and, ultimately, to the school board.</p> <p>Step 3: The school board decides whether the SMART Schools Clearinghouse and the Frugal Construction Standards are made part of the district’s operating policies.</p> <p>Step 4: After board approval, a system is developed to incorporate the SMART concepts into action.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director; ultimate approval by the school board.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Utilizing SMART School Frugal Construction Standards can significantly impact the reduction of cost for construction and maintaining. Also applying Frugal Construction Standards may assist the district in qualifying for a School Infrastructure Thrift Award (SIT Award).

19

The district minimizes construction costs through the use of prototype school designs and frugal construction practices.

The intent of the legislature is to provide school prototype design for all new public schools to reduce the time and cost of developing new facilities needed to alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the public school systems. The district has used the prototype school designs for elementary schools, middle schools, and is currently being used for a new high school, which is in the process of being built. Prototype designs were used for the schools and additions illustrated in Exhibit 10-6.

Exhibit 10-6

District Utilizes Prototype Building Design

Schools Built Using Prototype Design	
• Spring Creek Elementary	• AAA High School
• Seminole Springs Elementary	• Eustis Middle School
• Umatilla Elementary	• Tavares Elementary (classroom addition)
• Round Lake Elementary	• Triangle Elementary (classroom addition)
• Windy Hill Middle	• Groveland Elementary (classroom addition)

Source: Lake County School District.

20The district secures appropriate professional services to assist in facility planning, design, and construction.

Appropriate Professional Services Are Employed for Facilities Planning

The district demonstrated that procedures for the selection of appropriate professionals to assist in the process of facility planning, design and construction were in compliance with legal requirements. The district uses an architectural selection committee to screen written applicants and identify and evaluate finalists. Chapter 287.017, *Florida Statutes*, establishes a threshold for determining the need for architectural selection committee. The district demonstrated its compliance by producing an architectural planning document listing the names of the members of the selection committee. The outline for the process to be followed in the selection for services is shown below.

- The district forms an independent selection committee, which includes
 - a school board member;
 - the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services;
 - a Principal;
 - the Maintenance Manager;
 - the Supervisor of Vocational/Technical Education;
 - the Director of Finance;
 - the Purchasing, grounds, warehouse and property management supervisor; and
 - the Facilities Director.
- A public advertisement for professional services is made and proper bid documents are sent to at least three prospective bidders.
- During the committee meeting each proposal is discussed and scored based on the following criteria:
 - location of the firm;
 - professional qualifications;
 - current/future workload;
 - specific individuals assigned;
 - minority status;

- proof of licensing;
- sworn statement stating that no conflict of interest exists;
- volume of work awarded by Lake County School Board; and
- Form SF54 information.
- The three proposals with the highest point totals are short listed and invited for an interview.
- During the interview the applicants are questioned in more detail about items listed above. Samples of previous work are presented to the committee.
- A firm is selected and awarded the opportunity of contract negotiations with the School District.

Upon board approval, the contract for services is signed. The contract form has been developed by the district legal counsel and incorporates the requirements of the standard American Institute of Architects (AIA) contract along with the specific requirements of the project being completed. Those requirements include the time frame for completion, the allowable reimbursable expenses, the degree of construction supervision that will be required, and verification of the absence of contingent fees. The fee agreed to in the contract is a total fixed fee plus approved reimbursable expenses.

The district could not demonstrate that professionals were used early in the planning process, helped define project goals and needs, assisted with site selection, and helped clarify educational specifications and facilities list.

While the district has no formal process of evaluating architects, the staff agrees that the architect's quality of work is considered in future selections. Since there is no formal process, there is no verification that any findings are referred to the board. Given the amount of current and future new construction and major renovations in the district, it is important to have a formal evaluation process in order to use the information to ensure quality with future projects.

The district could not demonstrate that frugal and life cycle cost analysis was applied to project goals and needs, site selection, educational specifications, and facilities list.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district use reputable, competent, licensed professionals early in the planning stages process for facilities. The selected professional is hired to assist the district in the development of project specifics.*
- *We recommend that the district develop a process for formal architect evaluation.*
- *We recommend that the district perform frugal and life cycle cost analysis to construction projects.*

Action Plan 10-12 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 10-12

Involve Architect In Developing Educational Specifications

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should involve an architect in the development of project specific educational specifications.
Action Needed	Step 1: Select professionals early in the process to enable them to aid in the process of project goal development, site selection, and the development of educational specifications.
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Perform Architect Evaluation

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop a formal process for architect evaluation.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop a process within each project team for formal architect evaluation. The process should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the criteria for assessing performance; • inclusion of facility department staff, school administrators, • instructional staff and school support staff; • an analysis of how the facility meets the program needs; and • the process for reporting to the board. <p>Step 2: Utilize the results when selecting future architectural services.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Frugal And Life Cycle Analysis

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Perform frugal and life cycle cost analysis for construction projects.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop a procedure to conduct frugal and life cycle cost analysis, taking into consideration maintenance history and expected life of the facility.</p> <p>Step 2: Assign the responsibility to an employee at the supervisory level to ascertain that the analyses are promptly and correctly done for each project.</p> <p>Step 3: Report results to the facilities planning committee.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.

Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be completed with existing resources.

21 The district can demonstrate that funds collected for school projects were raised appropriately.

The school board approves construction projects prior to any work starting. Based on this information plus our review of the fiscal budget for 2000-2001, ValienteHernandez P.A. determined that the district uses capital outlay funds in accordance with Florida law and for approved facilities construction projects, including renovation, remodeling, or upgrading.

Completion of Projects on Time and Within Budget —————

Goal E: The district uses generally accepted architectural planning and financial management practices to complete projects on time and within budget.

22 District planning has provided realistic time frames for implementation that are coordinated with the opening of schools.

Each project manual clearly states the time frame as of when construction shall be completed. The time frame usually states the number of days beyond the “notice to proceed.” In other situations the time frame is a specific date for completion. Completion dates are implemented to coincide with the start of the school year or semester to minimize the impact on students.

The board receives updates on the progress for major construction projects. Any amendments to the original time budget are presented to the board. Although construction is completed to coincide with the opening of schools, the district often has a “punch list” of items remaining to complete after the opening of new schools. Although punch list items tend to be minor, there may be construction type activities occurring during/after school hours that interrupt student learning.

23 For each project or group of projects, the architect and district facilities planner develop a conceptual site plan and building specifications.

The district demonstrated that plans and building specifications were developed for each project by providing a set of architectural plans. The plans showed the existing layout of buildings and grounds,

parking and roads, and playfield areas. The plans also showed the areas where the school could expand to accommodate each site's maximum proposed enrollment.

The district develops building specifications for each construction project. As support, the district provided a project manual for a classroom addition (Groveland Elementary School). The manual is comprised of the necessary information needed for the construction of this project.

The manual included information, such as

- bidding and Contractual Requirements;
- general conditions for construction;
- site work (cleaning, termite control, etc.);
- concrete, masonry, metals, woods, plastics, doors and windows;
- equipment (such as, projection screens);
- furnishings (such as, vertical blinds);
- mechanical information (such as, plumbing fixtures); and
- electrical information (such as, conductors, grounding, wiring, and etc.).

This information is essential in the design, planning, and building phases of construction. The building specifications and architectural plans together is the basic framework for a construction project.

24 The district follows generally accepted and legal contracting practices to control cost.

The District Has Considered Alternatives to the Traditional Bidding Systems

When making a decision to build, the district is faced with the choice of what type of contracting method to use. The district needs to consider alternatives to maximize efficiency or effectiveness of the construction project, saving costs, making the project flow without delays, and, in general, for better documentation of management decisions.

The district has experimented with alternatives to the traditional hard-bid approach, but has not formally performed analysis to determine which of the methods to utilize. The traditional approach, plus alternatives to the traditional approach are discussed below.

Traditional Design-Bid-Build. Utilizing this methodology, the owner retains an architect through a qualification-based selection process who designs the project based on the owners' programmatic requirements (educational specifications). Upon approval of the owner, the architect prepares contract documents for bidding purposes that consist of plans and specifications. The owner then directs the architect to put the project out for bid and a general contractor is selected based upon the lowest responsive bid.

Design-Build. The design-build process offers a single source of responsibility for both design and construction phases. In most cases the owner will contract with a general contractor, which, in turn, sub-contracts its architectural work to an independent architect. In some cases, however, the architect is an

employee of the general contractor. The process involves the owner advertising for design build teams to submit total cost bids to design and construct a building based on a program and criteria established by the owner. Design-build is most often used for simple uncomplicated projects that have pre-determined functional requirements or projects that are designed and constructed the same way many times.

Construction Management. Construction management brings professional rather than entrepreneurial direction to the entire design and construction process. With this process, the district hires a construction manager based on qualifications who then provides services before, during and after the actual construction process.

After selection of the construction manager, he makes significant input relating to cost, quality and time to the architect during the design process. Competitive bidding is still employed for what are traditionally the subcontracts to the general contractor.

Under typical construction management, these become prime contracts to the owner. The various contracts may be bid at once, but are often phased or bid at different times. This is particularly true when time is short and fast-track scheduling techniques are employed to complete the project.

Certain contracts are then bid in advance of others, so that work can get underway on construction elements that must be completed first. This type of construction management is commonly referred to as agency construction management. Recently, many construction management contracts are “at risk” where the district negotiates a maximum price with the construction manager who contracts directly with the subcontractors. The construction manager is then “at risk” to complete the project within the agreed upon maximum price.

Board policy does include provisions for using innovative methods of construction.

- The policy states that procedures to contract for construction of new facilities or major additions to existing facilities shall be as authorized by *Florida Statutes* and State Board of Education rules.
- Using a competitive selection process and negotiations pursuant to Ch. 287.055, *Florida Statutes*, the district may select a construction manager (CM) for construction services. The construction management entity is responsible for all scheduling and coordination in both design and construction phases, and generally responsible for the successful, timely, and economical completion of the construction project.
- Construction management may be utilized for continuing contract services involving several projects, which are limited to \$500,000 in construction costs.
- Using as a minimum the requirements of Ch. 287.055, *Florida Statutes*, the district may select a design-build firm for construction services. Design and construction professionals providing design-build services shall include design professionals and contractors certified, licensed, or registered to do business in Florida.
- The Superintendent or designee shall develop procedures, evaluation standards, and contracts for the implementation of construction management and design-build contracts.
- The Superintendent or designee shall assure that construction management and design-build projects are in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and rules, building and life-safety codes and the UBC.
- To expedite project workflow and efficiently manage these contracts, the school board may delegate project decision-making authority to the Superintendent, pursuant to Florida Statutes, for survey-approved projects including submission of project documents for

approval; award of contracts consistent with board pre-approved project time; scope; and budget; and approval of change orders within pre-established amount.

Although there is board policy, the district has not performed a formal analysis of construction management alternatives that identify advantages and disadvantages of each option.

The school board needs to approve the construction management approach for each school so that the decision is justified from a cost-benefit standpoint. Different management techniques work more effectively for different school systems depending on the availability of contractors and the quality of in-house staff. The board's decision to formally approve specific options will require the district to prepare an analysis of alternatives and justify a recommended option. This exercise will ensure that the district is using the management approach that is the most effective and efficient alternative.

The District Has Used Generally Accepted Bidding Procedures

SREF Section 4.2(2)(e) requires that an employee of the board or other appointed individuals publicly open bids and read and tabulate the bids at a designated time and place. This ensures that the competitive bid process is fair and open to public scrutiny, and that no individual bidder has any advantage other than what is contained in their respective bid.

Based on inspection of the advertisement and the bid tabulation form for the classroom additions at Tavares Elementary School, the district open bids as required. A signed bid form was provided to show compliance with legal requirements. The bid form included a dollar amount, bid bond, designation of sub-contractors, and certificate of worker's compensation and liability insurance.

SREF Section 4.2 (2)(h) requires the school district to select the lowest bidder, considering base bid and accepted alternates, and award a contract for a fixed fee. Based on a review of a contract award, the district recommended the lowest bidder on this project, and the board voted to accept the recommendation.

The District Can Demonstrate That Necessary Legal Documentation Is Provided in the Contract

Applicable state statutes require adequate documentation from contractors. This is intended to protect the district from certain risks associated with construction contracts. Based on inspection of a recent construction contract (12 new classrooms at Tavares Elementary), the items below are included as part of the contract.

- A signed owner-contractor agreement.
- Workers compensation insurance certificate—this form is attached to the contract.
- Payment bond—this form is attached to the contract.
- Performance bond—this form is attached to the contract.
- Certificate of liability insurance.
- Guarantee of completion—this date is defined in Article 2 of the contract. Dates for substantial completion and final completion are established, and liquidating damages are provided on a daily basis for each day that (1) the actual date of substantial completion exceeds the scheduled date of substantial completion—\$2,000 per day—and (2) the actual date of final completion exceeds the scheduled date of final completion - \$1,000 per day.

Recommendations

- *The district should establish a committee to evaluate alternative construction management techniques to improve management and control over construction projects while minimizing costs.*

Action Plan 10-13 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-13

Evaluate Alternative Construction Management Techniques

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district needs to establish a committee to evaluate alternative construction management techniques to improve management and control over construction projects while minimizing costs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The board should establish a committee that includes key members such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a board member; • Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; • Director of Facilities; and • General Counsel. <p>Step 2: The committee should consider construction management options available under the law.</p> <p>Step 3: The committee should evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of alternative approaches to contract management available.</p> <p>Step 4: The committee should recommend an approach to the board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School board.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

25 **The district has assigned one person with the authority and responsibility to keep facilities construction projects within budget and on schedule.**

The district's definition for the position of Facilities Director includes the authority and responsibility to keep facilities construction projects within budget and on schedule. This position however, is currently vacant. There is an interim Facilities Director who has other duties, including being a supervisor of construction and the district's Uniform Building Code inspector. The district is in the process of recruiting for the position.

The job description for the Facilities Director includes the duties listed below.

- Responsible for long-range planning and budget development for capital improvement projects in the district.

- Prepare and submit reports regarding the status of capital improvement projects as required by the district.
- Prepare, coordinate, and implement plant survey.
- Administer applicable rules, regulations, policies and procedures set down by the DOE, Superintendent, and Lake County School Board.
- Organize, promote, administer, evaluate, and direct all activities and aspects of the operations of Facilities, Maintenance, Warehouse/ Grounds and Purchasing.
- Coordinate the development of design and construction documents, for all school system facilities and review all design and construction documents for compliance with all applicable laws.
- Supervise the activities of contracted professionals.
- Prepare, submit, and present board agenda items for professional services.
- Submit and present construction documents to the DOE for approval.
- Serve on the professional services committee.
- Hold weekly staff meetings with subordinate department supervisors.

These responsibilities indicate that the facilities director will be responsible for construction projects.

26 The board minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to minimize project costs.

The district's school board policy states that the Superintendent is authorized to approve and execute any construction contract change order which will decrease the construction contract amount, or which will increase the construction contract amount by \$25,000 or less, provided the approval is in the best interest of the school board.

To assure that the board receives quality work and maximum value, changes in the work are put out for bid, whenever practical or feasible. Each approval shall be reported by the Superintendent to the school board and entered in the official minutes at the next regular board meeting.

The district's board policy for change orders is detailed below

- A Change Order, which will increase the construction contract amount by more than \$25,000, is to be submitted by the Superintendent to the school board for review and action thereon. No such Change Order shall be binding until it is approved and executed by the school board.
- Requested Change Orders concerning the same subject cannot be split in the event that the sum total of the initial requested change increases the contract amount by more than \$25,000.
- With all requested Change Orders, the contractor will provide, prior to commencing the work involved, accurate cost data in sufficient detail to enable any architect or engineer to evaluate and confirm its accuracy and the fair market value of all labor, materials, equipment, and incidentals required to accomplish the change.
- With all requested Change Orders, the architect of record for the project will certify in writing to the Superintendent and the school board that the cost of the requested change is fair, reasonable, and in proper proportion to the cost of the original work of the contract and shall recommend action thereon.

- The cumulative total of all approved Change Orders on any project cannot increase the original construction contract amount by more than 8%, or \$100,000, whichever is less, without prior school board approval.
- The designee of the Superintendent may serve in the Superintendent's capacity for Change Order authorization whenever the Superintendent is absent or is ill. It is the intent of the school board that this provision be used sparingly. When construction changes can wait for the Superintendent's return, without undue harm or project delay, the approval shall wait for the Superintendent's personal review and signature.
- All Change Orders will comply with Florida Statutes; DOE publication titled *State Requirements for Educational Facilities*, or any successor statute or rule.

The district provided change order documentation for Round Lake Elementary and Umatilla Elementary to show compliance with board policy. Any change order that exceeded the threshold amounts stated above was submitted to the board for approval.

27 The architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project.

Construction Projects Are Paid Based on a Percentage of Work Completed and Upon Approval That Includes Recommendation for Payment From the Project Architect

Payment records reflect that the architect recommends payment based on the percentage completed (as verified by the architect) and that a percentage is withheld until final completion. Payment is made based on a pay request signed by the architect and project manager ensuring that the payment is based on work complete.

This procedure is essential because prudent business practices, and common sense, indicate that a contractor may fall into adverse financial conditions, making the completion of the project questionable. The approval by the project architect of "construction draws" is a standard business practice found throughout the country.

Retaining a percentage of the final payment until the certificate of occupancy is issued, and until the district accepts the site as being complete, is important to ensure that the project is completed to the district.

In terms of efficiency, effectiveness and cost savings, the procedures outlined above are essential parts of a control mechanism to ensure best practices in this area.

28 The district requires appropriate inspection of all school construction projects.

The District Requires and Obtains Appropriate Inspection for All School Construction Projects

The district demonstrated that the final inspection report and certificate of occupancy were conducted on the renovations to Leesburg High's band and choral classrooms before they were occupied. This provides assurance that the building will be safe and is ready to meet the needs of the students and staff. DOE verifies that a certificate of occupancy was filed before the building was occupied.

The district is responsible for updating their FISH data online. The DOE stated that, as of May 1, 2001, the district was still working on updating their data. FISH information is verified during a plant survey that is required every five years. During this process the party conducting the plant survey independently verifies the number of student stations and teaching stations in the new schools FISH document.

Training and Evaluation for the Construction Program _____

Goal F: To maximize use of new facilities, minimize operation costs, and provide feedback for future construction planning, the district trains building users and evaluates the construction program.

29 The district should conduct a comprehensive orientation for the new facility prior to its opening so that users better understand the building design and function.

The District Does Not Conduct Comprehensive Orientation Program to a New Facility

At the opening of each new school the district has conducted walk through for both maintenance and instructional staff, but there is no comprehensive orientation program established for staff, students, parents, and the general public. The absence of a comprehensive orientation program results in a lack of understanding by the persons responsible for the building operation. For example, staff might not know the location of all exits or how to properly evacuate during an emergency.

During the process of writing this report, the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services formed a School Opening Committee. This committee is comprised of approximately 13 members who will have the responsibility to oversee the opening of new schools and to ensure that the transition into the new school is a success. Another responsibility for this committee should be to aid in the

development of a standardized comprehensive orientation program that can then be tailored to specific schools. The provision of such a program will

- provide the building users with a better understanding of the design and how it is intended to be most optimally utilized;
- provide the general public with an overview of the programs that can be implemented in the new facility and how they can have access to the building;
- assist the district with ideas for future facility planning;
- provide for a more meaningful transition into a new building; and
- provide administrators with guidelines for ensuring that all relevant material is presented to the appropriate user.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district use the newly formed opening committee for AAA high school to develop and implement comprehensive orientation programs for all new facilities and major renovations.*

Action Plan 10-14 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-14

Comprehensive Orientation Program

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and implement comprehensive orientation programs for all new facilities and major renovations.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Use the newly formed opening coordinating committee for the AAA high school to develop an orientation program.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify and prepare a prototype orientation program to include modules for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintenance personnel, architect, contractor(s), facilities department personnel, and the site administrator in attendance that involves the specifics of the mechanical systems; • instructional staff; and • students, parents, and the community that includes a walk through conducted by the site administrator. <p>Step 3: Prepare prototype user manuals for both teachers and maintenance staff that can be adapted for individual schools.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources

30 While there is an informal walk-through at the completion of the first year of operation, the district does not perform comprehensive evaluations regularly during the next three to five years to collect information about building operation and performance.

The District Does Not Perform Comprehensive Evaluations Routinely

While there is an informal walk-through at the completion of the first year of operation, there is no record that the district periodically conducts evaluations of new facilities, follow-up utilization analysis, or an analysis of building operation and performance. This would be beneficial to the district to ensure that facilities are meeting educational needs of students. This would enable the district to compare the finished product with the educational and project specifications to determine whether changes need to be made. Other issues such as safety, operations, performance might surface as a result of routine evaluations. Once deficiencies are discovered the necessary action could be taken to alleviate the problem.

These evaluations also would enable the district to build a database on which equipment last longer and needs fewer repairs overtime. This would provide facilities management with valuable data in making equipment purchase decisions.

Recommendations

- *The district needs to develop and implement a post-occupancy evaluation of all major projects completed.*

Action Plan10-15 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

*Action Plan 10-15***Post-Occupancy Evaluations**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Regularly conduct post-occupancy evaluations.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop procedures to ensure that post occupancy evaluations regularly occur. These procedures should include educational adequacy, function, safety, efficiency, and suggestions for future improvements.</p> <p>Step 2: The evaluation should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an analysis of the educational program improvements for consideration by future educational specification committees; • an operational cost analysis; • a comparison of the finished product with the educational and construction specifications; and • recommendations for future changes.
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

31 **The district does not analyze building evaluations to determine whether facilities are fully used, operating costs are minimized, or changes in the district's construction planning process are needed.**

Formal Post-Occupancy Evaluations Are Not Conducted

The district does not conduct formal post-occupancy evaluations. Because of the lack of post-occupancy evaluations the district does not have data to determine whether

- facility use is as intended and operating costs minimized;
- end product met specifications, and that the district received the product desired; and
- the district still needs the product it built.

Formal post occupancy evaluations would also enable the district to

- provide the architect with corrective feedback to be used in the next building cycle and
- ensure changes are made, if necessary, to the district's construction planning process for facilities to be built in the future.

Minimize future cost by eliminating equipment that requires more upkeep or that is not as efficient. This would enable the district to accomplish its objectives in a more efficient manner.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district utilize the results of the post-occupancy evaluations to assess operating costs, provide feedback to the architect, and make changes in the construction planning process.*

The steps needed to implement this recommendation are included in Action Plan 10-15.

32 **The district has no process in place for comparing maintenance and operations costs of recently completed projects for the purpose of identifying and implementing cost saving measures on a district-wide basis.**

Due to the absence of a process to for compare maintenance and operations costs of recently completed projects, and the district's inability to identify possible improvements to the planning process, implementing cost saving measures on a district-wide basis is not done utilizing empirical data. Therefore, the district has not identified

- analytical measures of maintenance and operations costs;
- improvements that need to be made to its construction planning process, which would, based on its analysis of maintenance and operations costs;
- cost saving actions that are consistently used on a district-wide basis; and
- implemented changes that have resulted in documented cost savings.

As a result the district has not been able to recognize any potential cost savings or avoidance.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop a formal process of analyzing maintenance and operations costs and new and renovated facilities for the purpose of implementing cost saving measures district-wide.*

Action Plan 10-16- provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

*Action Plan 10-16***Analyze Maintenance And Operating Cost**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Analyze maintenance and operations costs at recently completed facilities.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop a procedure to ensure that post-occupancy evaluations include an analysis of the maintenance and operations costs. Compare these costs with other district facilities.
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

11

Facilities Maintenance

Although it has had noteworthy accomplishments and complies with federal and state regulatory mandates, the Lake County School District needs to formalize its approach to facilities maintenance. The maintenance function would benefit from implementing a strategic plan that establishes priorities, guides budget decisions and proactively reduces costs.

Conclusion

Survey results and observations indicate that facilities at the Lake County School District (the district) are reasonably well maintained. The district has also experienced several accomplishments in the area of facilities maintenance as illustrated in Exhibit 11-1. However, as discussed in the remainder of this chapter, process improvements need to be made. The department has allocated its resources primarily to capital projects, both remodeling and major repairs. As a result, fewer resources are available for the preventive maintenance activities necessary to extend the facilities' useful lives. Facilities maintenance in the district is informal, lacking defined goals, plans and procedures, standards, accountability mechanisms, and staffing formulas.

Following is a review of the district's facilities maintenance practices, processes and procedures, along with specific recommendations for improving this function.

Exhibit 11-1

The District Has Had Several Notable Accomplishments in Facilities Maintenance in the Past Two Years

- The Maintenance Supervisor is in the process of establishing written operating procedures.
 - Steps are currently underway to improve maintenance processes. A proposed plan would create a Plant Operator position at each of the schools in the district. The position would be responsible for minor repairs and maintenance. This will reduce vehicle cost and driving time between facilities.
 - The district recently approved an Energy Manager position. This position will be responsible for the implementation of a district-wide energy system.
-

Source: Lake County School District.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Compliance with Standards, Five-Year Facilities Work Plan, and State Laws

- The Maintenance and Operations department's organizational structure is established in writing, but the mission statement and operating procedures are not. (Page 11-5)
- Although schools are appropriately and equitably maintained, the district has not established maintenance standards in its short-term and long-term plans within annual budget and in accordance with the district's five-year facilities work plan. (Page 11-11)
- The district has not clearly identified and communicated performance standards and expected outcomes to maintenance and operations staff. (Page 11-15)
- The district does not ensure that maintenance and custodial standards are regularly updated to implement new technology and procedures. (Page 11-16)
- The district does not obtain and use customer feedback to identify and implement program improvements. (Page 11-19)
- The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure adequate performance and efficiency of the maintenance and operations program. (Page 11-21)

Adequate Facilities Maintenance Budget

- The district projects cost estimates of major maintenance needs. The district, however, should adopt a more formalized approach. (Page 11-23)
- The administration has developed an annual budget with spending limits that comply with the lawful funding for each category of facilities maintenance and operations. (Page 11-24)
- The board keeps a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations. (Page 11-26)
- The Maintenance and Operations departments do not regularly evaluate maintenance and operations activities to determine the most cost-effective method of providing needed services. (Page 11-26)
- The district has several practices that minimize equipment cost through purchasing practices and maintenance; however, there are areas that could be improved. (Page 11-28)
- The district does not use proactive maintenance practices to reduce maintenance costs. (Page 11-30)

Qualified Personnel And Professional Development

- Although the district has begun an informal review of the organizational structure of the Maintenance and Operations Program to minimize administrative layers and processes, this needs to be done formally and on a regular basis. (Page 11-32)
- The Maintenance and Operations department has not regularly reviewed the staffing levels of the maintenance and operations program to maximize the efficient use of personnel. (Page 11-33)
- The Maintenance and Operations department ensures qualified staff by using appropriate hiring practices. (Page 11-36)
- The Maintenance and Operations department has written job descriptions for each position within the department. (Page 11-37)

- The district provides appropriate supervision of Maintenance and Operations staff. (Page 11-37)
- The district does not provide a staff development program that includes appropriate training for Maintenance and Operations staff to enhance worker job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety. (Page 11-38)
- The district provides Maintenance department staff the tools and equipment required to accomplish their assigned tasks. (Page 11-40)

Computerized Maintenance Management System

- The district does not use a computerized control and tracking system to accurately track work orders and inventory. (Page 11-40)
- The Maintenance and Operations department does not have a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the district. (Page 11-43)

Compliance With State And Federal Regulatory Requirements

- District policies and procedures clearly address safety conditions of facilities. (Page 11-44)
- Maintenance and Operations department does not identify and implement strategies to contain energy cost. (Page 11-45)
- The district does not have an energy management system in place, but has recently approved an Energy Manager position. (Page 11-46)
- The school district complies with federal and state regulatory mandates regarding facility health, safety, and energy efficiency conditions. (Page 11-47)
- The district is aware of and prepared for permitting and inspection requirements of the Florida Building Code. The district however, needs to develop procedures to ensure these inspections take place. (Page 11-48)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

ValienteHernandez P.A. recommends two actions in the facilities maintenance area that would have a fiscal impact. However, other recommendations have been made that, when implemented, will have a beneficial fiscal impact for the district, but could not be estimated at this time.

- Increase district-wide custodial productivity to 20,000 square feet per custodian would enable the district to eliminate 22 custodial positions. We estimate that the district would save \$330,000 annually. (Action Plan 11-12 Recommendation 3)
- Develop uniform construction standards and establishing a uniform building management system will reduce the labor and inventory cost realized in the thirteen systems currently utilized. We estimate the district could save \$15,000 per year in inventory cost and \$40,000 per year in labor cost. (Action Plan 11-4)
- Implement a district-wide energy management program to reduce energy cost. We believe the district would realize a reduction in costs that cannot be specifically calculated at this time.

Exhibit 11-2 shows the estimated fiscal effect of the effect of the recommendations above concerning facilities maintenance.

Exhibit 11-2**Implementing the Recommendation for Facilities Maintenance Will Have a Five-Year Fiscal Impact of \$1,897,000 in Cost Savings**

		Fiscal Impact: Cost Savings/Increased Revenues or (Increased Costs)					
Action Plan and Strategy		Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Total
11-4	Establishing a uniform building management system	\$49,400	\$49,400	\$49,400	\$49,400	\$49,400	\$247,000
11-12	Increasing district-wide custodial productivity to 20,000 square feet per custodian.	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$1,650,000
Total		\$379,400	\$379,400	\$379,400	\$379,400	\$379,400	\$1,897,000

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Background

The district's maintenance function is responsible for the upkeep and repair of 23 elementary, 9 middle, 6 high schools, and other administrative facilities. The Facilities Director oversees this function.

Maintenance is divided into two separate sections and each is overseen by a supervisor who reports to the Facilities Director. (See Exhibit 11-3 and 11-4). The Purchasing, Grounds, Warehouse, and Property Manager section has approximately 28 staff members responsible for the following:

- warehousing property;
- purchasing materials, supplies and services for the district;
- grounds upkeep and landscaping;
- pest control; and
- training and evaluation of custodians.

The maintenance section has approximately 72 staff members responsible for the activities below

- Electrical work
- Carpentry
- Painting
- Plumbing
- Air conditioning mechanics
- Boiler mechanics
- Roofing

The remainder of this chapter provides an assessment of the maintenance function, as well as specific recommendations for improving.

Methodology

To assess the district's performance in relation to the best practices for facilities construction, ValienteHernandez P.A. conducted six site visits, interviewed the Assistant Superintendent of Support Services, interim Facilities Director, Construction Project Manager, Uniform Building Code Inspector, and additional support staff. This assessment also involved research of Florida law, and industry information.

To receive program input ValienteHernandez P.A. surveyed the board members, district staff, school principals, teachers, Student Advisory Council (SAC), parents, and students. The question varied depending on the group surveyed and the results have been incorporated in this chapter where applicable.

Findings and Recommendations

Compliance with Standards, Five-Year Facilities Work Plan, and State Laws

Goal A: **The district ensures that maintenance and operations functions are performed in accordance with appropriate standards, the district's five-year facilities work plan, and in compliance with all applicable state laws.**

1 The Maintenance and Operations Department's organizational structure is established in writing, but the mission statement and operating procedures are not.

The District Needs to Adopt Board Approved Mission Statement

The district's Maintenance department (the department) does not have a formal, written, mission statement to define its purpose and help focus its activities.

The department has allocated its resources primarily to capital projects, both remodeling and major repairs. As a result, fewer resources are available for preventive maintenance activities that are necessary to extend the facilities' useful lives. Establishing a mission statement with a defined purpose for the department will serve as documentation of management's indication as to how to distribute resources in an optimal manner. The mission statement will assist the department by driving goals, performance measures, and plans. The statement of purpose will help focus department employees on what is most

important and make them feel as an important part of the school district. A sample mission statement for a school district's maintenance department is presented below:

The Maintenance Department will provide competent, responsive, and efficient services to users of facilities in order to operate and maintain a safe and functional environment for students, staff, and the community.

The school board, to ensure consistency with the district's mission statement and board-created policy, is the appropriate body to approve the mission statement.

The Maintenance Function Is Administered in Accordance With Organizational Charts

The maintenance function is responsible for the upkeep and repair of school facilities. This function is divided into two separate sections:

- Maintenance and
- Purchasing, Grounds, Warehouse, and Property Management.

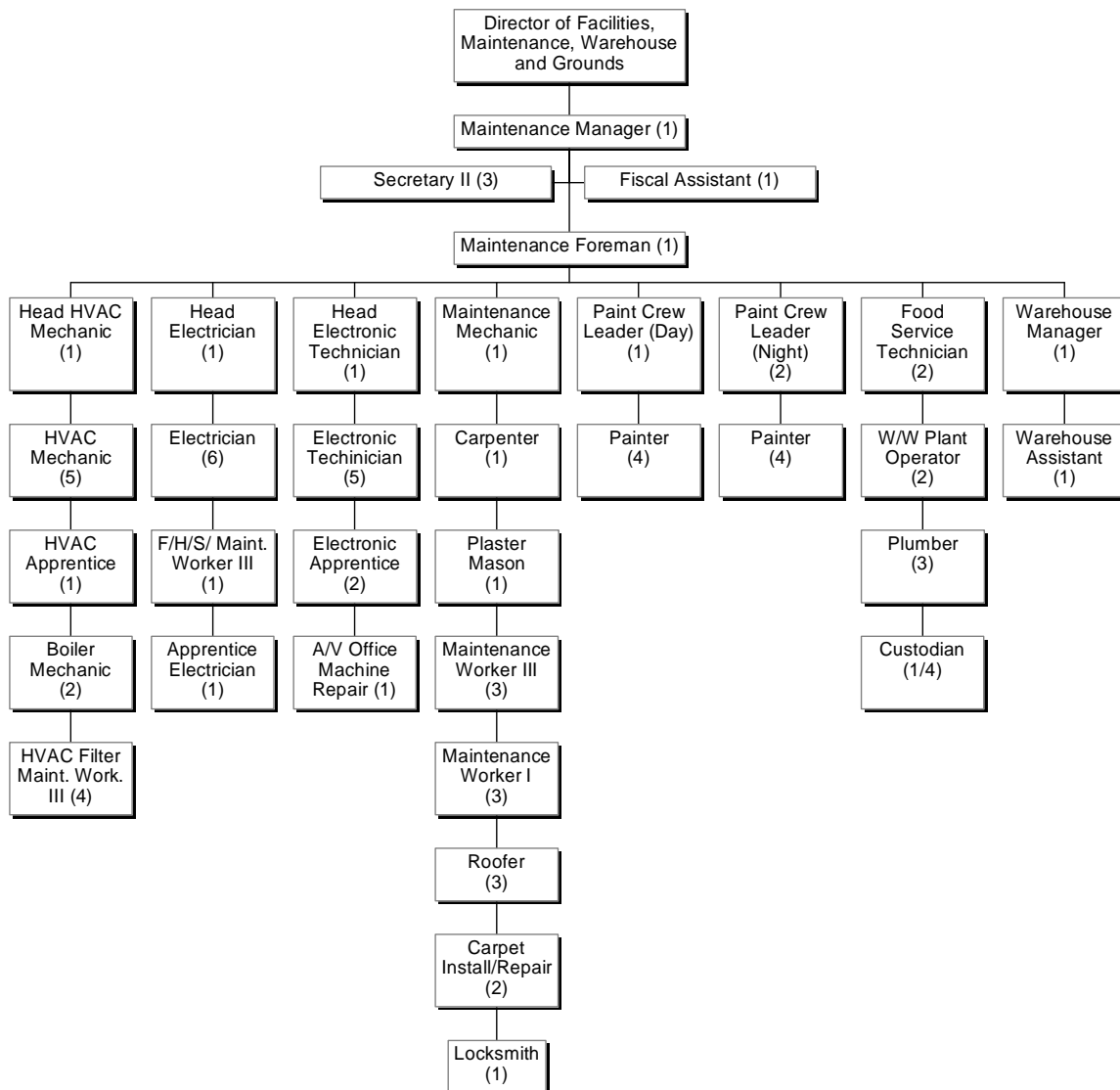
During the recent past, even after experiencing a fast-growing student population, the department has not had an appreciable increase in staff levels. During the 1999 and 2000 school years, the district added five elementary schools and one middle school with no increases in maintenance and operations staff. The addition of the new schools without additional staff has put a strain on maintenance staffing.

According to supervisors interviewed by ValienteHernandez P.A., the department spends a considerable amount of time repairing facilities vs. time spent on preventative maintenance. In other words, the district operates on a "fix it when it breaks" approach, rather than preventatively maintaining facilities. For a more detailed explanation of maintenance staffing levels see page 11-29 in this chapter.

Exhibit 11-3 presents the organizational structure for the maintenance function.

Exhibit 11-3

Maintenance Department Organizational Chart



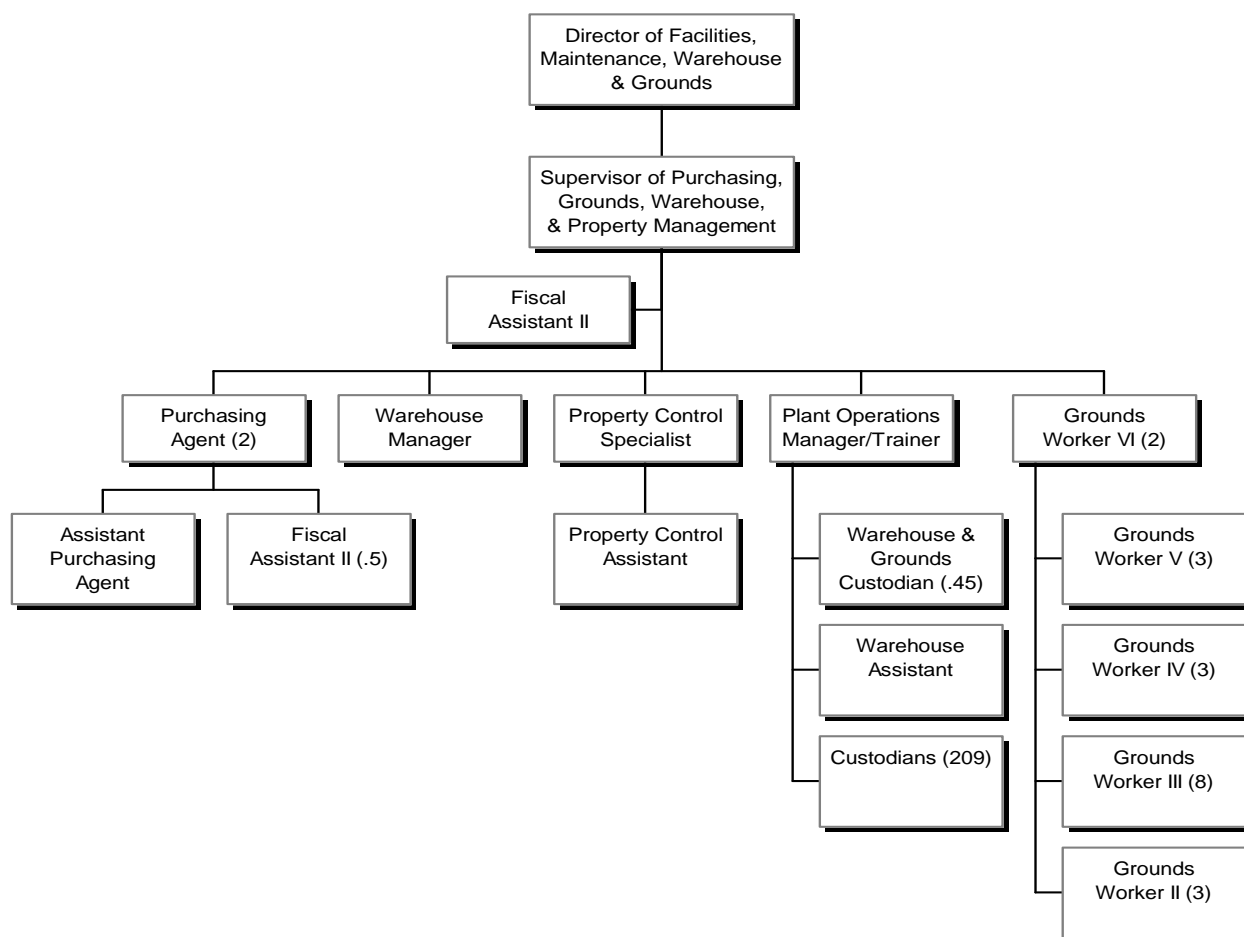
Source:

One maintenance foreman, who supervises all of the trade lead, or head, persons of the mechanical, electrical, paint, and air conditioning crews, follows the maintenance manager. The latter reports to the Director of Facilities. There are a total of 72 full time employees employed in the maintenance section.

The purchasing, grounds, warehouse, and property management section is responsible for maintaining school grounds, sidewalks, landscaping, pest control, warehousing property, and purchasing for the district. This section is responsible for a wide range of tasks that are diversified and allow for the employees to take on many roles. See Exhibit 11-4.

Exhibit 11-4

Office of Supervisor of Purchasing, Grounds, Warehouse, and Property Management



Source:

Under the authority/responsibility of the section supervisor are purchasing agents, warehouse manager, property control specialist, plant operations manager, and grounds worker leads. The section supervisor reports to the facilities director.

This section's organization enables employees to work in other areas depending on the workloads on any given day. For example, on rainy days ground workers may work in the warehouse or in purchasing moving supplies and equipment. Another example is the fiscal assistant of this section also provides the pest control service for the various schools. This is an efficient way of utilizing staff resources when the staff person's primary responsibility is being adequately performed and with good quality.

Custodians are not depicted on this organizational chart because they are under the control of school principals. However, this section is responsible for the training and evaluations of the custodians. This section is also responsible for ordering cleaning supplies and chemicals for the custodians.

The District Has to Develop and Adopt Written Operating Procedures

The purchasing, grounds, warehouse, and property management section does not have written operating procedures, other than what is provided for custodians. The custodian operating procedures clearly describe the processes required for certain task. The *Custodian's Procedure Manual* addresses the subjects listed below.

- Floor care procedures
- Restroom cleaning procedures
- Carpet care procedures
- Water fountain cleaning
- Food service area cleaning; and
- Miscellaneous procedures.

The Maintenance manager stated that a standard operating procedures manual for the Maintenance section will be developed and updated copies made available to all staff. As procedures are written and implemented, the manual is updated. However, the Maintenance supervisor has not established a deadline for the completion of this process. At present, the following procedures have been implemented and included in the procedures manual.

- Work order protocol
- Warehouse parts and distribution
- Non-stock special order for parts and materials
- Replacement or obsolete part distribution

Once the manual is completed it should be composed of what has already been included as well as the topics below.

- Purchase and selection of equipment
- Purchase of equipment, supplies, and materials
- Establishing a level of maintenance expectations and maintenance standards
- Maintenance and budget criteria
- Management of facilities
- Facilities standards
- Personnel staffing policies
- Use of facilities and equipment

The development of written operating procedures are essential to the district because they

- enable efficient and effective training of employees;
- promote consistencies in the performance of task;
- provide assurances that task are accomplished in compliance with school policies and other legal regulations; and
- ensure that institutional knowledge is retained within the district when employees retire or leave the district.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district document an explicit mission statement for the Maintenance department.*
- *We recommend that the district develop procedures for the Maintenance department, and that these be approved by the school board.*

Action Plan 11-1 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 11-1

Develop Mission Statement

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a mission statement for the Maintenance department.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: As part of its strategic planning effort, district staff should establish a mission statement for maintenance. See example on page 5.</p> <p>Step 2: The mission statement should be presented to the board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be completed with existing resources.

Document Policies And Procedures

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Document policies and procedures for the Maintenance department.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Conduct research through national organizations to identify sources for procedures manual components.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop table of contents for maintenance procedures manual</p> <p>Step 4: Prepare a written draft of the maintenance procedures manual</p> <p>Step 5: Incorporate and update custodial handbook into maintenance procedures manual</p> <p>Step 6: Put procedures manual on server, allowing access by maintenance staff and campus staff.</p> <p>Step 7: Revise applicable sections as needed during a one- to two-year period.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be completed with existing resources.

2 Although schools are appropriately and equitably maintained, the district has not established maintenance standards in its short-term and long-term plans within annual budget and in accordance with the district's five-year facilities work plan.

The District Needs to Develop Goals and Objectives for the Maintenance Department

The district has not developed written goals and objectives for the Maintenance department. Without established goals and objectives, the district does not have a basis for meaningful short and long term plans to provide for appropriately and equitably maintained facilities. Established goals and objectives are critical because they

- communicate management expectations for performance to personnel;
- provide standards against which actual results can be measured; and
- provide management with information that enables them to make decisions, develop plans, and revise plans as needed.

These elements, along with a mission statement, are essential to provide direction to the facilities maintenance function and to ensure that the department is operating efficiently and meeting or exceeding industry standards and user expectations.

The Maintenance Department Needs to Establish Maintenance Standards for Assessing Needs

The Maintenance department identifies needs in three ways.

- Plant survey
- Annual inspections
- Input from district staff

The educational plant survey is conducted once every five years. The district's most recent study was in 1998. These surveys identify State Requirements of Educational Facilities (SREF) compliance deficiencies and other major maintenance and repair needs and incorporate them into a five-year facilities work plan.

However, these processes do not collect the types of information that would be available through a formal evaluation of existing facilities (also referred to as facility audits or facility appraisals). A "facilities audit" applies a formal methodology in evaluating and grading all aspects of facilities, including the school site, structural and mechanical features, plant maintainability, school building safety and security, educational adequacy and a proper environment for education. For a more detailed explanation of a facilities evaluation see Chapter 10, page 14.

SREF requires that the district conduct annual inspections on each facility to ensure that it is being maintained in accordance with regulations. The district safety officer and other qualified personnel conduct these inspections and issues a report identifying any facility repairs or renovations needed to be SREF compliant. Results of the inspections are summarized and delivered, through established supervisory channels, to the Superintendent. In the following annual inspection, the safety officer

confirms whether or not the district has remedied the previous year exceptions. A significant number of deficiencies had not been corrected from the prior year's report. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the outstanding deficiencies and concluded they center primarily on preventative maintenance, such as heat and smoke detection in kitchens and cafeterias.

Maintenance receives input from other employees on the condition of facilities through the work order process. The district, however, does not evaluate work order trends to identify major maintenance needs. The district's manual work order system is used for maintenance transaction purposes, not for reporting or planning purposes. Evaluating work order trends can help identify major maintenance needs and avoid costly repairs. For example, recurring work orders to repair a standard piece of equipment at several schools could be an indication that preventative maintenance should be applied to help stop the repair trends. This same analysis could also support a decision to use different equipment on new or remodeled facilities.

Maintenance standards define procedures for maintaining facilities and equipment that maximize their useful lives. In the long run, a school district that applies maintenance standards will experience lower maintenance costs and also lower equipment replacement costs. For example, the district could implement standards for the major components of facilities such as roofs, HVAC, exterior of buildings, etc. During the facilities assessment each major component is examined and its condition ranked as good, not urgent, potentially urgent, urgent. This assessment will enable the district to effectively identify needs based on predetermined standards.

Schools Are Maintained Equitably

ValienteHernandez P.A. visited two each elementary, middle, and high schools in the district to determine whether there is equitable treatment throughout the district. The schools are being maintained equitably, the overall cleanliness and general maintenance is comparable. However, it was found that the district does not have appropriate, documented, maintenance standards, and that some schools are in need of renovation projects.

Survey results of parents, principals, and the Student Advisory Councils (SACs) supports our conclusion. (See Exhibit 11-5.)

Exhibit 11-5

Facility Users Are Satisfied With Maintenance and Cleanliness of Schools

Survey Group	Question	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Principals	My school buildings and grounds are well maintained.	91.3%	8.7%	0%
Parents	My child's school is clean and well maintained.	88.0%	11.2%	0.8%
School Advisory Council (SAC)	School buildings and grounds are well maintained.	77.3%	21.8%	0.8%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

There Is No Long-Term Plan That Projects Maintenance Needs

As noted in Chapters 9 and 10, long-term facilities planning for the district has not been effective. Maintenance needs should be incorporated into long-term facilities planning along with new construction and renovation projects. The district does not have a five-year maintenance plan that identifies long-term manpower, budget, equipment needs, or conditions at specific buildings to be repaired. Although, the district did provide a partial listing of certain conditions such as a paint priority list and job priority list, there was no evidence of a comprehensive five-year plan based on the following:

- Manpower
- Budget
- Equipment
- Physical condition and repair/replacement needs of district facilities including, but not limited to,
 - Paint
 - Roofs
 - Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) equipment (tracking age and repair history)
 - Grounds (including paving)
 - Electrical service
 - Plumbing

The district needs to develop a five-year plan that projects manpower, budget, and equipment needs for each year. This process will allow the district to forecast future financial needs and identify funding sources.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop specific goals and objectives for the maintenance department that are consistent with the mission statement.*
- *We further recommend that the district develop maintenance standards in their short-term and long-term plans.*

Further, we recommend that the district develop written comprehensive projections to be used when preparing its five-year (capital) plan. The projections should consider

- *manpower requirements,*
- *equipment requirements,*
- *physical condition, and*
- *budgetary constraints.*

Action Plan 11-2 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 11-2

Document Goals And Objectives

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Document specific goals and objectives responsive to the Mission Statement for the Maintenance department.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Facilities Director and Maintenance Supervisors need to analyze the department's mission statement and write specific goals and objectives to accomplish the mission. These goals and objectives need to be communicated through proper channels to the Superintendent, who will approve or amend them.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent, after her approval, presents the long-range plan to the board.</p> <p>Step 3: The board reviews and considers approving the plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School board; Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent; Facilities Director; Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Develop Five-Year Plan Of Projected Needs

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop a long-range (five-year) plan that identifies staff, budget, and equipment needs to meet the goals and objectives of the district.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Facilities Director and Maintenance Supervisors shall analyze the existing list of needed facility improvements. The director shall project manpower, budget, and equipment needs to complete all of the needed facility improvements.</p> <p>Step 2: The director needs to prioritize the needs assessed in prior steps, and develop a five-year plan with clearly stated goals and objectives for each year.</p> <p>Step 3: The director researches through national organizations publications and other authoritative means to identify sources for creating maintenance standards for and procedures to accomplish the desired goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 4: Conduct research of the above sources and prepares standards with short-term and long-term components.</p> <p>Step 5: The director, with the Assistant Superintendent, develop projections for the five-year plan considering resources needed to accomplish the department's objectives and to comply with approved standards.</p> <p>Step 6: Prepare a written request including, at a minimum,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • desired levels of physical conditions; • manpower requirements to reach the desired levels; • equipment requirements to reach said levels; and • prioritization to consider budgetary constraints. <p>Step 8: Obtain approval from Superintendent and school board.</p> <p>Step 9: Document in five-year plan and current year's budget.</p> <p>Step 10: Revise applicable sections as needed during a one-year period.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School board; Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent; Director of Facilities; Director of Finance; Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002

Fiscal Impact

This can be completed with existing resources.

3 The district has not clearly identified and communicated performance standards and expected outcomes to maintenance and operations staff.

The district has not developed performance standards for the maintenance and operations staff. Work standards, quality levels, completion schedules, and other standards for job performance have not been established and based on appropriate industry standards. The department relies on their supervisory personnel (leads, heads, and managers) to communicate to their subordinates what is expected of them. With lack of performance standards, it is difficult to hold maintenance staff accountable for their work and to ensure that work is performed in an efficient and effective manner.

Written standards promote efficient performance by ensuring that work is performed in a consistent economical manner between different schools. Written standards promote effective performance by serving as a mechanism to ensure that management expectations are communicated. They also provide a benchmark by which work performed may be compared to management expectations to ensure that expectations were accomplished.

Performance standards should not be seen as rigid rules, but as guidelines to set expectations for performance and as a management tool to be used with the manager's experience and judgment to plan work schedules and evaluate employee performance. Identifying specific performance standards will involve an examination of past work orders to identify appropriate tasks. The Maintenance supervisors and staff will share thoughts on this process to develop standards that are unique to this school district. Examples of these standards might be

- that all emergency work orders be completed within a certain time frame and
- that all exterior walls of a school be completely painted on an established schedule.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish performance standards for the Maintenance and Operations staff. Clearly defined expectations will assist in improving worker productivity. Further, we recommend that these standards be based on frequently repeated tasks and can be used to schedule workloads, evaluate staff, improve productivity. Examples of performance measures that could be adopted for the facilities functions can be found in Chapter 3, Performance Accountability.*

Action Plan 11-3 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-3**Develop Performance Standards**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop performance standards for frequently repeated maintenance tasks. The standards shall clearly define the task and the number of staff hours necessary to complete the task in an efficient manner.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The supervisors of Building Maintenance and Warehouse and Grounds shall identify tasks, which are appropriate for the application of performance standards.</p> <p>Step 2: The supervisors shall research any existing industry/military standards, which are applicable.</p> <p>Step 3: Utilizing the work order tracking software, the supervisors and their lead forepersons shall develop performance standards for the most commonly repeated tasks.</p> <p>Step 4: The supervisors and the lead forepersons shall hold staff meetings to explain the performance standards. The standards shall be made available to all staff members. Sanitation and Grounds should communicate the performance standards for custodians to the site administrators.</p> <p>Step 5: The supervisors shall track the performance of their staff as measured against the performance standards for six months and adjust the performance standards as needed to reflect the most efficient standards.</p> <p>Step 6: The director shall review the performance standards with the board.</p> <p>Step 7: The board shall approve the use of the performance standards for the performance evaluations of staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

4 The district does not ensure that maintenance and custodial standards are regularly updated to implement new technology and procedures.

The District Needs to Develop and Update New Technology, and Implement Them as Part of Its Construction Standards

The district needs to design and implement a set of construction standards for facilities. This process will establish and define the design, products, materials, and systems used in facilities. The purpose of these standards is to create an efficient and user-friendly environment for the maintenance and construction process. These standards would create a better informed, more productive, maintenance staff as they repair or maintain facilities. Instead of having to learn to repair many different types of the same product, maintenance staff would need to know how to repair a limited number, perhaps only one or two different types of products. Also, uniform standards result in a standardized inventory allowing the district to

minimize cost associated with housing fewer parts, materials, and tools, for performing the maintenance function.

For example, the district currently has 13 different building management systems throughout the district. As new schools or classroom wings are built, the selected mechanical contractor looks for a system that closely relates to the building specifications. Due to the number of systems utilized, the district must keep inventory of the most critical components in order to make timely repairs. The district must have an access cable for each system in order to connect remotely on site with the controllers. Additionally, having 13 different systems requires the district to house a variety of controllers in order to service one classroom or building. The extra inventory and cables needed to supply each of the air-conditioning technicians for on-site repair of the building management systems create not only frustration among district staff, but also higher operating cost.

The district does not have a job position for a Building Management Controls Operator. Consequently, every technician may be required to know each system and the intricacies of operational control. Also with the complexity of some of the systems, the maintenance technicians can only make repairs up to a certain level of complexity. In many situations the vendor must be contracted to repair, update, and upgrade the various systems. The cost of outside repair troubleshooting and repairs can cost between \$75 and \$100 an hour. Another labor cost is the time spent to change cooling setpoints for all the classrooms. This process on a majority of the systems takes approximately one and a half-hour. Maintenance supervisors suggest that the cooling setpoints are changed approximately once a week. However, there is one type of system used by the district that only takes approximately five minutes to perform the same process. Overall, the characteristics of the various systems can create an environment that is not cost-effective and processes that are not efficient. Provided the district implements one standard building management system, the cost savings below may be realized.

- Eliminating quantity of inventory would result in savings of approximately \$11,400 a year.
- Reducing labor time would result in savings of approximately \$38,000 a year.

There are other areas that are in need of uniformity when designing and constructing buildings. A district-wide set of construction standards may also include, but not be limited to:

- fire alarm systems,
- windows and doors,
- locks on doors,
- lighting fixtures, and
- roofing.

Maintenance Department Subscribes to Trade Publications

The Maintenance department keeps current subscriptions to various, relevant trade publications. These publications are put in one location where the staff has access to them; some examples of subscriptions are listed below

- *Maintenance Solutions*
- *Phillips Consumer Electronics*
- *Coastal Safety Environmental*
- *Thomas Regional Newsletter*
- *Florida Turf Digest*
- *Betrock's Plant Finder*
- *American School and University*

District Staff Need to Participate in Additional Professional Organizations

Active participation in state and national organizations enables district personnel to remain current with maintenance issues, new technology, equipment, materials, and procedures. They are members of the organizations below.

- Florida Plant Management Association
- Pest Control Association
- Florida Rural Water Association
- Florida Rural Wastewater Association

However, the district needs to ensure participation, not just membership, by the appropriate levels of maintenance department employees in other trade organizations, including, the Florida Department of Education Trade Associations and the Council of Educational Facilities Planners International. The district should participate in additional professional organizations only after determining if the cost justifies the benefits.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop a set of construction standards for facilities. One set of construction standards will yield a standard building management system to be used throughout the district.*

Action Plan 11-4 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-4

Develop Construction Standards and Implement One Standard Building Management System

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a set of construction standards to be used throughout the district.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities, Supervisors of Maintenance, and Architect should meet with the goal of developing a uniform set of construction standards with the purpose of developing and adopting a standard building management system.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider construction products, materials, and systems that create an efficient and user-friendly environment for maintenance staff.</p> <p>Step 3: Have the construction standards approved by the board.</p> <p>Step 4: Update construction standards for new and implemented technology.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002

Fiscal Impact	<p>An example of savings that result from standardizing equipment used in schools is demonstrated by implementing a standard building management system. A standard building management system would eliminate both the inventory and labor cost associated with operating the number currently being used in the district. If the 13 systems currently in place were reduced to one system, the district could save approximately \$49,400 for a full year (\$38,000 for reducing labor time plus \$11,400 for reducing/eliminating inventory). Any incremental costs on the first year of implementation are considered to be negligible. Furthermore, there may also be additional costs saving in other areas as a result of utilizing construction standards, which have not been herein quantified.</p>
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5 The district does not obtain and use customer feedback to identify and implement program improvements.

There Is No Planned Customer Feedback Policy or Program; Customer Surveys Are Not Conducted

Currently the only feedback the maintenance function receives is through the work order process, complaints, and the infrequent surveys administered in the past. Customer feedback is not used to conduct a self-analysis to improve the performance and productivity of the maintenance department. Customers are not regularly surveyed using a written instrument to determine strengths and weaknesses of the maintenance department service and to identify major maintenance needs. Consequently, the maintenance department is not afforded the opportunity to use feedback information from its customers in making process improvements.

A survey process will allow constituents and interested community members to express their opinions; problems, as they perceive them; and concerns. The maintenance function will be more complete as district personnel will be able to analyze this feedback to identify opportunities to improve operations and enhance customer service. For example, if customer feedback from surveys suggests that school activities are negatively impacted by repairs not being made in a timely fashion, management would be made aware that a problem exists and that further investigation into the matter is necessary.

The Maintenance Department Communicates With Its Staff, and Through Them to Their Customers. Steps Are in Place to Efficiently Assign, Schedule, and Complete Work

The district communicates with staff their scheduled responsibilities through the use of the work order system. After work orders are input and reviewed by lead personnel they are disbursed to the staff for completion. The lead person tracks daily the performance of personnel assign to him/her. However, there is no evidence that the district analyzes effective work hours or hours worked versus hours scheduled. The district needs to perform weekly analysis of work orders to more efficiently assign and schedule work. Performing such analysis will enable management to

- develop trends of work performance,
- determine employee strengths and weaknesses,
- identify training needs,
- determine average time spent on certain projects for future planning, and

- determine the volume of the different categories of work orders (routine, emergency, and vandalism) for future resource planning.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district, through its Facilities Maintenance department, establish a mechanism to annually survey its customers. The results of the survey is be used to improve the operations of the department and to better communicate with the customers.*
- *We recommend that the district analyze the efficiency of its maintenance personnel by gathering and evaluating performance by comparing actual time worked in a work order, versus scheduled time for the same work order.*

Action Plan 11-5 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 11-5

Conduct Annual Survey Of Customers

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and implement an annual survey of the customers of its Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations shall oversee the development of a customer survey.</p> <p>Step 2: The director will implement the necessary mechanism so that an annual survey (conducted at approximately the same time every year) by a responsible staff person.</p> <p>Step 3: The results of the annual surveys shall be reported to the Superintendent and the school board, and used as a tool in planning how to improve the operations of the department.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Analyze Performance Data

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop and implement procedures to measure the efficiency of its maintenance personnel by gathering and comparing performance data.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of facilities and maintenance supervisors develop an evaluation form to measure the actual time versus scheduled time for the particular work order.</p> <p>Step 2: The director will implement the necessary procedure to ascertain that each work order is reviewed in this fashion.</p> <p>Step 3: The result of these analyses is to be periodically conveyed by each supervisor to the director (weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, but not any longer), who investigates actions taken to improve performance.</p> <p>Step 4: The director will report to the Assistant Superintendent of achieved, or unachieved, improvements in productivity.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent; Director of Facilities; Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

6 **The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure adequate performance and efficiency of the maintenance and operations program.**

The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the construction program.

These mechanisms are essential for the district to improve its facilities construction program. The process to establish accountability mechanisms need to include, as a minimum,

- development of goals and objectives to implement accountability to the public at large to provide for improve the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the district's construction program;
- development performance benchmarks and cost-efficiency measures, including comparisons to similar adjoining districts, to evaluate the program and use these tools to improve management decision-making;
- development of procedures to evaluate the performance and cost of the program, and to analyze the data to recognize potential cost savings. Consider the implementation of alternatives, such as outside contracting and privatization; and
- development, establishment, and implementation of strategies to continually assess the reliability of program performance and cost data.

Refer to Chapter 4, Performance Accountability Systems, of this report for more information on performance accountability in the operating programs.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish and implement accountability mechanisms to ensure high performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Maintenance program.*

Further, we recommend that the criteria below be considered while establishing accountability mechanisms.

- *Develop clearly stated goals and measurable objectives for the program that reflect the intent (purpose) of the program and address the major aspects of the program's purpose and expenditures.*
- *Utilize appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks, including comparisons to adjoining districts, to evaluate the program and use these in management's decision making.*
- *Evaluate the performance and cost of the program and analyze potential cost savings of alternatives, such as outside contracting and privatization.*

Action Plan 11-6 shows steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Also, please refer to Chapter 4, Performance Accountability Systems, for additional information on operational programs accountability.

Action Plan 11-6

Implement Accountability Mechanisms

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district needs to implement accountability mechanisms to ensure the Maintenance programs' performance, effectiveness, and efficiency.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities and Maintenance supervisors oversee development of a survey of stakeholders of the Maintenance department activities (its "customers").</p> <p>Step 2: The director designs and implement the necessary mechanism so that an annual survey is conducted at approximately the same time every year by a responsible staff person.</p> <p>Step 3: The results of the annual surveys are reported to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, the Superintendent, and the school board.</p> <p>Step 4: The survey is to be used as a tool in planning how to improve the operations of the department; the analyses are to be periodically conveyed by each supervisor to the director (weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, but not any longer), who investigates actions taken to improve performance.</p> <p>Step 5: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, the Director of Facilities, and assigned subordinates ("the implementation team") develop goals and objectives based on criteria developed from surveys and their own knowledge of the department's mission and resources available.</p> <p>Step 6: Research is made by the implementation team of appropriate and acceptable cost-efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks to evaluate the program on an on going basis.</p> <p>Step 7: The Director of Facilities periodically reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services of achieved, or unachieved, improvements in productivity, potential cost savings, alternatives and recommended course(s) of action.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Director of Facilities; Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Adequate Facilities Maintenance Budget

Goal B: **The district has an annual budget for facilities maintenance and operations that is equitable throughout the district, supports annual ongoing and deferred maintenance requirements, and allows administrators to track and control maintenance and operations costs.**

7 The district projects cost estimates of major maintenance needs. The district however, should adopt a more formalized approach.

When developing the district's five-year facility work plan the district identifies major maintenance needs. Prior experience with similar projects and the district's knowledge of cost are used to provide estimates of major needs. However, there is no written documentation that indicates any type of formal evaluation is performed on cost estimates; nor is there documentation to suggest that market conditions are used in estimating future maintenance cost. As a result, the department's management does not have the necessary tools to assist in effectively planning or budgeting. Although the district has been accurate with estimates of project costs in the past, a more formalized approach can provide better justification for funding needs of the districts.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop a procedure for estimating cost for major projects.*

Action Plan 11-7 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-7

Develop Guidelines For Estimating Cost

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should develop guidelines for estimating cost for major projects.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop guidelines for estimating cost that should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • past experience, • professional cost standards, and • market conditions <p>Step 2: Periodically evaluate cost estimates to improve future estimates.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This may be implemented with existing resources

8 The administration has developed an annual budget with spending limits that comply with the lawful funding for each category of facilities maintenance and operations.

The District's Budget Does Not Rely on or Permit Unlawful Use of Taxpayer Dollars

The district restricts the use of spending funds and this policy is reflected in the annual budget. The budget clearly outlines all expected revenues and expenditures for the district. The budget is submitted to the school board each year for approval. Once the budget is approved and implemented, any amendments must be approved by the school board.

The Annual Budget Does Not Address Long-Term Goals for Maintaining and Operating District Facilities

The district does not currently have written long-term goals. Although the district is presently working to develop a strategic plan, the district has not yet implemented a final, comprehensive plan that establishes long-term priorities and guides budget decisions. As a consequence, it has made budget decisions without consensus on whether these decisions will meet goals and objectives of the department.

Strategic planning will allow the maintenance function to establish a long-range view toward management of resources to effectively execute the department's programs and activities. A strategic plan will also enable the department to focus on priorities and be proactive in addressing problems.

For example, the district has not established a goal for preventative maintenance and therefore spends most of their funding on repairs and renovations. If this goal was established and the budgetary process was tied to the goals and objectives of the department, there would be more resources allocated to a proactive/ preventable type of approach. Correlating the budget to strategic planning is essential to ensure that spending is consistent with the department's mission, goals, and objectives.

Budget Processes Provides for Routine Evaluation of Actual vs. Planned Expenditures

Each month the district presents to the school board an outline of the current budget situation. The district prepares a general operating fund summary by object. A schedule analysis of all funds is also prepared. A "resolution to change" is presented to the board if the district determines the need for a change. If the board approves the resolution a budget amendment is created. During the prior fiscal year the district had five amendments to the budget.

The Budget Allocates Resources for Correcting Deficiencies Relating to Safety, Casualty, and Fire

The district safety officer conducts evaluations each year on all schools in the district. This inspection is detailed and is performed in accordance with SREF. The evaluation lists all conditions that create a safety problem or that does not comply with SREF. The budget provides a line item that is used for the correction of deficiencies identified in this report. The district has used this line item exclusively for correction of deficiencies.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop guidelines for maintenance budgeting, which identify funding levels for recurring or routine maintenance, major maintenance, preventive maintenance, school improvements, staffing levels and training.*

Further, we recommend that these guidelines need to reflect industry standards, comparisons with peer districts, and historical data for the district.

Action Plan 11-8 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-8

Implement Guidelines For Budgeting Maintenance

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should develop guidelines for maintenance budgeting.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop guidelines for budgeting of the maintenance function that identify the items below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding levels for recurring or routine maintenance • Funding levels for major maintenance • Funding for preventive maintenance • Funding for school improvements • Staffing levels • Training <p>Step 2: These guidelines are to be made reflecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • industry standards, • comparison with peer districts, and • historical data from the district. <p>Step 3: Periodically re-evaluate the guidelines to improve them in the future.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

9 The board keeps a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations.

The district maintains a reserve, “rainy day fund”, that may be used only in extreme circumstances. In the 1998-99 fiscal year the reserve was approximately 1% of that year’s budget. There is anticipation that the reserve by the end of the current fiscal year will have increased .5%. The district plans to increase this reserve to a level between three and five percent over the next four years. Policy states that the reserve fund should be used only for extreme circumstances. The district has not needed to use the rainy day fund for maintenance needs.

10 The Maintenance and the Operations department does not regularly evaluate maintenance and operations activities to determine the most cost-effective method of providing needed services.

The District’s Objectives Are Not Clearly Related to the Budget

The budgeting process does not identify the objectives and responsibilities of the facilities maintenance function and demonstrate that the budget is responsive to those objectives and responsibilities in a cost-effective way.

Cost-effectiveness measures have not been established for all general support activities. Although the district is not clearly identifying cost-effective measures for each support activity, it is informally experimenting with different ways it can provide maintenance services and reduce costs.

The District Does Not Evaluate Existing Services to Determine Those Suitable for Privatization

The district privatizes and outsources some of the activities performed by the maintenance function on an as needed basis. Some of these include, but are not limited to, the activities below.

- Electrical work
- Carpentry
- Painting
- Roofing
- Irrigation
- Landscaping
- Equipment and vehicle repair

According to Maintenance supervisors the work is privatized or outsourced primarily because of the inadequate allocation of maintenance staff. However, there is no coordinated procedure in place to ensure that the district performs a detailed cost/benefit analysis of existing activities to determine if privatization is suitable. The district should undertake an analysis of each trade within the maintenance function to determine whether cost-efficiencies can be accomplished by outsourcing to private companies.

For example, the district may find that outsourcing lawn maintenance would be beneficial. This outsourcing could eliminate current employee benefits, eliminate the need for purchase of lawn maintenance equipment, and eliminate the need for transportation of maintenance equipment.

The District Does Not Evaluate All Contracted or Privatized Services to Verify Effectiveness and Cost Savings

There is no coordinated procedure in place to ensure that the Maintenance department regularly evaluates all contracted or privatized services to verify effectiveness and cost savings. An analysis of all trades that are currently contracted to private companies should be conducted to determine whether cost-efficiencies are being accomplished.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that each budget item be supported by an objective that clearly supports the goals of the maintenance and operations departments and the district. The objective should contain or refer to standards for determining whether the budget item is cost effective*
- *We recommend that the district formally evaluate existing services to determine those suitable for privatization*

Action Plan 11-9 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 11-9

Document Goals and Objectives

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district's budget for the Maintenance department is supported and tied to goals and objectives for the Maintenance department as reflected in the district's five-year plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district's budget needs to tie each budget item to the detailed goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 2: The district's finance department ensures that these goals and objectives are reflected in the annual budget.</p> <p>Step 3: The maintenance department periodically reports on results comparing actual versus budget items, and whether the actions being reported are cost effective.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Supervisors of Maintenance; Finance Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Privatizing Maintenance Services

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Formally evaluate existing services to determine those suitable for privatization
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify maintenance trade functions that could be privatized. Step 2: Identify criteria for use in determining cost to privatize these functions. Step 3: Perform analysis comparing vendor cost to in-house cost. Step 4: Consider non-monetary variables when performing this evaluation. Step 5: Determine feasibility of privatizing maintenance trade functions based on the results of the comparison.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance; Finance Director.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

11 The district has several practices that minimize equipment cost through purchasing practices and maintenance; however, there are areas that could be improved.

The District Does Not Periodically Conduct Cost Comparisons to Determine Whether Purchasing Practices Have Minimized Costs

There is a board policy that requires the district to receive a minimum number of bids to ensure that it obtains the lowest possible cost on the goods and services purchased. However, the maintenance department has not conducted any follow-up analysis to determine if the lowest bid provided the lowest long-term cost as well.

The lowest bid might mean a lower up-front cost but the operating cost and maintenance cost could be considerably higher. Without a formal procedure of conducting an analysis of cost comparisons the district is unable to determine if the purchasing practices have resulted in lower cost. It would be beneficial for the district to go back two to three years and conduct a cost comparison to determine whether the purchase price and the operating cost have resulted in the best value at the lowest cost. This information would enable the district to make better-informed decisions in the future.

Volume Purchases Are Considered

Volume purchases are considered. The Purchasing department buys most of the parts and materials and regularly makes volume purchases. However, analyses are not performed in determining when these type purchases are beneficial.

Volume purchases is an important concept to consider because of the potential cost savings resulting from discounts commonly offered by vendors. Also, processing cost can be decreased because fewer transactions occur in volume purchasing.

There are also costs associated with volume purchases and should be compared to the benefit in determining whether this type of purchasing method is utilized. For example, the district will have to

consider the shelf life of certain products and the possibility of some products becoming obsolete. Another example is the cost of warehousing the increased volume of inventory.

Equipment Purchases Are Based on Operating Costs and Repair Feasibility, but Not on Projected Needs

The Maintenance department, albeit not in writing, considers operating cost when purchasing new equipment. Based on interviews, Maintenance supervisors, with input from staff, make purchasing decisions only after considering all operating cost on all purchases. Decisions are made strictly using the knowledge gained from prior experience.

Equipment refurbishing and/or repair are considered in lieu of new purchases. The Maintenance department attempts to repair tools and equipment before a decision is made to purchase a replacement. The district makes decisions based on prior experience. If the staff's knowledge and experience indicates that the equipment is not repairable then new equipment is purchased.

The district does not project equipment needs and therefore does not project inflationary cost. Also, Maintenance supervisors indicate that the budget process does not facilitate replacement projections. If the district were to formalize operating costs, the district can better project equipment needs. Older equipment may result in higher costs due to inefficiency.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district make projections for needed equipment for five-year periods. These projections need to include an inflation factor and should be included in the long-range plan.*
- *We recommend that the district periodically conduct cost comparison studies for purchasing materials and equipment. The goal of the studies is to ensure that the district is obtaining the best value for the money spent.*

Action Plan 11-10 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 11-10

Conduct Equipment Cost Projections

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district needs to make projections for needed equipment for five-year periods. These projections need to include an inflation factor and be part of the long-range plan.
Action Needed	Step 1: The district prepares a list of needed equipment for its five-year period. Step 2: The district's budget needs to include an inflation factor for each year. Step 3: The district's finance department determines whether these inflation factors are reasonable and reflected in the annual budget.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Supervisors of Maintenance; Finance Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Conduct Cost Comparisons

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district, periodically, conducts cost comparison studies for purchasing materials and equipment. The goal of the studies is to ensure that the district is obtaining the best value for the money spent.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify materials and equipment where a cost comparison is applicable to determine whether the district received the best value for money spent.</p> <p>Step 2: Conduct a detailed and documentable comparison of the items selected under Step 1 above, as to the best value for the money spent.</p> <p>Step 3: Comparisons are to be for identical items, no substitutes.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance; Finance Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

12 **The district does not use proactive maintenance practices to reduce maintenance costs.**

The District Does Not Have a Preventative Maintenance Program in Place

Although the district does perform limited preventive maintenance on the HVAC and boiler systems, the district does not have a comprehensive preventative maintenance program. Without this program, the district has operated using a “fix it when it breaks approach”. This has led to higher repair costs in the long run.

A preventative maintenance program is an investment to the district in that, by definition, it reduces the number and frequency of repairs and the associated costs. The costs include labor, parts, and downtime. A comprehensive preventative maintenance program would assist in reducing long-term repair costs and service outages in all areas.

Procedures Are in Place for the Disposal of Equipment

The district has procedures in place for the disposal of equipment that is no longer usable. District-owned property may not be sold, traded, or otherwise disposed of, without first obtaining approval from the Superintendent or her designee.

Dispositions must also receive final approval from the school board. The following procedures have been established to initiate disposal, or removal of tangible personal property. According to maintenance supervisors these procedures are strictly adhered to.

- Person disposing of equipment must complete a district MIS form 75B008.
- The form should be completed in full and include the related identification number.
- Indicate type of disposal. (i.e., trade-in, sale, auction, etc.)
- This form is forwarded to the property control department.

- Items of federally funded equipment with a current per-unit fair market value of less than \$5,000 may be retained, sold, or otherwise disposed of with no further obligation to the awarding agency.
- Federally funded equipment costing over \$5,000 must have approval from the DOE.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district take necessary measures to create and implement a program to use preventative maintenance practices to reduce costs.*
- *We recommend that the district periodically conduct a review of its preventative maintenance practices to ascertain whether costs are being successfully reduced, and at desired levels.*

Action Plan 11-11 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 11-11

Implement Preventative Maintenance Program

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district needs to undertake measures to create, and implement a program to use preventative maintenance practices to reduce costs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district prepares a list of potential areas where preventive maintenance is attainable and projects attainable costs reductions.</p> <p>Step 2: The district, through its maintenance department, dissects the list into logical components and designates a lead person for each category.</p> <p>Step 3: The district's maintenance department prioritizes the projects and assigns target dates for accomplishing them.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Preventative Maintenance Practices

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district establishes periodic reviews of the preventative maintenance practices to ascertain whether costs are successfully and systematically reduced as a result of carrying this program.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify how the measurement of items to be compared will take place (dollars; efficiency; postponement of adverse conditions when major repairs take place).</p> <p>Step 2: Comparison is made between the additional costs of preventive maintenance, after considering the time lapsed during which the preventative maintenance needs to take place, versus the costs of replacement and the costs of disrupting operations when major repairs take place.</p> <p>Step 3: Prepare a detailed listing of items selected under Step 1 above.</p> <p>Step 4: Determine the costs savings, by each category, or projects.</p> <p>Step 5: Inform Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, and school board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent; Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance; Finance Director.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Qualified Personnel and Professional Development

Goal C: The Maintenance and Operations department accomplishes maintenance program goals and expected outcomes through the use of qualified Maintenance and Operations personnel and provides appropriate supervision, equipment, and ongoing training to ensure continued professional development and quality work.

13 Although the district has begun an informal review of the organizational structure of the maintenance and operations program to minimize administrative layers and processes, this needs to be done formally and on a regular basis.

There is no documentation that indicates the maintenance function formally reviews its organizational structure and staffing levels, with the objective of minimizing administrative layers and processes. Maintenance supervisors periodically review the department's structure, but not in a formal or comprehensive manner. A comprehensive review needs to include feedback from staff and the public. It would also include a comparison of the program's structure and staffing level as compared to other districts.

Although no documentation exists, the district is considering a structure change for the maintenance function. Currently, maintenance crews work out of a central warehouse. Each time a call is made in regard to a repair or some type of maintenance need, the staff must travel from their current location to the other destination. Lake County is geographically a large county and the distance from one facility to another is often long. The Assistant Superintendent stated that these calls are often for minor reasons, like flipping switches on/off. The proposed plan would create a plant operator position at each of the schools

in the district. The position would be responsible for operations of the school and minor repairs. Major repairs would continue to be performed by specialist. In the instance of small schools the plant operator may be assigned to more than one school.

The district does not have a formal process of reviewing the maintenance function organizational structure and staffing levels. Consequently the Maintenance department cannot report these findings in writing to the school board or members of the public at large.

Refer to Action Plan 3-4, which includes the detailed steps the district needs to implement to address this finding.

14 The Maintenance and Operations department has not regularly reviewed the staffing levels of the Maintenance and Operations program to maximize the efficient use of personnel.

Other Than a Staffing Formula for Custodians, the District Does Not Have Staffing Formulas for Other Maintenance Functions

The district has developed a staffing formula for the custodian function. However, the district has not developed a staffing formula for most maintenance department employees. Staffing formulas are important to determine proper staffing levels and to ensure adequate allocation of staff resources to meet needs.

The district provided a custodial formula that is used to determine the positions needed at each of the facilities. Currently, according to the maintenance staffing formula, there is one custodian per 23,000 square feet plus one additional custodian per site. Utilizing this formula provides the district with approximately one custodian per 18,000 square feet. This is 5,000 square feet less than the peer district average of approximately 23,000 (See Exhibit 11-6).

The results of previous school district reviews suggest a ratio of approximately one custodian per 20,000 feet. The district should strive to attain no less than this standard productivity level. If the district used this ratio, approximately 22 custodial positions could be eliminated.

Exhibit 11-6

Custodial Comparison with Peer Districts

District	Custodians	Net Square Feet	Square Feet Per Custodian
Lake	227	4,097,415	18,050
Alachua	251	4,752,870	18,935
Charlotte	116	2,336,922	20,145
St. Johns	121	2,903,359	23,994
Okaloosa	153	4,044,757	26,436
Osceola	138	4,130,334	29,929

Source: Florida Inventory of School Houses, Lake County Human Resource Report, and peer districts.

A Staffing Formula Needs to Be Developed for the Maintenance Function

The district does not apply staffing formulas for maintenance trades. The supervisors of Maintenance stated that there has not been an increased staffing level for the corresponding growth in the district. The tendency has been to keep the staff levels as they were in the previous year. Maintenance staff has spent the majority of their time on major repairs or renovations, not preventative maintenance. Consequently, preventative and corrective maintenance has not been sufficiently staffed.

Exhibit 11-7 presents a comparison of Lake County staffing levels to peer districts. The comparison indicates that the district is below the average in square footage per trades staff. Lake and Osceola County have similar productivity levels (net square feet per trade staff), but these are significantly lower than Santa Rosa, St. Johns, and Charlotte. Lake County has a higher number of painters than the peer districts. This is a result of the district maintenance staff being involved in major repair projects and renovations. Peer districts indicated that they outsource the majority of their painting needs. Lake County should evaluate outsourcing painting when considering privatization options as discussed on page 11-23.

Exhibit 11-7

Comparison of Staffing Levels by Trade With Peer Districts

Trade	Okaloosa	Lake	Osceola	Santa Rosa	Charlotte	St. Johns
Air Conditioning	13	13	19	5	6	4
Electricians	16	9	6	8	7	2
Plumbers	15	3	4	4	3	2
Painters	0	10	2	4	0	2
Mason	0	1	4	0	0	1
Roofer	0	3	2	0	0	1
Carpenters	13	1	4	4	5	3
General Maintenance	20	27	25	14	0	10
Totals	77	67	66	39	21	25
Net Square Footage/Trades staff	52,529	61,155	62,580	82,406	111,282	116,134

Source: Florida Inventory of School Houses, Lake County Human Resource Report, and peer districts.

Staffing formulas are important to ensure adequate and equitable allocation of staff resources to meet needs. The tendency, particularly in maintenance related areas, is to keep prior year staffing levels or cut if needed, without knowledge of resource needs or current productivity levels. With the lack of preventative maintenance, the district should reassess maintenance staffing levels by utilizing a staffing formula. Reassessing the maintenance staffing level by utilizing a formula offers the district a solid base to develop a preventative maintenance program.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district routinely perform a formal review of the maintenance organizational structure.*
- *We further recommend that the district document current plans of establishing plant managers at each of the schools.*

- *We recommend that the district reallocate custodial staff to achieve maximum productivity on regular campuses (schools) to 20,000 square feet per custodian.*
- *We recommend that the district develop a staffing formula for the maintenance trades..*

Action Plan 11-12 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 11-12

Review Organizational Structure

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Routinely perform a formal review of the maintenance organizational structure.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent, Facilities Director, and Maintenance Supervisors shall identify ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the maintenance structure.</p> <p>Step 2: Research industry and other district to gather ideas on ways of improving current structure.</p> <p>Step 3: Clearly define any structural changes in writing</p> <p>Step 4: Submit to the board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Document Plans of Establishing Plant Manager Function

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Document plans of establishing plant manager at each of the schools.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Research industry and other district to gather ideas on ways of implementing this process.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish job descriptions for these positions.</p> <p>Step 3: Assign staff to each of the schools.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop procedures adequately defining the roles and responsibilities of the staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	The increase in salary and benefits can be offset by the reduced need for maintenance vehicles. This will eliminate the cost associated with those vehicles. Also, the cost associated with the driving time (or down time) between facilities will be reduced.

Reallocation of Custodial Staff

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Reallocate custodial staff to achieve maximum productivity of 20,000 square feet per custodian
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign custodial staff based on square footage or building space, modified based on age of facility. Total productivity for the district should be 20,000 square feet per custodian.</p> <p>Step 2: Reassign custodial staff among campuses.</p> <p>Step 3: Achieve reductions in staff through attrition where possible.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Increasing district-wide productivity to 20,000 square feet per custodian would allow the district to eliminate 22 custodial positions. With the district average salary and benefits package of \$15,000 per custodian, the district could save approximately \$330,000 per year.

Maintenance Staffing Formula

Recommendation 4	
Strategy	The district should develop a staffing formula for each job category in the maintenance function
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities, assisted by the supervisors in the maintenance department, research different staffing formulas, including comparisons with peer districts.</p> <p>Step 2: This group will obtain industry information related to staffing levels for various maintenance trades, including published materials, periodicals, and internet sites.</p> <p>Step 3: The director and supervisors will develop a staffing formula that will enable the district to maintain the facilities with good quality, but at minimal cost.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

15

The maintenance and operations departments ensure qualified staff by using appropriate hiring practices.

The district has procedures for attracting qualified applicants based on the district's size, location, and needs. Job announcements identify the job description, required qualifications, and salary. These jobs are often advertised in the school newspaper, the local area newspaper and at local supply shops. Maintenance supervisors personally check personal and professional references for potential employees.

16 The maintenance and operations departments have a written job description for each position within the department.

The Maintenance department has job descriptions for all positions, including head trade positions and staff trade positions. These descriptions define job goals, qualifications needed, specific job responsibilities, and supervisory responsibility. Supervisory staff is given the opportunity to provide input in the development and revision of job descriptions. A copy of each Maintenance department job description is located in the maintenance office and is accessible to employees.

The district should consider reviewing and updating the job descriptions to ensure that the responsibilities of the employees are appropriately reflected in the job descriptions. The current job descriptions have not been update in four years and do not always reflect the responsibilities of the individual holding the position. Accurate and up-to-date job descriptions are needed to establish accountability and evaluation processes in the district.

17 The district provides appropriate supervision of maintenance and operations staff.

Levels of Authority, Responsibility, and Supervision Have Been Assigned to Each Position

Levels of authority are clearly indicated by the organizational chart (see Exhibit 11-1 and 11-2). Areas of responsibility are identified in the job descriptions. A lead person who in turn reports to the supervisor of Maintenance supervises each trade. As discussed below there is adequate supervision for employees in each of the trades.

Supervisor/Employee Ratios Are Not Established

Supervisor/employee ratios have not been established for the district's maintenance function. Without established ratios, supervisors may be required to supervise more employees than they can effectively monitor. Best practice reports of other school districts state that a range between 20 and 25 employees for every lead position is within industry practices. Lake County is clearly within this acceptable range.

Employees Have the Opportunity to Review Their Performance Evaluations

Employees have the opportunity to review their performance evaluations. Evaluations are conducted annually by the maintenance supervisor. The parties meet and discuss the evaluation and the employee signs the evaluation form to indicate that he or she has read the form.

18

The district does not provide a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff to enhance worker job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.

The District Needs to Develop a More Formalized Training Program

Documentation exists supporting the existence of some technical and safety training for maintenance staff. For example, the maintenance supervisor provided evidence of staff participation in “bucket truck training.” Other examples include safety equipment training, safety hazards, vehicle safety, employee safety in hot weather, and boiler operations and maintenance. Vendors that supply equipment and chemicals for the district address many other needs. However, the district does not have a systematic way of identifying all training needs. A more formalized training program would ensure it identifies and fills all of these needs.

There Are No Written Training Goals

There are no written training goals for the maintenance and operations staff. Training by manufacturer’s representatives is offered as appropriate for new materials, tools, or systems. The trade’s staff receives no training in interpersonal team skills, time management, or district policy awareness. Written training goals are important in establishing the purpose for the training program. Without goals, the training received by the staff may not serve the district’s needs. Training goals should identify how the training will benefit the district’s effectiveness of operations. These goals should be communicated to supervisors and staff so they are aware of what their training responsibilities are.

The Maintenance Supervisors Should Work Closely with Human Resources to Develop a Structured, Sequential Training Program

The maintenance supervisors receive input from staff and vendors on needs for skill development, but does not work with human resources department to ensure a planned, sequential program for personal skill development. The human resources department needs to be directly involved in the development and refinement of training programs for each maintenance position since this department is responsible for the coordination of all district training. This department also has the technical skills and resources to identify and fill training needs.

Training Programs Should Include Interaction Strategies

As stated above, there is evidence of some technical training to meet specific trade needs, and skill sets. According to the maintenance supervisors, the district has not formally trained maintenance staff on personnel interaction strategies. Since maintenance is a customer service function, personal interaction is a major component of the job. All maintenance department employees should receive training on personal interaction strategies.

The District Should Implement an Apprenticeship Program

The district does not currently have an apprenticeship program for maintenance employees. These programs are effective in identifying and training future employees and provide a less expensive way to provide training to newly hired employees. Apprenticeship programs also improve a district’s ability to recruit and maintain a qualified workforce over the long term.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations department develop a comprehensive training program that is aimed at improving the technical skills of the staff, their job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety. This program should include regularly scheduled training sessions and should not be limited to sessions offered by manufacturer's representatives.*

Action Plan 11-13 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-13

Develop Staff Development Program

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff in the areas of job skills, job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations and the supervisors will meet with the respective staffs to determine the types of training that are needed.</p> <p>Step 2: The director and the supervisors shall meet with the Staff Development team and develop staff training in the following areas at the least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job safety, • team work, • use of tools, • interpersonal communications, • work habits, and • job skills. <p>Step 3: Staff Development shall prepare a training schedule, which allows for all Maintenance and Operations staff to receive at least two training sessions per year.</p> <p>Step 4: The Director of Facilities shall develop a training budget based on the schedule prepared by Staff Development.</p> <p>Step 5: The Director of Facilities and the Director of Staff Development shall present the training curriculum, schedule, budget, and expected outcomes to the board.</p> <p>Step 6: The board shall review, revise, and consider the approval of the training program.</p> <p>Step 7: The program will be evaluated annually. Staff feedback will be part of the basis for the evaluation.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Director of Staff Development.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

19 The district provides maintenance department staff the tools and equipment required to accomplish their assigned tasks.

Maintenance Personnel Is Equipped With All Necessary Tools, Equipment, and Materials

The Maintenance department personnel are provided the necessary tools to perform a given task. These tools are assigned to the employee and replaced only upon providing a broken tool or police report. Tools that are not used frequently or would be cost prohibitive are rented on an as needed basis.

There Is a Procedure for Acquiring Parts and Materials That Are Not Stocked

The maintenance function has procedures for acquiring parts, materials, and equipment that are not stocked. When stock parts and materials are available from the warehouse, they are matched against specific work orders and delivered to the maintenance employee designated on the work order form. A blanket purchase order is required when parts and materials are not available in the warehouse. Special order parts and materials received through the warehouse require two signatures on the receiving document for payment. A signature is required by the warehouse receiving staff, and the employee requesting the part.

Employees are allowed a "fifty-dollar fund" to use in the event that their truck is not stocked for a certain part needed for a project. For example, if a maintenance worker is repairing plumbing at a school and determines that a special type of plumbing fixture is needed, instead of returning to the maintenance warehouse he is able to purchase the part from a nearby hardware store.

Computerized Maintenance Management System _____

Goal D: The district utilizes an effective computerized maintenance management system that includes work order management, work prioritization guidelines, and inventory control.

20 The district does not use a computerized control and tracking system to accurately track work orders and inventory.

The district generated one report for the time period of October 1, 2000, to December 1, 2000, that showed work orders requested as compared to work orders completed. The district was unable to provide documentation that indicates that these reports are regularly conducted and used for decision-making purposes. Therefore, the current system is not being used to enhance management capability. Without this type of procedure supervisors are unable to continuously monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of their crews. With the establishment of the new work order system the district would benefit from designing the system in a way that would ensure the ability to routinely produce certain reports. Some examples of reports that could be utilized include, but are not limited to,

- hours worked by trade;
- completion times versus deadlines;
- effective work hours- hours incurred as compared to established budget;
- work-order history of a school;
- work-order activity by type; and
- parts usage analysis.

The district should analyze such information on a bi-weekly or monthly basis to enable them to make better-informed decisions and to plan how to optimize available resources. For example, after analyzing a report from the system it is determined that the backlogs at certain schools have increased. This would alert supervisors, enabling them to take the necessary actions in correcting this problem. Another example is management could use the reports to identify repairs or maintenance that cost more in parts and/or labor than suggested by the manufacture of the particular equipment or by the district budget. That circumstance could identify the need for more staff training in the subject task.

The current system does not include an inventory-tracking component of commonly used parts, materials, and equipment, including those carried on the maintenance vehicles. With a tracking function the district could more efficiently control and manage inventory. This would also assist in the periodic inventory count performed by the internal audit function. As noted above, the district is in the process of purchasing a work order system that will be capable of tracking inventory.

The current system does not include an automatic-reorder mechanism. With an automatic-reorder mechanism the district could be more efficient in the management of inventory. With this mechanism the district will be able to set lower inventory levels enabling the district to save cost associated with warehousing of parts, materials, and etc. Once these products drop below a set quantity, an automatic reorder mechanism would initiate the purchase of that product. This will also eliminate the risk of down time of waiting for parts or materials. Again, with the purchase of the new work order system the district should ensure that the system includes a mechanism for reordering.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district prioritize the establishment of an inventory tracking system for the facilities, maintenance, and operations department when the new software is installed. The inventory tracking system should*
 - *track all inventory in the warehouse, shops and on trucks,*
 - *tie all inventory used to a specific work order, and*
 - *automatically trigger reorders for materials that are low in stock.*
- *We recommend that the district routinely generate reports from the new work order system to analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of maintenance crews.*
- *We further recommend that supervisors need to meet monthly to discuss productivity levels and expectations of their staff.*

Action Plan 11-14 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 11-14**Establish Inventory-Tracking System**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a plan to prioritize the establishment of an inventory tracking system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities, Manager of Maintenance, Manager of Warehouse/ Grounds, and Director of MIS should meet to determine necessary steps to the establishment of an inventory tracking system.</p> <p>Step 2: Utilize appropriate resources determined in step one to implement the system.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be developed with existing resources.

Analyze Productivity Of Maintenance Crews

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Routinely generate reports from the new work order system to analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of maintenance crews.
Action Needed	<p>Step 3: Have procedure in place where work order reports are routinely generated and analyzed.</p> <p>Step 4: Area supervisors meet monthly to discuss results from report analysis.</p> <p>Step 5: Supervisors should troubleshoot and discuss ways to be more efficient and effective with productivity.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Routinely Discuss Productivity Levels

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Supervisors meet monthly to discuss productivity levels and expectations of their staff.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish a procedure for supervisors to meet monthly meet to discuss productivity levels and expectations of their staff.</p> <p>Step 2: Area supervisors meet monthly to discuss results from report analysis.</p> <p>Step 3: Supervisors need to discuss with their staff expectations and ways to be more efficient and effective with productivity.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and supervisors.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

21 **The maintenance and operations department does not have a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the district.**

The District Does Not Have Formal Guidelines

The district does not have formal guidelines addressing the prioritization of maintenance needs. Lead supervisors rank work orders as: *routine*, *emergency*, or *vandalism*. However, the district has not developed formal guidelines to determine priorities of ongoing maintenance needs. Ongoing maintenance priorities are not tied to educational program needs, changing enrollment projections, or long range facility planning. As discussed on page 11-11, the district has had inadequate long range planning. By prioritizing maintenance needs the district will be better able to develop long-range facilities plan.

Work Orders Are Prioritized

The lead supervisor assesses each work order and assigns a priority ranking. The examples below are used when prioritizing work orders.

Routine. Day-to-day work required to maintain or repair facilities such as

- Defective light switch
- Leaky faucet
- Painting
- Ceiling tile replacement
- Room air conditioning
- Reach in refrigerator or freezer
- Typewriter repair
- Printer repair

Emergency. Unexpected, serious occurrence requiring immediate attention such as

- Fire hazard/ fire alarm
- Walk-in refrigerator
- Sanitary health hazard (sewer line backing up)
- Chiller/ boiler system
- Broken window posing security risk
- Broken lock posing security risk

Vandalism. Disruption of normal operations by acts of vandals are treated with different degrees of priority, depending on the severity of the exposure to students, staff and the general public to dangers associated with this type of situation.

The district staffs determine when emergency maintenance is necessary based on the criteria list above. This has provided for effective emergency repairs. Items determined to be emergency or life/safety receive first priority.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop formal guidelines for the prioritization of maintenance needs. Ongoing maintenance priorities should be tied to educational program needs, changing enrollment projections, or long range facility planning*

Action Plan 11-15 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-15

Establish Guidelines for Prioritizing Maintenance Needs

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop formal guidelines for the prioritization of maintenance needs. Ongoing maintenance should be tied to educational program needs, changing enrollment projections, or long-term facility planning.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish written guidelines for prioritizing maintenance needs.</p> <p>Step 2: This should provide criteria for ranking ongoing maintenance needs. The criteria used for ranking should be more specific than routine, emergency, and vandalism.</p> <p>Step 3: Guidelines need to consider educational program needs, changing enrollment projections, and long range-facility planning to determine the priorities</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Compliance With State And Federal Regulatory Requirements

Goal E: **The district maintains school equipment and facilities to provide healthy, safe, and energy efficient facilities in compliance with related state and federal regulatory requirements.**

22 District policies and procedures clearly address safety conditions of facilities.

The District Has Written Safety Standards

A copy of the district's Employee Workplace Safety Program manual is provided to each employee. This document includes a safety policy statement that reads as follows:

"Accidents and injuries create a heavy toll on the available resources within the Lake County School District and cause pain and suffering to employees, their co-workers,

their families and loved ones. The public, our students, and our employees are our greatest assets and our utmost concern. Therefore, it is the policy of Lake County Schools that no function or assignment is so critical that it cannot be performed safely.

The district's management is committed to providing you with a safe and healthy workplace by taking every reasonable step to reduce the potential for an accident. Our Safety program has the full support of the School Board of Lake County.

As, employees, each of us must pursue the highest standards in our assigned job activities and responsibilities. School administration will be actively participating with you in ongoing safety and health program activities. Employees are to report all accidents, injuries and unsafe conditions to their supervisors.

I encourage you to support and participate in this accident prevention program. Join your fellow employees and me in achieving our goal of an injury and occupational illness-free workplace by performing your tasks and job duties in a safe manner."

This program includes safety components such as first aid procedures, proper use of tools, proper use of machinery, roofing safety, science lab safety, etc. There are also procedures in this document that address the responsibilities of the district's supervisors relating to the proper orientation of the safety program, job-specific training, and periodic retraining of employees.

The district needs to update this program regularly to incorporate the evolving needs of the district. When doing so they should use appropriate external benchmarks to evaluate the cost effectiveness of its health and safety standards.

Evaluations Are Made and Documented for the Condition of Buildings and of Each New School

Legal requirements require there to be a plant survey every five years. During this process the district conducts evaluations of the condition of the buildings and documents the results of these evaluations. As discussed in the facilities construction chapter, this survey does not represent a complete facilities audit, whereby each building component is evaluated based on standard facilities evaluation form. However, it does provide a general assessment of the condition of each building.

The district's safety officer conducts evaluations each year on all schools in the district. This inspection is detailed and is based on SREF. The evaluation lists all conditions that create a safety problem or that do not comply with SREF.

23 Maintenance and operations departments do not identify and implement strategies to contain energy cost.

Without an energy management and accountability program, the district is not able to conserve energy and is faced with high cost. The district does not communicate with utility providers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), available local industry experts, and other organizations, to identify energy efficient benchmarks and to implement actions to increase cost efficiency. Research has shown significant cost savings in the existence of such programs. A program of this nature would include criteria such as:

- conducting an energy audit to determine ways of reducing energy consumption and cost;

- energy management training for students, teachers, administrators, and maintenance workers;
- energy conservation checklist for students, teachers, administrators, and maintenance workers;
- incentive programs for schools to promote and reward student and staff for participation;
- plans for improving HVAC systems; and
- monitoring and improving indoor quality.

In addition, energy improvements often result in better lighting, temperature control, indoor air quality, and reduced ambient noise. Such improvements promote the general well-being of students, teachers and administrators, and may help improve student performance.

Refer to Action Plan 11-6 which includes the detailed action steps the district needs to implement to address this finding.

24 The district does not have an energy management system in place but has recently approved an Energy Manager position.

As discussed in best practice 2 above, the district has no energy management system.

The district should consider energy management programs that provide incentives for energy reductions. For example, the Energy Star Building Program that the Environmental Protection Agency has developed. This program allows a school district to be compared against national benchmarks, and gives them an opportunity to apply for the “Energy Star Label” - a sign that the district’s buildings are top energy performers.

During the process of writing this report the district approved an Energy Manager position. The responsibility of the person who fills this position will be to implement an energy management system as described above.

Recommendations ---

- *We recommend that the district develop a comprehensive energy management plan.*

Action Plan 11-16 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-16**Develop Energy Management Plan**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a comprehensive energy management plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Director of Facilities and Maintenance Supervisors should conduct research on different energy management programs. This would include communication with different organizations.</p> <p>Step 2: Conduct process to hire a person qualified to perform the responsibilities of the recently approved Energy Manager position.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop a comprehensive program that would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conducting an energy audit to determine ways of reducing energy consumption and cost; • energy measures to be tracked by facility; • energy management training for students, teachers, administrators, and maintenance workers; • energy conservation checklist for students, teachers, administrators, and maintenance workers; • incentive programs for schools to promote and reward student and staff for participation; • plans for improving HVAC systems; and • monitoring and improving indoor quality. <p>Step 4: Present this plan to the Superintendent for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation may result in future energy savings. However, until an assessment of the district's current situation is completed, savings cannot be reasonably estimated.

25 **The school district complies with federal and state regulatory mandates regarding facility health, safety, and energy efficiency conditions.**

The district has an employee workplace safety program reaching and covering all employees. This program addresses safety related issues, and was developed within the authoritative parameters below.

- *Keller's Official OSHA Safety Handbook.*
- *Occupational Safety and Health Standards for General Industry (29CFR Parts 1910 and 1926).*
- *The 1994 Workers' Compensation Manual.*
- *The Florida Industrial Arts Safety Guide.*

There is documentation supporting the existence of additional technical and safety training for maintenance staff. For example, the maintenance supervisor provided evidence of staff participation in

“bucket truck training.” Other examples include safety equipment training, safety hazards, vehicle safety, employee safety in unusually hot weather, and boiler operations and maintenance. Vendors that supply the district with equipment and chemicals address other needs.

26 The district is aware of and prepared for permitting and inspection requirements of the Florida Building Code. The district however, needs to develop procedures to ensure these inspections take place.

The Department’s Staff Is Training for the New Code

The original date of implementation of the Florida Building Code has been extended from July 1, 2001, to January 1, 2002. The district has not yet developed procedures to ensure the necessary inspections and permitting takes place.

The appropriate management staff is being trained for the newly adopted Florida Building Code. The district staff provided documentation indicating their attendance at a regional workshop hosted by the DOE. These workshops are focused on explaining the new code requirements in terms of facility condition as well as inspections and permitting.

No Procedures Have Been Developed to Ensure That Necessary Inspections and Permitting Under the Florida Building Code Take Place

The district needs to establish the procedures of implementing the new building code. The district has several options for completing inspections. Inspections can be performed in-house, it can be contracted out to a consultant, it can be performed by local municipalities, or through some comparable method. The key is that maintenance and operations departments know how they will ensure that all permitting and inspections are obtained.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop procedures to ensure the necessary permitting and inspections are obtained, prior to commencing the actual construction of a particular project.*

Action Plan 11-17 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

*Action Plan 11-17***Permitting and Inspections**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and implement procedures that ensure the necessary permitting and inspections of new construction projects are timely obtained.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Obtain, read, and understand, the new Florida Building Code.</p> <p>Step 2: Director of facilities, maintenance supervisors, and inspectors will form procedures that will ensure that all necessary permits and inspections are obtained.</p> <p>Step 3: Present procedures to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and later to the Superintendent for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

12

Student Transportation

Transporting students to and from school is a major activity and significant expense. Lake County School District is substantially in compliance with student transportation best practices. Making recommended improvements will have a fiscal impact and the resulting increases in efficiencies, personnel retention, and operational integrity are expected to further reduce the net cost of these actions.

Conclusion

Despite the daunting challenges and heavy new demands created, in part, by its close proximity to the sprawling Orlando metroplex, the Lake County School District (the district) is more than holding its own. Not only is the district largely in compliance with most student transportation best practices, it has had a number of notable accomplishments in this key area over the past two years as shown in Exhibit 12-1.

Exhibit 12-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Student Transportation in the Past Two Years

- The district was the first district to have live cameras installed on all buses.
 - The district is only buying 78-passenger buses to increase occupancy on its regular routes.
 - A committee was formed to review all accidents involving district owned vehicles. During the 1999-2000 school year, the Supervisor of Transportation reported that at-fault accidents involving buses were reduced by approximately 30%.
 - The department has implemented Safe Driver awards for bus drivers with no accidents.
 - The department has increased the mileage rate charged on field trips from \$1.00 to \$1.50 to better recover actual costs. This is expected eventually to increase to \$1.60 per mile.
-

Source: Lake County School District.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found:

Safe and Efficient System

- The student transportation office plans, reviews and establishes bus routes and stops to provide efficient student transportation services for all students qualifying for transportation. (Page 12-7)

Student Transportation

- The district ensures that all regular school bus routes and activity trips operate in accordance with established routines, and that unexpected contingencies affecting those operations are handled safely and promptly. (Page 12-13)
- The district effectively and efficiently recruits and retains the bus drivers and attendants it needs. (Page 12-19)
- The district trains, supervises and assists bus drivers to enable them to meet bus-driving standards and maintain acceptable student discipline on their buses. (Page 12-21)
- The district provides student transportation services for exceptional students in a coordinated fashion that minimizes student hardships and accurately reports exceptional students transported for state funding purposes. (Page 12-29)
- The district ensures that staff acts promptly and appropriately in response to any accidents that occur. (Page 12-34)
- The district ensures that appropriate student behavior is maintained on the bus at all times. (Page 12-36)

Adequate Transportation

- The school district has a process to ensure that its school bus fleet is economically acquired. However, the district has not always adhered to the policy that ensures adequate replacement of buses. (Page 12-37)
- The district provides timely routine servicing for buses and other district vehicles, as well as prompt response for breakdowns and other unforeseen contingencies. (Page 12-42)
- The district ensures that fuel purchases are cost-effective and that school buses and other vehicles are efficiently supplied with fuel. (Page 12-45)
- The district maintains facilities that are, overall, conveniently situated to provide sufficient and secure support for vehicle maintenance and other student transportation functions. However, the feasibility of adding a bus compound at the southern part of the county (where growth patterns have been the highest) should be considered, with the intent of saving costs and improving operating efficiency, after allowing for the additional capital and operating costs associated with the new facility. (Page 12-49).
- The district maintains an effective staffing level in the vehicle maintenance area and provides support for vehicle maintenance staff to develop their skills. (Page 12-54).
- The district maintains an inventory of parts, supplies, and equipment needed to support student transportation functions that balances the concerns of immediate need and inventory costs. (Page 12-55).

Appropriate and Cost Effective Transportation

- The district does not provide appropriate technological and computer support for student transportation functions and operations. (Page 12-58)
- The district regularly tracks and makes public reports on its performance in comparison with established benchmarks. The district, however, has not established an accountability system for student transportation. (Page 12-61)
- The district does not coordinate long-term planning and budgeting for student transportation within the context of district and community planning. (Page 12-63)
- The district's ability to monitor the fiscal condition of student transportation functions by regularly analyzing expenditures and reviewing them against the budget is restricted to the accuracy and timeliness of the reports produced by the Finance department. (Page 12-66)

- The district provides regular, accurate, and timely counts to the Florida Department of Education of the number of students transported as part of the Florida Education Finance Program. (Page 12-67)
- The district has reviewed the prospect for privatizing student transportation functions, as a whole or in part. (Page 12-68)
- The district does not periodically review the organizational structure and staffing levels of the student transportation program to minimize administrative layers and processes. (Page 12-72)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations—————

ValienteHernandez P.A. recommends four actions in the student transportation area that would have a fiscal impact on the district. However, other recommendations have been made that, when implemented, would have a beneficial fiscal impact for the district that cannot be estimated at this time. If these recommendations are implemented, we anticipate that in each of the next five fiscal years the district will realize an additional \$221,200 in cost savings, recovered costs, and increased revenues

Among our other recommendations are those below.

- *Eliminating unnecessary courtesy rides. We estimate the district would save \$174,500 annually. (Action Plan 12-1 Recommendation 2)*
- *Charging school groups for field trips to recover the full cost of these trips. We estimate the district would receive \$56,600 annually in additional funding. (Action Plan 12-2 Recommendation 2)*
- *Promoting lead drivers to supervisory positions. This would cost the district an estimated \$33,000 annually, but would also produce cost savings through better supervision of the other drivers' working hours; however, these savings cannot be estimated at this time. (Action Plan 12-4 Recommendation 2)*
- *Collecting Medicaid reimbursement for the portion of costs associated with transporting exceptional students who are eligible for Medicaid and receiving medical services or treatments. We estimate the district would receive \$23,100 annually in additional net revenue. This impact considers the cost of employing a contractor charging 30% of the \$33,000 in revenue generated. (Action Plan 12-5 Recommendation 2)*
- *Reviewing the current 10-year bus replacement schedule and determining if it would be cost-effective to extend the schedule to a 12-year span and continue to implement the plan to bring the age of the fleet into compliance with current school board policy. (Action Plan 12-6 Recommendation 1)*
- *Continuing efforts to become a warranty center for international buses as a way of recouping warranty claims for in-house repairs. We believe this would result in revenue increases to the district that cannot yet be specifically calculated. (Action Plan 12-10 Recommendation 2)*
- *Conducting make-or-buy analyses of services provided in-house to determine if such services could be provided at a lower cost if bidded out to private vendors. We believe the district would realize a reduction in costs that cannot be specifically calculated at this time. (Action Plan 12-16 Recommendation 2)*

Exhibit 12-2 shows the estimated fiscal impact of these recommendations.

Exhibit 12-2

Implementing the Recommendations for Student Transportation Will Have a Five-Year Fiscal Impact of \$1,106,000 in Savings

Action Plan and Strategy	Fiscal Impact: Cost Savings/Recovered Costs/Increased Revenues or (Increased Costs)					
	Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Total
12-1 Eliminate unnecessary courtesy rides	\$174,500	\$174,500	\$174,500	\$174,500	\$174,500	\$872,500
12-2 Charge school groups for field trips to cover the full cost of the trip	56,600	56,600	56,600	56,600	56,600	283,000
12-3 Promote lead drivers to a supervisory position	(33,000)	(33,000)	(33,000)	(33,000)	(33,000)	(165,000)
12-4 Pursue reimbursement from Medicaid for eligible transportation	23,100	23,100	23,100	23,100	23,100	115,500
Total	\$221,200	\$221,200	\$221,200	\$221,200	\$221,200	\$1,106,000

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Background

Lake County, covering 954 square miles, is located in north central Florida. In recent years, the Orlando metropolitan area has expanded into the southern portions of the county. The county's geographic configuration (its distance north-to-south is much greater than its distance east-to-west), along with a fast-paced level of new housing development and other construction, especially in the southern part of the county, presents significant operational difficulties and related challenges to the district's Transportation department.

During the 2000-01 school year, for example, the district provided school bus service to 17,592 of its 29,217 students at 42 school centers throughout the county. Among those served were 516 exceptional students, who, because of their varying disabilities, required special arrangements to be transported to school sites throughout the district.

District school buses were also used for approximately 2,000 extracurricular field trips during the year and for transportation (on an "if available" basis) for other community organizations. There were 272 school buses in service (including spares) on 203 school bus routes. Most buses made three runs daily to accommodate staggered school start times.

Exhibit 12-3 presents selected student transportation data for the district and six peer districts in the state for the 1998-99 school year. Listed below are several conclusions that may be drawn from this data.

- Slightly more than half of the students in the district (15,782 of 27,817, or 56.74%) required student transportation services. This percentage ranks the district third highest when compared with the six peer districts (which range from 46.12% to 61.36%).
- Student transportation staff as a percentage of all district staff was 8.55%, which ranked it fourth lowest when compared with the six peer districts (which range from 7.53% to 12.87%).

Exhibit 12-3

Comparative Student Transportation Data for Lake County

School District and Six Peer Districts for 1998-99 (the most recent data available)

Measure	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns	Santa Rosa
Square Miles	954	902	690	936	1350	617	1024
Number of Students Enrolled	27,817	29,673	16,565	30,375	30,127	18,341	22,021
Number of Students Transported	15,782	13,975	8,538	14,010	14,232	10,583	13,512
Percentage of Students Transported	56.74%	47.10%	51.54%	46.12%	47.24%	57.70%	61.36%
Number of School Centers	38	43	21	38	35	24	30
Busing for desegregation?	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Number of Student Transportation Staff	284	297	174	296	276	177	284
Number of all District Staff	3,321	3,946	1,994	3,374	3,514	2,221	2,207
Percentage of Student Transportation Staff	8.55%	7.53%	8.73%	8.77%	7.85%	7.97%	12.87%
Number of Buses (Daily Service)	211	181	113	193	127	113	220
Number of Bus Maintenance Facilities	3	1	2	3	2	2	1
Number of Miles Driven	4,240,883	5,034,185	1,755,001	2,894,066	3,331,620	3,008,648	4,175,254
Student Transportation Expenditures	\$6,858,753	\$7,135,545	\$3,809,378	\$5,602,284	\$5,867,068	\$4,274,250	\$7,302,986
All District Expenditures	\$148,556,891	\$167,230,607	\$94,899,143	\$161,111,944	\$160,173,088	\$101,671,458	\$113,641,837
Percentage of Student Transportation Expenditures	4.62%	4.27%	4.01%	3.48%	3.66%	4.20%	6.43%
Transportation Operating Expenditures per Student	\$421	\$493	\$443	\$396	\$407	\$401	\$537
Operating Expenditures Per Annual Mile	\$1.62	\$1.42	\$2.17	\$1.94	\$1.76	\$1.42	\$1.75
Average Student Transportation Salary-plus-benefit	\$17,509	\$19,885	\$17,335	\$17,112	\$18,611	\$20,000	\$15,808

Source: *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles* 2000, for 1998-99. Department of Education Profiles of Florida School Districts, 1998-99. ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations.

- Student transportation expenditures as a percentage of all district expenditures are 4.62%, which was higher than all but one of the peer districts (which range from 3.48% to 6.43%).¹
- The district's average student transportation salary-plus-benefits was \$17,509, which ranked it fourth lowest when compared with six peer districts (which range from \$15,808 to \$20,000).
- The district's transportation operating expenditures per student were \$421, which ranked it fourth lowest when compared with six peer districts (which range from \$396 to \$537).
- The district's operating expenditures per (annualized) mile were \$1.63, which ranked it second lowest when compared with the six peer districts (which range from \$1.42 to \$2.17).

All student transportation services, including operations and vehicle maintenance, are provided under the direction of the Supervisor of Transportation, who reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services. Transportation operations consist of 364 employees reporting to its supervisor.

Main activities under student transportation operations include responsibility for hiring, training and managing bus drivers, and creating bus routes. Additionally, the department provides transportation for field trips and extracurricular activities. The department also provides maintenance for all other district vehicles, including school buses, trucks, vans and automobiles, and handles certain administrative functions, including payroll and billing.

The district has an operating budget of \$7.4 million for student transportation services during the 2000-01 school year, with an additional \$1.3 million allocated for school bus purchases. Exhibit 12-4 provides further detail on the current (2000-01) student transportation services budget, and actual expenditures during the 1999-2000 school year.

Exhibit 12-4

The District's Student Transportation Expenditures for 1999-2000 and Budget for 2000-01

	Expenditures 1999-2000	Budget 2000-01
Student transportation operations	\$ 6,796,558	\$ 7,408,540
School bus purchases	1,994,470	1,347,655
Total Student Transportation	\$ 8,791,028	\$ 8,756,195

Source: Lake County School District.

Methodology

ValienteHernandez P.A. used a variety of methods in to assess the district performance related to the best practices for student transportation. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed self-assessment instruments prepared by district staff and associated evidence; conducted interviews of district staff; performed site visits of operational areas; conducted surveys of stakeholders; and held public meetings.

¹ This difference could be the result of several factors including the size of the district, distribution of the population, services provided, percentage of students transported, and costs reported by each district.

Findings and Recommendations

Safe and Efficient System

Goal A: The district's student transportation operations are planned with safety in mind and conducted effectively and efficiently.

1 The student transportation office plans, reviews and establishes bus routes and stops to provide efficient student transportation services for all students qualifying for transportation.

Staff Reviews Bus Stop Safety

The staff of the district's student transportation function reviews safety at bus stops and loading zones, and when a safety hazard or other problem is identified, considers changing bus stops, re-routing buses, or taking other appropriate corrective actions. Student transportation staffers use a standard form to evaluate hazards as a guide to reviewing site conditions at each bus stop. This review considers several factors affecting student safety, including

- presence and condition of local walkways;
- condition and size of the street; and
- traffic intensity in the area.

Bus Routing and Staggered Start Times Help Ensure Efficiency

The Transportation department maintains detailed route reports for all bus routes. These reports detail exact locations of the stops, times of the stop, distances between stops, and the number of students to be picked up at each. Route managers prepare bus routes manually and as soon as one year ends, begin developing routes for the next.

The district is looking into computerizing the boundary and routing system. The Transportation Supervisor estimates that computer routing would decrease time spent on manual routing by 35% to 40%. The Fiscal Year 2001-02 budget includes \$57,000 allocated to acquiring a software package specifically designed to improve the efficiency of bus routing. This money has been requested by the department and was approved by the board in September 2001.

Commercial software packages available include *Plan Ware*, which the district plans to acquire, and *Ecotran* and *Edulog*, which have been proven in other districts. Computerization is expected to help the district answer such boundary and routing questions as those below.

- Could we eliminate routes by optimizing pick-up locations?
- Could we eliminate buses by improving capacity on existing routes?

- Could we control the growing need for additional buses by making better use of existing resources?

Decreasing the time route managers spend manually preparing routes will allow them more time for other responsibilities, such as driver supervision.

The district has adopted a three-tier system to enhance the use of buses and increase the efficiency of bus routing. This staggered system allows most buses to make three separate runs daily. The following schedule is consistent throughout the district, within certain time frames:

- high schools generally begin from 7:15 AM to 7:35 AM and dismiss from 2:06 PM to 2:30 PM;
- elementary schools generally begin from 8:15 AM to 8:45 AM and dismiss from 2:45 PM to 3:05 PM; and
- middle schools generally start from 8:40 AM to 9:20 AM and dismiss from 3:50 PM to 4:00 PM.

This staggered arrangement along with efficient routing has allowed the district to achieve a more efficient bus usage rate. Exhibit 12-5 demonstrates that the district has a higher bus occupancy rate than its peer districts, with the exception of Osceola. This is important because Florida Department of Education (DOE) funding is based on bus occupancy rates.

Exhibit 12-5

Bus Occupancy Rate in Lake Is Higher Than Most Peer Districts

	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	Santa Rosa	St. Johns	Peer District Average
Bus Occupancy Rate	80.31	74.73	74.89	73.93	88.67	64.96	78.68	75.98

Source: *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 2000*, for 1998-99, Department of Education.

Policy Helps Minimize Courtesy Riders

The district has established policies governing student eligibility for bus transportation. The Lake County School Board has established policy 8.31, which states:

Any student who resides two or more miles from his/her designated school by the most direct traveled route is eligible to ride the school bus to and from that school. These students shall be reported for funding purposes. Under the following conditions, students who reside within two miles of the designated school may be eligible to ride the school bus:

- The Lake County School Board grants special authorization.*
- An exceptional student not requiring special care may ride a school bus regardless of distance from home to school upon furnishing a statement from the Supervisor of Exceptional Students certifying that the student is handicapped and is unable to walk to school.*

Exhibit 12-6 shows the number of courtesy riders for the 1998-99 school year, the most current data available. Courtesy riders constitute 2.2% of all students transported, which places the district second lowest among the seven peer group districts considered. The district receives no state funding for

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courtesy riders, thus the district bears 100% of the cost. Five buses could be eliminated at one district middle school where courtesy riders are transported across a busy highway for safety reasons. Assuming an average per-student rider cost of \$2.73 per day and 180 days of school, the cost to the district of courtesy transportation in 1998-99 was \$174,500. Discontinuing bus service to students who could walk to school could save the district \$872,500 in the next five years as illustrated in Exhibit 12-7.

Exhibit 12-6

Lake County Provides Transportation to Relatively Few Courtesy Riders

	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	Santa Rosa	St. Johns	Peer District Average
Total Number Riding Bus	15,782	13,975	8,538	14,010	14,232	13,512	10,583	12,947
Number of Courtesy Students Riding Bus	355	2,127	599	3,207	73	1,955	1,123	1,348
Courtesy Students as a Percentage of All Bus Riders	2.2%	15.2%	7.0%	22.9%	.05%	14.5%	10.6%	10.4%

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations and *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles*, 2000, for 1998-99, DOE.

Exhibit 12-7

Discontinuing Bus Service to Students Who Could Walk to School Could Save the District \$872,500 in the Next Five Years

	Fiscal Year				
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual Cost Savings	\$174,500	\$174,500	\$174,500	\$174,500	\$174,500
Cumulative Cost Savings	\$174,500	\$349,000	\$523,500	\$698,000	\$872,500

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the district continue its conversion to computerized routing. The department supervisor indicated that he plans to implement a software product to accomplish this objective by December 31, 2001. The new routes need to be approved by the school board and the public notified of route changes by May 31, 2002, so the plan can be implemented by June 30, 2002.*
- We recommend that the district evaluate the use of courtesy bus service, discontinuing this service unless courtesy riders can be accommodated on routes already used to transport other*

students. Discontinuing courtesy service to students who can walk to school could save approximately \$174,500 annually (See Exhibit 12-7). If the reasons for transporting courtesy students are safety-related, a study should be done in conjunction with other governmental agencies (i.e., Florida Department of Transportation, Lake County government, Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement officials) to determine alternate solutions, such as additional crosswalks, sidewalks, and/or crossing guards. The district should complete this study by August 31, 2002, bringing it to the school board for approval by September 30, 2002, with public notices and the information period completed by October 31, 2002. To allow a reasonable time for public input and clarification of parental concerns, the community should be notified by May 31, 2002, so that these changes for the next school year by November 30, 2002, and be ready for implementation by the next school year. This recommendation does not imply that the district should discontinue courtesy ridership in cases where no documented alternatives exist to address significant safety concerns.

Action Plan 12-1 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-1

Acquisition of Routing Software

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Acquisition of proven, well-supported, bus routing software from recommended vendors, and implementation of a computerized routing plan.
	<p>Step 1: Assign responsibility by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services to the Transportation Supervisor and Director of MIS to compare existing available software packages, such as <i>Plan Ware</i> (which the district has budgeted to buy) or others such as <i>Ecotran</i> and <i>Edulog</i>, if the software selected does not meet the district's needs.</p> <p>Step 2: Analyze the selected products using criteria best suited to the district, benchmarking results against other Florida districts, or using other readily available sources such as <i>Q-Link</i>.</p> <p>Step 3: Make recommendations based on previously established criteria to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services by December 31 2001.</p> <p>Step 4: Evaluate the cost/benefits of implementing these recommendations.</p> <p>Step 5: Outline benefits and improvement suggestions, and submit them to the Superintendent for approval before submitting them to the school board.</p> <p>Step 6: With the Superintendent's approval, and after the necessary public notice and information period (and when any changes have been made), bring the Action Plan to the school board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; MIS Director; approval by the Superintendent and school board.
Time Frame	Selection of software package by December 31, 2001. Approval by the school board by March 31, 2002; community input and any board-approved changes made by August 31, 2002; implementation of new routes by September 30, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed within existing resources. Acquisition of software has been budgeted for the Fiscal Year 2001-02 at \$57,000. Future savings possible, including increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) count, from having better data.

Discontinue of Courtesy Rides

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Evaluate the use of courtesy bus rides, with the aim of eliminating this service except for those students who can be accommodated on existing routes at no additional cost to the district.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns responsibility to the Transportation Supervisor for compiling a list of all courtesy rides, citing reasons and indicating in each case if courtesy bus service is provided using existing resources and established routes.</p> <p>Step 2: In addition, the study should determine if courtesy service was provided without re-routing buses or creating additional capacity.</p> <p>Step 3: Determine which courtesy riders create additional capacity needs or result in re-routing buses. Determine why these students are receiving courtesy bus service, including safety and other issues.</p> <p>Step 4: The Supervisor of Transportation contacts other agencies (i.e., Lake County Sheriff's Office; city police departments; Florida Highway Patrol; Lake County government; Florida Department of Transportation) that can help decrease or eliminate hazards that necessitate courtesy rides. Present the results of these contacts to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services to formalize communications and obtain the other agencies' cooperation in dealing with these hazards.</p> <p>Step 5: Evaluate the cost/benefits of implementing this program.</p> <p>Step 6: Outline the program's benefits and suggestions, bringing to the Superintendent for approval before submitting an Action Plan to the school board.</p> <p>Step 7: With the Superintendent's approval, and after the necessary public notice and information period (and when any changes have been made), bring the Action Plan to the school board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; interaction with external agencies; approval by the Superintendent and school board.
Time Frame	Complete the study by May 31, 2002. School board approval by June 30, 2002; community outreach and input completed by August 31, 2002; implementation by September 30, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources. Future savings: up to \$174,500 annually.

¹ This recommendation does not imply that the district should discontinue courtesy ridership in cases where no documented alternatives exist to address significant safety concerns.

2 The district ensures that all regular school bus routes and activity trips operate in accordance with established routines, and that unexpected contingencies affecting those operations are handled safely and promptly.

Procedures Are in Place to Respond to Bus Breakdowns

The district has procedures in place to respond quickly to bus breakdowns. Drivers receive instruction in these procedures during initial driver training. All buses are equipped with two-way radios. In the event of a breakdown, drivers call in and a replacement bus is sent to transport students.

Some Bus Runs Are Longer Than the Limits Set by School Board Policy

The district has adopted a policy that limits a student's one-way riding time on school buses in compliance with state rules to 50 minutes for elementary students and to 60 minutes for secondary school students.

Student transportation staff does not currently have data on the exact number of children who ride beyond these established limits. Published regular route schedules for the 2000-01 were reviewed to evaluate trip times, with morning trips selected for evaluation. In the morning, the total trip time for elementary schools ranged from 12 to 79 minutes. Seventeen percent (17%) of the trips to elementary schools were more than the 50 minutes standard. Trip times for middle and high schools ranged from 11 to 99 minutes. Less than one percent (1%) of trips studied exceeded the one-hour standard.

The student transportation staff needs to improve its ability to report on the number of students riding buses longer than times set by school board policy (computerized routing will provide assistance with gathering this reporting data). Strategies to remedy this condition should be developed. Also needed: periodic monitoring by the Transportation Supervisor, with statistical reports submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services. This initiative will blend naturally with developing benchmarks (discussed below).

Policies Govern Activity Trips

Although activity trips are approved and operated in compliance with district policy, they present certain difficulties. Lake County School Board Policy 8.321 states:

School buses may be used for educational field trips or for special school-connected or sponsored events provided any such trip is approved by the principal and is under the supervision of an instructional staff member of the school. Such trips may include educational field trips and extracurricular trips relating to athletics, band, choral music, clubs, or organizations sponsored by the school.

The district requires each school principal to submit a field trip and bus request form to the transportation office two weeks before to each trip. The available time window available is from 9:30 AM to 1:45 PM (before and after buses are needed for regular routes) and after 5:00 PM.

The selection of drivers for activity trips is based on seniority and directed by union rules. Current charges for activity trips are \$14.00 an hour, plus \$1.00 per mile for schools (with the exception of high school

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athletic—contracted sports—and band departments, which are only charged \$14.00 an hour). The charge to external users (YMCA, Special Olympics, etc.) is \$14.00 an hour, plus \$1.50 per mile. The mileage rate is expected to be increased to \$1.60 in the 2001-02 school year.

The District Could Increase Its Annual Revenues By \$56,000 By Charging School Groups Full Cost to Cover Activity Trips

The mileage rate currently charged increased from \$1.50 to \$1.60 for the 2001-02 school year. However, analyses conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. demonstrate that the district's cost per mile has actually increased from \$1.62 in 1998-99 to \$1.88 in 2000-01.² Based on this calculation, the district could realistically increase its annual revenues by approximately \$56,000 (base year 1998-99, 192,544 miles, increased by 5.03% to 2000-01 equivalent activity miles of 202,229, see Exhibit 12-9, times the \$0.28 differential per mile) by charging the actual cost per mile. Refer to Exhibit 12-10.

Exhibit 12-8 includes data establishing that the seven peer districts studied have slightly different approaches to charging schools and outside users for activity trips.

Charging Mileage Cost to Contracted Sports and Band Field Trips Would Promote Better Accountability

As mentioned above, the district does not charge the mileage associated to field trips for contracted sports and band. In this case, users (schools) are charged for the salary of the driver, and the Transportation department absorbs the mileage cost. This particular procedure has a negative impact on the department's productivity. An analysis conducted by the department and ValienteHernandez P.A. showed an average of 5,250 miles a month for contracted sports and band trips. Translated into a dollar amount, this represents approximately \$8,400 a month (5,250 times \$1.60), or over \$75,000 annually for the school year.

The district should consider changing its procedure of charging contracted sports and band trips only for the drivers' salary, and additionally charge for mileage usage. This action will better reflect the actual cost of the basic purpose of the Transportation department and increase accountability.

² The district's per-mile cost of operating expenses for the school year 1998-99 [the latest available for comparison purposes] was \$1.62 (see Exhibit 12-3). Since then, transportation costs have increased 27.66% (budget for 2000-01, \$8,756,195 vs. \$6,858,753 reported for 1998-99). In addition, the number of students transported has increased by 11.47% (school year 2000-01, 17,592 vs. 15,782 reported for 1998-99). Using these calculations, the net increase of transportation costs over students transported is established as 16.19%.

Based on above computations, the cost per mile, net of increased students being transported, increased from \$1.62 per mile to \$1.88 (or a differential of \$0.38 per mile from the \$1.50 per mile charged by the district to external users). Using the \$1.60 to be charged during the next school year, the difference would be \$0.28 per mile. If the activity miles were increased by the same percentage as the increase in total students (27,817 for school year 1998-99 vs. 29,217 for school year 2000-01, or a 5.03% increase), the most recent year would equal 202,235 miles.

Exhibit 12-8**Rates Charged for Activity Trips Vary Among School Districts. 2000-01 School Year**

	Lake	Alachua	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	Santa Rosa	St. Johns
Rate Charged for External Users	\$1.50 per mile, plus \$14.00 per hour	\$.70 per mile, plus \$12.50 per hour	\$.55 per mile, plus \$10.00 per hour	\$50.00 user fee, plus \$1.00 per mile	\$6.00 admin fee, plus \$1.15 per mile, plus \$12.67 per hour	Contracted with Laidlaw Educational Services	\$.29 per mile, plus driver hourly rate
Rates Charged for Schools	\$1.00 per mile, plus \$14.00 per hour for field trips; \$14.00 per hour for high school athletic or band trips	\$.55 per mile, plus \$11.00 per hour	\$.55 per mile, plus \$10.00 per hour	\$15.00 per hour or \$1.25 per mile for trips over 150 miles round trip	\$3.50 admin fee, plus \$.62 per mile, plus \$12.67 per hour	\$.60 per mile, plus \$10.20 per hour	\$.29 per mile, plus driver hourly rate

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. questionnaires to peer districts.

As a percentage of total miles during the 1998-99 school year, activity trip miles for the district were lower than all but one of its peer districts. The district recorded 192,544 activity trip miles. Compared with the six peer districts, the district's percentage of activity trip miles (4.5%) was second lowest (range: From 4.2% to 10.8%). Exhibit 12-9 demonstrates how the district compares with its peers and the peer average.

Exhibit 12-9**Activity Trip Miles for Lake Are Similar to Those of Peer Districts (in Ascending Order)**

District	Total Miles	Activity Trip Miles	Percentage of Activity Trip Miles
Santa Rosa	3,998,315	176,939	4.2%
Lake	4,048,339	192,544	4.5%
St. Johns	2,842,148	166,500	5.5%
Alachua	4,751,287	282,898	5.6%
Okaloosa	2,680,606	213,460	7.4%
Charlotte	1,587,255	167,746	9.6%
Osceola	2,970,326	361,294	10.8%
Peer Average	3,138,323	228,140	6.8%

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles 2000, for 1998-99; DOE; and ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations.

Exhibit 12-10

Charging School Groups Full Cost to Cover Activity Trips Could Increase District Revenue by \$283,000 in the Next Five Years

	Fiscal Year				
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual Cost Savings	\$56,600	\$56,600	\$56,600	\$56,600	\$56,600
Cumulative Cost Savings	\$56,600	\$113,200	\$169,800	\$226,400	\$283,000

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the student transportation department obtain current data and improve regularly established reporting on the number of students who ride longer than the times set by school board policy (computerized routing can assist in gathering the necessary data), and provide suggestions, and timeframes for complying with board policy. This initiative should be in conjunction with developing benchmarks (as discussed in Action Plan 12-16, Recommendation 2).*
- *We recommend that the district change its procedure of charging groups less than the full cost of activity trips, and begin charging the full cost per mile. (See Exhibit 12-10.)*
- *We recommend that the district change its procedure of charging contracted sports and band trips only for the drivers' salary, and additionally charge for mileage usage. This action will better reflect the actual cost of the basic purpose of the Transportation department and increase accountability.*

Action Plan 12-2 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-2**Obtain Reliable Data and Regularly Report on Students Who Ride School Buses Longer Than School Board Policy Allows**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and implement a system whereby data is gathered and promptly made available indicating the times students normally ride their assigned buses. In summarizing this data, include the number of students riding buses longer than permitted by school board policy. Provide compliance suggestions with implementation timeframes.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns responsibility to the Transportation Supervisor for developing a mechanism to track the number of students riding longer than allowed under current school board policy. Delegation to subordinates is desirable; however, responsibility for completing this assignment should remain at the higher level.</p> <p>Step 2: Periodically analyze the data being furnished; make comments and suggestions for remedying or correcting each case.</p> <p>Step 3: Evaluate the cost/benefit of suggested actions.</p> <p>Step 4: Report to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and the Superintendent on non-compliance with board policy. Determine if policy changes are required.</p> <p>Step 5: Periodically report findings and suggestions to the school board.</p> <p>Step 6: Superintendent reviews plan results and assesses its effectiveness.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; possible delegation to subordinates. Involvement by the Superintendent and School Board.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002, and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Charge Full Cost Per Mile For Activity Trips

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The school board establishes a policy for the full recovery of transportation costs when school buses and other district vehicles are used for purposes other than transporting students to and from school. Per-mile costs should be periodically analyzed to maintain full cost recovery.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns responsibility to the Finance department (with assistance from the Transportation Supervisor) for capturing the full cost per mile driven by district school buses and other vehicles. This may be based on empirical information derived from previous fiscal years, or from the current year's budget.</p> <p>Step 2: Once the per-mile cost is established, notify the Superintendent of the potential reductions in operating expenses from charging the full cost per mile for activity trips, rather than the current charge of \$1.60 per mile.</p> <p>Step 3: Evaluation and approval by the Superintendent are suggested, since this action may impact other policies being considered.</p> <p>Step 4: School Board action may be required; if not, it is suggested that it be obtained to determine if policy changes are required.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Finance Director; possible delegation to subordinates; assistance from the Transportation Supervisor. Involvement and approval by the Superintendent; consent or action by the School Board.
Time Frame	June 30, 2001, and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	Additional annual revenues of approximately \$56,600.

Better Reflect the Productivity of the Transportation Department

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Better reflecting the productivity of the Transportation department by changing the procedure of charging contracted sports and band trips for mileage in addition to the labor cost currently being charged.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns responsibility to the Finance department to analyze the accounting structure and make the necessary changes that would better reflect the productivity of the Transportation department with respect to the mileage usage for contracted sports and band. This task should be done in conjunction with the Transportation Supervisor.</p> <p>Step 2: Modified procedure is formalized and communicated to stakeholders in general.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Finance Director; and assistance from the Transportation Supervisor.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

3 The district effectively and efficiently recruits and retains the bus drivers and attendants it needs.

The District Has Not Compared Its Driver Turnover Rate to Rates in Peer Districts

Although the district does not have useful information on turnover rates, the student transportation staff believes employee turnover is an issue that needs attention.

Having recently begun exit interviews with bus drivers, the district has identified three predominant reasons for turnover:

- a) insufficient pay rates;
- b) drivers need full-time rather than part-time jobs; and
- c) dealing with student misbehavior on school buses is too stressful.³

While the department has made some efforts to determine the reasons for employee turnover, it has not systematically analyzed its findings over time or compared employee turnover trends in comparable districts.

In response to the continuing need for bus drivers, the district's student transportation staff has developed several different approaches to publicizing the availability of bus driver positions.

- The district posts vacant positions with the unemployment office.

³ While bus drivers may not discipline students by means other than reasonable verbal reprimand, bus drivers are empowered to write the student up and initiate a bus referral procedure (see Pages 12-31 and 32).

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- The district posts vacant positions on the school board job vacancy listing.
- The staff has placed signs advertising vacant positions in buses parked at various sites within the county where they can be readily viewed by passing motorists.
- The staff has used school marquees to advertise driver vacancies.

Driver Salaries are Above Those of Peer Districts

Driver salaries are above those of peer districts. Exhibit 12-11 shows bus drivers' starting wages for peer districts and surrounding districts. This data shows that Lake County's beginning pay rate for bus drivers, \$9.85, is above the peer average of \$8.43, and surrounding districts' average of \$9.35. Department staff annually contacts surrounding districts to compare beginning and ending salaries to maintain competitiveness.

Exhibit 12-11

Bus Driver Hourly Starting Wages, School Year 2000-01

District	Starting Hourly Wage	Amount Higher or Lower than Lake
Lake	\$9.85	\$ ---?
Peer Districts		
Alachua	9.53	.01
Charlotte	8.00	(1.52)
Okaloosa	7.41	(2.11)
Osceola	8.85	(.67)
Santa Rosa	8.11	(1.41)
St. Johns	8.70	(.82)
Peer Average	8.43	(1.09)
Surrounding Districts		
Marion	9.60	.08
Polk	8.86	(.66)
Orange	9.90	.38
Seminole	8.86	(.66)
Sumter	9.74	.22
Volusia	9.13	(.39)
Surrounding district average	9.35	(.17)

Source: Lake County School District Transportation Department, peer district questionnaires and district interviews.

In addition to regular pay, the district has established a driver attendance incentive plan to encourage perfect attendance and reward safety. Drivers with perfect annual attendance receive one-half day off and a new bus to drive; safety awards are given drivers who have had no at-fault accidents during the year.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that student transportation staff improve their ability to track driver vacancy rates and the reasons for such vacancies. In addition to conducting exit interviews, the*

district's procedures should include asking drivers who are leaving employment voluntarily to complete a survey indicating their reason(s) for resigning and asking them to feedback on the department. These surveys can be used to identify and assess the reasons for turnover and, if applicable, suggest necessary changes to the district's student transportation operations and driver training.

Action Plan 12-3 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-3

Improve Ability to Track Driver Vacancy Rates

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Improve procedures to track and determine reasons for driver vacancies.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Personnel department develops an exit interview form that includes inquiries from the driver as to the reasons for resigning.</p> <p>Step 2: The transportation supervisor, in conjunction with the Personnel department, establishes procedures to analyze trends for losing drivers.</p> <p>Step 3: The Supervisor of Transportation and the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services periodically evaluate the reasons for losing drivers and propose solutions to correct imbalances.</p> <p>Step 4: These recommendations are brought to the Superintendent for approval. Any fiscal consequences should be, after approval by the Superintendent, be included in the proper budgetary process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Transportation, Personnel department, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, Superintendent.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

4 The district trains, supervises and assists bus drivers to enable them to meet bus-driving standards and maintain acceptable student discipline on their buses.

The District Provides Driver Training

Student transportation staff offers initial training classes for prospective bus drivers. These classes are held when there are enough attendees (usually 8 to 10). This initial training for a commercial driver's license (CDL) is free to potential bus drivers. Although prospective drivers are not paid for their training time, they are reimbursed for required driving tests and physicals. Initial driver training covers a variety of topics in the classroom and provides actual driving instruction. Prospective drivers are given a training manual, which must be returned when the program has been completed.

The district also provides a minimum of eight hours of in-service training workshops each year for school bus drivers. These are usually conducted four times during the year. Topics include

- managing and reporting student conduct;
- CPR and first-aid refresher;
- communication skills;

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- blood-borne pathogens and wellness; and
- rules of the road: safe driving skills.

Class sizes are limited and are filled on a first-come, first-served basis, with appropriate district staff members serving as certified trainers. Using qualified in-house instructors reduces district training costs. The existing driver's handbook from the 1990s is out of date, and not every driver has a copy. According to the Transportation Supervisor, the handbook is being updated.

One area of concern is the number of newly hired drivers who receive the district's free driver training, obtain their CDL licenses, and then promptly resign to take other employment. The department's supervisor estimates the cost of training each new driver at \$1,000. However, the supervisor believes that if free driver training is discontinued, charging the full \$1,000 may adversely affect recruitment.

Another way to avoid training drivers only to have them resign shortly thereafter would be a pre-employment contract. This contract would stipulate that drivers who voluntarily leave employment before the end of a six-month period are required to reimburse the district for approximately one-half of the cost of their training.

The monetary impact of this recommendation is immaterial.⁴ The big benefit to the district is that such a policy would discourage people from applying who have no intention of actually working for the district and, on the other hand, it would encourage people to stay and avoid the district to continually having to recruit, hire, and train new drivers, thus avoiding administrative costs.

Bus Drivers Receive Only Limited Direct Supervision, Since Route Managers Must Focus on More Immediate Priorities

Route managers are responsible for supervising bus drivers and bus attendants. Route managers are expected to assess assigned drivers' on-road skills and habits, monitor compliance with safety rules, and critique their general approach to picking up and dropping off students. For example, route managers often make suggestions for improving inexperienced drivers' on-road performance, such as negotiating tight corners or the sudden application of brakes.

However, the district does not have a system in place to ensure that route managers (or other staff) ride with each driver at least once a year to assess the individual's performance and student management techniques, or to provide direct supervision or guidance. In fact, route managers' other responsibilities generally require them to be in the office during much of working day attending to other priority tasks, such as responding to routine calls and concerns, and developing and monitoring bus routes.

Typically, route managers try to visit each of their assigned parking lots at least once a week to interact with drivers. They will also follow buses or investigate problems that come to their attention through telephone calls from parents or citizens, among other ways. One form of interaction, "shadowing," involves following drivers though at least a portion of their routes. Since managers can begin shadowing at intermediate points, this is less time-consuming than following a bus through its full route. Periodically, however, route managers need to confer with their drivers about student management techniques or personal issues or other matters that can interfere with a driver's performance (such as lack of concentration due to problems at home). However, the common perception among route managers is

⁴ According to the department supervisor, six to eight drivers leave before completing six months employment each year. Thus, if the district implemented the cost reimbursement policy it would recover approximately \$3,000 to \$4,000 per year, assuming \$500 is recovered from each employee leaving under those conditions.

that it is too difficult to arrange enough time with drivers one-on-one to evaluate their on-road skills effectively or otherwise provide adequate guidance and support.

A board-approved policy dating back several years permits a two-pay grade increase as an incentive to drivers who, in effect, become supervisors at district parking lots while retaining their own routes. Currently the district has eight so-called “lead” drivers. However, these individuals have not received the pay increase and do not have supervisory authority. As shown in Exhibit 12-12, the approximate annual cost of pay-grade increases for these eight drivers is \$33,000.

By compensating and providing supervisory authority to lead drivers the district would take some of the pressure off its route managers, assisting them with driving evaluations and bus driver concerns, and generally, providing better supervision. Although the amounts cannot be reliably calculated, this could also produce cost savings by more closely monitoring drivers’ working hours, reducing idle time, and related payroll costs.

Exhibit 12-12

Lead Drivers in a Supervisory Position Will Cost The District an Additional \$33,000 Annually

	Fiscal Year				
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual Cost to Place Drivers in Supervisory Position	(\$33,000)	(\$33,000)	(\$33,000)	(\$33,000)	(\$33,000)
Cumulative Cost	(\$33,000)	(\$66,000)	(\$99,000)	(\$132,000)	(\$165,000)

Note: The additional payroll costs of upgrading lead drivers by two pay grades, making them supervisors of other drivers while still retaining their own routes, is expected to be partly offset through improved driver supervision.

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations.

Exhibit 12-13 provides peer data to compare staffing levels for drivers, substitute drivers, and bus attendants.

Exhibit 12-13

The District’s Operation Staff Is Within Range of Peer Districts (in Ascending Order)

School District	Drivers	Substitute Drivers		Bus Attendants		Total Drivers, Substitutes, and Attendants
		Number	Percent of Drivers	Number	Percent of Drivers	
Charlotte	113	18	16%	18	16%	149
St. Johns	137	11	8%	12	9%	160
Lake	193	36	19%	15	8%	244
Santa Rosa	208	22	11%	20	10%	250
Alachua	206	12	6%	40	19%	258
Okaloosa	186	33	18%	40	22%	259
Osceola	196	12	6%	51	26%	259
Peer Average	188	21	11%	30	16%	238

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 2000, for 1998-99; DOE; and ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations

Exhibit 12-14 examines the staffing ratio of employees per supervisor for the entire department. The district ranks highest in the number of employee per supervisor (one supervisor per 47 employees) compared to its peer group (which ranges from one supervisor for each 22 employees to one supervisor per 42 employees). Relating to direct driver supervision, the ratio is one route manager for 50 bus drivers, meaning that there is currently a lower level of bus driver supervision in Lake County than the other peer districts.

Exhibit 12-14

The District's Ratio of Employees Per Supervisor Was Highest as Compared to Peer Districts (in Ascending Order)

School District	Primary Supervisors	Clerical	Non-Supervisory Operations	Operations	Vehicle Maintenance	Total Staff	Total Employees per Supervisor
Charlotte	8	3	3	149	11	174	22
Alachua	10	5	4	258	20	297	30
Santa Rosa	9	8	0	250	17	284	32
St. Johns	5	3	1	160	9	178	36
Osceola	8	5	3	259	13	288	36
Okaloosa	7	8	2	259	20	296	42
Lake	6	6	7	244	21	284	47
Peer Average	8	6	3	238	17	271	37

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 2000, for 1998-99; DOE; and ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations

Drivers' Records Are Frequently Reviewed

The district reviews all drivers' records on a regular basis to ensure that qualifications remain up to date. Each driver's personnel file includes training documentation, commercial driver certification, copies of annual physical reports (drivers are required to have an annual physical examination and maintain a valid commercial driver's license), motor vehicle reports, and annual performance reviews.

As part of department policy, drivers and other transportation personnel know they are required to immediately report any tickets, citations, or convictions for speeding, driving under the influence, or any other type of motor vehicle violations. The transportation supervisor stated that he personally checks for tickets, violations, and convictions from the driver license registry every quarter.

District's Substance Abuse Policy Is Clear and Enforced

The district has adopted and clearly communicated a substance abuse policy to student transportation employees. All new employees must submit to a drug test before employment. Any employee who is qualified to operate a district vehicle is also subject to random drug testing.

The district has a zero tolerance policy; if an employee fails a drug test, the employee is immediately terminated.

Additionally, the district's drug and alcohol policy includes an employee assistance program. This program is included under the district's group health insurance coverage. Appropriate treatment can be

provided to employees who voluntarily report themselves in need of assistance. In such cases, the employee is removed from active driver status until completion of the program.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that route managers increase both their personal supervision of assigned drivers and their one-on-one interaction with them. Suggested methods include following drivers periodically ("shadowing") to offer suggestions for improving on-road performance, assisting them one-on-one through job-related performance problems, and creating supportive "mentoring" relationships between route managers and their drivers.*
- *We recommend the expanded use of lead drivers in supervisory positions. This will permit them to assist route managers with driving evaluations and bus driver concerns. The district needs to provide the lead drivers and provide them with the means to monitor their drivers in order to reduce, or eliminate, idle time*
- *We recommend that the district update its driver handbook and distribute it to all drivers before the coming school year.*
- *Furthermore, we recommend that drivers maintain a copy of the training manual for future reference. Any additional costs for updating and printing of these handbooks and manuals will be negligible.*
- *We also recommend that the district include among its employment practices a pre-employment contract for driver candidates. This contract would state that drivers who voluntarily leave employment at the district, or are terminated for valid cause, before the end of a six-month period are required to reimburse the district for the cost of training. Furthermore, such a policy may dissuade individuals who do not intend to remain in such employment from even applying, thus avoiding associated administrative cost.*

Action Plan 12-4 provides the steps to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-4

Increase Route Manager Personal Supervision and Interaction With Drivers

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Periodic “shadowing” of assigned drivers by route managers to identify and correct conditions that could lead to inadequate job performance; increase interaction between route managers with their drivers to foster supportive “mentoring” relationships.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Transportation Supervisor assigns route managers responsibility for periodically “shadowing” drivers assigned to them to detect the needs for additional skills training and other forms of assistance. This will be feasible if the computerized routing system produces the expected timesaving for district route managers.</p> <p>Step 2: Transportation Supervisor contacts the personnel department for assistance in training route managers in interpersonal and mentoring skills. By being able to converse with their drivers in a non-confrontational manner, for example, route managers can reach out to drivers for feedback about job-related and personal issues that may have a direct effect in their performance, especially with respect to driver safety and concentration. This training should enable route managers to develop supportive “mentoring” relationships with their drivers to prevent problems from arising.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify implementation strategies for the “mentoring” relationships and other interactions between route managers and assigned drivers.</p> <p>Step 4: Route managers to report periodically to the Transportation Supervisor about potential safety and driver-concentration matters that come to their attention.</p> <p>Step 5: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and Transportation Supervisor to monitor this activity.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Transportation Supervisor; route managers; Personnel department involvement; additional monitoring by Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Use Lead Drivers in a Supervisory Position

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Use lead drivers in a supervisory position.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Negotiate with the union any changes needed in current job descriptions to implement lead bus drivers.</p> <p>Step 2: Implementation of the previously approved board policy making lead drivers supervisors of other drivers; providing a two-grade pay increase as an incentive, and to compensate them for the additional responsibilities.</p> <p>Step 3: Transportation Supervisor meets with route managers to explain the additional responsibilities assumed by the lead drivers, which should allow route managers more time to act in their own supervisory capacities. While this won't give route managers more people to supervise, it will allow them to concentrate on increasing efficiency and reducing costs.</p> <p>Step 4: The Transportation Supervisor and the route managers meet with the eight lead drivers and explain the additional responsibilities given and increase in pay.</p> <p>Step 5: The Transportation Supervisor gives an informal training to the lead drivers, with the route managers present, as to how to monitor the drivers assigned to them, which until then have been their equal and are now supervised by the eight lead drivers, in addition to the route managers.</p> <p>Step 6: The Transportation Supervisor, assisted by the personnel department, informs all drivers, in writing, of these changes, and assigns a lead driver to each driver.</p> <p>Step 7: Provide route managers with the means to communicate effectively with each of their lead drivers and provide feedback to the Transportation Supervisor.</p> <p>Step 8: Provide lead drivers with means to better monitor the number of hours actually worked by their assigned drivers, with the aim of reducing idle time, among other benefits.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Transportation Supervisor; route managers; lead drivers; assisted by the Personnel department and monitored by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	The additional cost to bring eight lead drivers up two pay grades is \$33,000 annually. (If properly motivated and supported, using lead drivers as supervisors may produce payroll cost savings through better monitoring of driver working hours. However, these savings are not estimated.)

Update Driver Handbook; Make It Available to All Drivers

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Update driver handbook and distribute the revised edition to all drivers before the coming school year.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services determines who in the district is best suited to update the driver handbook (and training manual), and with assistance of the Personnel and Risk Management departments, and the Transportation Supervisor, assigns that person (or position within the district) responsibility for keeping these publications up-to-date.</p> <p>Step 2: If it is determined that no one in the district is technically or editorially qualified to edit these documents, the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, together with the Transportation Supervisor, should locate qualified editorial assistance and contract these services through the district's normal purchasing procedures.</p> <p>Step 3: For future reference, existing drivers should be provided with a copy of the driver handbook (acknowledged by a written receipt).</p> <p>Step 4: New drivers in training should be provided copies of the updated manual and handbook (acknowledged by a written receipts), and should be encouraged to use these publications as the need arises.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; Personnel and Risk Management departments.
Time Frame	June 30 2001 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Agreement With Drivers for Training Reimbursement if Driver Voluntarily Leaves Employment by the District

Recommendation 4	
Strategy	As a condition of employment, obtain a pre-employment agreement with driver candidates stipulating that, once employed by the district, if a driver voluntarily leaves employment before the end of a six-month period, he/she is required to reimburse the district for the cost of training.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, together with the personnel department and legal counsel, and with input from the Transportation Supervisor, determines the language to be included in the bus driver pre-employment agreement.</p> <p>Step 2: Legal counsel provides required exculpatory language to prevent unnecessary litigation or personnel grievances.</p> <p>Step 3: The level of reimbursement costs claimed by the district is to be supported by the Finance department, which needs to determine that the amount is fair and not so high that prospective employees will not wish to accept the terms and conditions offered.</p> <p>Step 4: Periodically update the agreement based on current costs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Personnel department, legal counsel, Transportation Supervisor; Finance department.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	The direct fiscal impact of this recommendation is immaterial. There are greater potential cost savings from reduced employee turnover and administrative costs that cannot be established at the present time.

5 The district provides student transportation services for exceptional students in a coordinated fashion that minimizes student hardships and accurately reports exceptional students transported for state funding purposes.

Procedures Guide Staff in Providing Transportation Services to Exceptional Students

The district has established procedures to guide decisions regarding transportation services for students with special educational needs. The 1975 federal law entitled Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) largely controls the decision-making process for exceptional students.

IDEA establishes that an individual education plan (IEP) must be developed for every exceptional student, and that those plans control which services, including transportation, that exceptional students receive. The intent of the IEP is to determine how best to serve exceptional students in the least restrictive environment.

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Participants in the IEP process typically include the classroom teachers, parents, exceptional students education (ESE) teachers, psychologists, and guidance counselors. The district has identified one route manager as the ESE transportation coordinator. Transportation staff typically does not have a role in creating IEPs; however, the ESE transportation coordinator may occasionally participate in IEP meetings.

As the title suggests, the ESE transportation coordinator is responsible for coordinating with ESE staff to make the most appropriate and cost-effective decisions for meeting the transportation requirements of ESE students. The transportation coordinator receives from ESE staff a Special Program Student Transportation Information Form that identifies the individual's need for special transportation. A form is completed by the student's parent or guardian, identifying equipment requirements, medical information, medications the student is taking, and contact phone numbers.

The Transportation department has indicated that routing for the ESE students can be quite complex. As additional ESE students needing transportation services are identified, existing routes may have to be adjusted or additional routes added. When making routing decisions in these situations, route managers must consider the factors below.

- Some students can be served at their home school with no need for special transportation services. This can be the case with students who have mild impairments, such as learning disabilities.
- Some exceptional students can be served by programs that are available at their home school, but may still require special transportation because of the nature of their disability. For example, a student in a wheelchair will not be able to walk or ride a regular bus, but will instead require a school bus equipped with a wheelchair lift.
- Most exceptional students require transportation to a school other than their home school. For these students, special transportation arrangements must be made. Currently, the district has one primary exceptional education center, Lake Hills School. This presents certain operational difficulties, as so many exceptional students must be transported from all parts of the district to that one site.

One area of concern for the Transportation department is the increasing number of students identified as exceptional due to behavioral problems. As a result of the district-wide code of conduct (occasionally referred to as the "four strikes rule") students are being identified as needing special transportation for reasons related to behavioral or social problems. Department management indicates an adverse condition has been created by having to use buses designed for the handicapped to transport increasing numbers of students who could be transported on regular school buses.

The Transportation staff reports that working relationships with the ESE staff have been good, but that communication could be improved. One area of importance for the Transportation staff is being included in selecting schools to become ESE centers. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this is problematic because transportation can be a major cost in school operations. For example, locating an ESE program at just one site may appear to be cost effective if only facility needs are considered; but those savings may be offset by the high cost of transporting students to a single location.

Some Exceptional Students Meet Eligibility Requirements for State Supplemental Funding

Some exceptional students who require special transportation arrangements are eligible for state supplemental funding (these are called "weighted ESE students"). DOE has identified five eligibility criteria for this supplemental funding, as shown in Exhibit 12-15.

*Exhibit 12-15***State Criteria for Exceptional Student Eligibility for Supplemental State Funding**

- Medical equipment required. (Medical equipment is defined as wheelchair, crutches, walkers, cane, tracheotomy equipment, and positioning or unique seating devices.)
- Medical condition that requires a special transportation environment as per physician's prescription (Such as tinted windows, dust-controlled atmosphere, and temperature control).
- Aide or monitor is required due to disability and specific need of student.
- Shortened day required due to disability and specific need of student.
- School assigned is located in an out-of-district system.

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Comparative data from peer districts suggest that the district performs higher than its peers in obtaining state supplemental funding for exceptional students. The district's percentage of weighted ESE students is 96.0%, which ranks it second highest when compared with the six other peer districts (from 20.2% to 100%), and roughly 50% higher than the peer average of 45.8%. Data on weighted ESE students as a percentage of all exceptional students transported for the February 2001 FTE counts are presented in Exhibit 12-16.

*Exhibit 12-16***Percentage of Exceptional Students Eligible for Supplemental State Funding Varies Widely Among the Peer Districts (in Ascending Order)**

District	Total Number of ESE Students Transported	Number of Weighted ESE Students Transported	Weighted ESE Students as Percent of Total Transported
Santa Rosa	578	117	20.2%
Osceola	639	151	23.6%
Okaloosa	479	185	38.6%
St. Johns	338	149	44.1%
Charlotte	296	249	84.1%
Lake	453	435	96.0%
Alachua	399	399	100.0%
Peer Average	455	208	45.8%

Source: District FEFP Forms for February 2001 as reported to the Florida DOE and ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations.

Medicaid Funding Is Obtained for Some Exceptional Student Bus Runs

The district had recently taken some initial steps to seek Medicaid funding for the transportation of certain exceptional students. This relatively new program would reimburse the district a set rate of \$3.45 per each one-way trip for each eligible exceptional student receiving any medical treatment or service in conjunction with a student transportation trip (effective July 1, 2001; previously it was \$3.25). The district will receive the federal portion (56%) of the rate, or \$1.93 per trip. For example, a Medicaid-eligible exceptional student who receives physical therapy at a school site as part of his/her individual education

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plan would make the district eligible to receive partial reimbursement for bus trips that delivered him/her to the school site for therapy and subsequently returned the student home.

Currently, the district is in the process of applying for a Medicaid provider number from the State of Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, which administers the state Medicaid program. However, the district has decided to abandon or postpone pursuing reimbursement. Since this type of reimbursement is new, no baseline data exists for the number of exceptional students who are also eligible for Medicaid, or how many treatments or services they receive for which reimbursement may be claimed.

On this point, however, preliminary estimates from the Hillsborough County School District suggest that approximately 30% of exceptional students are also eligible for Medicaid, and those students receive at least eight eligible trips per month. Using information available in the U.S. Census Bureau database, Lake County has a slightly higher percentage of children below poverty than Hillsborough County. Assuming the same ratio as Hillsborough County School District of 30% of exceptional students being eligible for Medicaid, approximately 120 students at the district would be qualified for Medicaid eligible trips. If these students were to use school transportation for this service over 180 school days (nine calendar months) at eight trips per month, times \$1.93, times two for round trip, the district could receive approximately \$33,000 a year from this funding source. Considering the cost of employing a contractor charging 30% of the revenue generated, the net revenue to the district is of approximately \$23,100 annually or \$115,500 over a five-year period as illustrated in Exhibit 12-17.

Exhibit 12-17

Claiming Medicaid Reimbursement for Eligible Exceptional Student Bus Runs Could Increase Revenues by \$115,500 in the Next Five Years

	Fiscal Year				
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual Cost Recovered	\$23,100	\$23,100	\$23,100	\$23,100	\$23,100
Cumulative Impact	\$23,100	\$46,200	\$69,300	\$92,400	\$115,500

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the district carry out periodic (monthly, bimonthly or quarterly) meetings between ESE and transportation staff to improve coordination and minimize the number of students classified as "exceptional" who receive special student transportation service, but do not qualify for state supplemental funding and ESE.*
- We further recommend that the student transportation staff be specifically included in meetings involving the location or relocation of exceptional student programs at particular school sites.*
- Additionally, we recommend the district continue its current initiative to convert to a computerized routing system. Computerized routing would be especially beneficial in routing exceptional students, as this is one area where routes are constantly changing and being added. Action Plan 12-1 Recommendation 1 shows the steps to implement this recommendation.*

- *We recommend that the district revive its efforts to collect Medicaid reimbursement for all qualifying student transportation trips. The district could receive approximately \$23,100 annually from this new funding source. (Medicaid reimbursement is also discussed in Chapter 5, Action Plan 5-3 Recommendation 3).*

Action Plan 12-5 provides the steps to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-5

Increase Coordination Between ESE and Transportation Staff

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implement a procedure to ensure that periodic (at least quarterly) meetings between ESE and transportation staff take place to improve coordination and minimize the number of students classified as “exceptional” who receive special student transportation service, but do not qualify for state supplemental funding and ESE. Transportation staff needs to be included in meetings involving the location or relocation of exceptional student programs at particular school sites.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendents for Instructional Services and for Business and Support Services to communicate to their respective subordinates the need to exert meaningful and recurring communication between ESE and transportation staffs.</p> <p>Step 2: Agreement is reached that Transportation department personnel be consulted when establishing or changing the location of exceptional students programs. The transportation factor needs to be incorporated as an important ingredient in such location or relocation decisions.</p> <p>Step 3: Representatives of the Transportation department and instructional services meet to review existing procedures and recommend changes to increase communication between transportation and instructional departments. If necessary, recommend additional procedures to address behavioral and disciplinary problems when ESE students are being transported (including worse-case disciplinary scenarios).</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendents for Instructional Services and Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; ESE instructional staff.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Collect Medicaid Reimbursement for Qualifying Students' Transportation

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Revive the district's efforts to collect Medicaid reimbursement for all qualifying student transportation trips.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns the responsibility to determine the appropriateness of obtaining reimbursement from Medicaid for transportation services related to qualified students to the Finance Director, assisted by the Transportation Supervisor.</p> <p>Step 2: The Finance Director, or subordinate, contacts the appropriate person who can provide billing information for Medicaid-reimbursable expenses.</p> <p>Step 3: Once Medicaid billing information has been determined, the Finance Director and/or subordinate(s), assisted by Transportation department personnel, establish procedures to capture this information in an auditable fashion.</p> <p>Step 4: The Finance department bills Medicaid using the proper form and/or format required for expedient reimbursement.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Finance Director; subordinate personnel; Transportation Supervisor.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	Net revenue of \$23,100 annually. This impact considers the cost of employing a contractor charging 30% of the \$33,000 in revenue generated.

6 The district ensures that the staff acts promptly and appropriately in response to any accidents that occur.

Drivers Are Trained in Proper Accident Procedures

Drivers are trained in proper accident procedures. During driver training classes, new drivers receive complete instructions in how to respond in the event of an accident. This training includes a discussion of radio procedures (buses have two-way radios), a review of forms that need to be completed, and an overview of accident investigation procedures.

When an accident occurs, a route manager goes to the scene. The route manager evaluates the accident by interviewing driver, taking pictures and notes at the scene, etc. The district's driver handbook also includes descriptive material and guidance in dealing with emergencies and accidents. As noted in Action Plan 12-4 Recommendation 3, the outdated current handbook is being updated.

Emergency Bus Evacuation Drills Are Conducted Regularly

The district has adopted a policy requiring each school to hold two emergency evacuation drills during the school year. The Health and Safety department coordinates with all schools to ensure that these drills are conducted.

Drivers are instructed how to conduct emergency evacuations during their training. Before drills are conducted, all drivers receive a memorandum from the Health and Safety department reminding them of emergency evacuation drill procedures.

Daily Pre-Trip Forms Are Completed By Drivers

Drivers are required to complete a daily pre-trip inspection form. Drivers must inspect their buses twice daily, just before starting their morning and afternoon routes. These forms are turned-in to the respective route managers at the end of each week.

Driver-conducted inspections help ensure the safety of pupils and drivers, and decreases maintenance costs. If a driver determines equipment needs attention, he/she then fills out a repair request and calls it in to the service shop on the bus radio. During their initial training, drivers learn how to complete the inspection form, as well as inspection requirements and procedures.

Staff Follow State Procedures to Report Accidents

The district complies with state accident reporting requirements. In addition, the district has established its own procedures to respond to and investigate all accidents. As noted above, route managers respond to the scene of all accidents. Student transportation staff routinely reports to DOE on school bus accidents in the district, meeting the state's reporting criteria.

State rules require districts to report to DOE all school bus accidents involving \$500 or more damage; such data includes information on the type of accident (such as another motor vehicle, pedestrian, fixed object, etc.), the location of the accident's impact on the vehicle, roadway types and conditions, light and weather conditions, and the bus driver's experience level. As illustrated in Exhibit 12-18, the district reported the lowest number of accidents per 100,000 miles driven in its peer group.

Exhibit 12-18

The District Has a Lower Number of Accidents, Per 100K Miles Driven, Than Its Peers

District	Total Number of Accidents	Total Miles Driven	Reported Accidents per 100,000 Miles	Accidents from Drivers with Less Than One Year of Experience	
Lake	12	4,240,883	.28	3	25%
Alachua	19	5,034,185	.38	7	37%
Charlotte	7	1,755,001	.40	0	0%
Okaloosa	9	2,894,066	.31	4	25%
Osceola	16	3,331,620	.48	not reported	
Santa Rosa	18	4,175,254	.43	7	44%
St. Johns	12	3,008,648	.40	6	50%
Peer Average	14	2,885,539	.34	6	47%

Source: *School Bus Accident Summary Report*, Florida Department of Education, 1997-1998, *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles*, 2000, for 1998-99, DOE and, ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations, excluding Osceola, number not reported.

Beyond maintaining records of school bus accidents as they occur, the State of Florida requires school districts to have a mechanism in place to determine the cause of each school bus accident and determine how the accident could be prevented in the future.

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The district has adopted a safe driver plan establishing a committee that meets monthly to review all accidents involving district-owned vehicles. Members of the committee include a risk management representative, the transportation supervisor, a route manager and two bus drivers. At each meeting the committee reviews any convictions for driving violations and assesses points in accordance with the district-imposed point system. Points are assessed against the driver as violations occur, according to the committee's findings. An accumulation of accident/violation points may result in verbal or written reprimands, suspension without pay, or termination of employment.

7 The district ensures that appropriate student behavior is maintained on the bus at all times.

Policies Govern Pupil Ridership

The district has established policies governing pupil ridership. School Board policy emphasizes proper conduct on buses for safety purposes; violations are subject to the uniform district-wide code of conduct. A school bus driver may not discipline a student by means other than reasonable verbal reprimand. If a problem occurs with a particular student on a school bus, the driver may write the student up on a school bus incident report. The basic referral process is described below:

- When a student misbehaves on a bus, the driver will write the individual up on a standard referral form and give the completed form to the school principal. The principal is responsible for disciplining the student.
- The driver retains a copy of the referral before and after action is taken.
- The student's parents or guardian receive a copy of the referral from the school.
- School buses follow a discipline plan based on the uniform district-wide code of conduct. Discipline imposed is based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's grade level, and the frequency of the occurrence. For serious infractions, students can be suspended from riding the bus. The district has adopted a "four-strike rule"; after four offenses, assuming board approval, the consequence is expulsion from the bus.

The district's *Code of Conduct* manual addresses the behavior expected of students transported on a school bus and the Lake County School Board has recently approved a "Zero Tolerance Policy" for violating this policy on school buses. With infractions categorized in four levels, Level IV being the most serious type offense, the new policy stipulates that a fourth offense of any type results in expulsion from the bus for 90 days and any Level IV offense occurring on the bus shall result in a recommendation for expulsion. While bus drivers may not discipline students by means other than reasonable verbal reprimand, bus drivers are empowered to write the student up and initiate a bus referral procedure. Refer to Chapter 12, Page 6, for additional information on student conduct.

During the 2000-01 school year, the district had a total of 4,844 bus suspensions for all grade levels, and a total of 74 incidents that were serious enough that the students involved were suspended from school for a number of days. The district has made several efforts to respond to disciplinary issues. For example, all buses are equipped with video cameras that can record both student and driver behavior, and provide good documentation supporting any allegations. The transportation staff states that the cameras have cut down the number of problems occurring on district buses.

Issues concerning the appropriate management of students are part of the regular curriculum for bus drivers during their initial training; these matters are also covered during in-service classes. The driver's

handbook provides several pages of discussion and guidance on disciplinary issues for bus drivers' subsequent reference.

Adequate Transportation

Goal B: **The district acquires the vehicles it needs and maintains them in a safe operating condition within the context of a physical plant that provides sufficient support for student transportation functions.**

8 The school district has a process to ensure its school bus fleet is economically acquired. However, the district has not always adhered to the policy that ensures adequate replacement of buses.

Options to Expand the Bus Replacement Schedule and/or Meet the Policy on Aging Buses

The documented school board policy is to replace all school buses after 10 years of service, which is in agreement with DOE's recommended 10-year bus replacement cycle, and is typical of Florida school districts. For many years, the Department of Education has recommended and supported a planned 10-year replacement cycle for all school buses in the state of Florida, based three reasons: safety, specification and design, and economy and efficiency. Many school districts in Florida however, have extended their bus replacement schedule beyond 10 years, considering that buses now being build can reasonably have longer operating lives. For example, in 1996 the Hillsborough District School Board adopted a 15-year bus replacement cycle (12 years regular use and three years use as a spare). The Miami-Dade School District has also extended the replacement cycle from 10 to 12 years for certain transit buses.

Prior to the new administration, the district had not been adhering to its policy of replacing buses every 10 years. As illustrated in Exhibit 12-19, currently there is a significant number of buses (95 or 36% of the bus fleet) that are 10 years or older. The exhibit also shows that another 62 buses (23%) will reach the 10-year threshold. The district has addressed this issue and the Supervisor of Transportation has planned for the replacement of these aging buses in the department's five-year plan.

As the exhibit shows, currently 95 buses, 36% of the bus fleet, are 10 years or older. This means that over the next five years, the district would replace 157 buses that are or will be 10 or more years old over that period of time. This represents approximately 32 buses per year. Considering that the average number of buses replaced during the last two years is 29 ($34 + 24 = 58 / 2 = 29$), the analysis shows that there are three more buses (32 minus 29) that will need to be replaced each year during the next five years, above and beyond the ones already budgeted. The fiscal impact of this action over the next five years would be approximately \$960,000.

Alternatively, the district could consider expanding the replacement cycle to 12 years. There are 46 (17%) buses in the district that are currently 12 years or older. If the district moves to a 12-year cycle, it would then have to replace 123 buses over the next five years, at a rate of 25 per year. Thus, the district would

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not need to increase funding and could continue to buy and replace buses at the current average rate of 29 each year.

We recommend the district consider reviewing its current 10-year bus replacement schedule and evaluate if it would be cost-effective to extend the schedule to a 12-year span. Extending the replacement schedule can produce substantial savings by reducing the number of buses that need to be purchased each year. As part of the evaluation, the district would have to analyze the different variables that impact the life cycle of the current fleet such as safety, specification and design, and economy and efficiency. Alternatively, if the district decides to retain its current 10-year plan, it will need to increase funding to approximately \$192,000 annually over the next five years.

Exhibit 12-19

Lake County School District's Bus Fleet Has Many Overage Buses

Age in Years	Number of Buses	Percent of Total
13+	44	16%
12	2	1
11	33	12
10	16	6
9	11	4
8	17	6
7	0	0
6	34	13
5	17	6
4	17	6
3	18	7
2	24	9
1	34	13
Total	267	100%

Note: *Number of Buses* includes daily service and spares and the *Age in Years* is established by the year they were purchased.

Source: Lake County Transportation Department, Inventory Listing March 2001.

Spare Buses Are Available As Needed

The district maintains spare buses and uses them, as needed. They are available for immediate assignment at all of the district's bus compounds. Exhibit 12-20 shows the district's percentage of spare buses to the total number of buses in the fleet, compared to its peer group and to the peer average. The district maintains 41 spares, or 16.3% of its total fleet. This percentage is negligibly lower (0.7%) than the peer average of spares composing 17% of the total fleet.

*Exhibit 12-20***The District's Percentage of Spare Buses Was Below Peer Average (in Ascending Order) in the 1998-99 School Year (Most Recent Comparative Data Available)**

School District	Total Buses	Buses in Daily Service	Spare Buses	Spare Buses as Percentage of Total
Santa Rosa	252	220	32	12.7
Osceola	150	127	23	15.3
Okaloosa	229	193	36	15.7
Lake	252	211	41	16.3
St. Johns	137	113	24	17.5
Alachua	224	181	43	19.2
Charlotte	149	113	36	24.2
Peer Average	190	158	32	17.0

Source: *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 2000*, for 1998-99, Department of Education.

Buses Are Purchased Through State Purchasing Pool

The district minimizes costs and maximizes value when purchasing vehicles. The district acquires all new school buses through the state purchasing pool. DOE coordinates a voluntary joint bid that represents the cumulative needs of participating school districts. This process enables participating districts to receive some of the most competitive school bus prices available.

There Are Standards for Repairing vs. Replacing Vehicles

The Transportation department maintains accurate records of its bus inventory, including the age, size, and type of buses in its existing fleet. The department maintains detailed service records for each vehicle in its inventory including parts and labor costs. The Service Manager and Transportation Supervisor review these records when repair decisions are made.

The Transportation department has established a \$1,000 threshold for repair costs for any vehicle in service. The transportation supervisor must specifically approve any vehicle facing major repairs above that amount before the related repair work is done.

When a decision has been made to remove a bus from service, the district makes every effort to recover as much of the cost as possible. In some instances, buses are disassembled ("cannibalized") for usable parts. Old, out of service buses are turned over to the property control department, which auctions off district property once a year. This process results in an average of \$4,000 received per bus sold.

The District Has Taken Steps to Improve Growth Projections

In the past, the Transportation department, and the district in general, had made limited provisions for projected growth within the geographic boundaries of Lake County, particularly the southern-most part of the district. Other than the 10% replacement provision, the district had made no allowance for projected growth and the resulting need for additional transportation services. In March 2001, the district employed a consulting firm to address redistricting in the southern part of the district, which resulted in improved growth projections. Information from this firm will assist the Transportation department in future planning.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district continue to implement its plan to bring the age of its fleet into compliance with current school board policy.*

As part of this strategy, we recommend the district consider reviewing its current 10-year bus replacement schedule and determine if it would be cost-effective to extend the schedule to a 12-year span. Extending the replacement schedule can produce substantial savings by reducing the number of buses that need to be purchased each year. As part of the evaluation, the district would have to analyze the different variables that impact the life cycle of the current fleet such as safety, specification and design, and economy and efficiency.

Alternatively, if the district decides to retain its current 10-year plan, it will need to increase funding to approximately \$192,000 annually over the next five years.

- *We recommend that the Transportation department use information produced by the consulting firm that was hired to address the redistricting issue, to better anticipate future transportation needs within its service area. The number of additional buses needed to accommodate future growth needs to be estimated, translated into future bus purchases and incorporated into the Transportation department's five-year plan.*

Action Plan 12-6 provides the steps to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-6**Evaluate the Cost-Effectiveness of Changing the Bus Replacement Schedule and Initiate a Bus Purchase Plan to Meet the Board's Policy on Age of Buses**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Review the current 10-year bus replacement schedule and determine if it would be cost-effective to extend the schedule to a 12-year span and continue to implement the plan to bring the age of the fleet into compliance with current school board policy.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns the Supervisor of Transportation and the Director of Finance the responsibility of carrying out an assessment to determine whether it would cost-effective to adopt a 12-year bus replacement schedule. Part of the assessment should include an analysis of all the variables that impact the life cycle of the current fleet such as safety, specification and design, and economy and efficiency. The assessment could also include consultations with the Hillsborough and the Miami-Dade school districts, and with DOE.</p> <p>Step 2: If a 12-year bus replacement schedule results more cost-effective, the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services prepares a report including the cost savings and presents it to the school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: If a 12-year schedule is not beneficial, during the budget process the Transportation Supervisor communicates bus purchase needs for the upcoming year based on the 10-year replacement plan. Because this option entails purchasing three extra buses annually (in addition to the ones already budgeted), funding would have to be increased to approximately \$192,000 annually over the next five years.</p> <p>Step 4: The related school board policy is modified contingent upon Step 1.</p> <p>Step 5: As buses are removed from service and replaced, they should go to auction to recover as much cost as possible.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School board, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, Transportation Supervisor, Purchasing department staff, and property control staff
Time Frame	By end of September 2002.
Fiscal Impact	Cannot be established at the present time. This particular recommendation presents two options to the district one that may yield to savings, the other to additional costs.

Coordination of Efforts Between Planning and Transportation Functions

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	The Transportation department use information from the consulting firm that was hired to address the redistricting issue, to better anticipate future transportation needs within its service area.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Transportation Supervisor includes the growth data from the consultant and Lake County government to identify future transportation needs. This increased data should help the district determine how many new buses will be needed to accommodate expected growth.</p> <p>Step 2: The transportation and finance department, working with other district staff, determine the increased costs required to acquire additional buses due to growth.</p> <p>Step 3: The district's long-range plans incorporate these estimates.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School board, Superintendent; appropriate Assistant Superintendent(s), Transportation Supervisor, Finance and Planning departments.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	Can be implemented within existing resources.

9 The district provides timely routine servicing for buses and other district vehicles, as well as prompt response for breakdowns and other unforeseen contingencies.

Bus Safety Inspection Records Are Complete and Accurate, and Ensure That a 20-Day Inspection Is Conducted on Each Bus

The district's buses in service are inspected every 20 working days in accordance with the *Florida School Bus Safety Manual*, and in compliance with Rule 6A-3.017, *Florida Administrative Code* (FAC). One full-time certified inspector who works from a standardized checklist from DOE performs these inspections. Since all buses are kept at bus compounds, scheduling the inspections is not a problem. They are performed during the day between morning and afternoon runs.

Through the inspection process problems such as worn or flat tires, oil leaks, clouded windshields, and torn seats can be identified. Any problems identified by the inspector are referred to the maintenance staff, which makes the needed repairs. Department staff maintains and reviews these inspection records to determine their completeness and accuracy. The most recent review of the district's 20-day inspections by DOE found no deficiencies.

Systems Are in Place to Track Vehicle Maintenance

Manual systems are in place to track vehicle maintenance. Detailed spreadsheets are maintained on each vehicle including fuel usage, cost of repairs, etc. As part of every 20-day inspection, the inspector reviews the service record for each bus being inspected. Routine preventative maintenance (i.e., oil changes, fuel filter changes) is performed at this time if the bus is due for it. For other district vehicles, the department maintains a card file on each vehicle recording the mileage intervals at which servicing is required. The

Service Manager reports that these cards are not reviewed as often as they should be due to staff limitations.

District staff has indicated that a computerized fleet maintenance system that tracks service work would be beneficial. The ideal program would be one that incorporates inventory management (including bar coding), work orders, and maintenance scheduling. Staff has indicated that they will be contacting other districts to see which systems they are using and assessing the pros and cons of each system before making a decision.

Maintaining District Owned Vehicles is Problematic

In addition to maintaining buses, the Transportation department is responsible for the maintenance of all district-owned vehicles. Monthly invoices are sent to all departments for fuel usage and any service work performed. Based on interviews with transportation staff, the current system in place for servicing inter-department vehicles does not work properly. The Service Manager indicated that not all departments bring their vehicles in at regular service points for preventative maintenance. This is problematic because vehicles can incur costly breakdowns when preventative maintenance is not performed.

Staff Respond to Bus Breakdowns

The district has procedures in place to promptly respond to bus breakdowns. In the event of a breakdown, drivers call in to service using two-way radios. One mechanic will take a spare bus and switch buses with the driver so he/she can complete the route in progress. Another mechanic will follow in a service truck equipped with tools and parts. If the repair can be done on location, it is; if not, an approved towing company is called and the bus is towed to the main garage for repairs.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that, prior to acquiring the software package mentioned below, maintenance staff periodically (i.e., monthly) review maintenance records for non-bus district vehicles, determine which are overdue for service, and schedule required work. Department staff needs to implement a system to remind, when needed, affected departments when maintenance is scheduled for vehicles under their care.*

Additionally, we recommend that the district establish and enforce a policy making all department heads responsible for determining whether or not vehicles assigned to their departments are serviced at required intervals.

- *We recommend that the district continue in its efforts to find a maintenance software package that incorporates all areas of maintenance, particularly preventative maintenance scheduling.*

Action Plan 12-7 provides the steps to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-7

An On-Going Review of Maintenance Records

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Periodic review of, non-bus vehicle maintenance records to identify any overdue service requirements. Policy needs to be established making department heads responsible for seeing that vehicles assigned to their departments are periodically serviced.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Transportation department, through the Service Manager, implements a system to identify all non-bus district-owned vehicles. This needs to be accomplished with the cooperation of the property and/or fiscal departments, which maintain a record of assets owned by the district.</p> <p>Step 2: The Service Manager prepares a schedule for preventive maintenance of non-bus, district-owned vehicles and notifies each department when vehicles need to be brought in for service.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent notifies department heads with non-bus, district-owned vehicles in their custody to abide by the preventive maintenance schedules provided by the Service Manager.</p> <p>Step 4: The Service Manager produces a monthly report to the Transportation Supervisor that shows, by department, vehicles scheduled for preventive maintenance during that month and identifies which were serviced and which were not.</p> <p>Step 5: Transportation Supervisor sends an exception report to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services pointing out individuals who were non-compliant.</p> <p>Step 6: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services takes whatever action he/she decides to remedy the situation.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; department heads.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Undetermined. Possible savings due to preventive rather than reactive maintenance of non-bus vehicles.

Find Maintenance Software Packages

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The Transportation department needs to continue in its efforts to find a maintenance software package that incorporates all areas of maintenance, particularly preventative maintenance scheduling.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: District staff has indicated that a computerized fleet maintenance system that tracks service work would be beneficial. The ideal program would be one that incorporates inventory management (including bar coding), work orders, and maintenance scheduling. Staff has indicated that they will be contacting other districts to see which systems are in use, and assessing the pros and cons of each system before making a decision.</p> <p>Step 2: The Transportation department needs to continue its search for an adequate, supported, widely used, software package to modernize its maintenance program. This search needs to take place in conjunction with the district's MIS department.</p> <p>Step 3: The software is acquired, tested and implemented.</p> <p>Step 4: The MIS department monitors and assists in the implementation.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Step 8: Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; MIS department; Finance department.
Time Frame	Step 9: July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Step 10: Can be implemented within existing resources. Cost of software is relatively low, and can be covered by the existing budgetary process.

10 The district ensures that fuel purchases are cost-effective and that school buses and other vehicles are efficiently supplied with fuel.

The District Utilizes the Lake County Contract ("Piggy Backs") to Buy Fuel

The district currently purchases fuel under Lake County government's contract with an independent dealer. When asked why the district has not gone out for bids on its own, department staff responded that the district would not be able to get a better deal. It is the department staff's belief that the district has long "piggybacked" the county's fuel contract.

One alternative mentioned during interviews was for the district to outsource the fueling process. In that situation, a vendor would go to all the bus lots once a day with a tanker truck and fill buses needing fuel. This should be thoroughly examined and a cost/benefit analysis done to determine if it is worthwhile.

The Department Has an Adequate Number of Fueling Sites

The district's Transportation department currently has seven fueling stations strategically located throughout the county. Transportation department staff is currently satisfied with the number and location of the fueling sites. Currently, all fueling stations are manual.

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Each station has a fuel attendant who fuels each bus and records pump reading before and after each usage on a fuel tracking form. This form is forwarded daily to the Transportation department, where usage information is recorded in vehicle records. There is no indication that the fuel tracking forms are used for any other purpose than accounting. The use of this report should be expanded to exercise more control over fuel usage as a way to reduce the potential of unauthorized usage. The Transportation department submits monthly invoices to other district departments for their fuel usage.

In the past, the district had uses an automated fueling system. The health and safety department purchased and installed this system. According to Transportation department staff responsible for maintaining fueling records, problems with this system outweighed its benefits, and it is no longer used. A representative from an outside company is looking at the system to determine if it can be brought up to proper operating condition.

A major advantage of an automated fueling system is in controlling of fuel costs. The system flags vehicles with unusually high fuel charges, which may lead, after investigation, to a work order for maintenance or the discovery of unauthorized use.

The District Cooperates With Environmental Agencies

The district cooperates with governmental environmental agencies charged with conducting environmental inspections of fueling stations. The Transportation department is not responsible for such communications. This activity is handled by the Health and Safety department, which has been monitoring the replacement of fuel tanks on district property.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district Transportation department conduct a cost/benefit study to determine whether or not the district would benefit from outsourcing the fueling function, giving proper consideration to direct, indirect and supervisory staff costs, occupancy expenses, shifting of risks, and other associated costs and expenses.*

If the conclusion of the cost/benefit study is that outsourcing of the fueling function would be cost beneficial, we recommend that such a process be conducted through the request for proposal (RFP) process, in which price per gallon of fuel is indexed to wholesale cost, after rebates, and which would also require certain indirect benefits, such as prompt response to emergencies, locations where buses and other vehicles would be fueled, record keeping by vehicle, auditable records, adequate insurance, compliance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, and other business and legal requirements as deemed appropriate.

- *We recommend, depending on the outcome of the above cost/benefit study and if determination is made that the district would be better off financially not outsourcing the fueling function (after considering direct and supervisory staff reductions, occupancy, risk management and other costs), that the district continue efforts to get its existing automated fueling system working, or look into purchasing new system.*

Action Plan 12-8 provides the steps to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-8**Consideration to Outsourcing the Fueling Function**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct a cost benefit study to determine whether or not the district would benefit from outsourcing the fueling function, giving proper consideration to direct, indirect and supervisory staff costs, occupancy expenses, shifting of risks, and other associated costs and expenses. If outsourcing is the desired alternative, a request for proposals (RFP) is to be prepared; in addition to cost per gallon, appropriate attention needs to be given to parallel considerations, such as maintaining detailed and auditable records, prompt response to emergencies, and other matters required by the district.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services appoints a task force to prepare a detailed study of the costs associated with the fueling function. The task force should include the Transportation Supervisor, Finance Director, Risk Manager, and a representative of the purchasing department.</p> <p>Step 2: The task force determines direct and indirect costs associated with the fueling function. The Finance Director needs to apply an indirect cost factor (known as “burden rate”, or “indirect costs”) to the computation. For example, factors to be considered should include decrease (or increase) in risk management expense, occupancy, wear and tear of equipment, etc.</p> <p>Step 3: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services will determine whether the district should make an RFP for the fueling function. If the decision is to proceed, the Superintendent needs to approve and the school board concurrence obtained, if necessary.</p> <p>Step 4: The Purchasing department prepares the RFP, with assistance from the Transportation Manager, Risk Manager, and legal counsel, if required. A selection criteria needs to be established beforehand to ensure a fair review process.</p> <p>Step 5: Responses to the RFP are conceptually reviewed by the purchasing department for compliance with instructions, followed by a selection process independently made by each member of the task force based on the criteria previously established.</p> <p>Step 6: Once established, the process needs to be repeated every three years.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; Finance Director; purchasing department, Risk Manager; possibly legal counsel.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Undetermined, but could result in savings. Task force activities require no additional resources.

Continue Efforts to Restore Existing Automated Fueling System or Consider Purchasing New System

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	<p>The district needs to continue efforts at getting its existing automated fueling system working, or look into purchasing new system. According to Transportation department staff, problems associated with this system outweigh benefits, and it currently is not being used.</p> <p>A major advantage of a properly used, adequately supported, automated fueling system is an enhancement in the control of fuel costs. The system flags vehicles with unusually high fuel charges, which may lead, after investigation, to a work order for maintenance or the discovery of unauthorized use.</p> <p>This recommendation is dependent on the outcome of the above cost/benefit study and if determination is made that the district would be better off financially not outsourcing the fueling function (after considering direct and supervisory staff reductions, occupancy, risk management and other costs).</p>
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Obtain from the district staff that has indicated that a computerized system that tracks fuel consumption and provides ancillary information would be beneficial, but that the one that has been tried did not provide the desired results, the reasons why the one that was tried did not work. The ideal program would be one that incorporates detailed information on gallons and cost per visit to the fuel pump, by vehicle.</p> <p>Step 2: Using the knowledge obtained from Step 1 above, the Transportation department continues its search for an adequate, properly supported, widely used, software package to modernize its fueling operations. This search needs to take place with the assistance of the district's MIS department.</p> <p>Step 3: The software is acquired, tested, and implemented.</p> <p>Step 4: The information derived from the fueling software is used to monitor excess use by particular vehicle(s) and/or department(s). These are reported to the Transportation Supervisor for follow-up.</p> <p>Step 5: As the Transportation department submits monthly invoices to the operating departments, an inquiry is made as to vehicles with apparent high usage.</p> <p>Step 6: The affected department's head responds to the Transportation department as to his/her findings concerning high, or unusual, fuel usage.</p> <p>Step 7: The Transportation department issues repair orders, when necessary, to correct improper vehicle performance, or reports suspected unauthorized usage to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; MIS department; purchasing department; involvement by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be implemented with existing resources. Cost of software is not material, and can be included and covered by the existing budgetary process.

11 The district maintains facilities that are, overall, conveniently situated to provide sufficient and secure support for vehicle maintenance and other student transportation functions. However, the feasibility of adding a bus compound at the southern part of the county (where growth patterns have been the highest) should be considered, with the intent of saving costs and improving operating efficiency, after allowing for the additional capital and operating costs associated with the new facility.

The District Has an Adequate Number of Bus Compounds and Garages Centralized to Maximize Efficient Use of Resources; However, the District Needs to Assess the Net Cost Savings and Operating Efficiencies Created by Operating an Additional Bus Compound in the Southern Part of the County

The Transportation department's principal maintenance facility, located within a mile from the district's main office at the county seat, Tavares, includes a maintenance garage with nine bays and limited parking. There are two additional two-bay garages, one each in Leesburg and Groveland. There is also an outdoor concrete slab at the bus compounds where limited repairs can be performed. The Service Manager indicated that for all major repairs the buses are taken to the Tavares location.

Buses are stored at various locations. The bus fleet is evenly distributed geographically throughout the school district at these locations. Transportation department staff is satisfied with the existing system of compounding; however, the most growth is occurring at the southernmost part of the county. The district needs to evaluate the possibility of cost savings and enhancing operating efficiency by opening a compound in that geographic area. The major advantage of compounding buses for mechanics and maintenance staff is that between morning and afternoon runs, the buses are easily accessible at the compounds for inspections and other maintenance functions. While the current system of bus compounds meets the department's needs, the department has indicated in its five-year plan an additional lot is needed at the south end of the county near the new high school to accommodate future growth.

The department's parts office is based at the Tavares main garage. Other bus garage locations in the district keep a minimum amount of high volume parts on hand. Trips to the central garage are made to pick up various parts as needed for repair work. The number of facilities and compounds in the district are comparable to peer districts as illustrated in Exhibit 12-21. Exhibit 12-22 shows that the number of work bays to mechanics of Lake is comparable to its peers.

Exhibit 12-21

Number of Transportation Facilities in Lake Is Comparable to Its Peers

School District	Total Buses	Area in Square Miles	Bus Maintenance Facilities	Bus Compounds
Lake	252	954	3	6
Alachua	224	902	1	3
Charlotte	149	690	2	2
Okaloosa	229	936	3	4
Osceola	150	1350	2	13
St. Johns	137	617	2	10
Santa Rosa	252	1024	1	15
Peer Average	190	920	2	8

Source: *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles*, 2000, for 1998-99, Department of Education

Exhibit 12-22

Number of Work Bays to Mechanics Is Comparable to Peer Districts (in Descending Order)

School District	Total Number of Mechanics	Number of Work Bays	Ratio of Work Bays to Mechanics
Santa Rosa	15	8	.53
Alachua	14	11	.79
Okaloosa	13	12	.92
Lake	14	13	.93
St. Johns	8	8	1.0
Charlotte	6	6	1.0
Osceola	3	20	6.67
Peer Average	10	11	1.10

Source: *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles*, 2000, for 1998-99, Department of Education, peer district questionnaires, and ValienteHernandez P.A. Osceola currently constructing new facility with 20 bays.

Safety and Security Issues Are Monitored

Site visits to all garages were conducted. Shop layouts were typical for garage settings. The garages have covered bays for mechanics to work. As noted, mechanics are available at the bus compounds. The layout at those compounds consists of a concrete slab and storage shed. At two of the compounds, the slabs were not covered, exposing workers to the sun and weather conditions. On days when it rains, staff indicated that those workers go to one of the covered garages and perform any work that needs to be done there.

The maintenance staff also monitors safety issues related to transportation shop operations. Oil, antifreeze, and other fluids are captured in appropriate containers. A vendor retrieves and disposes of contaminated fluids. The Transportation department maintains a binder with procedures related to environmental compliance and clean-up procedures for spills. This binder is readily available to all employees.

Additional Storage Space Is Needed

Storage space at the Tavares garage is inadequate. The Tavares location has limited room for expansion. Currently, there is a portable building in the rear of the property serving as office space for the route managers. The Transportation department's five-year plan also indicates the need for an additional portable building for office space. It was noted that there was inadequate shelving, poor lighting, and that the parts rooms at the Tavares facility are cramped for space. An on-site shed is used as an additional storage area. Furthermore, at the Groveland ancillary facility, tires were being stored in a work bay that should be used for servicing of vehicles.

Review of Facilities Is Not Formalized

Department staff indicated that reviews are done of the transportation facilities; however, this is not formalized or conducted on a routine schedule. The department supervisor gave indications of being aware of his department's needs and is attempting to address them.

The district has included in its five-year facilities plan the addition of a portable building for additional office space at the Tavares location, and an additional bus lot in the south county. The supervisor acknowledges that the space at the Tavares location is cramped, and the building and electrical wiring are very old. However, there is no additional land available to expand operations. One potential way to address this problem would be to consolidate some vehicle maintenance services with the county government, which also maintains a vehicle repair facility in Tavares. Although there have been communications with Lake County government officials regarding consolidating maintenance services, this alternative is not currently being pursued. ValienteHernandez P.A. received information that the highest levels of administration and policy-makers at both the district and Lake County government are willing to explore this and other opportunities for joint efforts.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district carry out a feasibility study to assess possible net cost savings and improve operations effectiveness by adding a bus compound at the rapidly growing southern portion of the county.*
- *We recommend that a reorganization of the parts room be undertaken, including provisions for better shelving and lighting.*
- *We recommend that working conditions be improved at bus compounds. The district needs to acquire a tent or similar device to cover the concrete slabs and sheds to improve working conditions, especially during inclement weather, and for proper storage of materials and tools.*

Action Plan 12-9 provides the steps to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-9**Determination of Feasibility of Southern Region Bus Compound**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct a feasibility study into whether or not cost reductions and/or improved operating effectiveness result when a new bus compound is located at the southern part of the county, where the greatest population growth is occurring.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services authorizes the feasibility study, assigning responsibility to the Transportation Supervisor, Finance Director, a person from the planning staff, and the Service Manager, with input from the Risk Manager. Current operating costs including personnel, fuel, additional maintenance and bus depreciation need to be considered.</p> <p>Step 2: Suitable accessible and secure place(s) to locate the new compound is (are) identified. Consideration needs to be given to co-location with other facilities.</p> <p>Step 3: The Finance Director, or assignee, furnishes the related existing costs; the Risk Manager is consulted about any consideration to be given for reducing the accident risk by having the buses travel fewer miles.</p> <p>Step 4: A recommendation is made to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services about whether or not to proceed.</p> <p>Step 5: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services approves or rejects recommendation, seeking approval from the Superintendent. If agreement is reached, the proper budgetary process takes place.</p> <p>Step 6: Ultimate approval by the school board through the budgetary process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; a representative of the planning department; Finance Director; Service Manager; Risk Manager.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Cannot be determined until the feasibility study is completed. Carrying out of the feasibility study itself can be done with existing personnel.

Reorganization of the Parts Room

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Reorganization of the parts room is undertaken, including provisions for better shelving and lighting.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services authorizes an increase in the space provided for parts storage.</p> <p>Step 2: The Transportation Supervisor and the Service Manager, with a person from facilities department, find a suitable accessible and secure place to adapt for parts storage.</p> <p>Step 3: The Risk Manager is asked to provide guidance as to workers' safety and the security of the facility. Suggestions offered by risk management need to be incorporated into the physical layout of the new facility.</p> <p>Step 4: Move to the additional space takes place under the direction of the Service Manager. While this is being performed, a complete physical inventory of parts moved to the new facility is done and a new perpetual inventory system is implemented for the new facility.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; Finance Director; purchasing department, Risk Manager.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be accomplished with existing resources.

Improve Working Conditions at Bus Compounds

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Improved working conditions at bus compounds. The district needs to acquire a tent or similar device to cover the concrete slabs at the compounds that lack covers, as well as erecting sheds to improve working conditions, especially during inclement weather, and for proper storage of materials and tools
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Determine through a review of the transportation facilities what are the department's needs in order to provide improved working conditions</p> <p>Step 2: Using the knowledge obtained from Step 1, the Transportation Supervisor, the Maintenance Manager and a facilities department representative, with input from the risk management department, identify necessary improvements and determine how to achieve them.</p> <p>Step 3: If the decision is to acquire a tent or other portable device, attention should be made to flammability and durability.</p> <p>Step 4: Acquisition is made through normal requisition and purchasing channels.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; Risk Manager; purchasing department.
Time Frame	April 30, 2001
Fiscal Impact	Cost associated with the tents and sheds will be between \$7,500 and \$10,000, and can be met within existing budgetary constraints.

12 The district maintains an effective staffing level in the vehicle maintenance area and provides support for vehicle maintenance staff to develop their skills.

Vehicle Maintenance Staffing Comparable

The district's staffing, measured as to the total number of buses divided by the number of employees in the vehicle maintenance function, is at the lower end of the spectrum when compared to peer districts.

As shown on Exhibit 12-23 below, data from 1998-99 indicates that the district's maintenance workers serviced an average of 12 buses per worker. The lowest in the peer group was 11, the highest 22. In addition to buses, the district's personnel maintain all district-owned vehicles.

The Supervisor of Transportation has indicated a current shortage of mechanics, stating that during the last year, three mechanics were lost to higher paying jobs elsewhere. Due to vacancies, there currently are 10 mechanics on staff compared to 14 in 1998-99. However, based on the number of positions, the comparison below resembles current staffing.

Exhibit 12-23**Maintenance Staffing in 1998-99 Was Comparable With Peer Districts (in Ascending Order)**

School District	Total Buses	Mechanic Positions	Other Fleet Maintenance Positions	Buses Per Maintenance Employee
Okaloosa	229	13	7	11
Osceola	150	3	10	12
Lake	252	14	7	12
Charlotte	149	6	5	14
Santa Rosa	252	15	2	15
St. Johns	137	8	1	15
Alachua	224	4	6	22
Peer Average	190	8	5	15

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 2000, for 1998-99; DOE; and ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations

Incentive Plans Are Not Used

No formal incentive plan exists for mechanics. Maintenance workers are required to furnish their own hand tools. The district provides an annual \$300 allotment for these tools. As noted below, mechanics that are Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified in more than one area receive one pay class increase.

Vehicle Maintenance Staff Receive Training

The district requires all mechanics to have their diesel certification from ASE. As mentioned, mechanics with more than one certification are paid one pay class more than those who do not. The district does not pay for mechanics to receive ASE certification.

The district encourages all maintenance staff to improve current skills and become familiar with emerging technology and techniques. The department usually sends two mechanics to the vehicle maintenance “summer camp” sessions organized by DOE. Staff also attends workshops organized by various companies such as bus manufacturers International, Thomas, and Blue Bird. Participation is rotated among the mechanics. In addition, the district has on-site in-service training programs where vendors come and provide updates on their products.

13 The district maintains an inventory of parts, supplies, and equipment needed to support student transportation functions that balances the concerns of immediate need and inventory costs.

Parts Inventory Is Adequate and Secure

Student transportation staff has implemented an inventory system to ensure the security and the adequacy of their stocking levels. The district attempts to maintain a “just in time” inventory of all parts and supplies needed not only to save costs, but this is also necessary due to lack of storage space.

Student Transportation

The parts room at all three facilities have controlled access to help keep inventory secure, and the Parts Manager regularly monitors parts room operations and inventory records at all three locations. The districts fleet maintenance software includes information on parts room inventory. All parts are entered into a database. When parts are released for use, they are checked out and tracked through the system and recorded on the vehicle work order. Monthly reports are generated detailing inventory on hand.

The district made an attempt to improve the parts and supplies inventory control by installing a new fleet maintenance system that included bar code reading of inventory parts. However, due to the software's networking incapability, the district was not able to use the fleet maintenance system.

The district has forms and procedures in place to report the monthly fuel inventory and a schedule of fuel purchases. The amount of fuel dispensed is recorded daily on a log by fuel attendants, and then forwarded to a service clerk for recording and billing usage.

The Department Uses Purchasing Pool

The department participates in the State of Florida Department of Education's School Bus Transportation Bus Purchase Program. This pooled purchase of buses allows the district to obtain a lower price than it would attempt to negotiate bus prices with vendors on its own. The district also purchases its two-way radios and tires under the state contract.

The department also "piggybacks" other purchases from contracts (through the bidding process) entered into by other districts and the county government for items such as oil filters and support vehicles.

District Utilizes Competitive Bids for Some Parts

The district requires three price quotes for expenditures greater than \$6,000. The district solicits competitive bids for purchases over \$10,000. The district staff conducts an annual competitive bid for some high usage parts and supplies, such as brake shoes, brake linings, and brake drums.

Student transportation staff coordinates this process with staff from the purchasing office to solicit bids from any interested and qualified vendors. When the bid has been awarded, the Parts Manager maintains a bid book that identifies all sources of supply that have been accepted through the bid process. The district has the option to extend the contract for another year or solicit new bids from vendors.

The district has not solicited bids for other high usage parts, such as wiper blades. In many instances, the district has open purchase orders with vendors, such as NAPA Parts. If parts were purchased through a bidding process, discounts are taken in consideration as part of the negotiated prices. Informal quotations are solicited sporadically; when this happens, the prices being quoted include any discounts offered by the particular vendor.

The district does not solicit bids on all services supplied by outside vendors. Examples of these are towing services and tire disposal. The process to acquire these services is done informally by calling up vendors and determining who offers the best deal.

As noted above, if services were acquired through a bidding process, negotiated discounts and pricing are made as part of the process prior to signing an agreement with the selected vendor.

Items Are Reviewed for Price and Performance, But Warranty Tracking and Recovery Could Be Improved

Vehicle maintenance staff evaluates purchased items for compliance with bid price, specifications and vendor performance. The Parts Manager reviews all orders received to ensure that the correct parts were delivered and that the bid price agrees to the price on the invoice. When vehicles are sent to private vendors for repair, the work is inspected when the vehicle is returned.

Making warranty claims is one way to hold vendors accountable for satisfactory performance. However, information on which parts and vehicles are under warranty is not maintained in the fleet maintenance system. This limits efficient access to this information and reduces the likelihood that all appropriate warranty claims are made. Better tracking of vehicle and part warranties in the district should be possible in the near future with the purchase and implementation of the new fleet maintenance software.

The Maintenance Supervisor has indicated that his department attempts to have all appropriate warranty work performed. However, instances exist where it was deemed to be more financially feasible to do the repairs on site than by a vendor. Warranty work for all of the districts International buses must be done at an “authorized dealer,” the nearest of which is in Ocala.

Taking the buses to Ocala requires two mechanics, one to drive the bus and the other to follow to take driver back. During this time, both mechanics are unavailable. The Service Manager believes that International could set up the district as a warranty center so the district personnel could do their own work and recoup the warranty costs.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district Transportation and Purchasing departments implement procedures to strengthen the purchasing function by soliciting bids, where quantities purchased warrant it, for items and services not currently purchased through competitive bids.*

Further, we recommend that, in addition to the above recommendation, the district continue to “piggyback” other districts and counties bids. As part of this process, the district needs to evaluate whether it would be better off by issuing their own request for proposals.

- *We recommend that the district pursue recouping warranty costs by contacting International and discussing the possibility of becoming a service center*

Action Plan 12-10 provides the steps to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-10

Strengthen Parts Purchasing Function and Continue “Piggy Backing”

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implement procedures to strengthen the purchasing function by soliciting bids, where quantities purchased warrant it. For items and services not currently purchased through competitive bids, the district should continue to “piggyback” other districts and counties bids. The district should evaluate whether it would be better off by issuing its own request for proposals.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Purchasing and Transportation departments agree as to which parts, supplies and services are purchased in enough quantities to merit having a separate bidding process from the current “piggy backing” of other governmental units’ prices.</p> <p>Step 2: For those parts and supplies found to be candidates for separate bidding (after Step 1 above), the Purchasing department, working with the Service Manager and warehouse personnel, determines how to procure these through a sealed bidding process.</p> <p>Step 3: For services found to be appropriate to solicit prices, the Purchasing department working with the Service Manager, decide whether to use sealed bidding or a request for quotation process. When procuring services, the risk management department should be consulted about any insurance coverage that may be required from prospective vendors.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; Purchasing department, Risk Manager.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Undetermined, but should produce cost savings. Can be accomplished with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Recouping warranty costs by contacting International and discussing the possibility of becoming a service center
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services authorizes the Transportation Supervisor, or his designee, to commence or continue the process to become an authorized service center for International buses.</p> <p>Step 2: The Transportation Supervisor, or his designee, obtains the necessary documentation from International and commence the process. Other departments, such as fiscal, that may be better suited to provide the information required by the manufacturer, should provide assistance.</p> <p>Step 3: The Risk Manager, Finance Director, and others within the organization may need to provide input in order to obtain approval by the manufacturer.</p> <p>Step 4: After approval is obtained to become an authorized service center (where warranty work done is reimbursed by the manufacturer), a system needs to be implemented to recoup the contractually authorized costs and billing these to the manufacturer.</p>

	Step 5: The district needs to maintain adequate records for an agreed period of time in order for a manufacturer's representative to inspect replaced parts, amount of time allocated to the repair and other support typically required by a manufacturer to reimburse a dealer or service provider for warranty work.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; Finance Director; Risk Manager.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources. Potential savings in time not spent in bring the International buses to Ocala for warranty work.

Appropriate and Cost Effective Transportation

Goal C: The district provides managerial oversight to ensure that all student transportation functions run smoothly and are fully accountable to the public.

14

The district does not provide appropriate technological and computer support for student transportation functions and operations.

Management Information System Is Weak

The Transportation department does not have a computerized management information system that is used to produce reliable and timely budgeting and expenditure information on student transportation, as well as basic performance data.

The only cost analysis data available is reports from Total Education Reports Management System, "TERMS," the district wide financial and accounting software. All costs for the Transportation department are reported under a separate cost center. The Transportation budget includes student transportation costs for several cost categories: employee salary and benefits; insurance; travel; repairs and maintenance; fuel; tires; buses; etc.

Staff in the Transportation department communicated that the reports of actual costs vs. budget information available to them is not useful. In most instances, these reports are received a month behind, cannot be reconciled, and individual line items often vary significantly month to month. In addition, the Transportation department is unable to determine whether appropriate credits are being made to the student transportation account.

Student transportation staff generates inter-departmental billings every month, which represent reimbursable costs for the student transportation budget. These charges are typically for vehicle maintenance and fuel expenses. There is no oversight to ensure that these monthly billings are being credited to the proper accounts.

Recording and Tracking Staff Data Not Computerized

The district does not maintain computerized database that would enable it to record and track information related to transportation staff. Most information related to training and certifications and personnel performance is manually recorded or maintained on spreadsheets. The department maintains a personnel file on each employee, which has sections for certifications, Florida Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) reports, required medical physicals, and annual evaluations.

Review of Technological and Computer Needs Not Formalized

The Transportation department does not have a formal technology plan. The department has identified the need for a new telephone system in its five-year plan. The supervisor is in the research stage of evaluating a computerized routing system and new fleet maintenance software.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the Transportation department be consistently and timely provided with monthly financial information, comparing actual vs budgeted figures. The Transportation Supervisor needs to review these reports and ensure that all proper credits due to the department are being recorded.*
- We recommend that the Transportation department develop a technology plan that includes budget reporting, parts and fueling reporting and routing data. This plan needs to be reviewed, updated and revised annually*

Action Plan 12-11 provides the steps to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-11

Monthly Departmental Financial Information

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Financial information timely and consistently provided to the Transportation department, comparing actual vs budget.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services directs the Finance Director to provide monthly, timely and consistent financial information to the Transportation department.</p> <p>Step 2: The Finance Director assigns a subordinate to complete the task.</p> <p>Step 3: The Transportation Supervisor, or a subordinate, reviews the monthly report being provided by the fiscal area. Reconciliation needs to be made by the Transportation department of credits being given to it for "billings" to other departments and from other sources with internally maintained records.</p> <p>Step 4: Once established, the process needs to be repeated each month.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; Fiscal Director.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002

Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.
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Update Technology Plan

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop a formal technology plan that includes budget reporting, parts and fueling reporting and routing data. This plan needs to be reviewed, updated, and revised annually
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Transportation and MIS department jointly develop a technology plan that includes elements that will make it compatible with other systems already, or known to be soon, implemented by the district. Among those already identified by the department as updated technology are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need for a new telephone system, • a computerized routing system, and • a new fleet maintenance software. <p>Step 2: The plan for new software needs to include provisions for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budget reporting, • parts acquisition, • fueling reporting, and • routing data. <p>Step 3: The plan including hardware and software requirements is drawn, under the principal direction of the MIS department, with full concurrence from the Transportation department.</p> <p>Step 4: The plan is submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services for this person's review, modification, and approval. At this level, the plan is documented for its fiscal implications.</p> <p>Step 5: Approval by the Superintendent and inclusion in the budgetary process.</p> <p>Step 6: Annually, the plan is updated and modifications and revisions are made.</p>
Who Is Responsible	MIS department; Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; Purchasing department; involvement by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	Can be implemented with existing resources. Cost of software is not material and can be included and covered by the existing budgetary process.

15

The district regularly tracks and makes public reports on its performance in comparison with established benchmarks. The district, however, has not established an accountability system for student transportation.

Goals and Measurable Objectives Not Formalized

The district has not clearly stated its goals and measurable outcome-oriented objectives for the student transportation program. The Transportation department is aware of its roles and responsibilities; however, formalized goals and objectives have not been developed.

The District Has Identified a Group of Peers

Student transportation staff makes informal comparisons of their performance and operational characteristics with those of other districts that the staff considers similar to the district.

DOE annually compiles uniform information on all districts and issues a report called: *Quality Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles* (generally referred to as *Q-Link*) makes comparison and rankings of districts possible. *Q-Link* provides many vital statistics about the districts, including, but not limited to: the number of students, number of student transported, number of transportation staff, size of school bus fleet, and annual expenditures. It also provides useful background information on factors that influence student transportation (such as number of special schools, or whether court-ordered desegregations orders are in effect). For many of the information fields, *Q-Link* also provides ranking information, making it particularly useful for comparison.

Student transportation staff have identified seven peer school districts for comparisons with Lake County: Alachua, Bay, Clay, Collier, Manatee, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa. Staff selected these districts primarily because of number of students transported, number of buses and fleet, and total expenditures were similar to those in the district. Transportation department staff compares, on an informal basis, the district to its selected peers on data reported in the *Q-Link*, such as occupancy rate, funding levels, expenditures per mile, etc.

Benchmarks Not Established

Benchmarks are expectations of how well an activity or function, such as student transportation, should perform. When a public entity tracks its actual performance over time against a benchmark, it can use this information to monitor performance, improve program operations, and to provide accountability to the public. The district has not adopted any cost comparison or other performance benchmarks for student transportation.

One of the results of omitting such an important element of managerial responsibility is that key information on performance and costs are not monitored consistently over time. This condition limits the staff's ability to provide decision-makers, such as the elected Superintendent and members of the school board, with objective information on the performance and cost-efficiency of the Transportation program.

The absence of benchmarks to evaluate program performance and cost is a district wide issue that is not limited to the student transportation area. Reporting on performance indicators should be an annual

exercise and presented to the school board in a “report card” format. Doing so would provide the school board detail on how well the department is performing in comparison with the established benchmarks.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that student transportation staff, in consultation with the Superintendent and approved by the members of the school board, develop a list of performance indicators that would provide that would provide management, members of the school board and general public with a broad, “big picture” understanding of student transportation performance for the year.*

We further recommend that for each performance indicator, a performance target should be identified against which actual performance will be compared. Periodic reporting on these performance indicators is required, at least annually, and presented by the Superintendent to the school board in a “report card” format that would identify each performance indicator, briefly describe its significance, identify both the performance target and the actual performance, and include additional comparisons and comments as appropriate.

Action Plan 12-12 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-12

Develop Performance Indicators, Benchmarks, and a “Report Card” Style Annual Report for the School Board

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a list of performance indicators that would be useful to the school board and general public to provide accountability for student transportation performance. Each performance indicator should be associated with a performance target to evaluate performance, and a “report card” style annual report should be made to the school board.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Review benchmarks that are appropriate, feasible, and useful for both student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance. Selected benchmarks should support the district strategic plan. Staff should consider the list of performance measures for student transportation operations shown below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per mile for school bus operations • Failure to comply with pick-up or delivery schedules within prescribed time ranges (late arrivals), measured as incidents per month • Customer service evaluation rating as good, as measured by routine customer service surveys of principals and parents • Number and percentage of students who have scheduled bus ride times that exceed the district’s standards • Number of all accidents, measured as incidents per 100,000 miles • Parent complaints, measured by number of phone calls and categorized by type of complaint (on-time, discipline, safety)

	concerns, vehicle maintenance, driver performance, etc.)
Step 2:	For vehicle maintenance staff should consider the performance measures shown below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Down time of buses, measured as days out of service • Number of breakdowns per 100,000 miles • Maintenance cost for each vehicle, measured against average for all comparable vehicles • Turnaround time for scheduled and corrective maintenance by type of vehicle • Vehicle maintenance hours as a percentage of total hours charged • Vehicle to mechanics ratio • Average maintenance cost per mile by type of school bus • Safety inspections, measured as a percentage of all repair work time. Other performance indicators may be selected based on local interest and data availability.
Step 3:	For all performance measures that are selected, devise a reporting mechanism and frequency appropriate for that particular measure.
Step 4:	Collect information on actual performance and report on it at selected intervals.
Step 5:	Establish performance standards for future school years.
Who Is Responsible	Student Transportation supervisor and service manager, in consultation with Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002: Identify which benchmarks are appropriate and feasible, and establish the mechanism for measuring them. June 30, 2002: Begin collecting performance information for the 2001-02 school year for each of the established benchmarks. June 30, 2002: Present school board with first annual report on student transportation performance.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

16

The district does not coordinate long-term planning and budgeting for student transportation within the context of district and community planning.

Assessment of Student Transportation Needs Not Systematic

As all district departments, the Transportation department prepares a five-year plan, which indicates their projected needs during that time period. According to its supervisor, the department attempts to include these identified needs into forthcoming years' budgets. However, when developing its budget, the department generally uses the prior year's actual and increases it by approximately 10%. There is little or no reliable, documented, systematic assessment on the department's needs, whereby proper planning, prioritization of needs can take place.

Department Has No Involvement in District Growth Strategies

According to transportation staff, the district's planning staff does not consult with them as they plan for future schools. The department's needs, concerns, opinion, and costs are not considered.

Transporting students to and from school is a major activity and significant expense to the district. When planning for school locations and similar considerations, the opinions of the transportation management need to be considered. For example, a school located in a rural area may be more cost-effective to build due to lower land costs; however, these cost savings may be quickly overcome by high transportation costs.

Until recently, the district has had little communication with county planners in regards to identifying areas of growth and development. Within the past several years, development in the south county has boomed. The district has had to respond to this growth instead of planning for it. This is particularly true in the area of student transportation. The growth caused the need for additional buses, drivers and facilities.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish and assist the Transportation department in the conceptualization, drafting and implementation of its portion of the district-wide five-year plan. Follow-up with attainable objectives and document in the district's budgets during the years covered by the plan.*
- *We recommend that the district ensure that the Transportation department is actively involved in planning for new school locations and design (prior to construction), as well as other actions the district takes to deal with significant changes in enrollment. The department needs to use the information it gathers from this process in its analysis of student transportation costs.*

Action plan 12-13 provides steps necessary to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-13**Five-Year Plan Development and Implementation**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conceptualize a five-year plan, with obtainable objectives, documented, and incorporated into the district budgets during the period being planned.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns to the Finance Director the responsibility of assigning a competent employee to assist the Transportation department in developing an obtainable, documented operating plan, spread into a five-year time period.</p> <p>Step 2: The Transportation department develops, with assistance provided a draft of objectives to be attained, how to achieve them, resources needed to do so, and projects these into a five-year plan that is attainable and used a road map during the near future.</p> <p>Step 3: The components of the five-year plan are incorporated into the district's annual budget.</p> <p>Step 4: Periodic comparisons between actual results and budgeted amounts are analyzed; annually, the department's five-year plan is updated, revised, and approved.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Finance Director; Transportation Supervisor; subordinate personnel; and those involved in district planning
Time Frame	Implement during school year 2001-02; use this period as a learning period and implement for the Fiscal Year 2002-03.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Involvement in District Planning

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Involve Transportation department management in the planning of new school locations and construction and other actions the district takes to deal with enrollment changes.
Action Needed	Include department management in school planning so they can provide input from a transportation point of view and be able to take planning assumptions into account in planning for future transportation needs.
Who Is Responsible	The Transportation Supervisor and those involved in district planning
Time Frame	Beginning in the 2001-02 school year and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

17 **The district's ability to monitor the fiscal condition of student transportation functions by regularly analyzing expenditures and reviewing them against the budget is restricted to the accuracy and timeliness of the reports produced by the Finance department.**

Historically the Review of Budget and Costs Was Hindered by Weak Budget Data

According to Transportation staff, in past years reports received from the finance department were outdated and could not be reconciled, and data received from the finance department varied unexpectedly from month to month. As a result, the Transportation department did not have reliable information to conduct analyses of its costs or to make reliable projections of future costs. Many of these reporting and data problems resulted from the outdated version of TERMS, the districtwide financial and accounting software, being used. According to finance and transportation staff, the district's recent acquisition of an updated version of TERMS should address these issues. Transportation staff is scheduled to receive training on the new TERMS in September 2001.

The Transportation Department Reviews Vehicle Maintenance Costs

Transportation staff maintains records of all maintenance and repairs conducted on all vehicles. The Service Manager and Head Mechanic review these records. As noted earlier, the department is currently in the process of searching for a new fleet maintenance system that incorporates inventory control and scheduling of preventative maintenance.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that, once the new TERMS system is in place and staff have been adequately trained, the Transportation department effectively track and evaluate its costs and make routine periodic (i.e., monthly) comparative analysis to budgeted amounts. This formal process of analytical review is only possible when reliance can be placed on historical financial records provided by the finance department.*

After the new TERMS system is in place and staff has been adequately trained, we recommend that a system of commonly accepted benchmarks be developed and established with the approval of the Superintendent and the school board. Periodic evaluations (i.e., quarterly) should be made, with corrective actions suggested as the reports are submitted to the district's management and the school board. Action Plan 12-16 Recommendation 2 provides the steps necessary to carry out this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-14 provides steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-14**Proper, Periodic Tracking and Evaluation of Costs**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Effectively track and evaluate departmental costs and make routine periodic analyses between actual and budgeted amounts.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Finance department provides monthly financial information to the Transportation department showing actual results compared to budgeted amounts.</p> <p>Step 2: The Transportation department uses the monthly financial information being provided to analyze its results of operations, compare these to budgeted amounts and determines alternate course(s) of action to remedy any discrepancies.</p> <p>Step 3: The Transportation Supervisor provides the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services his/her recommendations based on the information derived from analytical review, inquiries and corrective action taken.</p> <p>Step 4: Suggested amendments to the current year's budget may be suggested for material discrepancies. Corrections in courses of actions may be necessary.</p> <p>Step 5: Similar suggestions may be made for periods extending past the current fiscal year. This would necessitate a revision to the five-year plan.</p> <p>Step 6: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services brings those recommendations he/she has approved to the Superintendent for comments, changes and corrective action, if needed.</p> <p>Step 7: Bring to the school board any corrective action that may require its approval, such as a change in the five-year plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Finance Director, subordinate personnel; Transportation Supervisor, subordinate personnel. Superintendent and school board for consent and approval.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

18 **The district provides regular, accurate, and timely counts to the Florida Department of Education of the number of students transported as part of the Florida Education Finance Program.**

FTE Reporting Is Performed

Full time equivalent (FTE) counts of students transported are conducted twice during the school year, in October and February.

Several weeks prior to the counts, instructions and forms are sent to all bus drivers, monitors and their substitutes. After the counts, drivers turn their paperwork into their route managers who review the

counts for accuracy and he/she tallies the counts. The Supervisor of Transportation also reviews the counts for reasonableness. Although FTE counts are conducted as required, there is no indication that the counts are used to identify trends or other issues and is used for budgetary or managerial response.

Recommendation

- Although FTE counts are being conducted and reported in a timely manner, we recommend that the Transportation department compare the FTE with other indicators to guard against over or under reporting. Ways of comparing would be to occasionally count students when supervisors ride with drivers, and/or using the bus rider lists that will be generated through the new computerized routing system to help drivers count students.

Action plan 12-15 provides steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-15

Compare FTE Counts With Other Indicators

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Compare FTE with other indicators to guard against over or under reporting of students being transported. Occasionally counting students when supervisors ride with drivers, and using the bus rider lists that will be generated by the new computerized routing system to help drivers better count students each day during FTE survey periods.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Implement a system to periodically count students riding buses on a particular date.</p> <p>Step 2: Compare the count to the FTE in effect at the time. Reconcile major discrepancies, after allowing for absences.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Transportation; principals, or subordinates.
Time Frame	Implemented by March 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

19 The district has reviewed the prospect for privatizing student transportation functions, as a whole or in part.

Some Vehicle Maintenance Services Are Contracted to Outside Vendors

Transportation department staff, informally, compares their own costs with those of private vendors to identify maintenance activities that can be performed at a lower cost elsewhere. However, no formal and routine analysis is conducted.

The Service Manager indicated that he knows which services can be done at a lesser cost if outsourced. The district has concluded that certain repair and maintenance jobs, including transmission work and re-boring pistons, are more cost-effective conducted through local vendors than performed in-house. In

Student Transportation

most instances, the Transportation department does not have the facilities, equipment or know-how to perform those services. In addition, the district outsources towing service.

Although, informally, transportation managers assert that they know which services are more cost-effective, no written cost comparison or savings estimates exist. In addition, not all services are coordinated with Purchasing department through a formal bidding process. Approximately four years ago the district was approach by private vendors, Laidlaw, Inc. and Ryder, for privatization of transportation services. According to transportation staff, privatization was not deemed to be cost-effective and no study has been performed since.

A full cost analysis of the maintenance function, including, but not limited to, all direct, supervisory labor costs; indirect costs (occupancy expenses; worker's compensation claims and other risk management costs); safety compliance and security adequacy; and, the quality of the work performed (as measured by the number of re-works and repeated requests from bus drivers for similar repairs for the same bus) has not been done.

Such full-cost analysis, as mentioned above, would provide the district with information to decide whether or not to outsource the maintenance function, partially or completely. The district needs to consider one or both of the two alternatives that follow.

- Continue talks with the Lake County government officials to evaluate whether consolidation of maintenance facilities is feasible and whether it would be financially worthwhile.
- Prepare a request for proposals (RFP) to outsource its maintenance functions. The RFP should include provisions for stipulated and verifiable quality of work; maximum charges for types predictable or recurring maintenance; for non-predictable repairs, all inclusive hourly rates for each level or classification of workers; proof of adequate insurance for workers compensation and general liability; specific mark-up for parts and supplies; auditable system for time and costs ingredients; other matters that become evident as a result of the full-cost analysis

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district carry out a full-cost analysis of the maintenance function. This analysis should include, but not limited to, all direct, indirect and supervisory labor costs; occupancy expenses; worker's compensation claims and other risk management costs; safety compliance and security adequacy; and, the quality of the work performed, as measured by the number of re-works and repeated requests from bus drivers for similar repairs for the same bus. After the full-cost analysis mentioned above takes place, that the district consider one or both of the two alternatives that follow.*
 - *Continue talks with the Lake County government officials to evaluate whether consolidation of maintenance facilities is feasible and whether it would be financially worthwhile.*
 - *Prepare a request for proposals (RFP) to outsource its maintenance functions. The RFP should include provisions for stipulated and verifiable quality of work; maximum charges for types predictable or recurring maintenance; for non-predictable repairs, all inclusive hourly rates for each level or classification of workers; proof of adequate insurance for workers compensation and general liability; specific mark-up for parts and supplies;*

auditable system for time and costs ingredients; other matters that become evident as a result of the full-cost analysis

- *Further, we recommend, after a related full-cost analysis is conducted the district conduct a “do or buy” analysis of all, or of selected, maintenance services to determine which of these can outsourced in order to become more cost-effective. Caution should be made as to compare “pears with pears,” including the quality of the work and the reliability of any and all vendor-respondents.*
- *In addition, for those services deemed to be more cost-effective when outsourced, we recommend that the department, in conjunction with the purchasing function, solicit through a request for proposal (RFP) format competitive proposals, in which price is an important but not the exclusive criterion*
- *We recommend that, even if the district chooses to continue providing some or all services in house, a system be developed creating an ongoing cost comparison in order to provide valuable information on how effective and cost-efficient student transportation services are compared to private vendors.*

Action Plan 12-16 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 12-16

Full Cost Analysis of the Maintenance Function

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Carry out a full-cost analysis of the maintenance function. This analysis should include, but not limited to, all direct, indirect and supervisory labor costs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services appoints a task force, which includes the Transportation Supervisor, his designees, the Finance Director, with assistance from members of his staff, and with input of the Risk Manager to complete a full-cost analysis of the maintenance function. The Finance Director should lead the task force.</p> <p>Step 2: This analysis should include, but not be limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct labor cost, including benefits (taxes, compensated absences, etc.); • supervisory labor, including benefits (same as above); and • indirect costs, such as indirect labor, occupancy expenses; worker’s compensation claims and other risk management costs; safety compliance and security adequacy; and, the quality of the work performed, as measured by the number of re-works and repeated requests from bus drivers for similar repairs for the same bus. <p>Step 3: Using the knowledge obtained from Step 2 above, the Finance Director, and/or his subordinates, prepare an analysis (utilizing a common template software, such as Excel) with all costs associated with the maintenance function. Preliminary results are to be submitted to all members of the “task force” seeking their input; suggested changes agreed by the Finance Director are made.</p> <p>Step 4: The results are submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services. After approval, it is submitted to the</p>

	Superintendent.
Step 5:	The Superintendent determines whether or not to proceed with a talks with Lake County government officials to further evaluate consolidation of maintenance facilities, and whether it be financially worthwhile.
Step 6:	The Superintendent makes a decision whether a request for proposal (RFP) is to be prepared. If she/he decides to take this alternative, the school board should approve the process. An evaluation criteria needs to be decided in advance to ensure a fair process.
Step 7:	The RFP should include, but not limited to, provisions for <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stipulated and verifiable quality of work;• maximum charges for types predictable or recurring maintenance;• charges for non-predictable repairs,• all inclusive hourly rates for each level or classification of workers;• proof of adequate insurance for workers compensation and general liability;• specific mark-up for parts and supplies;• auditable system for time and costs ingredients;• references; safety record of existing premises;• compliance with federal, state laws and regulations, and district rules.
Step 7:	The RFPs are evaluated. The district decides whether or not to outsource the maintenance function, in full or partly, based on the information derived from this process.
Step 8:	For those services deemed to be more cost-effective when outsourced, the department, in conjunction with the purchasing function, solicit through a request for proposal (RFP) format competitive proposals, in which price is an important but not the exclusive criterion
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Finance Director; Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; Risk Manager, purchasing department.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources. Savings possible, but not determined.

Departmental Comparison to Private Sector

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	A system is to be developed creating an ongoing cost comparison of the district's student transportation services to private vendors, in order to provide valuable information on the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the department.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns the responsibility to maintain an on-going comparison of the district's transportation services with private sector vendors to the Finance Director, and through him, to subordinates.</p> <p>Step 2: The Finance Director, or a subordinate, prepares a worksheet using an electronic template, similar to <i>Excel</i>, where transportation costs are summarized in a non-detailed, but meaningful, categories, such as obtained in the analysis of transportation costs, and uses this spreadsheet to periodically call local vendors to compare prices.</p> <p>Step 3: The calling can be delegated to a subordinate in the fiscal department or to a responsible person in the purchasing area</p> <p>Step 4: Periodically, such as semi-annually, the fiscal department reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services of the results of the analysis.</p> <p>Step 5: Annually, the fiscal department, in conjunction with the Transportation department, updates the cost data. This may be accomplished during the update of the five-year plan and the annual budgetary process of the Transportation department.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent, Finance Director and Supervisor of Transportation.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

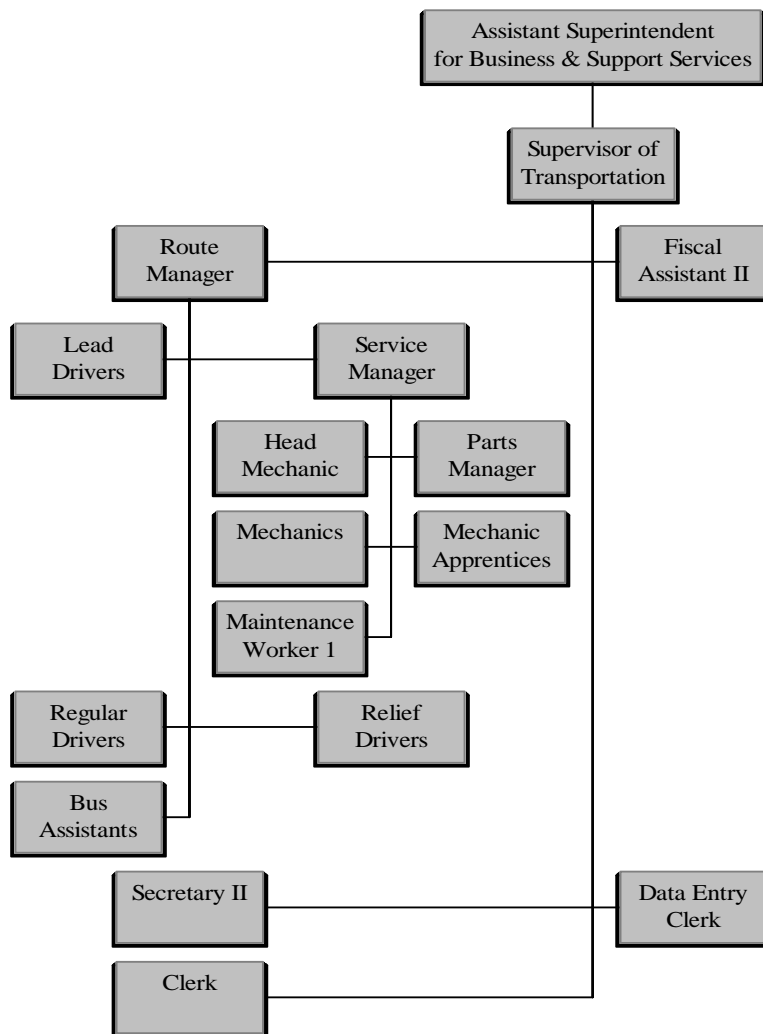
20 The district does not periodically review the organizational structure and staffing levels of the student transportation program to minimize administrative layers and processes.

The Organizational Structure of Department Not Checked Periodically

The district does not perform a formalized review of the Transportation department's organizational structure and staffing levels. The supervisor of transportation has indicated that he does compare the district's staffing levels with its peer districts using the *Q-Link* report prepared by the DOE. However, it is not considered that the *Q-Link* data is always several years behind and it does not provide enough detail to enable a proper assessment of staffing levels and organizational structure.

Exhibit 12-24

Organizational Chart of Transportation Services



Source: Lake County School District (obtained from administrators at district headquarters).

Recommendation

- *We recommend that a written review of the Transportation department be conducted annually. This review needs to include comparisons of the district's staffing levels to selected peer districts and with established benchmarks. The results of the review and any findings thereof, is to be reported to the school board.*

Action plan 12-17 provides steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-17**Review of the Department's Organizational Structure**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct an annual review of the student transportation program's organizational structure and staffing level to minimize administrative layers and process.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Update organizational chart to include all positions and lines of authority. Also review and update job descriptions.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish criteria and benchmarks to base review on.</p> <p>Step 3: Conduct annual review of department.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The supervisor of transportation and assistant superintendent for business and support services.
Time Frame	<p>Summer 2001: Update organizational chart and job descriptions. Identify which benchmarks and criteria review will be based on.</p> <p>Spring 2002: Perform review of department based on established benchmarks and comparisons with peer districts.</p> <p>Summer 2002: Present school board with any findings.</p>
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

13

Food Service Operations

In the last three years, the Lake County School District Food Service Program has reverted back to being self-operated and through overall good management the department morale is high.

Conclusion

Overall, program leaders manage the Food Service Program well, but could do better if performance measures are adopted and integrated into the management process. Management has begun computerizing meal counts and expenses. This will improve accountability and financial reporting. Central and school staff have developed and follow comprehensive purchasing, inventory control, and storage procedures. Program management should consider other opportunities to ensure self-sufficiency of the program, such as breakfast in the secondary schools and other nutritional programs.

The district's Food Service Program has had several accomplishments during the last two years as illustrated in Exhibit 13-1.

Exhibit 13-1

The District Has Had Some Notable Accomplishments in Food Services in the Past Two Years

In the past two years the district has

- opened six new schools with cafeterias;
 - opened two new cafeterias in existing schools;
 - automated meal accountability in the majority of its cafeterias; and
 - implemented a recycling program.
-

Source: Lake County School District.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Efficient and Effective Operation

- The Food Service Program has a complete set of operating policies and procedures in place and is in the process of developing a mission statement with input from food service staff. The program, however, needs to establish a long-term plan that clearly reflect the intent of the program. (Page 13-8)

- In order to enhance the efficiency of the food service operation, the district should regularly review the organizational structure of the program and adjust the staffing needs in a more systematic manner. (Page 13-10)
- The district uses a comprehensive food service training program to increase productivity, improve employee performance, and enhance the Food Service Program; however, training-related documentation could be improved. (Page 13-12)
- The district needs to develop a system to identify barriers to student participation in the school meals program and implement strategies to eliminate these barriers. (Page 13-14)
- The district has not established cost-efficiency benchmarks based on comparable public sector Food Service Programs. (Page 13-17)
- While the district evaluates individual cafeterias, there is not a process in place to regularly evaluate the school Food Service Program based on established benchmarks. (Page 13-18)
- The district does not regularly assess the benefits of service delivery alternatives, such as contracting and privatization, and changes have not been implemented to improve efficiency and effectiveness. (Page 13-20)

Financial Accountability and Viability

- While the program's budget is based on revenue and expenditure projections, it should also be linked to departmental goals. (Page 13-23)
- The district's financial control process includes an ongoing review of the program's financial and management practices. (Page 13-25)
- The district accounts for and reports meals served by category. (Page 13-26)
- The district regularly evaluates purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase efficiency. (Page 13-27)
- The district has developed an effective inventory control system that is appropriate to the size of the school Food Service Program. (Page 13-27)
- The district has a system for receiving, storing, and disposing of food, supplies, and equipment. (Page 13-27)
- The district does not have a long-range plan for the replacement of equipment and facilities that includes preventative maintenance practices. (Page 13-28)

Meal Preparation and Service

- The district provides school meals designed to meet the nutritional needs of students. (Page 13-29)
- The district's food production and transport systems ensure the service of quality food with minimal waste. (Page 13-30)

Safe and Sanitary Food Service Environment

- The district follows safety and environmental health practices and regulations. (Page 13-30)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

As illustrated in Exhibit 13-2, the district could realize an increase in net income of approximately \$339,000 over the next five years by implementing a breakfast program in its middle and high schools with an initial 20% and 10% participation for middle and high schools, respectively (Page 13-19).

Exhibit 13-2

Implementing the Recommendation for Food Services Will Have a Five-Year Fiscal Impact of Approximately \$271,200 in Additional Net Income

Action Plan No. and Strategy	Fiscal Impact: Cost Savings/Increased Revenues or (Increased Costs)					Total
	Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	
13-7 Expand nutritional programs.	0	\$67,800	\$67,800	\$67,800	\$67,800	\$271,200
Total	0	\$67,800	\$67,800	\$67,800	\$67,800	\$271,200

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Background

The Lake County School District (the district) Food Service Program had total revenues in the 1999-2000 school year of \$8 million and served approximately 2,800 breakfasts and 16,000 lunches daily using 35 cafeterias. The district permits students to choose among meal items as long as they take the minimum required components to make up a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved reimbursable meal. In addition to the meals served at the 35 cafeterias, the district provides meals to seven satellite locations.

The district's Food Service Program is financially secure although it suffered a net operating loss in fiscal year 1999-2000 of \$415,000. This loss was directly linked to program funding of air conditioning installed in all school cafeterias. Exhibit 13-4 illustrates the Food Service Program revenues and expenses for the last three fiscal years.

Board Policies and Procedures

The Lake County School Board policies and procedures address the specific topics below applicable to the Food Service Program.

- General food service requirements
- Meal patterns
- Sale price of meals
- Food and beverage services available to students
- Free and reduce price meals

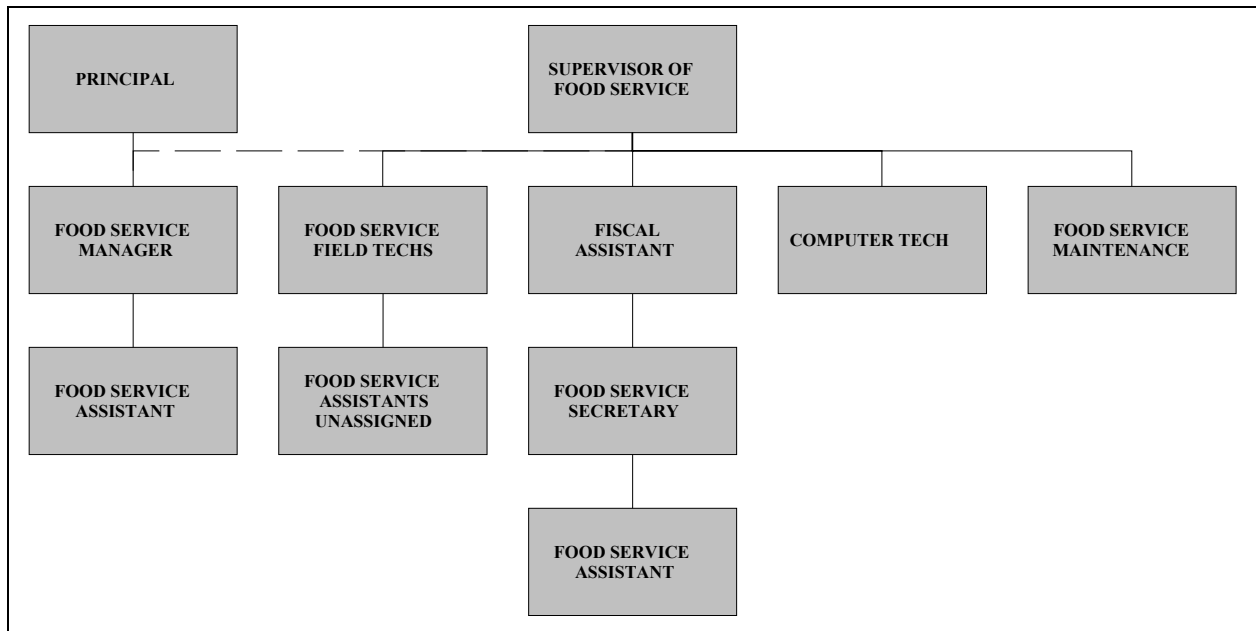
- School food service funds

Organizational Structure

Exhibit 13-3 illustrates how the district manages its Food Service Program. The chart depicts shared program authority between the Food Service Supervisor and school principals. The Food Service Supervisor is responsible for the administration of the program while the principals have line authority over food service managers and assistants.

Exhibit 13-3

Food Service Organizational Structure



Source: Lake County School District.

Exhibit 13-4

Profit and Loss Statements of the Lake County School District Food Service Department

	FY 1997-1998			FY 1998-99			FY 1999-2000	
	Dollars	Percentage of Total		Dollars	Percentage of Revenue		Dollars	Percentage of Revenue
Revenues								
National School Lunch Act	\$ 3,870,302	51%		\$ 3,869,705	49%		\$ 3,924,141	49%
USDA-donated food	439,250	6%		434,439	6%		363,858	5%
State Supplemental income	184,311	2%		173,883	2%		165,179	2%
Student lunch cash sales	1,431,134	19%		1,597,299	20%		1,674,612	21%
Breakfast cash sales	41,213	1%		48,825	1%		56,407	1%
A-la-carte sales	1,550,149	20%		1,631,046	21%		1,620,195	20%
Other food sales	3,609	0%		19,634	0%		11,244	0%
Other revenue	117,569	2%		105,504	1%		127,028	2%
Total Revenue	\$ 7,637,537	100%		\$ 7,880,335	100%		\$ 7,942,664	100%
Expenditures								
Food and supplies	\$ 3,432,985	45%		\$ 3,465,067	46%		\$ 3,520,641	42%
Salaries	2,293,079	30%		2,342,032	31%		2,543,257	30%
Benefits	931,600	12%		958,369	13%		932,192	11%
Purchased services	418,670	5%		100,204	1%		276,373	3%
Energy services	7,515	0%		4,292	0%		5,775	0%
Capital outlay	424,995	6%		438,392	6%		879,635	11%
Other expenses	172,809	2%		191,639	3%		200,311	2%
Total Expenditures	\$ 7,681,653	100%		\$ 7,499,995	100%		\$ 8,358,184	100%
Net Operating Income (Loss)	(44,116)			380,340			(415,520)	
Fund Balance, end of year	\$ 2,977,570			\$ 3,357,910			\$ 2,942,390	

Source: Lake County School District. Totals may not add due to rounding.

The district provides centralized support to the department in the areas of personnel, accounting, payroll, and purchasing.

Nutritional Programs

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and National Breakfast Program (NBP), which are regulated by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). These federal school nutrition programs assist states through grant-in-aid and other means in establishing, maintaining, operating, and expanding non-profit school feeding programs. The NSLP and NBP safeguard the health and well being of the nation's children and encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities and other foods. The Florida Department of Education (DOE) and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services administer the NSLP and NBP programs. The district renews its agreements with these state agencies each year to operate the program at the local level. The district's board, school principals, and the food service department share local responsibility for program administration.

Exhibit 13-5 shows the NSLP and NBP reimbursement rates for the 1999-2000 and 2000-01 school year. At a minimum, the district receives \$0.19 for each full lunch equivalent and \$0.21 for each breakfast equivalent. Additional monies are received based on the number of free and reduced meals served and whether schools are designated as having a maximum severe need population (greater than 60% Economically Needy). Exhibit 13-5 shows the full reimbursement rates based on the category of meal served.

Exhibit 13-5

Federal Meal Reimbursement Rates

Meal		1999-2000	2000-01
Free Lunch	Population < 60% Economically Needy	\$ 1.98	\$ 2.02
	Population > 60% Economically Needy	2.00	2.04
Reduced Price Lunch	Population < 60% Economically Needy	\$ 1.58	\$ 1.62
	Population > 60% Economically Needy	1.60	1.64
Breakfast	Free – Non-Severe Need	\$ 1.09	\$ 1.12
	Free – Severe Need	1.30	1.33
	Reduced Price – Non-Severe Need	0.79	0.82
	Reduced Price – Severe Need	1.00	1.03

Source: Florida Department of Education.

During the 1999-2000 school year, 40% of the district's students were approved to receive free or reduced meal benefits through the NSLP and NBP. Exhibit 13-6 shows that the district is about average among its peers in the percentage of students receiving free and reduced meals and lower than the state average.

Exhibit 13-6**Among Its Peers, Lake County Has About Average Percentage of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Meals**

School District	Student Population	% Receiving Free/Reduced Meals
Lake	28,545	40%
Alachua	29,905	45%
Charlotte	16,753	42%
Okaloosa	30,248	28%
Osceola	31,877	44%
St. Johns	19,046	23%
Santa Rosa	22,226	31%
Peer Average	25,009	36%
State Average		44%

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts 1999-2000, March 2001, Florida DOE.

In addition to federal meal income reimbursements, the district also receives USDA food commodities. The USDA issues a dollar allocation to Florida's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which in-turn allocates to the district its allocation for free surplus food items. The district then orders the desired items from the USDA catalog. Commodities are packaged in commercial size packages and are classified into two categories:

- Group A commodities—meat, fish, poultry, fruits, and vegetables; and
- Group B Commodities—grains, oil, shortening, cheese, and peanut products.

The food commodities are received at a USDA-approved storage facility where they are either stored or sent out for further processing. The commodities are delivered from the USDA-approved storage facility to the schools as food service managers order them.

Receipt of Goods

The district does not have a central warehouse. It receives purchased food and related meal items directly from vendor(s) at the school sites. As previously stated, USDA commodities are delivered directly to the schools from a USDA-approved storage facility.

Financial Status

The Food Service Program is funded through a combination of federal and state reimbursements and cash sales. For Fiscal Year 1999-2000, federal and state reimbursements accounted for 56% of total program revenue, while cash sales represented 42% of the district's food service revenue. Other revenue accounts for the remaining 2%.

Methodology

To develop findings related to the Food Service Operations Best Financial Management Practices, ValienteHernandez P.A. conducted five school site visits, conducted reviews of program documentation, reviewed the Food Service Supervisor's self-assessment, made use of subject matter experts hired by ValienteHernandez P.A., interviewed the Food Service Program supervisor, field service technicians, two additional food service managers, and other central support staff. Also interviewed were district staff, which included a purchasing agent and the Finance Director.

To receive program input, ValienteHernandez P.A. conducted surveys of the board members, district staff, school principals, teachers, Student Advisory Council (SAC), parents and students. The questions varied depending on the group surveyed and the results have been incorporated in this chapter where applicable.

ValienteHernandez P.A. also obtained information from other school districts in Florida that were determined to be comparable to Lake County School District. These peer districts selected for comparison were Alachua, Charlotte, Okaloosa, Osceola, St. Johns, and Santa Rosa.

Findings and Recommendations

Efficient and Effective Operation

1 The Food Service Program has a complete set of operating policies and procedures in place and is in the process of developing a mission statement with input from food service staff. The program, however, needs to establish a long-term plan that clearly reflect the intent of the program.

The District Has Not Developed Comprehensive Plan

During the course of this review, the district held an in-services session for all the food service workers and, by consensus, adopted the following Food Services Department mission statement:

"To provide all Lake County Schools students with nutritious, high quality food choices to enhance their ability to learn."

To become fully operational, the mission statement still has to undergo board approval and be communicated to stakeholders at large. It is important to formalize and publish the mission statement because it communicates to students, their parents or guardians, food service employees, teachers and school based administrative staff, custodians, and others the purpose and direction of the program.

Currently, the Food Service Supervisor and his staff have established some short-term objectives limited to the current school year. For instance, the following were objectives established for the 1999-2000 school year:

- computerize school cafeterias,
- develop an education program with the children, and
- develop a new menu committee (involve parents).

These and other objectives were established with the input from a significant number of food service staff and are a noteworthy beginning.

However, the district's control over program services is hampered by the lack of a food service long-range (five year) plan with measurable objectives that accomplish goals, priorities, and plans of action. Without a strategic plan and related benchmarks, the Food Service Supervisor is unable to meaningfully assess program performance and plan for future program development. These goals should include increasing meal participation rates, meals served per labor hour, use of USDA commodities, and lowering costs per meal. The plan and goals should be developed with input from food service central office staff, food service managers, principals, and interested parents.

Program Management Provides Comprehensive Policies and Procedures to All Employees

A comprehensive policies and procedures manual has been developed for the Food Service Program and is made available to all food service employees. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the contents of the handbook and found that the handbook contains background information about the National School Lunch Program, USDA school meal patterns, use of commodities, and other relevant information regarding the federal program such as the importance of obtaining and retaining a students' meal application form.

ValienteHernandez P.A. also found that the handbook contains copies of all the district's policies and procedures applicable to the Food Service Program and detailed information about the responsibilities of all food service workers, which includes established policies regarding meal and cash accountability, managing food and supplies, and sanitation and food safety.

In order to maintain the quality of the information contained in the handbook, the food service department plans to update the handbook prior to the beginning of the 2001-02 school year.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district develop a strategic plan for the Food Service Program to guide and evaluate program development. The plan needs to be developed including input from school-level food service staff and customers and be communicated to stakeholders, food service employees, school administrators, district administrators, and the school board. The plan should include*
 - *a board approved mission statement,*
 - *long-range goals,*

- *strategies to accomplish goals, and*
- *plans of action.*

Action Plan 13-1 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 13-1

Implementation of Strategic Plan for Food Service Program

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implementation of a strategic plan for the Food Service Program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 2: The Superintendent directs the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Support Services to develop a strategic plan, which includes a board approved mission statement, long-range goals, strategies to accomplish goals and plans of action, for the food services program. Assigns the project to a committee of the Food Service Supervisor, the field technicians, and a representative group of 3-5 principals or assistant principals.</p> <p>Step 3: After reaching consensus, the food services supervisor along with other committee members develop the detailed action plan. The plan needs to be approved by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and by the Superintendent. The School Board should also approve the plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Food Service Supervisor; Principals; Assistant Principals; Food Service Managers.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

2 In order to enhance the efficiency of the food service operation, the district should regularly review the organizational structure of the program and adjust the staffing needs in a more systematic manner.

The Program Supervisor Is Well Qualified

The district has a qualified Food Service Supervisor. The Food Service Supervisor has been with the district for nearly 3 years. He has more than 15 years of commercial food management experience prior to joining the district and has made significant improvement to the program during his tenure. Prior to his employment with the district, the Food Service Program was outsourced to a private contractor for a period of one year. Many of the food service managers we interviewed informed us that at the end of that period, morale was very low.

The food workers ValienteHernandez P.A. interviewed expressed their happiness with the current Food Service Supervisor's leadership.

Program Management Should Adjust Staffing Needs More Frequently

The district currently reviews the staffing needs for each food service location (cafeteria) annually, at the end of the school year. The staffing needs of the cafeterias for the coming year are established based on projected enrollment. As a result, management presently adjusts the scheduled working hours in August or early September.

The district could further improve the operation by conducting a comprehensive revision of the planned schedules after the school year begins and actual enrollment and participation is known. Early or mid-October is a good point in time because actual participation would have settled in and at least one month of actual data would be available to management. Additionally, management could consider monitoring staffing every three to four months during the school year to assure that staffing levels continue to be adequate at each campus.

This action would prevent that some cafeterias might be understaffed and therefore the employees will be overworked and the quality of the program may suffer, while other cafeterias might have an excess of allocated hours and be a waste of staffing costs. Controlling the labor hours is a critical component of the operation. Adequate monitoring of this variable at critical points would enhance program performance.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the district fine tune the cafeteria staffing levels by adjusting the planned schedules soon after actual enrollment is known.*

Action Plan 13-2 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 13-2

Adjust Cafeteria Staffing During the First Few Weeks of the School Year

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Adjust cafeteria staffing based on actual enrollment figures four to six weeks after the beginning of the school year.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Food Service Supervisor directs the field technicians to determine cafeteria staffing needed based on actual enrollment no later than six weeks into the new school year.</p> <p>Step 2: Based on the information prepared by the field technicians, the Food Service Supervisor adjusts cafeteria staffing.</p>
Who is Responsible	Food Service Supervisor
Time Frame	October of each year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

3 The district uses a comprehensive food service training program to increase productivity, improve employee performance, and enhance the Food Service Program; however, training-related documentation could be improved.

Program Management Could Improve Documentation of Employee Training

The Food Service Program provides in-service training to all food service workers at the beginning of the school year. During the year, food service interns (food service managers in-training) are provided training in cafeteria supervision, food ordering, meal preparation, and meal reporting. Also, the Food Service Program follows USDA menu planning, which is developed at the beginning of the school year and followed by all schools. All staff members that are employed at a school that has implemented the Student Nutritional Accountability Program (SNAP) are also provided training on SNAP and general computer applications.²

Much of the training that is provided is also documented in a district food service handbook. For example, the district's food service handbook includes information regarding the preparation and storing of food, receiving and storing purchases, workplace safety and sanitation, and merchandising of food. Management has made this handbook available to all school food service staff.

Although much training is provided, no formal training plan has been developed. A training plan should include such items as training needs for each type position, establish training sequences and priorities, and contain lesson outlines. The Food Service Supervisor has indicated that he is in the process of developing a staff training plan.

While the district is conducting comprehensive training, it is not fully documenting such training in each food service employee official personnel file. The district has in place the beginning of such a process by recording such training on sign-in sheets at in-service training sessions.

A good training program includes all of the elements listed in Exhibit 13-7.

¹ SNAP is the automated system utilized to account for meals served and track them according to existing categories (paid, free and reduced).

Exhibit 13-7**Elements of a Food Service Training Program**

Food
• Nationally recognized dietary guidelines
• Portion size
• Appropriate serving utensils
• Food safety/storage
• Special diets (as applicable)
• Inventory methods (as appropriate for staff level)
• Meal count procedures/automation (as appropriate for staff level)
Workplace
• Receiving and storing purchased items, equipment, and USDA commodities
• Workplace sanitation/safety
• Kitchen safety techniques
• Emergency procedures
Service
• Customer service
• Communication
• Program marketing/advertising (as appropriate for staff level)

Source: OPPAGA.

Recommendations

- *Although good training is occurring in the Food Service Program, we recommend that a formal training plan and manual be created with the assistance of the human resources department, to document goals and objectives of each training effort. In addition, staff should annotate employee records of those successfully completing training.*

Action Plan 13-3 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 13-3**Document Food Service Staff Training Plan**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Creation of a formal food service training plan.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Food Service Supervisor should complete the training plan. This plan should direct management to provide specific training documentation for placement and retention in employee personnel files.
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services is responsible for directing the Food Service Supervisor to develop a food service training plan.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

4 The district needs to develop a system to identify barriers to student participation in the school meals program and implement strategies to eliminate these barriers.

The Food Service Program Needs a System for Identifying Meal Participation Barriers

The district needs to develop system of mechanisms for students, faculty, and parents to provide feedback to food service management so that management can identify potential barriers to participation in the Food Service Program.

The district has not proactively or systematically attempted to discover if barriers are limiting meal participation. Barriers, such as bus arrival time for breakfast, length of lunch periods, seating room, temperature control, and food quality or variety can limit student participation in the Food Service Program. If these barriers do exist, they can often be eliminated with adjustments to the schedules, improvements to facilities, or additional staff training. However, to make these changes, the barriers must first be identified. On-site food supervisors often do not have the training or time to identify these barriers so management needs to assist.

The district is above the peer average and state average for daily lunch participation rates in all grade levels. However, the district may be able to improve its meal participation rates even further if steps were taken to identify barriers by soliciting input from customers. Results of a survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. support the need to discover existing participation barriers even more. As shown in Exhibit 13-8, the majority of high and middle school students that completed the survey disagreed with the statement, *"I like to eat the school lunch"*; also, 65% of the group of teachers that responded to the survey agreed that students usually have positive opinions about the meals served. Although these responses tend to conflict, they do offer a good indication that the district needs to identify and overcome meal participation barriers.

Exhibit 13-8**Survey Results Indicate the District Should Identify Meal Participation Barriers**

SURVEY GROUP (s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Middle and High School Students (s = 505; n = 473)	I like to eat the school lunch.	20.0%	75.7%	7.3%
Teachers (N = 1,761; n = 850)	Students are usually positive regarding opinions relating to the meals served.	65.5%	25.7%	8.8%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

The District Promotes Balanced Meals Through Its Pricing Policy

The district sets food prices at levels that encourage students to purchase entire meals rather than individual a-la-carte food items. Prices are set so that featured whole meals provide more food for the money than a-la-carte items. This encourages students to purchase reimbursable meals as contrasted with a la carte items and, therefore, eat a more complete and nutritious meal.

To set a la carte prices, the Food Service Supervisor refers to DOE a la carte pricing formula. This formula recognizes the greater costs associated with preparing, packaging, and serving a la carte items. In addition, the state mandated policy of limiting access to vending machines in secondary schools and prohibiting them in elementary schools minimizing competition with reimbursable meals.

The Program Has Not Made Sufficient Effort To Obtain Customer Feedback

The district does not have a formal mechanism in place to solicit district-wide customer feedback. Such information is needed in order to develop meaningful and effective plans. Although, some of the employees at cafeterias that ValienteHernandez P.A. visited indicated that informal customer feedback is solicited.

The district does have a website. However, not every school in the district is accessible through the website. In addition, we found no place on the site for food service opinions or comments. To express these opinions, students and parents must find a means to directly communicate with school management or cafeteria personnel. With the expanding use of the Internet, the district's website could become a significant source of Food Service Program feedback.

The need for the district to increase the effort to obtain additional customer feedback was also corroborated by the results of the surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2000. As illustrated in Exhibit 13-9, the majority of school principals and parents expressed that the district or the food services program do not regularly seek customer feedback.

Exhibit 13-9**Survey Results Indicate the District Should Seek Additional Customer Feedback**

SURVEY GROUP (s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Principals (N = 84; n = 52)	Students and staff are periodically surveyed as to the quality and variety of foods served in the cafeteria	32.6%	62.8%	.7%
Parents (s = 485; n = 264)	I have received surveys from the districts Food Service department	10.5%	66.4%	23.2%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the district develop a formal process to obtain input from students, parents and teachers regarding the Food Service Program. Obtaining feedback will enable the identification of participation barriers and needed program adjustments.*

Action Plan 13-4 shows the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 13-4**Solicit Customer Feedback**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a formal process for obtaining input from students, their parents, and teachers about the Food Service Program at each school. Identify barriers to participation and seek to implement changes that remove or reduce impact of these barriers.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Food Service Supervisor forms an ad hoc committee of several food service managers and principals to brainstorm ideas on how to formally obtain and use input from students and parents regarding food service issues. In implementing this recommendation, the district should consider establishing food advisory committees composed of students, distributing surveys to students and parents, and conducting student taste tests in the menu development process. The district could also work with its food service vendors to test promotional items.</p> <p>Step 2: Implement the developed plan.</p> <p>Step 3: Work to eliminate the identified barriers.</p>

Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services should direct the Food Service Supervisor to develop and implement, in coordination with the principals and food service managers, a formal process for obtaining feedback from students and parents.
Time Frame	Beginning with the 2001-02 school year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

5 The district has not established cost-efficiency benchmarks based on comparable public sector Food Service Programs.

The District Has Not Adopted Benchmarks

Benchmarks are expectations of how well an activity or function, such as food service, should perform. These expectations should be based not solely on history, but where the program should progress. Thus, when an entity tracks its actual performance over time and compares that performance against developed benchmarks, managers then have the means to evaluate the status of their plan.

The Food Service Supervisor uses some indicators that are similar to benchmarks. These indicators come from relevant data gathered regarding meals served by category and could be used to calculate program performance and cost data. For example, the Food Service Supervisor has developed an indicator for meals served per labor hour. This indicator was set at twenty-two (22) meals per labor hour. However, the indicator was based solely on history and not any specifically developed program goal. An indicator becomes a benchmark when it is based on an action to accomplish a formal plan.

The district has not adopted any formal performance benchmarks, such as costs per meal, meals per labor hour and overall meal participation in order to effectively manage the Food Service Program and to determine if improvements need to be made. As a result, important information on performance and costs are not monitored against a formal plan. This lack of benchmarks has limited management's ability to provide decision makers with key information on the performance and cost-efficiency of the Food Service Program. Since information is already being gathered, once the district develops the benchmarks, the analysis should be accomplished with minimal additional effort. With the full implementation of the SNAP systems, analyzing program performance will be more efficient.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district establishes food service benchmarks to assess its key management performance indicators, such as*
 - *meals per labor hour,*
 - *costs per meal,*
 - *overall meal participation, and*
 - *satisfaction with menu selections from customers.*

Action Plan 13-5 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 13-5**Develop Food Service Benchmarks**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Identify program benchmarks to assess program performance.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop program benchmarks which include the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meals per labor hour, • cost per meal, • overall meal participation for Breakfast, lunch, and other feeding programs, and • satisfaction with menu selections from customers. <p>Step 2: Identify school districts with exemplary Food Service Programs in order to compare the Lake County Food Service Program performance.</p> <p>Step 3: Conduct regular comparisons of the program performance to established benchmarks and to the other previously identified Food Service Programs.</p> <p>Step 4: Communicate food service benchmarks to food service personnel, appropriate school administrators, and other interested stakeholders such as community members.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services directs the Food Service Supervisor to develop and implement food service benchmarks and to communicate program performance to food service personnel, appropriate school administrators, and other interest stakeholders.
Time Frame	Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

6 While the district evaluates individual cafeterias, there is not a process in place to regularly evaluate the school Food Service Program based on established benchmarks.

The District Evaluates Individual Schools, But Not the Overall Food Service Program

The Food Service Supervisor reviews profit and loss by cafeteria regularly, but has not established program-level benchmarks nor is the overall Food Service Program performance evaluated. For example, the district has not established meal production benchmarks that are tied to a strategic plan. As a result, the food service managers cannot take corrective action that is linked to a district and program plan. In addition, a review of plan benchmarks needs to be conducted system-wide.

Overall system reviews would assist managers to identify systemic problems that need broad and immediate attention versus individual school problem areas. For example, high labor costs at one school

can be caused by a concentration of long-term employees, probably balanced out by other schools, and may not be a problem. However, management needs to know if there are system-wide high labor costs. This is a different problem with much broader implications and requires management attention.

As required by the USDA, the district conducts an annual on-site review of each cafeteria. As part of this review, the district examines within the categories below.

- Application approval
- Master list of students eligible for free and reduced meals
- Meal count system
- Meal count recording and edit checks
- Accountability of cash
- Food production/inventory
- Sanitation/storage safety

Recommendation

- *Once food service benchmarks are established, we recommend that the district establish a system for routine evaluations of the overall Food Service Program. To the extent possible and based on the result of these evaluations, the district should implement program changes that would ultimately reduce cost and/or increase revenue.*

Action Plan 13-6 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 13-6

Evaluate Program Performance

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Use developed food service benchmarks to evaluate the overall Food Service Program and identify areas to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: See Action Plan 13-5, Recommendation 1.</p> <p>Step 2: Design a routine system for periodically evaluating performance using developed benchmarks versus actual performance.</p> <p>Step 3: Evaluate performance and initiate corrective action as needed. Implement program changes that would ultimately reduce cost and/or increase revenue.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services should direct the Food Service Supervisor to develop food service benchmarks and a system for evaluation and action. The Food Service Supervisor should conduct the evaluation and take corrective action as needed.
Time Frame	During the 2002-2003 school year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

7 The district does not regularly assess the benefits of service delivery alternatives, such as contracting and privatization, and changes have not been implemented to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

The District Recently Tried Outsourcing

The district contracted out its Food Service Program for the 1997-1998 school year. Because of several problems, the school board decided to return the operation in-house. This is when the current Food Service Supervisor was hired and morale began to significantly improve. Although it recently contracted out its Food Service Program, the district needs to continue assessing the outsourcing alternative at least every three years.

The Food Service Department Has Not Assessed Service Delivery Alternatives

The district has not reviewed the cost benefit of warehousing commodities versus storing them with a private contractor. For the year ending June 30, 2000, the district paid approximately \$33,000 in storing its commodities with a private contractor. Due to the limited warehousing available throughout the district, the private contractor is needed at this time. However, as the district continues to grow and acquire land, it should consider opportunities for Food Service Program warehousing.

The District Should Explore Additional Nutrition Programs

The district may be able to increase Food Service Program revenue by implementing additional services. For instance, the district does not offer a breakfast program in its middle or high schools. The district needs to survey students and parents of middle and high schools to determine the expected participation in a breakfast program and barriers to implementation. If the district was to implement a breakfast program in its middle and high schools, it is estimated that it could increase revenues by \$271,215 annually. Assuming that the district is able to operate the food service breakfast program with a 25% margin (approximately 40% in food cost and 35% in labor), this would represent approximately \$67,800 in additional net income annually. This estimate is based on an initial 20% and 10% participation for middle and high schools, respectively.

The district could implement innovative ideas used in other districts. For example, if little time is available between bus arrival and first class, the food service staff could have a cart located at the bus drop-off point with breakfast packages pre-made so students could quickly purchase the meal and then eat it on their way to class. The district could further maximize the revenue by making these breakfasts a reimbursable meal according to USDA guidelines. Exhibit 13-10 illustrates the projected additional annual revenue and Exhibit 13-11, the fiscal impact over a five-year period. Alternatively, the district could pilot a breakfast program at selected schools and analyze results for system-wide implementation.

The district could also pursue non-traditional revenue programs such as headstart feeding and catering. In considering this option, the district should coordinate with Lake County government agencies as to the possibility and methods of providing these services.

The result of the survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. further supports the recommendation to expand the nutritional programs. When asked, *"Are you in favor of a Breakfast Program for your child?"*, 67% of the parents that responded to the survey agreed (21% disagreed and 12% said they did not know).

Also, 51% of the teachers that participated in the survey agreed to the question, “*Would students benefit from a Breakfast Program?*” (34% disagreed and 16% said they did not know).

Exhibit 13-10

With an Initial 20% and 10% Participation for Middle and High Schools, Respectively, Implementing a Breakfast Program in Middle and High Schools Could Increase the District’s Net Income by Over \$67,000 Annually

School Category	Estimated Daily Breakfast Participation	Number of Projected Additional Breakfasts Per Year	Price Per Breakfast	Projected Additional Annual Revenue	Projected Additional Annual Income
Middle School	1,245	224,100	\$.75	\$168,075	\$42,019
High School	764	137,520	.75	103,140	25,785
Total				\$271,215	\$67,804

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A. calculations

Exhibit 13-11

The Five-Year Projected Additional Income from New Breakfast Programs Totals \$271,200

	Fiscal Year				
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual Income	(pilot test period)	\$67,800	\$67,800	\$67,800	\$67,800
Cumulative Income		67,800	135,600	203,400	271,200

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district identifies nutritional programs and/or program services be expanded to increase program revenues and customer satisfaction.*

Action Plan 13-7 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 13-7**Evaluate the Possibility of Expanding Nutritional Programs**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Determine whether additional nutritional programs could be added to district schools.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Food service managers should work cooperatively with the Food Service Supervisor to identify and select pilot breakfast programs in selected middle and high schools.</p> <p>Step 2: Meet with principals to obtain support and feedback of breakfast programs in middle and high schools.</p> <p>Step 3: Assess the pilot project outcome and submit a written report to the Superintendent and respective principals recommending either expansion or discontinuation based on pilot program results.</p> <p>Step 4: Obtain feedback from and brainstorm with food service managers and principals to identify other potential events or opportunities to increase food service revenue, e.g., catering, banquets, meetings, contracting with other agencies and organizations.</p> <p>Step 5: The Food Service Supervisor should oversee the implementation of any additional services, document costs and income, and report this information to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services is responsible for directing the Food Service Supervisor to outline and implement additional nutritional programs.
Time Frame	<p>During the 2001-02 school year, implement pilot breakfasts program in selected middle and high schools and explore other opportunities for increasing food program revenues.</p> <p>Assess the pilot project at the end of the 2001-02 school year and do a written report outlining either expansion of the project or discontinuation by June 2002.</p>
Fiscal Impact	With an initial 20% and 10% participation for middle and high schools, respectively, implementing a breakfast program in middle and high school could increase the district's net income by \$67,800 annually.

Financial Accountability and Viability

8 While the program's budget is based on revenue and expenditure projections it should also be linked to departmental goals.

The Program Budgets Are Based on Participation Projections, Not Necessarily Linked to Departmental Goals

The budget for food service is not linked to departmental goals since they are not financial in nature. Management reported that the current program budget was prepared using projected revenues and expenditures based on current meal participation rates, therefore, not to necessarily to accomplish program goals. The Food Service Supervisor did state that he also took into account revenues needed for replacement of program equipment.

The Food Service Program Reviews Actual Revenues and Expenses and Can Improve by Developing Fiscal Goals That Link to the Program's Budget

Through the use of an internal financial monitoring system, program staff estimates individual cafeterias profitability on a monthly basis. However, these statements are not reconciled to the overall district's general ledger, which includes indirect costs and expenses, nor does the district regularly review the actual results compared to its budget. Thus, management has not validated the accuracy of its own internal financial monitoring system. Management needs a financial monitoring system it can rely upon so it can take proper corrective action in a timely manner.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop fiscal goals for the Food Service Program that link to the program's budget in order to optimize revenues and expenses. These goals should be part of the program's strategic plan. (Also see Action Plan 13-1).*
- *We further recommend that the district regularly review and compare budget projections and actual performance in order to make timely management decisions.*

Action Plan 13-8 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 13-8**Evaluate Program Performance**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop Food Service Program fiscal goals.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop the food program fiscal goals that guide the annual budget development process. Program fiscal goals should be part of the strategic plan.</p> <p>Step 2: Validate the accuracy of the reporting system</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services is responsible to direct the Food Service Supervisor to establish program fiscal goals as part of the strategic plan and validated system for analyzing these goals versus the budget.
Time Frame	In-place for preparation of the Fiscal Year 2002-03-budget.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Review budgeted versus actual revenue and expenses on a regular basis. Use this information to make informed management decisions.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Track actual revenue and expenditures projections versus actual in a format that can be easily compared.</p> <p>Step 2: The Food Service Supervisor, purchasing supervisor, and the finance and accounting supervisor should meet to review and analyze budgeted versus actual expenditures and revenue to discuss plans for making necessary program adjustments to minimize costs and maximize revenue.</p> <p>Step 3: Make management decisions based on this information and plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services is responsible for ensuring that parties from each department (food services, purchasing, and finance and accounting) meet to review Food Service Program projected expenditures, revenue, and actual expenditures and report meeting results and recommended program adjustments.
Time Frame	The Food Service Supervisor, purchasing supervisor, and finance and accounting supervisor should meet every operational month beginning with the 2001-02 school year to review projected expenditures, revenue, and actual expenditures. Program adjustments should be made as necessary following these meetings.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

9 The district's financial control process includes an ongoing review of the program's financial and management practices.

The Program Has School-level Financial Internal Controls in Place

The district has financial internal controls in place that include written procedures for collecting, depositing, and disbursing money. The district also has written procedures to account for reimbursable meals and other sales. When the full implementation of SNAP (Student Nutritional Accountability Program) takes place, the procedures will be updated. An annual inspection of each cafeteria is performed, at which time compliance with the written procedures and financial internal controls are assessed.

The Program Has Partially Automated Data Processing for Financial Reporting

As required, the district food service staff compiles all the needed information and submits a consolidated request for reimbursement for meals to the State of Florida. Currently, there are 12 cafeterias on the SNAP system. There are 19 cafeterias with stand-alone computers that can produce a spreadsheet for compiling meals served by category. Four (4) cafeterias have no automation and use manual records to collect information. Via these three methods, all cafeterias report performance data to the district level food service staff. The district food service office staff then compiles these various sources onto a separate computer for analysis. The district plans to have the SNAP system in place in all schools by the end of the 2000-01 school year, which will greatly improve the reporting system and will allow more timely analysis by management.

The District Recently Increased Meal Prices

The district recently increased some meal prices for the first time in 10 years. Before installing the price increase, the Food Service Supervisor compared the district's prices with 15 other school districts within. The breakfast meal price was not changed since it was equal to the average of the other districts. The middle school price was increased from \$1.10 to \$1.50 since it was lower than all 15 other school districts. The high school price was increased from \$1.35 to \$1.50 since it was also lower than all 15 other school districts, but the new price still remains lower than the average.

It is a sound practice to compare district prices with other districts. However, price increases based on budgeted need is more important, as evidenced by the account financial history in Exhibit 13-4. This school district is growing and will likely need to make additional investment in equipment. Exhibit 13-12 shows a comparison of the district's meal prices against the peer districts selected for this review. As illustrated, the district's meal prices for its full-priced lunch is lower than the peer district average. In the future the district should not raise meal prices based solely on the comparison, it should also consider the program budget needs.

Exhibit 13-12**All Lake County School District's Meal Prices Are Lower Than Peer District Averages (School Year 2000-01)**

Full-Priced Breakfast	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Adult Prices
Lake	\$0.75	n/a	n/a	\$1.10
Alachua	1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	1.25
Charlotte	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.10
Okaloosa	0.50	0.55	0.55	0.75
Osceola	0.60	0.60	0.60	1.00
Santa Rosa	0.60	0.60	0.60	1.00
St. Johns	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.35
Peer Average	0.78	0.79	0.79	1.08
Full-Priced Lunch				
Lake	1.25	1.50	1.50	2.00
Alachua	1.50	1.65	1.65	2.00
Charlotte	1.40	1.70	1.70	2.10
Okaloosa	1.30	1.40	1.40	1.80
Osceola	1.35	1.45	1.50	2.00
Santa Rosa	1.50	1.75	1.75	2.25
St. Johns	1.50	1.75	1.75	2.25
Peer Average	\$1.43	\$1.62	\$1.63	\$2.07

Source: The Florida Department of Education.

10

The district accounts for and reports meals served by category.**The Program Properly Accounts for and Reports Meals by Category**

The district has procedures in place to accurately report meals served by category. The current process includes a combination of manual collection of data for those schools that are not on the SNAP point of sale system and automated information from those schools that are on the SNAP system.

The district expects that all schools will be on the SNAP system by the end of the 2000-01 school year, or soon thereafter. With more and more of the SNAPS system installed and operating, the process of reporting meals served will be less labor intensive.

In addition, the district performs edit checks to verify that the meals claimed for reimbursement are equal to or less than the number of approved applications of students eligible to receive free or reduced meals. The Food Service Supervisor also ensures that field personnel review the information and counting procedures during each cafeteria's annual review. Florida's Department of Education also audits this information as part of their compliance audit.

11 The district regularly evaluates purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase efficiency.

The District Regularly Evaluates Its Purchasing Practices

The Food Service Supervisor regularly evaluates the department's purchasing practices, both to attempt a decrease in costs and to increase efficiency. The food service department advertises a main food bid every three years, and other items such as bread and milk are advertised for bid annually.

The Food Service Supervisor develops the bid specifications and works with the district's purchasing department to ensure that the appropriate items are included in the bids. Bid proposals on all items purchased by food service require that vendors be given equal opportunity to bid, and proposals are made available to all potential vendors.

A committee, made up of the Food Service Supervisor and purchasing staff, review all responses to proposals to ensure that proposals consider specifications, service, and price. After reviewing all proposals, this committee makes a recommendation for award to the school board.

12 The district has developed an effective inventory control system that is appropriate to the size of the school Food Service Program.

The Program Completes Monthly Physical Inventories

The district does not currently have a central warehouse facility for food items and cafeteria supplies; these are maintained at each school. Commodities are stored with a private contractor.

The food service department has established written guidelines for inventory control at each cafeteria. These guidelines are included in the food service handbooks, which is available to all food service workers. Each food service manager conducts a physical inventory each month and reports the results to the district staff of the food service department. District management monitors these inventory levels and checks for outdated items during its annual inspection of each cafeteria.

13 The district has a system for receiving, storing, and disposing of food, supplies, and equipment.

The Program Has Developed and Uses Product Receiving Guidelines

The district has written procedures for receiving, storing, and disposing of food, supplies, and equipment. These guidelines include how many invoices are to be provided by the vendor. Food service managers should also examine the products delivered, verify amounts, brands delivered, and sign the invoices. All food service employees have been trained to mark the received date on each package before storing. In our reviews of school cafeterias, we observed this practice being followed.

The Program Has Developed and Uses Product Complaint Forms

The district provides all cafeterias with product complaint forms. These forms are completed when any deficiencies are found with items purchased and are submitted to the district's food service department central office. The food service central office staff conduct follow-ups with the vendor of the product to ensure product credits are issued when applicable.

14 The district does not have a long-range plan for the replacement of equipment that includes preventative maintenance practices.

Although Program Staff Can Respond for Immediate Equipment and Facility Repair, the Program Lacks a Complete Equipment Maintenance Plan

The food service department has two maintenance people on its staff to ensure that needs of the Food Service Program are met on a timely basis. All of the food service managers that ValienteHernandez P.A. interviewed reported that maintenance needs are handled timely and appropriately by the food service maintenance workers. While management offered one example of a preventive initiative (management arranged for major equipment maintenance when the kitchen hoods in all of the cafeterias were cleaned during the last fiscal year), the district does not have a complete plan in place for preventive maintenance.

It is important that the district establishes a preventive maintenance plan to minimize unexpected equipment breakdowns and avoid costly emergency repairs of equipment. The district should establish a plan for equipment maintenance that includes an inspection of current equipment. Once staff all immediate needs or all equipment, maintenance staff should inspect and/or service each major piece of equipment based on manufacture recommendations. Management should adopt procedures that extend the life of the expensive food service equipment since it is generally less costly than replacement of equipment.

The Program Needs to Include Equipment Replacement in Its Plans and Budget

The food service department has started collecting the information needed regarding equipment utilized by the program. Such information consists of location, model, condition, and age. Once this process is completed and the status of each piece of equipment is evaluated, the district needs integrate identified equipment purchase needs into the strategic plan and program budgets.

Recommendations ---

- *We recommend that the district develops a plan for long-range equipment and maintenance and replacement to optimize the cost-effective life of equipment and reduce overall program costs. The preventive maintenance plan for the Food Service Program should be coordinated with the district-wide preventive program effort described in Action Plan 11-11, Facilities Maintenance, Chapter 11 of this report.*

Furthermore, we recommend that the district assesses the needs for existing kitchen equipment and, where appropriate, sell or move unneeded or underutilized equipment in order to optimize use equipment assets.

Action Plan 13-9 shows the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 13-9

Maximize Equipment Life and Reduce Costs

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a long-range equipment replacement and preventive maintenance plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Inspect and document current equipment conditions.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify equipment replacement needs and costs for the next five years.</p> <p>Step 3: Obtain input from food service managers on additional equipment needs, equipment that is not used, and move equipment accordingly.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop equipment maintenance plans to maximize the life of the item and minimize replacement costs. The preventive maintenance plan for the Food Service Program should be in line with a district-wide preventive program described in Action Plan 11-11, Facilities Maintenance, Chapter 11 of this report.</p> <p>Step 5: Submit the equipment replacement and maintenance plans to the maintenance department for inclusion in an overall equipment plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Food Service Supervisor
Time Frame	During the 2001-02 school year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Meal Preparation and Service

15

The district provides school meals designed to meet the nutritional needs of students.

The Department Plans Menus That Meet Student Nutritional Needs and Dietary Guidelines

Although the district does not employ a registered dietician, the district staff provide nutritious meals based on the USDA meal patterns. In addition, all food service personnel are trained to follow these meal patterns to ensure the student nutritional needs. Staff address special diet needs on an individual basis at each school based on appropriate documentation.

16 The district's food production and transport systems ensure the service of quality food with minimal waste.

The Program Maximizes the Use of USDA Commodities

The district incorporates USDA commodities in its menu planning in order to maximize their use. It is important that the district maximize the use of commodities since the federal government provides the commodities at no charge to the Food Service Program. The district only pays to deliver and long-term storage of the commodities, as explained earlier in this chapter. Therefore, by maximizing the use of commodities in its menu, the district avoids spending district money on purchased foods. District staff specifically identify commodity items to be used in its recipes. Also, in-service training discusses the need to maximize the use of commodities.

The Program Has Standardized Food Production

The district provides standard recipes to ensure program consistency and quality. Standardized recipes are distributed and used district-wide to clarify directions, yields, serving sizes, portioning utensils, and per-serving nutritional analysis. Also, the use of standard recipes assists in meeting meal cost goals.

Safe and Sanitary Food Service Environment _____

17 The district follows safety and environmental health practices and regulations.

Food service staff members are trained and follow safety and environmental health practices and regulations. The program's food service handbook also contains information relating to general safety and safety regulations. The Lake County Health Department conducts inspections of the district's cafeterias. ValienteHernandez P.A. found no significant violations during its review of these inspection records.

14

Cost Control Systems

The district's cost control system includes internal auditing, financial auditing, asset management, inventory management, risk management, financial management, purchasing, and payment processing. The district should conduct annual risk assessments to identify and minimize potential risks. The district should enhance internal funds auditing, fixed assets accounting, inventory management, and purchasing processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Conclusion

During our review of the district's processes, ValienteHernandez, P.A found that the Lake County School District (the district) has generally established adequate cost control systems.

ValienteHernandez P.A., has determined that enhancements can be made for 8 of the 31 best practices that, when implemented, will improve effectiveness of the operation. Below are our conclusions on the district's use of each cost control system's best practice.

As illustrated in Exhibit 14-1, the school board and management team have experienced several notable accomplishments over the last two years to the district's cost control system.

Exhibit 14-1

Notable Accomplishments in Cost Controls in the Past Two Years

The district recognized that some of their financial processes were not working effectively and has taken the following steps to correct the situation:

- requested OPPAGA (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability) to perform a special review of the district's financial situation and a best practice review;
 - employed a new Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and a new Finance Director who have instituted procedures to increase communication accountability in the business services area; and
 - prepared and timely implemented action plans in response to recommendations contained in the financial portion of the FADSS (Florida Association of District School Superintendents) report.
-

Source: Lake County Schools.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P. A. found that:

Internal Auditing

- The district has not established an internal audit function. (Page 14-7)

Financial Auditing

- The district obtains an external audit in accordance with governmental auditing standards. (Page 14-9)
- The district should enhance its follow-up efforts for findings identified in external audits. (Page 14-10)
- The district obtains and reviews required financial information relating to its charter schools. The timeliness of delivery of financial information related to school internal accounts should be enhanced. (Page 14-11)

Asset Management

- The district segregates responsibilities for custody of assets from record keeping responsibilities for those assets. (Page 14-15)
- The district has established controls that provide for proper authorization of asset acquisitions and disposals. (Page 14-16)
- The district has established records that accumulate project costs, and other relevant data to facilitate reporting construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors. (Page 14-16)
- The district provides recorded accountability for capitalized assets. (Page 14-16)
- Assets are safeguarded from unauthorized use, theft, and physical damage; however, controls for verifying that all assets have been accounted for should be enhanced. (Page 14-16)

Inventory Management

- The district segregates responsibility for custody of inventories from record keeping responsibilities for those assets. (Page 14-19)
- The district has established and implemented controls that provide for proper inventory requisitioning. (Page 14-20)
- The district has established controls that provide for inventory accountability; however, safeguards for inventory custody should be enhanced. (Page 14-20)
- The district has not evaluated the inventory function to determine its cost effectiveness. (Page 14-22)

Risk Management

- The district has a process to set objectives for risk management activities, identify and evaluate risks, and design a comprehensive program to protect itself at a reasonable cost. (Page 14-26)
- The district has comprehensive policies and procedures relating to acquiring and reviewing coverage for risks of loss. (Page 14-26)

Financial Management

- District management communicates its commitment and support of strong internal controls. Communications however, could be enhanced through the development and use of written procedures manuals. (Page 14-27)
- The district records and reports financial transactions in accordance with prescribed standards. (Page 14-28)
- The district prepares and distributes its financial reports timely. (Page 14-28)
- The district has a financial plan serving as an estimate of and control over operations and expenditures. (Page 14-29)
- The district should enhance its controls over its cash resources by ensuring bank reconciliations are performed timely. (Page 14-29)
- The district has an investment plan that includes investment objectives and performance criteria designed to maximize investment return consistent with the risks associated with each investment and specify the types of financial products approved for investment. (Page 14-30)
- The district has established effective controls for recording, collecting, adjusting, and reporting receivables. (Page 14-30)
- The district has effective controls that provide accountability for the payment of salaries and benefits. (Page 14-31)
- The district analyzes, evaluates, monitors, and reports debt-financing alternatives. (Page 14-31)
- The district effectively monitors and reports grant activities. (Page 14-31)

Purchasing

- The district segregates purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving function. (Page 14-32)
- The district has established controls for authorizing purchase requisitions. (Page 14-33)
- The district has established authorization controls over purchasing. (Page 14-34)
- The district has established controls to ensure that goods are received and meet quality standards. (Page 14-37)

Payment Processing

- The district has established controls to ensure that disbursements are properly authorized, documented, and recorded. (Page 14-38)
- The district has established controls for processing invoices to ensure that quantities, prices, and terms coincide with purchase orders and receiving reports. (Page 14-38)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations _____

ValienteHernandez P.A. recommends four actions in the cost control area that will result in an overall cost savings to the district. If our recommendations are implemented, we estimate that the district could save \$307,340 over the next five years. We have also made five recommendations that can be implemented

using the existing resources of the district. The recommendations that will have a fiscal impact to the district are shown below.

- The district should conduct a risk assessment. We estimate that the implementation of this recommendation would result in a one-time cost to the district of \$15,000. (Action Plan 14-1)
- The district should hire a Fiscal Assistant II to expand the in-house internal accounts auditing function. We estimate the implementation of this recommendation would result in a five-year cost to the district of \$123,900. (Action Plan 14-3)
- The district should implement the use of a purchase card system for supply items currently kept as inventory. We estimate that the implementation of this recommendation will result in cost savings to the district of \$215,840 over the next five years. (Action Plan 14-6)
- The district should implement the use of a purchase card system for supply or repair items with a cost of less than \$500, which are currently purchased using purchase orders. We estimate that the implementation of this recommendation would result in cost savings to the district of \$230,400 over the next five years. (Action Plan 14-9)

The recommendations below can be implemented using the existing resources of the district.

- The district should address and correct findings in the external audit report within one year after the receipt of the findings. (Action Plan 14-2)
- The district should fully implement the capabilities of the New TERMS upgrade and update fixed asset transactions as they occur, thus establishing a general ledger control account. (Action Plan 14-4 Recommendation 1)
- The district should annually reconcile the additions shown to fixed asset accounts on the subsidiary ledger to the additions shown on the general ledger. (Action Plan 14-4 Recommendation 2)
- The district should reconcile and investigate significant discrepancies between the actual inventory and the inventory recorded in the district's financial records at year-end. (Action Plan 14-5 Recommendation 1)
- The district should provide safeguards for inventory custody. (Action Plan 14-5 Recommendation 2)
- The district should compile and institute the use of a written policies and procedures manual, which would demonstrate a commitment by district personnel to a strong internal control environment. (Action Plan 14-7)
- The district should cross-train one or more other individuals to perform the bank reconciliation if the primary accountant should become unavailable, and to rotate duties, when applicable. (Action Plan 14-8)

The annual cost effect of implementing the recommendations with a fiscal impact is illustrated in Exhibit 14-2.

*Exhibit 14-2***Implementing the Recommendations for Cost Control Systems Will Have a Five-Year Fiscal Impact of \$307,340 in Cost Savings**

Action Plan and Strategy	Fiscal Impact					Total Cost
	Year 2001-02	Year 2002-03	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	
14-1 Contract out a risk assessment study.	\$(15,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$(15,000)
14-3 Hire a full time Fiscal Assistant II to expand the in-house internal accounts auditing function.	(15,700)	(25,480)	(26,500)	(27,560)	(28,660)	(123,900)
14-6 Use of purchase cards to reduce inventory.	0	53,960	53,960	53,960	53,960	215,840
14-9 Use of purchase cards for supply items.	0	57,600	57,600	57,600	57,600	230,400
Totals	\$(30,700)	\$86,080	\$85,060	\$84,000	\$82,900	\$307,340

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Background

The district's major cost control systems are separated into eight subsections.

- Internal auditing
- Financial auditing
- Asset management
- Inventory management
- Risk management
- Financial management
- Purchasing
- Payment processing

The Lake County School Board, as provided in Ch. 230.03(2), *Florida Statutes*, is required to operate, control, and supervise all free public schools in the district. Laws, rules, regulations, and grantor restrictions applicable to the district's activities define, among other matters, the purposes for which resources may be used and the manner in which authorized uses shall be accomplished and documented.

Chapter 230.23(3), *Florida Statutes*, provides that the responsibility for the administration of the district is vested with the Superintendent of Schools, as the Secretary and Executive Officer of the board, as provided by law.

To ensure the efficient and effective operation of the district in accordance with good business practices and with applicable legal and contractual requirements, effective cost control systems must be established and maintained.

The Superintendent is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective cost control systems. The objectives of efficient and effective cost control systems are to:

- provide management with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition;
- ensure that transactions are executed in accordance with the board's authorization;
- ensure that transactions are recorded properly to promote reliable financial data;
- ensure that restricted assets are managed in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and contracts; and
- within the constraints established by applicable laws and regulations, ensure that operating policies and procedures promote cost-effective and efficient methods of operations.

At the district, significantly all of the responsibilities for ensuring efficient and effective cost control systems rest with the business services function, which is the responsibility of the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.

Methodology

To assess the district's performance related to the best practices for cost control systems, ValienteHernandez P.A. conducted five site visits, interviewed the Finance Director, the Assistant Finance Director, the Purchasing Manager, the Purchasing agent, and other key staff.

To receive program input, ValienteHernandez P.A. surveyed the board members, district staff, and Student Advisory Council (SAC). The questions varied depending on the group surveyed and the results have been incorporated into this chapter where applicable. ValienteHernandez P.A. also conducted analytical procedures on the documentation received from the district.

Issues identified through interviews, site observations, analytical procedures, and survey results were used to obtain comparable information for the cost control system programs in the six peer districts of Alachua, Charlotte, Okaloosa, Osceola, St. Johns, and Santa Rosa.

Findings and Recommendations

Internal Auditing

Goal A: The district has an effective internal audit function.

1 The district has not established an internal audit function.

Section 230.23(10)(l), *Florida Statutes* (2001), permits school districts to employ internal auditors to perform ongoing financial verification of the financial records of a school district and requires that internal auditors hired pursuant to this law must report directly to the board or its designee. Such an internal audit function, when properly defined and carried out, can provide a school district assurance that internal control processes in the organization are adequately designed and functioning effectively and can evaluate the manner in which organizational units comply with board and administrative policies and procedures, as well as with state and federal guidelines. Additionally, an internal audit function can provide a school district with an effective internal performance and evaluation system. Used this way, an internal audit function can be an effective element of management and internal control.

Some of the duties of an internal auditor include those below.

- Review the reliability and integrity of financial and operating information and the means used to identify, measure, classify, and report such information.
- Review the systems established to ensure compliance with those policies, plans, procedures, laws, regulations, and contracts, which could have a significant impact on operations and reports, and should determine whether the organization is in compliance.
- Review the means of safeguarding assets and, as appropriate, verify the existence of such assets.
- Appraise the economy and efficiency with which resources are employed.
- Review operations or programs to ascertain whether results are consistent with established objectives and goals and whether the operations or programs are being carried out as planned.

Lake School District Has Not Established a True Internal Audit Function

The district employs an internal accounts auditor whose responsibilities include auditing the school internal funds and special projects as needed for departments in the district. The job description for the district's internal auditor lists the following responsibilities:

- perform compliance, operational, and financial audits of internal accounts of all schools in the school system verifying;
- compliance with laws, rules and policies;

- compliance with good business practices, including budgets;
- effective use of funds;
- audit for accountability of all property purchased by schools;
- act as trainer/associate for computerized accounting system;
- train and educate principals and bookkeepers in business and financial affairs;
- perform and evaluate the internal control structures and policies and procedures of significant departments of the school system;
- perform other special audits as required; and
- perform related work as required.

These duties and responsibilities of the internal auditor in the district indicate that the district has employed an internal accounts auditor to audit the individual school internal funds as required by State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.087, *Florida Administrative Code*. For purposes of this report, we will refer to the internal auditor as an internal accounts auditor to distinguish the employee performing the internal funds audits from an internal auditor as contemplated by this best practice.

Lake School District's decision to not have an internal audit function is consistent with its peer districts. A review of the internal audit function in the six peer school districts (Alachua, Charlotte, Okaloosa, Osceola, St. Johns, and Santa Rosa) shows that, except for Okaloosa, none of these districts have an in-house internal audit function. Okaloosa School District has a limited internal audit function in that it retains a certified public accounting firm to perform internal audit services on an as-needed basis.

The District Should Conduct a Risk Assessment of Its Activities and Operations

Given the current financial condition of the district, it may not be economically feasible to establish an internal audit function at this time. Regardless of the district's decision concerning the establishment of a true internal audit function, a risk assessment of the operations should be conducted to determine if there exist potential risks that can adversely affect district assets, revenues, liabilities, and expenditures. Risk assessments are typically conducted in all large organizations as a means to protect against unnecessary risks and to identify means to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. Without a properly conducted risk assessment, the district cannot determine if potential risks exist which should be addressed. Typically, internal audit functions are used to address, eliminate, and minimize, through recommending enhanced control processes, the impact of risks to which the organization is exposed. The revenue enhancements and cost savings that could potentially result from addressing these risks may possibly offset the costs of an internal audit function. Due to the current time constraints of district personnel, the district should contract with an independent accounting firm to conduct the initial risk assessment. However, after the initial risk assessment is performed and evaluated, district personnel should be able to conduct the annual risk assessment in-house. Even if the district decides that it is not cost effective to establish an internal audit function, it should still provide for annual risk assessments and address significant risks that are determined from these risk assessments.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district contract with an independent accounting firm to conduct an initial risk assessment and, subsequently, perform a risk assessment of its operations annually.*

One of the outcomes of the risk assessment will be to determine if it would be cost beneficial to establish an internal audit function.

Action Plan 14-1 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 14-1

Internal Auditing

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Subsequent to the initial risk assessment performed by an independent certified public accountant, conduct a risk assessment annually. Determine if it is cost beneficial to establish an internal audit function to address risks identified by the risk assessment.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Contract with an appropriate organization to conduct the first risk assessment. The contract should include as deliverables a risk assessment methodology and materials appropriate to Lake County School District that the district can use to perform subsequent annual risk assessments in-house. The contracted risk assessment should include estimates of the financial impact for all risks identified through the assessment.</p> <p>Step 2: Prioritize identified risks.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop strategies to eliminate or minimize these risks.</p>
Who is responsible	In the absence of an internal audit function, the Finance Director.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	One-time cost of \$ 15,000 (estimated one-time cost of a risk assessment conducted in one of the peer districts, Manatee county). After the initial risk assessment, the recommended annual risk assessment process can be done with existing resources

Financial Auditing

Goal B: The school district ensures that it receives an annual external audit and uses the audit to improve its operations.

2

The district obtains an external audit in accordance with government auditing standards.

State law governs the district's responsibility to obtain annual financial audits. Section 11.45(2)(i), *Florida Statutes* (2001), provides that the Auditor General will conduct financial audits of the accounts and records of all district school boards in counties with populations under 125,000 and conduct financial audits of school districts with populations of 125,000 or more once every three years. Section 218.39(1), *Florida Statutes* (2001), provides that during the other two years, those school districts with populations of

125,000 or more shall have annual financial audits conducted of their accounts and records by certified public accountants. Lake School District is in a county with a population of 125,000 or more.

The annual audit of the district for the 1999-2000 fiscal year was performed by an independent Certified Public Accounting (CPA) firm, in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, supplemented with government auditing standards, and the provisions of the federal Single Audit Act.

The district annually receives a financial audit by either the Auditor General of the State of Florida, or by an independent CPA. A financial audit is defined in law as those audits that are conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and government auditing standards.

While performing the financial audit, the Auditor General and the independent CPA perform an examination to determine whether district operations are properly conducted in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Because of the district's significant federal funding sources, these audits included a review of the federal programs as required by the United States Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) *Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*.

3 The district should enhance its follow-up efforts for findings identified in external audits.

While the district has provided written responses for findings included in the 1998-99 and the 1999-2000 fiscal years audit reports, several recommendations for findings in the 1998-99 fiscal year audit report had not been implemented and were repeated in the 1999-2000 fiscal year audit report.

Pursuant to law, the Auditor General and the independent CPA firm are required to provide the district with all of the auditor's comments that will be included in the audit report.

A review by ValienteHernandez P.A. of the audit reports for the fiscal years ending June 30, 1999, and June 30, 2000, indicate that the district had responded to the audit findings with corrective action plans. However, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that, despite the efforts of district personnel, many of the corrective action plans (for example, the recommendation for a written procedures manual), had not been implemented. The delay in implementing the corrective action plans has been due to administrative changes, which were outside the control of district personnel.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district implement a process for addressing audit findings so that the findings in each fiscal year's audit report are resolved within one year after the receipt of the findings.*

Action Plan 14-2 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 14-2**Financial Auditing**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To address and correct findings in the external audit report within one year after the receipt of the findings.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign responsibility for resolving audit findings to appropriate staff.</p> <p>Step 2: Assigned staff should meet with affected departments and develop an action plan that will resolve the finding. Action plans should include deadline dates.</p> <p>Step 3: Assigned staff should report the status of audit finding resolutions to the board each quarter.</p>
Who is responsible	All departments impacted by audit findings
Time Frame	September 30, 2002 for existing findings, and one year after receipt of audit findings in all subsequent years.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4 The district obtains and reviews required financial information relating to its charter schools. The timeliness of delivery of financial information related to school internal accounts should be enhanced.

The school board has received the required interim financial information for all charter schools in the district.

The Timeliness of Delivery of Audits of Individual School Internal Accounts Should Be Enhanced

Each school in the district receives moneys from fund raising and other activities. Each school accounts for these funds in school internal accounts or funds. Although the board is responsible for these funds, each school is given wide discretion in the management and use of these funds. By law, the board is responsible for providing for audits of these funds. Because of this law, unless otherwise provided for by the district, the external auditors and/or the Auditor General do not perform audits of the school internal funds. Like many other school districts, Lake school district uses an internal accounts auditor to perform this responsibility. A reasonable expectation would be that audits of each school having internal funds should be performed and the results of the audit be presented to the board within 12 months of the close of the fiscal year.

Lake County School District employs one person as an internal accounts auditor. As mentioned earlier, this employee performs school internal accounts' related activities (see page 14-6) for approximately 40 district schools. In August 2001, internal funds audits for the 1999-2000 fiscal year for many of the schools were incomplete.

ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the board approved internal funds audits for several elementary and middle schools in the district for the Fiscal Year 1998-99. The internal auditor presented audits for most of the district's high schools through the 1999-2000 fiscal year to the board on May 14, 2001. The internal auditor told us that completed audit reports of the district's elementary and middle schools for the 1999-2000 fiscal year will not be ready until August 31, 2001, approximately 14 months after the end of the fiscal year. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the board approved internal funds audits for several elementary and middle schools in the district for the Fiscal Year 1998-99. The latest board approved reports available for the district's high schools that were provided in time for our initial review were for the Fiscal Year 1996-97. At that time, the audits for the district's schools were in process and the internal auditor was able to submit audits for most of the district's high schools through the 1999-2000 fiscal year to the board on May 14, 2001.

The internal auditor also indicated that she would present the financial statements of the school internal accounts for several periods to the school board at one time. A review of the school board minutes for the period October 9, 2000, to March 31, 2001, indicated that the May 14, 2001, presentation for most high schools included financial results from the 1996-97 fiscal year through the 1999-2000 fiscal year.

Expansion of the Internal Accounts Audit Function Would Increase Effectiveness and Timeliness of the Process

Based upon its review of peer districts, supplemented with interviews with district personnel, and its review of the timeliness of the internal school accounts audits performed, ValienteHernandez P.A. concluded that the current one-person internal accounts operation does not have the resources necessary to timely conduct the required audits of each school's internal accounts within one year of the end of any fiscal year.

As illustrated in Exhibit 14-3, a review of peer districts with an internal accounts audit function indicated that one peer district had a two-person internal accounts audit function, one peer district had a one-person department with a proposition before their board to increase to a two-person department, and one district had a one-person department with assistance from interns from a local university.

Exhibit 14-3

Handling of the Internal Accounts Auditing Function in Lake County and Peer Districts

District	Handling of Internal Accounts Audit Function
Lake	One person internal accounts auditing department.
Alachua	Two-person internal accounts auditing department.
Charlotte	Outsourcing of the internal accounts auditing function.
Okaloosa	Outsourcing of internal accounts auditing function and an internal funds person in the Finance Department.
Osceola	One-person internal accounts auditing department with proposal to expand to two-person department
St. Johns	Outsourcing of internal accounts auditing function.
Santa Rosa	One-person internal accounts auditing department, which uses part-time interns.

Source: Lake County and peer districts.

This analysis indicates that peer school districts generally have or are planning to provide more resources for their internal accounts auditing function. ValienteHernandez P.A. evaluated the costs of providing additional resources by contracting out versus expanding in-house resources in the district. In either case, the district would retain the current internal accounts auditor to monitor the activity and carry out other functions. ValienteHernandez P.A. found that the cost of outsourcing the internal accounts audit function would exceed the costs of expanding the in-house staff by adding a Fiscal Assistant II by approximately \$30,000.¹

In addition to being more cost-beneficial to the district, expanding the in-house function with a Fiscal Assistant II would improve the timeliness of the internal funds audits. Moreover, adding this position would allow the current internal accounts auditor more time to conduct the special review projects requested by departments in the district such as audits of P-card use, tangible personal property verifications, payroll verifications, etc. that are school specific. By carrying out these functions, the district would also be building up a true internal auditing function. Also, an expanded in-house internal accounts function staff could make available time to help the finance function with monitoring activities, such as reconciling bank accounts, reconciling property and/or inventory subsidiaries to controls, etc.

A new position would also increase the independence of the internal accounts auditor by having a different person available to work directly with the school bookkeepers. Presently, the internal accounts auditor is auditing information that she could have directed the school bookkeeper to prepare.

We also noted that the internal accounts auditor waited until several audits were completed before presenting them as a group to the board. To enhance the timeliness of the reports, we suggest that the internal accounts auditor present her completed audits of the school's internal accounts to the school board as they are completed, rather than presenting multiple reports at one time. Increased timeliness in the receipt of reports for the internal funds accounts by the school board would allow for better use of the resources available to each school, and to the district as a whole.

We estimate that expanding the in-house resources for the internal accounts auditing function would cost approximately \$123,900 over the next five years, as illustrated in Exhibit 14-4. This cost includes salary and benefits plus a one-time cost for overhead costs. This calculation is based upon the current lowest full-time salary of Fiscal Assistant II of \$18,376, a benefits package of one-third of salary, \$6,124, and a four, percent contractual increase in salary every year. Because we recommend that the position would be added by February 28, 2002, only four months, or 25% of the salary would be incurred in the first year, approximately \$8,200. In addition, there is a one-time cost of \$7,500 in the first year to cover one additional computer, training and other overhead costs.

¹ The costs of outsourcing and maintaining the present in-house internal accounts audit function would be approximately \$120,000. To calculate this estimated cost, ValienteHernandez P.A. used an average billing rate of \$80 dollars (one senior accountant \$90 and one staff accountant \$70) multiplied by approximately 996 hours to calculate a total cost of outsourcing the internal audit function of \$80,000. Adding the current costs of the present internal audit function of approximately \$40,000, the total cost of this option is approximately \$120,000.

The costs of adding a Fiscal Assistant II position and maintaining the present in-house internal accounts audit function would be approximately \$90,000 including \$75,000 of salaries and benefits for the current and new internal accounts auditing personnel, \$5,000 for a computer and equipment, and \$10,000 in additional overhead costs including space, utilities, and materials.

Exhibit 14-4**Expanding the In-House Resources for the Internal Accounts Auditing Function Would Cost Approximately \$123,900 Over the Next Five Years**

	Fiscal Year				
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual Costs	\$(15,700)	\$(25,480)	\$(26,500)	\$(27,560)	\$(28,660)
Cumulative Costs	\$(15,700)	\$(41,180)	\$(67,680)	\$(95,240)	\$(123,900)

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district add a Fiscal Assistant II position to the internal accounts auditing function. The primary responsibility assigned to this position would be to provide necessary assistance to the school bookkeepers. A secondary responsibility is to assist the internal auditor in conducting certain audit functions, as long as these are not in conflict with its primary responsibility of assisting the school bookkeepers.*
- *We recommend that the internal accounts auditor submit audit reports for each school to the board as they are completed.*

Action Plan 14-3 provides the steps necessary to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 14-3**Provide Additional Resources to the Internal Accounts Audit Function**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Provide additional resources to the internal accounts audit function by expanding the in-house staff with the addition of a Fiscal Assistant II. This action will enhance the timeliness of the audits of the schools internal funds, and the independence of the internal accounts auditor, and help the district develop a true internal audit function.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Review and evaluate all of the job functions performed by the internal auditor and develop time requirements/budgets for these job functions.</p> <p>Step 2: Determine the extent to which time for job requirements differs from standard work hours of internal accounts auditor.</p> <p>Step 3: Advertise for and hire a Fiscal Assistant II for the internal auditing department.</p> <p>Step 4: Reallocate internal accounts audit function responsibilities to maximize efficiency and independence. Assign the more complex tasks to the internal funds auditor and less complex tasks to the fiscal specialist (including assistance to school bookkeepers).</p>
Who is responsible	Human Resources and Internal Accounts Auditor.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002

Fiscal Impact	Total salary and benefits annually would be \$24,500. This calculation is based upon the current lowest full time salary of Fiscal Assistant II of \$18,376 and a benefits package of one-third of salary, or \$6,124. Because we recommend that the position would be added by February 28, 2002, only four months, or 25% of the salary would be incurred in the first year, approximately \$8,200. If there were a four percent contractual increase in salary every year, plus a one-time cost of \$7,500 for computer, training and other overhead costs, the five-year impact to the district would be \$123,900.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Increase the timeliness of the reports for the internal funds accounts to the school board by submitting the audit reports for each school as they are completed.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and the Director of Finance evaluate the procedure by which internal accounts audit reports are submitted to the board. The new procedure should be such that reports are submitted to the board as they are completed rather than presenting multiple reports at one time.</p> <p>Step 2: New procedure is approved and implemented.</p>
Who is responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and the Director of Finance.
Time Frame	June 30, 2001
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Asset Management

Goal C: The district has established effective controls to provide for effective management of land, buildings, and equipment (capital assets).

5

The district segregates responsibilities for custody of assets from record keeping responsibilities for those assets.

School principals, or their designees, and department heads initiate capital expenditures. The record keeping responsibilities for capital expenditures are in the property control and finance departments. School principals, or their designees have custodial responsibilities for the assets and property control. The property control clerk conducts a physical inventory of the assets at each school and all departments annually.

6 The district has established controls that provide for proper authorization of asset acquisitions and disposals.

Within the district, only the principals or their designees, and department heads can initiate a capital asset acquisition or disposal. Asset acquisitions are subject to the same guidelines as other purchases (see discussion under the purchasing goal on page 14-27).

7 The district has established records that accumulate project costs and other relevant data to facilitate reporting construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors.

The district maintains a project ledger for each project center, which includes budgetary and expenditure information detailed to the fund, function, object, and center level. The district uses a budgetary and expenditure tracking system, which details the total expenditures; made on a project through year-end and carries that amount into the next fiscal year's budget.

8 The district provides recorded accountability for capitalized assets.

The district uses a pre-numbered, bar-coded sticker in labeling each asset and has established accountability for each asset. A capitalization threshold of \$500 has been established and approved by the school board. The property clerk indicates the cost center and department that the asset was assigned to, as well as the fixed asset number, maintains detailed property records for all assets in the district, and the purchase order that authorized its acquisition.

9 Assets are safeguarded from unauthorized use, theft, and physical damage; however, controls for verifying that all assets have been accounted for should be enhanced.

The district has procedures to safeguard assets from unauthorized use; however, with the installation of the new TERMS upgrade, the district should update the general ledger as transactions occur, and reconcile the annual capital expenditures to fixed asset additions.

The District Should Enhance Its Accounting for Fixed Assets

The district safeguards its assets from unauthorized use, theft, and physical damage by using a pre-numbered, bar coded sticker system of identifying fixed assets and attaching these tags to assets. Also, annually the property clerk will conduct an asset inventory, and all discrepancies between the asset inventories and property records are investigated. Also, the district maintains subsidiaries that detail asset

inventories at each cost center. Procedures exist to maintain accountability of asset disposals and reports of disposal activity are presented to the board on a periodic basis.

ValienteHernandez P.A. found that subsidiary ledgers are maintained only for tangible items and vehicles. District Management Information System (MIS) personnel said that the present accounting system does not allow for the updating of the general ledger as transactions occur. Presently, assets are entered into the fixed asset subsidiary ledgers and at the fiscal year-end; the general ledger account balances are adjusted to those on the subsidiary ledger.

District staff also said that when the New TERMS upgrade is fully installed, the general ledger for fixed assets could be updated as transactions occur. When the new features are available, capital purchase transactions will not only update expenditures in the appropriate funds, but will also update fixed asset accounts in the general fixed assets account group. This feature, when used in conjunction with a reconciliation process that reconciles subsidiary account totals with general ledger account totals will allow district personnel to identify and correct any misclassification of capital purchases in a more timely manner. Periodically, and at least each fiscal year-end, a reconciliation of the general ledger and subsidiary ledgers should be performed. Discrepancies between the two ledgers should be fully investigated and adjustments if necessary, should be made to the subsidiary ledgers.

We also found that the district does not reconcile its capital expenditures during the fiscal year to the additions for furniture, fixtures, and equipment on the subsidiary ledger. Consequently, the district does not have any way of knowing if all capital assets that have been purchased have been properly recorded as fixed asset additions on the financial records. Again updating the general ledger as transactions occur would assist district personnel in performing this reconciliation. If the general ledger is updated as the transaction occurs, all fixed asset additions that have been added would be recorded in the general ledger, district personnel would be able to review all the additions made to the fixed asset accounts on the general ledger and reconcile the additions to the capital expenditures.

A reconciliation of capital expenditures made during the year to the fixed asset additions recorded on the general ledger will provide assurance to the district that all capitalizable assets that have been purchased have been properly accounted for in the subsidiary ledgers. This reconciliation needs to be performed routinely, at least annually, by finance department staff, with the cooperation of department heads and school principals and the property accounting clerk.

Recommendations

- *The district should use the features of the new accounting system to update the general ledger as transactions occur (at end of transaction) and establish the general ledger as the fixed asset control account.*
- *We further recommend that district personnel, at the end of the fiscal year, reconcile the fixed asset subsidiary and general ledgers.*
- *We recommend that the finance department reconcile, at least annually, capital expenditures to the amounts shown as capital additions on the general ledger.*

Action Plan 14-4 provides the steps necessary to implement these recommendations

Action Plan 14-4

Asset Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To fully implement the accounting functions of the New TERMS upgrade and update fixed asset transactions as they occur, thus establishing the general ledger as the control account.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: After the New TERMS upgrade has been fully implemented, select a cutoff date (one-two weeks prior to month end). Put a freeze on all non-essential fixed asset purchases to allow the property clerk to update the fixed asset subsidiary records. At month-end, run a complete listing of the subsidiary ledgers and update the general ledger balance to the balance in the subsidiary ledgers.</p> <p>Step 2: As the transactions occur, update fixed asset general ledger accounts.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Property Clerk, FTE Analyst, and Finance Department.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	To annually reconcile the additions shown to fixed asset accounts on the subsidiary ledger to the additions shown on the general ledger.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: At the end of the fiscal year, obtain a detailed printout of all asset additions shown by the property clerk, as well as the detailed records of additions to land, improvements other than building, buildings, construction in process, and computer software.</p> <p>Step 2: Set up a workshop among the selected personnel from property control, FTE, and finance to compare the values shown in the subsidiary ledgers with those in the general ledger.</p> <p>Step 3: Begin the process of reconciling the subsidiary ledgers to the general ledgers.</p> <p>Step 4: Examine and reconcile all discrepancies between the subsidiary property records and the general ledger.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Property Clerk, FTE Analyst, and Finance Department.
Time Frame	March 31, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Performance of an annual reconciliation of the capital expenditures to the capital additions shown on the general ledger accounts.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: At the end of each fiscal year, review purchase invoices for all additions that would be classified as capital expenditures (greater than \$500).</p> <p>Step 2: At the end of each fiscal year, review all additions to the capital accounts on the general ledger.</p> <p>Step 3: Begin the process of reconciling the capital additions to the general ledger.</p> <p>Step 4: Examine and reconcile all discrepancies between the capital expenditures and the capital additions shown on the general ledger.</p>
Who Is Responsible	FTE Analyst and Finance Department.
Time Frame	March 31, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Inventory Management

Goal D: The district has established controls for the effective management of inventory.

10 **The district segregates responsibilities for custody of inventories from record keeping responsibilities for those assets.**

The district has organized its inventory function to report to the Director of Facilities Maintenance, Warehouse and Grounds. Inventory requests are initiated at a school or department, followed by processing at the warehouse. Concurrently, the finance department verifies that the accounting strip is correctly prepared and that the cost center has sufficient budget dollars to fill the request. The perpetual inventory records are updated automatically as the order is processed.

The Finance department is responsible for maintaining the general ledger. Write-downs of inventory are initiated at the Finance department after a physical inventory and reconciliation process have determined that such a procedure is needed.

11 **The district has established and implemented controls that provide for proper inventory requisitioning.**

Only principals, or their designees, and department heads can originate inventory requisitions. As mentioned above, when an inventory requisition is received, both a warehouse employee and finance department personnel will verify it as to the accounting strip. Once the inventory order has been approved, it will be assigned to a warehouse employee to pick the requested materials and ship the required items to the intended location. If the item should have to be returned to the warehouse, a four-part warehouse return sheet must be completed. The school retains two copies of this sheet, the warehouse retains one copy, and the Finance department retains one copy.

12 **The district has established controls that provide for inventory accountability; however, safeguards for inventory custody should be enhanced.**

While the district maintains its inventory records on a perpetual basis and conducts an annual physical inventory, the district does not have sufficient safeguards over inventory and does not fully investigate significant differences between the actual inventory and inventory recorded on the general ledger.

In the general fund, the district accounts for four separate inventory accounts: warehouse, print shop, maintenance, and transportation. A physical inventory is conducted annually and the general ledger records are adjusted to the physical inventory annually, as well. As illustrated in Exhibit 14-5, for the year ending June 30, 2000, the general ledger inventory accounts showed the following balances prior to adjustment.

Exhibit 14-5

General Ledger and Physical Count Balances Prior to Adjustment for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2000

Category	General Ledger Balance	Physical Count	Difference
Warehouse	\$791,511.29	\$565,511.29	\$(226,000.00)
Print Shop	75,902.19	48,569.42	(27,332.77)
Maintenance	237,881.10	237,369.76	(511.34)
Transportation	109,526.33	122,493.52	12,967.19
Total	\$1,214,820.91	\$973,943.99	\$(240,876.92)

Source: Lake County School District inventory counts and general ledger.

Physical Inventory Procedures/Instructions Should Be Enhanced

ValienteHernandez P.A. found, based upon the records provided by the district, that the unadjusted general ledger warehouse inventory balance of \$791,511.29 included approximately \$202,000 of inventory

that was received and isolated prior to June 30, 2000, but not included in the physical inventory count. District staff adjusted the general ledger to agree with the physical inventory count without timely determining the reasons for the differences in these two balances. Accordingly, the adjusted general ledger balance did not include \$202,000 of inventory that was on hand at June 30, 2000. District staff subsequently realized that an error was made and the amounts reported for inventories on the financial statements were corrected for this and other errors.

The physical inventory count procedures, however, do not include a process to ensure that unusual or significant differences between physical counts and general ledger balances are reconciled and/or investigated. It is important to determine the reasons for these differences to ensure that inventory balances are correctly reported and to ensure that all inventories have been properly accounted for. The procedures for taking physical inventories should include processes for identifying all significant and unusual differences between the physical inventory counts and the general ledger balances at the time the physical inventories are conducted. Such a process will also help detect physical inventory counting errors.

The District Should Increase Its Security Controls to Safeguard Its Warehouse Inventory

Through a physical examination of the warehouse facility, discussion with department personnel, and verified by a review of the warehouse function's organizational chart, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that the warehouse is unsecured during regular operating hours. The district stores over \$565,000 of inventory in this particular warehouse, including grounds equipment and parts, furniture items, sports equipment, and readily usable and transportable classroom and cleaning supplies. The warehouse facility is so large that an unauthorized, non-district employee could enter the warehouse without being questioned or noticed by district staff.

The district has an alarm system already in place on its warehouse facilities. This alarm system is not set during hours of operation, however, all the district employees who should have warehouse access can be made aware of the alarm code. Activation of the alarm system during working hours would make employees aware if an unauthorized individual attempted to enter the warehouse facility.

Recommendations

We recommend that the district take two actions to improve its inventory management.

- *District personnel need to enhance physical inventory count procedures/instructions to include a reconciliation of the general ledger inventory balances with the physical inventory count balances, documenting and investigating any differences between the two. This reconciliation should be conducted at the time of the counts.*
- *We recommend that the district adopt stricter security measures during operating hours at its warehouse.*

Action Plan 14-5 provides the steps necessary to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 14-5

Inventory Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To reconcile and investigate significant discrepancies between the actual inventory and the inventory recorded in the district's financial records.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Working together, the Finance, MIS, and Warehouse departments should investigate and reconcile physical inventory count balances and the inventory balances recorded in the district's general ledger. This should be accomplished by comparing physical documentation (inventory requisitions, warehouse return receipts) with the computerized inventory records and ensuring that the same inventory cutoff dates have been observed on all inventory records.</p> <p>Step 2: After all discrepancies have been resolved, document and adjust the general ledger or perpetual inventory as appropriate.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Warehouse Manager, MIS, and Finance Department.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	To provide safeguards for inventory custody.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The alarm system should be set during hours of operation. Develop procedures to provide authorized district staff with the alarm code. The alarm code should be changed every 30 days.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Warehouse Manager, MIS, and Finance Department.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

13

The district has not evaluated the inventory function to determine its cost-effectiveness.

The district attempts to be as efficient as it can with the staff and resources that it has available for inventory management. Currently, the district has two employees who perform inventory functions at the main warehouse. Other staff, such as those responsible for pest control, grounds workers, tagging of fixed assets, etc., also assists with inventory maintenance and delivery when needed. Conversely, inventory staff is cross-trained to perform other functions when needed. Sharing work responsibilities with other departments, although an efficient use of staff, makes it difficult to determine the actual cost of the inventory management function without appropriate cost-allocation methods.

ValienteHernandez P.A. analyzed the inventory process to obtain a better understanding of its associated costs. The steps below are performed during the inventory ordering cycle, which take approximately 5-7 days.

- Authorized personnel at each cost center will prepare and electronically transmit their inventory requisitions to inventory management. A copy of the inventory request will have been transmitted simultaneously to the finance department.
- The manager or the assistant manager at the main warehouse will receive and review the requisition.
- If the inventory requisition is acceptable, the manager or assistant manager will print it. The printing process will automatically update the perpetual inventory report.
- The manager or assistant manager will assign the requisition to warehouse personnel to be filled.
- A typical inventory requisition will take approximately one to one and one-half hours to fill.
- The requisitioned items are delivered to the requesting cost center.

The district has also established specific points at which inventory is reordered, it encourages each cost center to maintain their supplies at a certain level, and it monitors inventory to avoid overstocking and stocking obsolete items. The district also encourages schools and departments to order supplies sufficient to last nine weeks. These steps are designed to minimize the number of times deliveries must be made. They also encourage using departments to order a sufficient amount of supplies to make each delivery worthwhile in terms of the cost of the delivery.

These practices are also followed because the large geographical area of the district makes it costly to make many small deliveries. A consequence of these practices is that there is an average five-to seven-day lag between when the inventory items are requested and when they are delivered. This practice puts using departments and schools in a bind when there is an emergency need for inventory items, which does occur periodically.

As noted previously, the warehouse inventory at June 30, 2000, was \$565,867.23. The value of general supply items included in the warehouse inventory was approximately \$239,140. General supply items include such items as classroom supplies, janitorial supplies, and janitorial chemical supplies. Our review of inventory requisitions showed that in excess of 40% of deliveries were for general supply items. These items are types that are easily purchased using a purchase card.

The District Should Institute a Purchase Card System for Items Currently Purchased With Inventory Requisitions From the School District's Main Warehouse

The use of a purchase card system by the district would benefit the district as described below.

- Inventory items would be delivered to the schools in a timelier manner. Instead of the five-to-seven day inventory lag in inventory delivery, most items could be delivered in one to two days (or picked up immediately if necessary).
- Currently five persons handle the warehouse function in the district with grounds workers serving in three of these positions, also a grounds person works as the receiving clerk for inventory items. A reduction in the size of the inventory would also reduce the number of personnel needed to maintain the warehouse function.
- Reduction in space required for storing inventory items, thus freeing warehouse space for other uses.

- Reduction in space required at schools for storing nine weeks supply of inventory requisitions.
- Reduction in warehouse overhead costs, such as the cost of purchasing and maintaining delivery vehicles, reduction of risks for workers compensation and vehicle liability claims (because of fewer deliveries), reduction in need for warehouse equipment (such as forklifts, etc.), and reduction in the need for fiscal services, including accounting and information technology.

Through the use of purchase cards and a 40% reduction in inventory transactions, significant cost savings could be realized. Because a cost allocation system was not in place, we could not estimate all cost savings that could be realized; however, ValienteHernandez P.A. estimates that the district could save approximately \$53,960 annually by the use of a purchase card system for inventory items. This cost savings is conservatively calculated as shown below.

Cost Area	Estimated (Cost) Savings
Reduction in two groundworkers/warehousemen positions: (Average salary and benefits of \$24,505.50 for each position)	\$49,011.00
Reduction in known overhead costs: (Conservative identification of known overhead costs of \$527,555 applied at a conservative rate of 10%)	52,775.00
Increase in cost of purchasing inventory from vendors direct instead of using the warehouse: (Estimated 4 complete inventory cycles each year times the ending inventory value of \$239,140 times an average 5% increase in per-item costs)	(47,828.00)
Total Net Savings	\$53,958.00

The increase in per-item costs were based on a comparison of the current average costs contained in the inventory records with major store catalogs and discounted for bulk purchases. We estimate that the use of a purchase card system for certain inventory items would result in cost savings over a five-year period as illustrated in Exhibit 14-6.

Our estimate relating to the overhead savings of \$52,775 is conservative. However, the district may choose to reallocate the overhead resources freed by implementing this recommendation to perform other essential services of the district. To the extent that resources are reallocated, the actual cost savings may vary.

Exhibit 14-6

The Use of Purchase Cards by District Personnel to Purchase Certain Inventory Items Will Result in Savings to the District of \$215,840 Over the Next Five Years

	Fiscal Year				
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual Cost Savings	\$0	\$53,960	\$53,960	\$53,960	\$53,960
Cumulative Cost Savings	\$0	\$53,960	\$107,920	\$161,880	\$215,840

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

Features of the purchasing card system recommended for inventory should be similar to those listed under the purchasing goals section of the report. (Page 14-26)

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district implement the use of a purchase card system for all supply items currently obtained by inventory requisitions.*

Action Plan 14-6 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 14-6

Inventory Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To institute a purchase card system for the purchase of supply items currently stocked in warehouse.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Perform an examination of the current inventory requisitions received from each cost center.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider type (bank or store), authorized users, and limits that should be placed on each purchase card.</p> <p>Step 3: Present a detailed outline of results of examination of costs and benefits of a purchase card system to the school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: Use purchase card, initially to reduce inventory at main warehouse and eventually to purchase items currently stocked in main warehouse.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Warehouse Manager, School Principals, and Finance Department.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Cost savings of \$53,960 in the first year of implementation. If cost savings were to remain constant, \$215,840 over the next five years. ²

Source: Lake County and peer districts.

Risk Management

Goal E: **The district has established procedures that identify various risks and provide for a comprehensive approach to reducing the impact of losses.**

² Estimated cost savings might vary in Lake County based upon discounts with individual vendors, and salaries of specific individuals and implementation of the recommendation by the district.

14 The district has a process to set objectives for risk management activities, identify and evaluate risks, and design a comprehensive program to protect itself at a reasonable cost.

The district has identified the various risks of loss to which the district is exposed, and as required by Ch. 230.12 (9) (d), *Florida Statutes*, carries insurance on school property, including contents, boilers, and machinery. As required by Ch. 230.23(10)(h), *Florida Statutes*, the district carries the required dishonesty insurance (bonds) on all employees responsible for school funds. The district is also in compliance with Ch. 230.23(10)(l) *Florida Statutes*, which requires that school districts provide adequate protection against any loss or damages to school property or loss resulting from any liability for which the board or its officers, agents, or employees may be responsible under the law. The district has a risk management function that ensures that the district is protected against those risks identified by law.

15 The district has comprehensive policies and procedures relating to acquiring and reviewing coverage for risks of loss.

The district purchases insurance coverage from two major insurers. It uses an insurance consortium of Florida school districts to obtain insurance coverage for property, third-party liability, worker's compensation, employer's liability, personal injury and medical payments (automobile), money and securities, and an employee blanket bond.

The district has obtained coverage for boiler and machinery, hazardous substances, errors and omissions, and catastrophic student accident coverage through purchased commercial insurance. The district provides employee group health and life insurance through a minimum premium agreement through June 30, 2001. Beginning July 1, 2001, the district is fully insured for group health and life insurance.

The district periodically reviews insurance coverage to determine adequacy. The risk management function has established processes to determine current valuations of district assets to ensure that insurance policies cover recent changes in assets. Periodically, insurance lines are evaluated to determine satisfaction with services provided relative to the cost of the insurance. The district also periodically places insurance lines up for requests for proposal to ensure that costs are reasonable.

Financial Management _____

Goal F: The district has established controls to ensure its financial resources are properly managed.

16 **District management communicates its commitment and support of strong internal controls. Communication however, could be enhanced through the development and use of written procedures manuals.**

The district has a commitment to the ethical conduct of its business, including a written employee ethics policy and the use of an Employee Protection Line if employees wish to report suspected improprieties or misconduct of a superior employee. Based upon the responses to a survey conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A., and our inquiries, this policy has been effectively communicated to district personnel.

The District Should Develop and Maintain Written Procedures Manual for All Critical Finance Processes

Although the district has communicated its commitment to a strong internal control environment verbally, it does not have written procedures manuals. A review by ValienteHernandez P.A. of the financial supporting documentation indicated that district personnel were following procedures usually present when there is a desired commitment to internal control.

However, written procedures manuals is essential to clearly outline the necessary procedures when completing the district's financial transactions. Such manuals would also serve as a guideline to new employees thus reducing the operational impact of staff departures, and the learning curve of new employees. Additionally, written procedures manuals would serve as a guideline for the cross-training of staff members.

ValienteHernandez P.A. understands that the development and maintenance of policies written procedures manuals for internal control is very time consuming. However, to minimize the impact of the loss of institutional knowledge possessed when an employee leaves, district staff should identify those financial processes that are critical to the continued operation of the district or are necessary for providing essential oversight of critical processes. District staff can then prioritize the critical processes and ensure that these processes are documented first.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district compile and institute the use of comprehensive written procedures manuals on internal control for critical financial processes, from the inception of the transaction to its recording in the general ledger.*

Additionally, we recommend the procedures manuals be periodically, at least annually, reviewed and updated.

Action Plan 14-7 contains the steps necessary to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 14-7

Financial Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Compile and institute the use of written policies and procedures manuals that would demonstrate a commitment by district personnel to a strong internal control environment.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Form a committee of key personnel in the finance department to identify and prioritize critical financial processes and document them.</p> <p>Step 2: Present a draft of the policy that has been written to the Finance Director for revision and submission to the school board.</p> <p>Step 3: Present the revised policy to the school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: Review and update the procedures manuals on an annual basis.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Finance Director and Finance Department.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002, and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with no fiscal impact.

17 The district records and reports financial transactions in accordance with prescribed standards.

The district's accounting system was designed to include a chart of accounts consistent with the requirements of the Florida Department of Education's manual *Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools* (known as the *Red Book 1997*), which is required under s. 237.01, *Florida Statutes*, and State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.001, *Florida Administrative Code*. The features of this system include account-coding information (cost center, program, function, object) to accumulate costs in accordance with prescribed standards.

18 The district prepares and distributes its financial reports timely.

The district prepares a monthly budget analysis comparing the revised budgeted expenditures to the actual year-to-date expended amounts. This report also includes information on amounts that have already been encumbered and the percentage of the budget (including encumbrances) that has already been expended.

This information is presented monthly to the board in summary format, making it practical for decision making. This report also includes the required information of grants and programs funded from restricted sources.

19 The district has a financial plan serving as an estimate of and control over operations and expenditures.

Budgets are formulated and adopted in accordance with applicable state laws and DOE rules. A budget calendar is prepared and used for the orderly submission of the budget.

Advertisements, including the required notification to the public concerning mileage rates and notification of budget hearings, are placed in commonly available local newspapers.

Budgets are prepared in sufficient detail to provide effective monitoring of restricted funds. Actual and budgetary amounts are compared on a monthly basis, and the budget is sent to the board for approval if revisions are necessary.

20 The district should enhance its controls over its cash resources by ensuring bank reconciliations are performed timely.

Generally, the district has effective controls to provide accountability for cash resources. There are sufficient personnel in the finance department to provide a segregation of duties for the cash receipts and disbursement functions, and the recording of cash receipts is functionally separate from the responsibility to make general ledger entries.

All cash receipts functions (except for the school internal account funds) are done within the finance department. The district also has procedures in place that physically safeguard cash that has not been deposited and petty cash funds. Although the district maintains one bank account, records are kept in sufficient detail for that account.

The District's Finance Department Should Cross-Train Personnel to Perform Monthly Bank Reconciliations

ValienteHernandez P.A. noted that if the designated employee is absent, no other employee is assigned the responsibility of reconciling the bank account. Bank reconciliations are considered a critical process for which procedures should be documented so that other staff can perform them in the absence of the employee who normally performs them. The district's control over its cash resources is rendered less effective during the time periods when the bank reconciliation is not being performed.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district's finance department cross-train one or more staff persons to perform the bank reconciliation process. A rotation of duties needs to be implemented in order to safeguard assets.*

Action Plan 14-8 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 14-8

Financial Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To cross-train one or more other individuals to perform the bank reconciliation if the primary accountant should become unavailable, and to rotate duties, when applicable.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Outline the critical processes in the bank reconciliation function.</p> <p>Step 2: Select employee(s) to be cross-trained in the bank reconciliation process.</p> <p>Step 3: Train the employee(s) to perform the bank reconciliation and supervise their preparation of the bank reconciliation the following month.</p> <p>Step 4: Design a confidential plan of rotation of duties, with the specific intention of having the bank account periodically reconciled by an employee other than the person specifically assigned that duty.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Finance Director, Assistant Finance Director, and assigned accounting personnel.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

21 The district has an investment plan that includes investment objectives and performance criteria designed to maximize return consistent with the risks associated with each investment and specify the types of financial products approved for investment.

The district has limited funds available for investment and will invest only in secure investments with very little risk of loss.

At any given point in time, the district will have between 75-100% of its investments in deposit with the Florida State Board of Administration (SBA) investment pool, the statutorily designated depository for state and local government retirement funds and local government investment pools.

A financial advisor has assisted the district in investing other funds; currently the district has approximately \$10 million dollars invested in commercial paper, Federal Reserve notes, and other investments with no risk of loss, as a result of that advisor's suggestions.

22 The district has established effective controls for recording, collecting, adjusting, and reporting receivables.

The district does not undertake or participate in activities that generate significant receivables. The revenue that the district obtains is from either state agencies or from the county tax collector. Receivables are recorded only at fiscal year-end for financial reporting purposes.

23 **The district has effective controls that provide accountability for the payment of salaries and benefits.**

The district has established sufficient controls to provide accountability for the payment of salaries and benefits.

The district limits access to the master payroll file to employees who are authorized to make changes. Access to the employee payroll records is limited to the personnel and payroll departments.

Access to the employee records in the accounting system is limited to employees that are authorized. The payroll department can access the system to record changes to the payroll records of an existing employee, but the access to new employee screens is restricted to the personnel department.

The district has a week lag time between the submission of payroll information and payroll processing. Most of the payroll changes necessary are identified and corrected during that one-week period; however, the district will run an exception payroll report as necessary to reconcile all changes from one payroll period to the next. Approximately 49% of the district employees are on direct deposit for payroll.

The district tracks the leave and vacation hours available for each employee and reports leave and vacation balances to the employee on each pay stub. The district sends the annual W-2 reports to the employee in a timely manner, and all returned W-2 forms are retained for the required period of time.

The district has made all of the required contributions to the state retirement program and does not currently have any employees who are receiving early retirement payments.

24 **The district analyzes, evaluates, monitors, and reports debt-financing alternatives.**

The district has a working system to analyze, evaluate, monitor and report debt financing alternatives. The district has engaged the services of a financial advisor to analyze and evaluate various financing alternatives. Currently, the major debt in the district is for two certificates of participation with outstanding balances totaling \$88,585,000 as of June 30, 2000.

The district also uses tax anticipation notes (TANs) and revenue anticipation notes (RANs) as other debt financing alternatives. The bids of three underwriters were considered prior to the last tax anticipation note being adopted.

25 **The district effectively monitors and reports grant activities.**

The district effectively monitors and reports the activity on each grant by performing the following for each grant that the district receives.

- The agency from which it is received
- Grant name
- Project code (what the grant is to be used for)
- Agency project number (how the granting agency identifies the project)
- The agency contact
- Information about terms and conditions of the grant
- The last date for incurring expenditures and issuing purchasing orders
- The date that all obligations are to be liquidated
- The date that final disbursement reports need to be submitted.

The district uses a unique number (called a project number) to identify each grant that has been received. All expenditures on the grant will be coded to that project number. The district reviews the terms of the grant before any expenditure is made using related grant funds.

If the terms of the grant extend over more than one fiscal year, district personnel will review and verify all amounts, which have not yet been expended or encumbered (payment has not yet been made for expenses already incurred) or committed (moneys are to be used for a specific purpose). The unencumbered and uncommitted remaining grant balance is transferred as the beginning grant budget for the next fiscal year.

Purchasing _____

Goal G: The district has an effective purchasing function that ensures goods and services of acceptable quality, and performances are acquired at prices that are fair, competitive, and reasonable.

26 The district segregates purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving function.

The district has segregated purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing and receiving function in the manner described below.

All purchase requisition requests are received electronically using the school district's accounting software package, Total Educational Records Management System (TERMS). The accounting software system has various authorization codes that prevent unauthorized individuals from making purchase requisition requests.

All purchase requisition requests are received simultaneously at the Purchasing department and at the Finance department.

It is the responsibility of the purchasing agent to review all requisitions and ascertain that all purchases are in accordance with applicable state laws and school board policies.

As part of the purchasing system, the Finance department will check the requisition for proper coding and availability of funds.

The purchasing department will either process the requisition into a purchase order or notify originating department that the requisition was not acceptable.

When the goods are received, a grounds worker who is functionally independent of the Purchasing department, will inspect the goods received and forward a copy of the receiving report to the Finance department.

Responsibilities for verification of the purchase orders and receiving reports against the invoice from the vendors, the disbursement of payment to the vendors, and entry of transactions into the district's financial reports have been assigned to different people in the finance department.

27 The district has established controls for authorizing purchase requisitions.

The district has established various controls for authorizing purchase requisitions. All purchase requisitions are originated by an authorized individual, either the principal (or someone that he/she has designated), or the department head.

The school or departments will electronically transmit a purchase requisition request to both the purchasing department and the finance department. The following information will be included in this electronic transmission, the identifying (cost center) number of the school or department requesting the item(s), and the contract or bid number that would authorize the expenditure for the particular purchase requisition. Information on the fund, function, object, center, and project, as well as information on the quantity, units, unit price, and extended amount is also included on the purchase requisition request.

The Purchasing department will verify that the purchase is in accordance with state law, and the finance department will verify that the purchase requisition is coded correctly. Once the purchase requisition has been approved by the Finance department, the Purchasing department will prepare four-part purchase order and distribute it to the vendor, school or department that requested the item(s).

The District Should Exercise Stricter Control in Monitoring the Purchase Requisition Requests Against Budgeted Funds

The district has procedures in place to prevent individual cost centers from over expending budgeted amounts. However, ValienteHernandez P.A. found instances where expenditures had exceeded budgeted amounts. Since the finance and purchasing departments receive the purchase requisition request simultaneously, checking of the account-coding strip is done before the purchase is authorized. In these instances, an error in the account-coding strip was made and was not caught and corrected prior to authorizing the expenditure. Subsequent to paying for the transactions, the error was found and,

when corrected, it resulted in expenditures exceeding budgeted amounts in the correct project or specific area. ValienteHernandez P.A.'s review indicated that the over-expenditure of budget amounts resulting from such errors occurred infrequently. ValienteHernandez P.A. determined that some of the errors occurred because of confusion as to the correct procedures to follow. As noted previously, procedures have been communicated informally without a written procedures manual. The requisitioning process is also a critical financial process, which with readily available written procedures could help reduce this type of error.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district compile and institute the use of a written procedures manual for the purchasing process, and the related accounting of such transactions. The development of the procedures manual for this area should be incorporated into the project of creating a complete manual for the Finance department, as described in Recommendation 1, Action Plan 14-7.*

28 The district has established authorization controls over purchasing.

The district has established authorization controls over various purchasing functions. The district has procedures in place to coordinate and consolidate planned purchases, which prohibit the use of split purchases. The district also has procedures in place to evaluate competitive bids on the basis of price and quality.

Additionally, the district has procedures to ensure that justifications for informal rather than competitive bids are periodically reviewed, that the appropriate number of price quotations are obtained before placing orders, and that purchase orders and contracts are issued under numerical control.

Certain Enhancements Could Be Made to the Purchasing Function

Although the district has procedures in place that establish authorization controls over purchasing, the district could enhance its purchasing function with the use of a purchase card system.

Currently, the district requires that all purchases be submitted using a purchase requisition. Personnel in the Purchasing department and Finance department verify the requisition for acceptability. If the purchase requisition is approved, a four-part purchase order is generated, copies of which are sent as follows:

- the original copy is sent to the vendor by the purchasing department;
- a second copy is sent to the school or department to be returned immediately to the purchasing department;
- a third copy is sent to the school or department to be retained by them; and
- a fourth copy is sent to the school or department that will receive the merchandise.

This last copy is subsequently forwarded to the accounts payable department when the purchased item(s) is (are) received.

The above procedure is followed for all purchase orders regardless of cost of the items being purchased. Following the above procedure requires the involvement of the purchasing department, school/department, and finance department.

District personnel were unable to provide ValienteHernandez, P.A. with a breakdown of the exact cost of time and resources necessary to generate a purchase requisition, purchase order, and approve the purchase order for payment, but peer district personnel have estimated the costs between \$50-\$125 for each purchase order. Each purchase order generated by the district involves utilizing both direct (salary and materials) and indirect resources (utilities and space) of at least three of the district's cost centers (school or department, purchasing department, and finance department). Therefore, this cost estimation appears reasonable.

A review of randomly selected purchase requisitions generated for the warehouse and grounds department indicated that one-half of the requisitions was for less than \$100. A subsequent review of the requisition verification reports for April 9 and April 11, 2001, indicated that of the 150 requisitions made on those two days, thirty-two, or approximately 30%, were less than \$200. The use of a purchase card for 20% of under \$200 requisitions (or 6.4 requisitions based on our two day sample) could generate cost savings to the district of \$57,600 based on a 180-day annual period with direct and indirect costs of \$50 per purchase order.

As illustrated in Exhibit 14-7, more complete implementation of the purchase card system would result in the following cost savings to the district over a five-year period, assuming that overhead costs associated with the processing of small dollar purchase orders are eliminated. To the extent that resources formerly committed to these activities are redirected and/or used to enhance financial services to the district, the actual cost savings may vary.

Exhibit 14-7

The Use of Purchase Cards by District Personnel Can Result in Savings to the District of \$230,400 Over the Next Five Years

	Fiscal Year				
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual Cost Savings	\$0	\$57,600	\$57,600	\$57,600	\$57,600
Cumulative Cost Savings	\$0	\$57,600	\$115,200	\$172,800	\$230,400

Source: ValienteHernandez P.A.

A review of the peer districts chosen for our examination indicated that of the five peer districts, four were already using a purchase card system and one was strongly considering implementing one. The use of purchase cards by the peer districts is outlined in Exhibit 14-8.

Exhibit 14-8

Use of Purchase Cards in Lake County and Peer Districts

District	Use of Purchase Cards
Lake	Does not use purchase cards. Use purchase requisitions and purchase orders.
Alachua	Does not currently use purchase cards, but is strongly considering implementation.
Charlotte	Uses purchase cards.
Osceola	Uses purchase cards.
Okaloosa	Uses purchase cards.
St. Johns	Uses purchase cards.

Source: Lake County and peer districts.

Each of the peer districts that use a purchase card system has implemented different criteria for the usage of this card, but all have prohibited the purchase of capitalized equipment, liquor and entertainment type items. Some districts are still in the pilot phase of implementation while other districts have fully implemented the use of purchase cards.

All districts that have implemented purchase card usage have done so for items the district would consider warehouse items. Utilizing purchase cards for certain items, and an implementation plan where security concerns are properly addressed and satisfactorily resolved, will reduce administrative costs related to the purchasing function.

Recommendation

- We recommend that the district implement the use of purchase cards for the purchase of supply items up to \$500 currently obtained from the warehouse or through purchase requisitions.*

Action Plan 14-9 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 14-9

Utilization of Purchasing Cards for Selected Acquisitions

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To implement the use of purchase cards for the purchase of supply items up to \$500 currently obtained from the warehouse or through purchase requisitions.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Discussion between the schools/departments, purchasing, and finance departments on the implementation of a purchase card.</p> <p>Step 2: Discussion of the type of features that a purchase card would have among the items to be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dollar limit on transactions (\$500 is recommended). The types of transactions that are acceptable (recommendation initially supply (0510) items). Level of implementation (recommendation pilot program of five schools and one department). Type of card to be used (recommendation – bank card). Authorization level (most peer districts have principal, bookkeeper, department heads, and secretaries).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget (\$10,000 a month recommended).
	Step 3: Present purchase card implementation plan to principals and department heads for review and comments. Choose a tentative pilot group.
	Step 4: Present purchase card plan to school board for approval.
	Step 5: If plan is approved, meeting between representatives from schools/ departments, finance and purchasing departments.
Who Is Responsible	Purchasing, Finance, Schools/Departments.
Time Frame	Initial implementation by October 1, 2002. Full implementation by October 1, 2005.
How to Evaluate	Reduction in expenditures of time and resources to fill inventory and purchase requisitions.
Fiscal Impact	Implementing this recommendation may save the district \$57,600 a year when implemented. If the cost savings remain constant, the savings to the district will be \$230,400 over the next five-years. ³

29 The district has established controls to ensure that goods are received and meet quality standards.

The district has established controls ensuring that goods received meet its quality standards by instituting two distinct receiving functions for goods depending on the origination of the request.

The groundsworker that handles the receiving function at the main warehouse receives inventory requisition items only. This employee will

- verify that all goods that have been ordered on the purchase order are received and meet quality standards;
- fill out one of two reports, (1) a receiving report if there are no deviations in the number of items received from the items listed on the purchase order, or (2) a partial receiving report if there is a variation in the items received from those listed on the purchase order; and
- follow up on all partial receiving reports that she/he has prepared.

The individual school/department that ordered the item bears the ultimate responsibility for verification that items ordered meet quality standards.

Each purchase order contains four parts, one of which is the receiving report maintained by the school/department that purchased the item. When an item is received, authorized personnel at the school/department will check to verify that the item meets quality standards and then forward their copy of the receiving report to the finance department for processing.

² Cost savings in Lake County could vary from the amount of estimated cost savings.

Payment Processing

Goal H: The district has effective controls over disbursements for goods and services.

30 The district has established controls to ensure that disbursements are properly authorized, documented, and recorded.

The district has established controls over cash disbursements in several ways. The district

- requires that all requests for checks or warrants contain the signature of an individual who is authorized to request disbursements (usually a school principal or department head);
- before a warrant or check is issued, compares the request for payment with the supporting documents (i.e. invoices, purchase requisitions, and receiving reports) to ensure payment is made only for items that have actually been requisitioned and received;
- ensures control over cash disbursements by using checks which are numbered by the computer with new TERMS system;
- maintains a check-signing chip, which must be signed in and out of a secure location and accounted for on a regular basis; and
- limits times, to the extent possible, it makes cash disbursements on a weekly basis, mainly for work flow purposes and to pay vendors more timely.

31 The district has established controls for processing invoices to ensure that quantities, prices, and terms coincide with purchase orders and receiving reports.

The district has established controls for processing invoices by requiring that all invoices received are forwarded to, and be located at, the accounting section of the Finance department.

All invoices for payment that are received by the Finance department, are verified by Finance department personnel to ensure that the request for payment is properly supported. This procedure involves a comparison of the invoice for payment to the original purchase order requisition and the receiving report. Finance department personnel verify that the items submitted for payment on the invoice are those that are contained on the original purchase requisition (order) and that all the items listed on the invoice have been received (this is normally referred to as the *matching* process).

The Finance department also has procedures in place to process payments for which there is no purchase requisition (i.e., monthly utility bills). One person within the Finance department is assigned to process the utility bills for all schools and departments within the school district. They will review the bill to ensure that it is reasonable, and follow up with the school or department if the bill appears to be unreasonable.

15

Safety and Security

The Lake County School District has clearly stated goals and measurable, outcome-based objectives for its safety and security program. However, the district could take further preventative measures to ensure the overall security of its students and employees.

Conclusion

Because education does not take place in a vacuum apart from the rest of society, the Lake County School District (the district) inevitably experiences its share of threats, acts of violence and incidents of intimidation, including those occurring while students are on school property. These join fire, athletic injuries, and countless other hazards among the safety and security contingencies for which the district must be prepared.

Parents, students, and community agencies are partners with the district in keeping schools safe and secure. However, it is the responsibility of the district, individual school administrators, teachers and other personnel to ensure that district schools are as safe and secure as possible at all times.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Effectiveness of Safety and Security Program

- The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms and could further improve by conducting an annual assessment of the performance measures and related costs of the safety program. (Page 15-3)
- The district regularly reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the safety and security program, and minimizes administrative layers and processes. (Page 15-5)

Safety and Security of Students and Employees

- The district has a written comprehensive plan that includes district-wide emergency and safety procedures and identifies those responsible for them. (Page 15-6)
- The district has developed a checklist for each school that provides step-by-step crisis-response procedures. (Page 15-9)
- The district should implement a coordinated system to track safety training for district and school personnel who need school safety training. (Page 15-10)

Disruptive and/or Violent Behavior

- Each school in the district has a system in place to detect the early warning signs of student violence and to protect others from disruptive behavior. (Page 15-12)
- The district identifies and implements parental and community outreach strategies to promote safety at home and in the community. (Page 15-14)
- The district conducts a needs assessment to determine the need for violence and drug prevention programs and, based on identified needs, implements appropriate programs. The district, however, should re-evaluate the Drop-Out Prevention program. (Page 15-15)
- The district and each school have established disciplinary policies that are well-defined and well-communicated. (Page 15-17)
- The school board adopts curricula and programs aimed at protecting students, teachers, and administrators. (Page 15-18)

Safety and Condition of School Facilities and Equipment

- The district was able to demonstrate that each school in the district has performed an annual self-assessment of all relevant health and safety issues. (Page 15-18)
- The district should consult with proper authorities, such as the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, regarding playground construction materials and regulations. (Page 15-20)
- Each school should have appropriate equipment to protect the safety and security of property and records. (Page 15-21)
- The district should establish procedures to guarantee that students and employees are provided appropriate safety equipment and information to prevent injuries to students and others. (Page 15-23)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations ---

The issues and recommendations previewed here and discussed at length in this chapter will improve district performance in meeting its safety and security goals. Recommendations should be neutral in terms of their fiscal impact.

Background ---

Maintaining a safe and secure environment for students and employees is the primary function of school safety and security. Reports from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice, Engineering and Safety Service offer the steps below for creating and maintaining a safe and secure school environment:

- Establish school-community partnerships
- Identify and measure problems
- Develop a plan by setting measurable goals and objectives
- Identify strategies to achieve goals
- Implement the plan
- Evaluate the plan

- Upon evaluation, revise the plan to increase effectiveness.

The Lake County School District encounters incidents of threat and intimidation, including those occurring while students are on school buses. The district takes measures to increase student awareness of the consequences of bus violations through *Code of Student Conduct Manual* and through a video that is watched by each student at the beginning of the school year.

Contributing to increased violence can be a lack of skills by students and adults in resolving conflicts peacefully, as well as a lack of behavior-management skills on the part of classroom teachers and other adults. Extensive training is currently underway on social skills and peer mediation. Peer mediation will take place three times during the 2002 school year. Social skills training has already taken place four times in the 2002 school year and two trainings are scheduled for bus drivers in the fall of 2002.

Methodology

ValienteHernandez P.A. used a variety of methods in assessing the district's performance in relation to the best practices for safety and security. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed self-assessment instruments prepared by district staff and associated evidence; conducted interviews of district staff; performed site visits of operational areas; conducted surveys of stakeholders; and held public meetings.

Findings and Recommendations

Effectiveness of the Safety and Security Program

Goal A: **The school district ensures that its safety and security program has clear direction and is effective in meeting its intended purpose in a cost-efficient manner.**

1

The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms and could further improve by conducting an annual assessment of the performance measures and related costs of the safety program.

The District Has Clearly Stated Goals and Outcome-Based, Measurable Objectives for the Safety Program

The Lake County School District has developed a Safety Alliance Fundamental to Education (SAFE) program and has created the position of SAFE School Coordinator to oversee all safe school programs

including alternative disciplinary, juvenile jail school, school resource officers, court liaison and truancy programs, school safety audits, emergency management training and substance abuse/violence prevention.

A SAFE committee consisting of community leaders, parents, educators, students, and board members has been formed to serve as the Safe and Drug Free Schools (S&DFS) advisory council. The S&DFS program networks with and provides services for many community agencies and has established strong reciprocal agreements with most agencies. The district works closely with both local and state law enforcement to provide extended services.

The S&DFS program continues to coordinate efforts originating in other school-based programs, community agencies, parent groups, and business partners.

The district has clearly stated goals for its SAFE Schools Program. Each goal developed includes a reference to state and district goals, plus a department objective. Each objective is further detailed with specifics to include strategic direction, results measured and timeline.

The stated goals are outcome-based, measurable objectives that reflect the intent of the program while addressing the major aspects of the program's purpose and expenditures. A part of these stated goals is the Annual Plan for the SAFE Schools Program. It includes specific goals for the SAFE Schools Coordinator followed by the current status, strategies for completion, timeline and budgetary impact.

The District Should Conduct an Annual Assessment of the Performance Measures and Related Costs of the Safety Program

The district has applied for and received Florida Department of Education (DOE) Safe and Drug Free Schools Grants that includes assurances developed from Title IV of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 and the United States Department of Education's Principles of Effectiveness.

Furthermore, the district has conducted needs assessments, project evaluations and developed specific outcome objectives and evaluation plans for several programs, including "Too Good for Drugs II", "A Peace-Able Place" and "Parents Who Care".

Benchmarks selected for the school safety and security program are specific and use comparisons to historical data from within the district. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed School Environmental Incident Reports (SESIR) summary for the district, by school, and noted it included multi-year statistics for battery, fighting, disorderly conduct, threats/intimidation and weapons.

Implementing proven programs to address predetermined goals is the first step towards ensuring safety and security of district students and employees. The district needs to follow through with an assessment of the performance measures established for each program to determine if the desired results (i.e., fewer cases of violence) are being achieved.

One way to evaluate program performance is the comparison of SESIR data, by school, for each year as the district is currently doing. Another benchmark for the district to use is to gather similar SESIR data from DOE for peer districts. This can be especially useful when trying to identify trends in student behavior by comparing similar data from peer districts using a relative index, such as incidents per 1,000 students.

Programs that do not meet established goals could be replaced or eliminated. Conversely, programs, which show positive results, can be continued and considered for expansion.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish performance measures for the safety and security program and establish benchmarks derived from SESIR historical data within the district and SESIR peer group data from other school districts.*

Additionally, we recommend that the district conduct formal annual assessments of the performance measures and benchmarks, including the related cost of the safety program.

Action Plan 15-1 provides the steps to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 15-1 **Program Performance**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct an annual assessment of the performance measures and related costs of the safety program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: For existing performance measures establish benchmarks from SESIR historical data within the district.</p> <p>Step 2: For existing performance measures establish benchmarks from SESIR historical data from peer group districts.</p> <p>Step 3: Conduct an assessment of the performance measures and related costs associated with the overall safety program in the district.</p>
Who Is Responsible	SAFE Schools Coordinator under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

2 The district regularly reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the safety and security program, and minimizes administrative layers and processes.

The district has processes in place to determine the staffing levels necessary to ensure that staff can adequately respond to safety crises. Two standing committees, Code of Conduct Revision Committee and Emergency Management Plan Committee, meet annually to assist the SAFE Schools Coordinator in directing and prioritizing resources including staffing.

The organizational charts approved by the district's school board in February 2000, and again in July 2000, reflect the fluid nature of staffing within the district. The February 2000 organizational chart showed the SAFE Schools Coordinator charged with a myriad of responsibility centers. In the July 2000 organizational chart, this was restructured to its present form with the coordinator position supervising an administrative liaison, a project specialist, a truancy reduction position, court liaison, two middle school S&DFS project specialists and a teacher in the jail school.

The program structure includes reasonable lines of authority given the responsibilities of each organizational unit. Spans of control are adequate, as several administrator workshops have been scheduled to update and clarify expectations for the expulsion process and alternative placement criterion.

The district periodically reviews the program's organizational structure and staffing levels to minimize administrative layers and processes. The SAFE Schools committee, chaired by a member of the district's school board, meets monthly. This structure assumes that there is a direct opportunity to bring staffing issues directly to the board via the member who serves on the committee.

In conducting the reviews mentioned above, the district uses staff feedback. School and workplace safety committees are established at each school. Organizationally, the committee is required to have at least two members coming from the instructional staff and four from support staff. An additional member of the committee can be a one non-bargaining unit employee. Minutes from meetings held are communicated to the Coordinator for Safe Schools and this information is used when the district-wide SAFE Schools Committee meets.

The district reports organizational structure and administrative staffing review findings in writing, and distributes these findings to school board members. We reviewed reports submitted during the annual budget process, requests to apply for grants, and job descriptions with each submitted to the district for consideration and approval. It was noted that these types of reports addressed current and potential organizational structure and administrative staffing as part of its contents.

Safety and Security of Students and Employees

Goal B: The school district has comprehensive plans and procedures to ensure the safety and security of students and employees.

3 The district has a written comprehensive plan that includes district-wide emergency and safety procedures, and identifies those responsible for them.

The District's Emergency Management Plan Provides Guidelines for Prudent Response in a Variety of Emergency and Crisis Situations

The district-wide Emergency Management Plan (the "plan") is a written comprehensive scheme that includes district-wide emergency and safety procedures for school and district employees and students to follow. The plan also identifies the individuals responsible for carrying out the procedures.

The plan addresses the responsibilities of the Superintendent for coordinating the adoption and implementation of the plan, evaluating that principal's performance regarding school safety, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plan at the school level, and coordinating with local law enforcement and court officials.

A broad cross-section of stakeholders including parents, community representatives, local emergency agencies, teachers, and students was involved in developing this plan. The written document is provided to each school principal and is available upon request to the public. Adoption of the plan took place in 1999; it is scheduled for review every three years. At this time, the district needs to project the intended time frame of the next revision, which is due by 2002.

The plan explains the roles and responsibilities of the school principal, administrators, teachers, and other school personnel for restoring, if necessary, and maintaining a safe, secure, and orderly school environment. Procedures include a requirement for providing information to parents and the local community.

ValienteHernandez P.A.'s review of the plan noted specific instructions to call a student's parents after a school bus accident, if a gun or other weapon is confiscated, kidnapping or child-napping, sexual battery, or a major disruption/demonstration by students. Sample letters (depending on the situation) to all parents or the public are part of this plan. The plan also contains a section on dealing with and providing information to the media.

The body of the plan contains the sections below.

- Evacuation Plan and Procedures
- Bomb Threat
- Fire or Explosion
- Guns/Weapons on Campus
- Hostage
- Major Student Disruptions/Demonstrations
- Sexual Battery
- Shooting/Stabbing
- Bus Accident
- Severe Weather
- Death/Suicide of a Staff Member/Student
- Working with the Media
- Emergency Phone Numbers (law enforcement agencies, fire/EMS departments)
- Emergency Codes

ValienteHernandez P.A. found that the document specifically includes a planning section so each facility can develop its own emergency team. Each school is required to submit a proposal specifically tailored to its needs; these are on file at the district office.

During fieldwork, ValienteHernandez P.A. staff made inquiries at all the schools that were visited and they reported that they had a copy of the Emergency Management Plan. Additionally, each of the schools visited reported that it had an active School and Workplace Committee.

The District's Code of Student Conduct Is Used to Govern Conduct and Discipline

In addition to the plan, ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the *Code of Student Conduct Manual* (the "code of conduct") that addresses behavior expected of students at different grade levels, and the consequences that will result from one or more violations of those standards.

Safety issues and policies at school-sponsored events are encompassed in the code of conduct. For example, the introduction contains the following:

“Each student must obey district rules while on school grounds; while being transported to or from school at public expense; and during school-sponsored events, field trips, athletic functions, and similar activities.”

Students and parents are required to sign the code of conduct notification and return it to school, where it is kept in the student’s curriculum folder.

The Code of Student Conduct Manual contains the items below.

- Section 1: STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
 - Student Rights
 - Responsible Students Make A Difference
- Section 2: POLICIES GOVERNING STUDENT BEHAVIOR
 - Attendance Rules
 - Academic Eligibility requirements For Participation In Extracurricular Activities
 - Dress Code Policy
 - Vehicle Rules
 - Bus Conduct Rules
 - Medication/Health Procedures
 - Gang and Gang-Related Activity
 - Supervision Of Students
- Section 3: DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS
 - Infractions Level I
 - Interventions Level I
 - Infractions Level II
 - Interventions Level II
 - Infractions Level III
 - Interventions Level III
 - Infractions Level IV
 - Interventions Level IV
- Section 4: DUE PROCESS
 - Due Process For Suspensions
 - Due Process Procedures for Expulsion
 - ESE: Suspensions and Expulsions
- Section 5: PUBLIC NOTICE
 - Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
 - Subpoenas For Student Records
 - Directory Information
 - Notification Of Compliance
 - Notification Of Risk

ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed a memorandum distributed to school administrators regarding “Threat and Intimidation by Students.” This is one example of the mechanisms used by the district for identifying

and serving the needs of students most at risk for engaging in disruptive and disorderly behavior. This memorandum, issued as a supplement to the related section in the code of conduct, serves as a delineation of protocol for school administrators to follow on the subject. It establishes five discreet steps to be followed.

- Establish expectations prior to giving the assignment.
- When threats and/or violence are present, contact the school administrator.
- The school administrator will document the conference with the student and parent.
- A Student Intervention Team (SIT) meeting will be convened.
- An administrator will develop a plan of action involving the school social worker and school psychologist and develop a clinical evaluation and social work history.

4 The district has developed a checklist for each school that provides step-by-step crisis response procedures.

The District's Emergency Management Plan Includes Checklists for Crisis Response

As mentioned above, the district-wide plan is a written comprehensive scheme that includes district-wide emergency and safety procedures for school and district employees and students to follow and identifies those responsible for them.

Each school has a checklist, readily available, in every classroom that explains step-by-step response procedures, specifically for each of the crisis situations below.

- Weapon-use and hostage situations
- Hazardous materials or toxic chemical spills
- Weather emergencies including hurricanes, tornadoes, and severe storms, and
- Exposure as a result of a manmade emergency.

There are procedures for emergency drills and for actual emergencies including, but not limited to, fires, natural disasters, and bomb threats.

The crisis checklist includes provisions for

- Backup communication procedures;
- Evacuation procedures developed with the fire marshal, law enforcement officials; and
- Contacts for external support.

The district has floorplans of each school facility that have been made available to local law enforcement agencies and fire departments. Local law enforcement has hosted several mock SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) and disaster drills as part of training procedures.

A broad cross-section of stakeholders including parents, community representatives, local emergency agencies, teachers, and students were involved in developing the checklist; it has been adopted by the

school board and provided to each school principal and teachers, available electronically, and available upon request to the public.

The district has a Grief and Loss/Crisis Intervention team that aids in dealing with people's reactions, making the adjustment after crisis occurs, and re-entering the school environment. The team is coordinated by the Student Services department and composed of school counselors, social workers and school psychologists.

The crisis checklist, as part of the district-wide plan, is reviewed and revised triennially.

5 The district should implement a coordinated system to track safety training for district and school personnel who need school safety training.

The district has a process in place to identify the number of staff, and their positions, that require specialized safety training.

The identification process is conducted when preparing the annual S&DFS grant. This includes district staff, principals, custodians, teachers and bus drivers. Review of the literature for training opportunities provided by the DOE, the Partnership for School Safety and Security, and other appropriate organizations was noted in the S&DFS grant.

The district provides a safety video and brochure to administrators and to in-service teachers at staff meetings. Documentation of the teacher's receipt of information and materials pertaining to their safety-related duties, rights, and responsibilities under Florida law are maintained at the district offices.

The district reported that needed training in crisis planning and intervention, CPR and first aid, the use of life-saving equipment, and the early warning signs of violence is provided to the appropriate personnel identified by area supervisors.

The District Needs to Implement a Coordinated System to Track Safety Training

The district has provided the related personnel with appropriate safety equipment, and seeks to train them on how to use the equipment. This is handled within the Maintenance Department and they use the "Lake County Schools Employee Workplace Safety Program" manual to orientate and assist employees with appropriate safety equipment. However, no evidential matter was found as to an existing process, currently in place, to document who was trained and when. This weakens the safety program as the district lacks assurance that all personnel who need to be trained in safety procedures and equipment actually receive this training. During our last field visit to the district's offices we were informed that new employee training would be held on the second Friday each month, starting in August 2001, coordinated by the Human Resource Department. A safety trainer position has been created and will be dedicated to training issues within the district.

When appropriate, the school board utilizes training resources from the Partnership for School Safety and Security (P4SSS) and other resources. The district receives brochures from P4SSS and it is currently in the planning stages for training in family involvement.

The district requires that schools regularly practice responding to crisis situations. Fire/tornado drills are required twice a month.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district implement a coordinated system to provide and track training in crisis planning and intervention, CPR and first aid, the use of life-saving equipment, and the early warning signs of violence*

The training system to be developed should include procedures for documenting who receives necessary training in safety procedures and equipment.

Action Plan 15-2 provides the steps to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 15-2

Safety Training

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a system to provide and track safety training.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction assign staff to jointly identify the different positions within the district that require specialized safety training (i.e., crisis planning, CPR and first aid, the use of life-saving equipment, and the early warning signs of violence).</p> <p>Step 2: Determine what types of safety training are currently offered and expand, if necessary, to cover all positions identified in Step 1.</p> <p>Step 3: Compare the results in the previous two steps to determine “who needs what” safety training.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop a tracking system to document training provided so that whenever safety training is required, the central office can schedule it and track it for future reference.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Possible involvement of the Supervisor of HRMD and Personnel, Supervisor of Staff Development, Staff Development Safety and Security Trainer, and SAFE Schools Coordinator.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Disruptive and/or Violent Behavior

Goal C: The school district identifies, minimizes, and protects others from disruptive and/or violent student behavior.

6 Each school has a system in place to identify the early warning signs of student violence and to protect others from disruptive behavior.

In Line With *Florida Statute 230.23(6)(e)*, the District Has Crime Watch-Type Programs in Place to Promote Responsibility Among Students and to Assist in the Control of Criminal Behavior Within the Schools

As part of the ValienteHernandez P.A. review of S&DFS, SAFE-T job descriptions, grants and evaluations, it was noted that a system is in place to identify the early warning signs of student violence. Additionally, guidance counselors are directed to counsel suspended students as a form of preventive intervention.

As required by *Florida Statute 230.23(6)(e)*, the district has active crime watch type programs in place, the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education And Training) programs. The purpose of these programs is to promote responsibility among students and to help in the control of criminal behavior within the schools.

The approach of D.A.R.E. is to offer an educational program in the classroom to prevent or reduce drug abuse and violence among children and youth. The emphasis of the program is to help students recognize and resist the many direct and subtle pressures that influence them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, inhalants, or other drugs or to engage in violence. The program offers preventive strategies to enhance social competence, communication skills, self-esteem, empathy, decisionmaking, conflict resolution, sense of purpose and independence, and positive alternative activities to drug abuse and other destructive behaviors.

The G.R.E.A.T. program is designed to help children set goals for themselves, resist pressures, learn how to resolve conflicts without violence, and understand how gangs and youth violence impact the quality of their lives. G.R.E.A.T. students discover for themselves the ramifications of gang and youth violence through structured exercises and interactive approaches to learning. Similar to D.A.R.E., G.R.E.A.T. is a combined effort of law enforcement, the school district, and the community.

The district also has Juvenile Justice (J.J.) Committees and School Safety (School SAFE-T) Committees in place. While D.A.R.E. and G.R.E.A.T. teach fifth and seventh grade students to be aware of gang-related and drug-related activity and who to report as well as how to resist the pressures, the J.J. and the School SAFE-T Committees are convened to talk about specific incidents involving gang or drug related activities. The J.J. Committee consists of at least one administrator, guidance counselor and teacher involved with the students and its purpose is to determine adverse impact of the felony charges in the community on the safe and secure learning environment of the school campus. When warranted, the student involved is administratively placed in an alternative setting. The SAFE-T committees are school based and are made up of school administrators as well as students.

The district also uses the toll-free Speak Out Hotline. Speak Out Hotline posters were distributed to every school and at least five to ten posters are visible in every school. According to the SAFE Schools Supervisor every classroom that she has visited has one poster on the wall. The supervisor also expressed that 30,000 Speak Out Hotline stickers were distributed during the fall of 2000 and are frequently seen stuck on lockers, notebooks, and payphones throughout the county. Both the student crime watch and toll-free hotline are designed to encourage all stakeholders to report criminal behavior and, at the same time, protect the identity of the person making the report.

The district incorporates an administrative directive, established in January 2000, which further explains “Threat/Intimidation” from the Student Code of Conduct which the district issued to explain how to request assistance with students who exhibit early warning signs of violence. Additionally, all schools have Student Intervention Teams (SIT) for students experiencing academic or behavior problems. Referrals are generated from these teams, and school officials verified that the district office provides explicit support.

ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the “Need-to-Know” procedures for sharing information included in the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice section in the district’s *Administrators Manual* (Chapter 6), and found them to be comprehensive and straightforward in maintaining legal confidentiality.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district continue to promote the safety hotline and establish the procedure to track calls for program evaluation.*

Action Plan 15-3 proves the steps to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 15-3

Evaluation of Safety Hotline by Evaluating Results of Calls

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Evaluate the Safety Hotline program.
Action Needed	Step 1: Spell out the purpose and nature of the safety hotline. Step 2: Develop an objective for the hotline. Step 3: Establish a process for tracking relevant information for future use. Step 4: Monitor the calls received on the hotline. Step 5: Identify peer districts that could supply relevant data for benchmarking purposes.
Who Is Responsible	SAFE Schools Coordinator under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained within existing resources.

7 The district identifies and implements parental and community outreach strategies to promote safety at home and in the community.

Parents, Students and Community Agencies Are Partners With the District in Keeping Schools Safe

ValienteHernandez P.A. review of the SAFE Committee minutes, Department of Juvenile Justice Council, and the Lake County Sheriff's Office Intelligence meetings presents evidence that the district works collaboratively with students, parents, community, and the media to promote safety.

Within each school, the Juvenile Justice and SAFE-T committees consist of teachers, staff, families and students with the purpose of identifying and responding to the early-warning signs of violence. We reviewed the Lake County Sheriff's Office and Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) grant partnerships and inter-local agreements and noted these agencies are partners with the district in keeping schools safe.

The district is a pivotal member of the Lake County Juvenile Justice Council (the council), whose purpose is to encourage interagency cooperation and collaboration in addressing juvenile crime through partnerships with the DJJ, Florida Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), law enforcement, schools, elected officials, the judiciary, businesses, religious leaders, children's advocacy service agencies, and other interested parties.

The council provides a forum for assessing the local juvenile justice system, for developing a juvenile justice plan, and for effectively utilizing community resources in dealing with juveniles who are truants, been suspended or expelled or been involved in a crime. The council's annual plan for the 2000-2001 school year listed six areas of concentration.

- Needs Assessment
- Early Intervention/Alternative Placement
- Legislation
- Funding/Resources/Grants
- Membership
- Faith Partnerships

The district provides information to parents regarding the necessary school-entry health examinations and immunizations for all students. Evidence was provided of notices sent to parents. It was noted that there were different versions of these notices for different grades levels, as well as for new county residents enrolling for the first time.

8 The district conducts a needs assessment to determine the need for violence and drug prevention programs and, based on identified needs, implements appropriate programs. The district however, should re-evaluate the Drop-Out Prevention program.

The District Needs to Re-Evaluate the Drop-Out Prevention Program as It Is Currently Structured to Determine if The Program Was Weakened by Budgetary Cutbacks

As previously noted, the district has an approved S&DFS plan, which is regularly reviewed and updated. ValienteHernandez P.A. reviewed the annual S&DFS (Safe and Drug Free Schools) grant application, which has been approved by DOE.

Schools have programs in place to respond to early warning signs of violence and reduce the number of violence risk factors. The district also has a Student Intervention Team (SIT) in place at each school and alternative programs are available. According to the Supplemental Academic Instruction (SAI) plan, program plans are designed to meet a student's level for remediation. The school-based SIT meets to review individual student needs, usually leading up to psychological testing and/or placement in an exceptional student program. Each school makes psychological counseling available to students by certified school counselors. Additionally, a safety committee meets monthly, and information from this committee is distributed to school personnel.

All grant and program applications are reviewed and approved by the school board, prior to being submitted, to assess the potential applicability of successful school safety programs identified by the P4SSS (Partnership for School Safety and Security) and the DOE.

ValienteHernandez P.A.'s review of inter-local agreements with local law enforcement, DJJ, and the Children's Commission noted that the district collaborates with other governmental and private agencies, as needed. Additionally, a court liaison at the district level works in conjunction with law enforcement agencies, state attorneys, and the courts to keep track of charges and convictions of students and employees. Furthermore, a DJJ Community Transition Coordinator (a grant-paid position) serves as disciplinary specialist in a "second-chance" school setting.

In accordance with Florida law, the school board has identified schools that will not be considered "small schools," and has developed plans to subdivide those schools in "schools-within-a-school" in order to comply with Florida law. As part of this compliance effort, the district has established ninth grade centers and "second-chance" schools.

Each school regularly reviews the performance of its intervention programs and revises, eliminates, or adds programs accordingly. At the state level, the DOE's Drop-Out Prevention (DOP) program lost its weighted funding. The former Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction interpreted this as meaning that the program had been deleted. Thus, many of the district's programs were subsequently discontinued or significantly reduced.

Prior to August 2000, the district's DOP programs consisted of:

- elementary classes with reduced ratio and alternative strategies in approximately 10 schools;

- in-school suspension;
- alternative education (Griffin Middle School);
- alternative disciplinary placements (contracted for 144 placements);
- DJJ extended day treatments (contracted for 23 placements);
- DCFS foster care alternative placements (contracted for 60 placements);
- Graduate Assistance Program (GAP) for at-risk high school students in all six high schools; and
- summer school remediation.

Since 2000-2001, the district's DOP programs consist of

- elementary classes with reduced ratio and alternative strategies not under the DOP criterion;
- in-school suspension which exists only where the school administrator has used an allocation for that purpose;
- alternative education (Griffin Middle School); and
- alternative disciplinary placements (contracted for 36 placements [108 fewer than before]).

Deleted during the school year 2000-2001, were

- DJJ extended day treatments;
- DCFS foster care alternative programs;
- Graduate Assistance Program (GAP) for at risk high school students in all high schools; and
- summer school remediation.

While program reductions due to budget cuts may have been needed, the district needs to determine whether these program reductions adversely affected the overall success of its dropout prevention efforts. The district should ensure that continuing programs have the largest impact on dropout prevention, and determine whether any programs that had been eliminated should be reactivated, as funding permits, to maximize program performance. In this study, the district should compare the program's success in preventing dropouts over several years (five years, for example) to determine if the dropout rate has changed since the budget cuts and if any performance change can be attributed to the changes in the programs that are provided.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district re-evaluate the Drop-Out Prevention program as it is currently structured to determine if the programs affected were producing positive results; to determine if the success of the program has weakened; and identify if activities that should be given priority for re-enactment as resources permit to improve performance.*

Action Plan 15-4 provides the steps to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 15-4**Re-Evaluation of the Dropout Prevention Program**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Re-evaluate the district's dropout prevention program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Review the dropout prevention program as it is currently structured.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify programs that are (or were) effective and evaluate whether they should be continued.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify peer districts that could supply relevant data for benchmarking purposes and draw conclusions.</p>
Who Is Responsible	SAFE Schools Coordinator under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

9 The district and each school have established disciplinary policies that are well-defined and well-communicated.

The District Is in Compliance With Relevant Laws and Regulations Regarding Discipline Policies, Including the Student Code of Conduct

The district's disciplinary policies include

- respect for authority,
- respect for school property,
- respect for others,
- daily attendance,
- use of obscenities, and
- harming or demeaning others.

Each year the discipline policies are clearly and thoroughly communicated to students during orientation in the first week of school. Signatures of student and parents, or guardian, acknowledging receipt and commitment are kept on file.

The school board and administrators annually review discipline policies and revise those policies with input from teachers, parents, and students. The Student Code of Conduct includes

- the requirement that each student to disclose at registration legally required information regarding the student's prior disciplinary history;
- statements that the district, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, promotes and enforces a zero tolerance policy for crime and substance abuse and requires the district to report all violations subject to Florida law to a local law enforcement agency;
- standards for using reasonable force by school personnel that comply with relevant state laws in order to maintain an orderly environment;

- disciplinary policies including statements regarding anti-harassment and anti-violence policies and due process rights; and
- policies that are consistent with state and federal requirements for students with disabilities.

10 The school board adopts curricula and programs aimed at protecting students, teachers, and administrators.

The SAFE Committee, which is chaired by a member of the school board, regularly reviews available sources of violence prevention and safety-related programs.

During ValienteHernandez P.A.'s review of the literature within the S&DFS grant curricula, it was noted that information from the P4SSS's (Partnership for School Safety and Security) electronic clearinghouse, the DOE's Program Inventory, and other applicable sources are an integral part of grant applications. The school board reviews and approves all grants prior to applications being submitted. Within the S&DFS grant application, it was noted that there were safety and health curricula and programs designed to reduce violence and increase safety. Also reviewed was the code of conduct where, it was noted, a Uniform Survey had been included as part of the district's dress code or school uniform policy.

Safety and Condition of School Facilities and Equipment —————

Goal D: School facilities and equipment are safe and in good working condition

11 The district was able to demonstrate that each school in the district has performed an annual self-assessment of all relevant health and safety issues.

In accordance with applicable Florida law and regulations, school principals report data concerning school safety using DOE approved standardized forms. SESIR (School Environmental Safety Incident Reports) data is incorporated into the Student Referral Form and then input into Total Education Records Management System (called TERMS, the district-owned software package) by the school data entry clerk. A certified fire safety inspector conducts an annual fire safety review of all education and ancillary plants to insure compliance with Florida law.

The District Should Correct Deficiencies Noted in the Annual Comprehensive Safety Inspections Based Upon Priority and Available Budget

Annually, in conjunction with the Comprehensive Safety Inspections, a fire safety, casualty safety, and sanitation safety review of all education and ancillary plants is conducted to insure compliance with Florida law.

ValienteHernandez P.A. was provided with a copy of the annual inspections conducted during the prior fiscal year. At the time of our initial field visit (early March 2001) only four facilities had been inspected for the current reporting year. The district plans to conduct all facility inspections prior to the end of the current fiscal year.

ValienteHernandez P.A. discussions with the district's Health and Safety Officer indicated that all deficiencies noted in the annual inspection report are forwarded to the Maintenance department and facility administrators for corrective action. A significant number of deficiencies had not been corrected as of the dates of the fieldwork visit was taking place. A review by ValienteHernandez P.A. of the outstanding deficiencies showed that these were centered primarily on preventative measures, such as heat and smoke detection in kitchens and cafeterias.

While the district's Maintenance department utilizes the annual safety inspections to correct deficiencies, the process could be improved if the deficiencies are addressed based upon priority and available budget. ValienteHernandez P.A. found that there was a line item budgeted in the current fiscal year for safety related repairs and maintenance, and that the amount budgeted was sufficient to correct high priority items. The annual Comprehensive Safety Report is reviewed and accepted by the school board and resides in the Health and Safety office and is available to the public.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district's Maintenance department correct deficiencies noted in the annual Comprehensive Safety Inspections, based upon priority and available budget.*

Action Plan 15-5 provides the steps to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 15-5

Correction of Deficiencies Noted in the Annual Safety Inspections

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Prioritize the correction of the deficiencies noted in the annual Comprehensive Safety Inspections.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns the responsibility of prioritizing the correction of deficiencies in existing facilities to the Facilities Director with input from the Health and Safety Officer.</p> <p>Step 2: The Facilities Director reviews the annual safety inspection reports.</p> <p>Step 3: The Facilities Director establishes a plan to address the noted deficiencies and prioritizes their correction. Corrections plan is submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for review.</p> <p>Step 4: Deficiencies are correct in order of priority and as budget is available.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, Facilities Director and Health and Safety Officer.
Time Frame	Ongoing
Fiscal Impact	None. This is currently a budgeted item.

12

The district should consult with proper authorities, such as the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, regarding playground construction materials and regulations.

School principals are responsible for the safe working and learning conditions at their schools, including playground equipment. Physical education instructors serve as the primary inspectors for identifying playground hazards. The process includes identifying a hazardous condition, reporting the hazard, and implementing corrective actions.

Individual schools are required to use an MIS 79006 form (Playground Inspection Checklist) to check all equipment and report potential problems for correction. Playground areas are supervised when children are present and using these areas. During school hours the physical education instructor/teacher is responsible for supervising students. ValienteHernandez P.A. found during interviews with school-based personnel that the playground areas were properly maintained and supervised to reduce risk of injury.

The District Should Consult With Proper Authorities, Regarding Playground Construction Materials and Regulations

Currently, no coordinated procedure is in place to see that the district consults with the proper authorities, such as the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, regarding playground construction materials and regulations. Whenever the district's Health and Safety Officer is aware of or involved in ordering playground equipment, he or she ascertains that the equipment meets or exceeds safety standards.

Over time, judgments of what is considered safe change, so the district needs to keep abreast of Consumer Product Safety Commission recommendations, and consider those recommendations when accepting current conditions or making necessary changes.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district consult with proper authorities, such as the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, regarding playground construction materials and regulations.*
Additionally, we recommend that the district purchasing function include pre-approval by the Health and Safety Officer when procurement is requested of playground equipment and of construction services to install such equipment.

Action Plan 15-6 provides the steps to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 15-6

Playground Construction Materials

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Identify and correct playground deficiencies.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Consult with proper authorities regarding playground construction materials and regulations.</p> <p>Step 2: Have the Health and Safety Officer obtain certification as a playground inspector.</p> <p>Step 3: Conduct a district-wide inspection of all playgrounds and equipment.</p> <p>Step 4: Correct deficiencies noted in the inspection.</p> <p>Step 5: Require the Health and Safety Officer approval on all purchase requisitions in advance of the purchase.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Risk Manager as to playground regulations under the supervision of the Assistant Superintendent.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	All necessary expenses should be part of the normal operating budget.

13 Each school should have appropriate equipment to protect the safety and security of property and records.

ValienteHernandez P.A. found, through inquiries of the appropriate personnel and sample visits to schools, the conditions described below.

- Some but not all district schools have security alarm systems. Most were installed, some also designed, by district personnel. These security systems were not selected or designed with the input of security professionals, reducing the assurance that the systems meet school needs.
- The district has no annual inspection requirement for security equipment to ensure that the systems operate as designed and continue to meet school security needs.
- The district maintains medical records centrally (off school sites) that can be quickly accessed in case of an emergency and are regularly updated. Authorized staff can access these records electronically at all times.
- The district, however, does not have an evacuation kit at each school with essential items such as student and staff rosters, emergency contacts, school floor plan, school safety plan, cell phone, first aid kit, emergency medicine, weather gear, etc.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district verify that each school has a properly working security system, including alarms and other equipment, such as fencing.*
Additionally, we recommend that the district include security professionals when designing, selecting and inspecting alarm systems. These professionals include the fire marshal, police and security experts.
- *We recommend that the district ensure each school maintains a crisis/evacuation kit, which should have a full complement of basic operational equipment.*
These evacuation kits should include items such as school floor plans, student and staff rosters, emergency contacts for students and staff, a current list of fire, police and emergency

numbers, other information as deemed necessary. Items such as first aid kit, cell phone, emergency medicine, weather gear and bullhorn should also be part of this kit.

Action Plan 15-7 provides the steps to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 15-7 Security Systems

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Assess current school safety security systems.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Conduct a security system review of all district facilities.</p> <p>Step 2: Consult with security professionals regarding security systems selection and installation. These professionals include the fire marshal, police and security experts</p> <p>Step 3: Include the costs associated with installing new security systems in the next budget year.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance under the direction of an Assistant Superintendent.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	The fiscal impact cannot be reliably determined as it would be dependent on outcome of security review.

Maintenance of Evacuation Kit

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Ascertain and ensure that each district school maintains an evacuation kit that includes copies of all necessary records and basic equipment needed to operate.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop a system to verify the existence of evacuation kits at each school.</p> <p>Step 2: Circularize all principals on the objects and requirements of the project.</p> <p>Step 3: Ask each principal to make an inventory of materials documents that should be included in the evacuation kit.</p> <p>Evacuation kits should include, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School floor plans. • Student and staff rosters. • Emergency contacts for students and staff. • Quick record of police, fire and other emergency numbers. <p>Step 4: Parts of the evacuation kit should be created, both in hard copy (paper) and electronic version.</p> <p>Step 5: Each school remits to the district headquarters a photocopy of the items that are in the inventory of documents in the evacuation kit; duplicates of hard to replace documents should be made and sent to headquarters with the list.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Principals; Risk Manager; Safety and Security Officer.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	No direct fiscal impact; this can be accomplished with existing resources.

14

The district should establish procedures to guarantee that students and employees are provided appropriate safety equipment and information to prevent injuries to students and others.

All district schools are equipped with fire extinguishers, which are inspected on a monthly basis by school-based personnel and annually by an independent contractor. The district has provided appropriate safety equipment in instructional areas where dangerous equipment or chemicals may be in use. This equipment includes emergency eyewash fountains, emergency showers, and fire blankets. However, the district should establish procedures to

- train students and school personnel in the appropriate safety procedures for dealing with dangerous equipment or chemicals; and
- supply all necessary protective equipment to minimize the number and extent of injuries related to athletic activities.

However, ValienteHernandez P.A. determined that students and school personnel have not been trained in appropriate safety procedures for dealing with dangerous equipment or chemicals. Neither does the district have all of the protective equipment needed to minimize the number and extent of injuries related to athletic activities.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district promptly establish procedures to train students and school personnel in appropriate safety procedures for dealing with dangerous equipment or chemicals.*

We further recommend that the district acquire necessary protective equipment and supplies to minimize the number of injuries related to athletic activities, and to minimize the severity of these when they occur.

Action Plan 15-8 provides the steps to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 15-8

Safety Equipment and Procedures

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Training for students and school personnel in dealing with dangerous equipment or chemicals. Acquiring necessary protective equipment and supplies to minimize the number and extent of possible injuries related to athletic activities.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify the different positions within the district that require specialized safety training</p> <p>Step 2: Determine what types of safety training are currently offered and expand, if necessary, to cover all positions identified in Step 1.</p> <p>Step 3: Compare the results in the previous two steps to determine “who needs what” safety training.</p>

	Step 4: Develop a training program for the entire district so that whenever safety training is required, the central office can schedule it and track it for future reference.
	Step 5: Determine whether new or additional equipment and/or supplies need to be replaced or acquired in order to minimize the number of injuries.
	Step 6: Budget the cost of said replacement or new equipment and/or supplies.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance under the direction of an Assistant Superintendent; Finance Director.
Time Frame	As early as possible, but not later than March 31, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	Cost of replacement or new equipment should be covered by the normal operating budget.

16

Community Involvement

The Lake County School District has developed and maintained an effective, well-received community involvement program. With a few modest adjustments and some additional attention to coordination and oversight, the program has a long, bright future.

Conclusion

The Lake County School District (the district) has several mechanisms in place for communicating with parents and the general public. The district also has a positive relationship with the business community, an active volunteer program complete with adequate background checks, and procedures in place to solicit parental input. The district's Community Involvement Program provides active and effective support to its schools. Volunteers and business partners are the foundation of this effort, and with proper coordination and oversight in position would ensure that the program is effectively maintained with minimal funding required. Exhibit 16-1 presents several of the accomplishments the district has had in the area of community involvement.

Exhibit 16-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in the Area of Community Involvement in the Last Three Years

- The level of volunteer involvement in the district compares favorably with other districts.
 - The district recognizes volunteer efforts.
 - Parents feel welcome at district schools.
 - The district has an active volunteer program with an adequate background checking process for volunteers.
-

Source: Lake County School District.

Overall, ValienteHernandez P.A. found that:

Communication With Stakeholders

- The district has developed a meaningful community involvement mission statement and as part of achieving this mission, the district includes ongoing community involvement activities in its strategic plan. (Page 16-3)
- The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Community Involvement Program. (Page 16-6)
- The district solicits and incorporates parent and community involvement and support. (Page 16-7)

- The district uses a variety of methods of communicating with parents. (Page 16-8)
- The district periodically reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the Community Involvement Program to minimize administrative layers and processes. (Page 16-9)

Parents' Involvement

- The district has active Parent Teacher Associations/Parent Faculty Organizations and other effective methods to involve and encourage parent leadership and participation. (Page 16-10)
- The district provides activities that encourage families to be involved in the schools. (Page 16-11)

Community Involvement

- The district use community resources to strengthen schools, families, and student learning and consistently offers school resources to strengthen communities. (Page 16-12)
- The district has developed school-business partnerships. (Page 16-12)
- District schools maintain active and effective volunteer programs to involve volunteers in the education process. (Page 16-15)
- The district schools solicit and receive economic support through school foundations. (Page 16-18)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations ---

The recommendations in this chapter will strengthen the district's community involvement function, but are neutral in terms of their fiscal impact.

Background ---

The Lake County School District operated a Community Relations Office at the district level from July 1997 to August 2000. The school board eliminated the office in August 2000 due to budgetary constraints. Since the elimination of the office, district level community involvement functions have been performed by a single staff member within the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. On August 2001 the board established the position of Public Information Officer to oversee the community involvement office. That position had not been filled at the conclusion of fieldwork of this review.

A school district's community involvement function typically includes communicating with and engaging different segments of the community, including parents, local businesses, and other local groups. The notion of "community involvement" at a public school district includes activities to provide supplemental resources to the schools, to get students involved with the community, and to enhance parental involvement in student and school activities. Most of these activities take place at the school rather than the district level.

The Lake County Community Involvement Program assists in providing services to the schools, such as the coordination of publications, training, and recognition activities related to community involvement efforts. In addition, the district collects information from the schools related to the participation of volunteers and business partners for reporting and monitoring purposes.

The district's program takes place, both at the district and at the school levels. Each school has a liaison to work with the parents, students, and community. The participation in community involvement varies from school to school. For example, the number of business partners ranges widely from as few as one (1) to as many as 240. All services may not be available at all schools. Most of the schools have their own business partnerships.

The district has a partnership with the Education Foundation of Lake County, a non-profit organization that raises funds for the school district programs.

Methodology

ValienteHernandez P.A. conducted on-site interviews with district level managers and gathered information on the Community Involvement Program such as the district's community involvement policies and procedures. This assessment also involved research of Florida law. To receive additional input, ValienteHernandez P.A. surveyed district-level staff, principals, teachers, and parents. Questions varied depending on the group surveyed, and the results have been incorporated into this chapter where applicable.

Findings and Recommendations

Communication with Stakeholders

Goal A: The district communicates effectively with education stakeholders to increase community participation in and support of educational programs.

- 1 The district has developed a meaningful community involvement mission statement, and as part of achieving this mission, the district includes ongoing community involvement activities in its strategic plan.**

The District Has Both a Mission Statement and a Strategic Plan for Community Involvement

The district has established a written mission statement that incorporates the use of business partners, volunteers, parents, community leaders, and foundations. The mission statement states:

“The Community Relations Office will use community resources to strengthen schools, families, and student learning through business partners, volunteers parents, community leaders and foundations.”

The district has had a strategic plan for community involvement since the 1999-2000 school year. The plan gives the district the ability to assess its current operations, determine the direction in which it wishes to go, and to create an effective plan of actions to achieve strategic goals. The strategic plan guides program development and include short-term and long-term goals, annual objectives, and strategic directions. Listed below are the district’s objectives and planned directions in the strategic plan for community involvement.

1. Objective

Increase yearly the number of Partners in Education who have been trained and screened working for Lake County Schools’ students.

Strategic Direction

- Through Volunteers in Teaching And Learning (VITAL), quality instructional services will be provided to students through the assistance of school volunteers, parental involvement, and business partners.
- Ongoing recruitment of additional volunteers will be conducted through media and school announcements, through business partnerships, and through community speaking engagements.
- All volunteers will be screened and processed with clearance through Florida Department of Law Enforcement background checks by the Community Relations Office.
- Training sessions will be provided including tutoring, mentoring, and specific reading strategies to all individuals who wish to be involved.
- The Community Relations Office will work to recruit and retain business partners.
- Increase best practices in all schools through parent involvement.
- All business partnerships, volunteers, parental and involvement recognition, both local and state wide, will be conducted out of this office.

2. Objective

Celebrate outstanding teachers, staff, students, schools, business partners, and volunteers through district and state award programs.

Strategic Direction

- Communicate with each school opportunities for recognition and awards.
- Conduct district-wide evaluation and selection of county winners.
- Plan and orchestrate all district recognition functions.
- Communicate achievements to the media and Department of Education.

3. Objective:

Provide effective communication, both internal and external, through email and Internet websites.

Strategic Direction

- Bring to the attention of the schools and schools' communities information and announcements of district-wide interest through weekly news reports. These reports are transmitted to the schools, school communities, and media through email.
- The Community Relations Office will oversee the district websites, including a site for school.

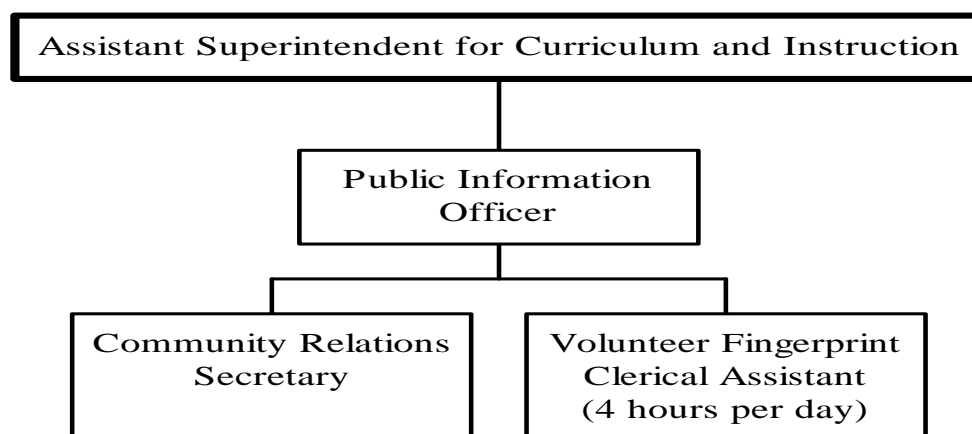
The District Maintains Ongoing Community Involvement Activities

From 1997 to 2000, the number of hours reported as worked by school volunteers increased 200%. During the 1999-2000 school year, more than 5,100 volunteers contributed more than 173,250 hours of recorded volunteer services, and more than 1,400 business partners actively sponsored and/or participated in school activities. Based on a \$15-per-hour rate set by the Department of Education (DOE), these volunteers contributed time valued at \$2,598,795. Some of the community involvement activity is shown in Exhibit 16-4.

In August 2000, the school board eliminated the position of Community Relations Officer due to budgetary reasons. Thereafter, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and an administrative assistant managed the community involvement function, and in August 2001 the board established a Public Information Officer position to oversee the community relations function. Pending the filling of that position, the administrative assistant continues to handle the normal duties of the program such as reporting the required information to DOE, organizing community involvement sponsored events, and passing the necessary information to the schools. Also, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction deals with any media function that occurs. The organization structure of the program with the newly established position is shown in Exhibit 16-2.

Exhibit 16-2

Community Involvement Office Organizational Chart August 2001



Source: The Lake County School District.

2 The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Community Involvement Program.

A school system is accountable to many different stakeholders: students and their parents; the state through the Florida Department of Education (DOE) and other parts of state government; its staff, including teachers and their union; local businesses; and, critically important, taxpayers representing the community at large. All of the above have invested time and money into the school system and all have a stake in its success. In return, the school district is obligated to demonstrate that it has spent the time and money given to it wisely and is making its best efforts to produce well-educated, work-ready, civic-minded graduates.

In the Past, the District's Community Involvement Program Lacked Administrative Direction

The district has established goals and objectives for its community involvement activities, but maintained limited oversight of the performance of community involvement activities throughout the district during the 2000-01 school year. Two out of the three objectives listed earlier for the Lake County School District's Community Involvement Program have been completed. However, the district was unable to complete the third object at district level because of the elimination of the Community Relations Officer.

Once the Public Information Officer position is filled, the district should work to improve the accountability of the community relations program. The district should develop and adopt performance measures to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's community involvement efforts. Examples of performance measures include numerical counts volunteers, partners, and hours which are already available as well as measuring dollars raised through fund raising, tutoring relationships established, and the number of students who receive technical training through a business partnership. The performance of the program should be aligned with the objectives the district wishes to achieve.

Recommendation

- We recommend that the district ensures that the new position of Public Information Officer is assigned the responsibility for program accountability. Program accountability must be thorough and include the development and adoption of meaningful performance measures that ensure efficiency of the Community Involvement Program.*

Action Plan 16-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 16-1**Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Community Involvement Program**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Assign the accountability to the new position and develop performance measures to evaluate efficiency of the Community Involvement Program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign the responsibility of the program and the development of performance measure to the Public Information Officer.</p> <p>Step 2: Analyze the mission statement and goals/objectives as stated for the Community Involvement Program.</p> <p>Step 3: Determine the desired results and completion time frame for each performance measures.</p> <p>Step 4: Evaluate the cost/benefit of the implementation actions for the program.</p> <p>Step 5: Periodically report findings and suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>Step 6: Superintendent reviews and determines alternatives for improvements.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and Public Information Officer.
Time Frame	July 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be completed with existing resources.

3 The district solicits and incorporates parent and community involvement and support.

The District Solicits Input and Involvement From Parents and Community

Results of the ValienteHernandez P.A. April 2001 survey of parents indicated that most parents in Lake County believe that the school district has effective procedures in place to receive community and parental input. To promote involvement, the district surveys parents annually, has an active School Advisory Councils at most schools (SACs), and allows citizens to have input on budgetary and policy matters.

Each year the district sends the Annual School Climate Survey to all district parents in an effort to solicit input. One of the areas covered on the survey is family involvement. The surveys are distributed to families by the individual school. Each school determines its own method of distribution. The surveys are compiled by the schools or by the district. The results are shared with individual School Advisory Councils to determine or suggest school improvements.

The schools encourage parents and other stakeholders to be members of school advisory councils and other education decision-making groups. Some schools actively recruit for Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and SAC with notices in the newspaper, announcements at the PTO meetings, memos to parents, and advertisements in the school newsletter.

The schools have office hours scheduled before and after school by using parent teacher report card night and evening conference for parent convenience. Parents are informed of these hours, such as through school newsletters. Exhibit 16-3 illustrates that parents feel the district solicits input and involvement.

Exhibit 16-3

Parents Feel the District Seeks Their Input and Involvement

SURVEY GROUP (s = sample size; n = respondents)	Question	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know
Parents (s = 485; n = 264)	I play an active role in decisions concerning school wide-initiatives.	73.4%	22.5%	4.1%
	The schools encourage parents to be members of education decision-making groups.	88.4%	8.3%	3.2%
	The schools have office hours scheduled before and after school for parent convenience.	90.9%	3.0%	6.0%
	District schools prepare and distribute useful, attractive, helpful, and meaningful monthly newsletters to parents.	78.5%	13.9%	7.6%
	The schools use every practical means of communication to provide timely information to parents.	81.1%	15.7%	3.2%
	Teachers maintain excellent communication with parents.	82.1%	15.1%	2.8%
	Community support enhances student achievement at my child's school.	86.5%	8.2%	5.3%

Source: Surveys conducted by ValienteHernandez P.A. in April 2001.

4 The district uses a variety of methods for communicating with parents.

Open, two-way communication with the public is essential for a school district to maintain and increase its support base in the community. A school district must find effective ways to communicate with the public and to receive input from different segments of the community. An informed public, and one that is heard, provides the added support and feedback needed to maintain district excellence.

The District Needs to Strengthen Its Public Relations Activity

The primary role of public relations in a school district is to work closely with the Superintendent to convey a message and image consistent with the policies and programs set by the school board and implemented by the Superintendent's office. The public relations and community outreach efforts of a school district significantly affect citizens' perceptions of the system.

A strong public relations program will manage to garner public support even when the district faces adversity or fails to achieve high goals. Conversely, a weak public relations program will fail to bring into the public eye achievements even when the district is performing quite well. The ideal public relations program will create public support and public involvement in the form of parent and community volunteers, community participation in decision-making processes affecting the schools, and productive business and community alliances.

The consultants concur with the findings and recommendation made by Florida Association of District School Superintendent (FADSS) in October 2000 on the relationship between some principals and other work-site administrators with respect to interfacing with the media. The FADSS report states “the district should consider sharing sessions between key management personnel at the schools and district office and media representatives (newspaper, TV, others)”.

The District Keeps Parents Informed on School Activities

As shown on Exhibit 16-3 above, 78.5% of the respondents strongly agree that district schools prepare and distribute useful, attractive, helpful, and meaningful monthly newsletters to the students homes.

ValienteHernandez P.A. found, based on the self-assessments and the data gathered, that the schools produce newsletters on a regular basis. The newsletters are distributed to the parents and contain general information about district activities, including announcements of upcoming events and recognition of new faculty and staff. Also, many schools have websites where information is posted to inform parents and the community of ongoing activities.

We recommend that the district improves its relationship with the public media. Ideally, the district would do this by filling the position of Public Information Officer. Once the position is filled, the district should promptly engage in varied activities involving management personnel at the schools and district office and media representatives to fortify the existing relations.

5 The district periodically reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the Community Involvement Program to minimize administrative layers and processes.

Approving the Public Information Officer Position

As mentioned above, the district eliminated the position of Community Relations Officer during budget reductions in August 2000, but this action did not appear to be the result of a review of the organizational structure and staffing levels of the community involvement effort. The consultant agrees with FADSS study that the media sources need a central reliable source to provide information and thinks the district will be able to provide this central source through the Public Information Officer position.

By establishing this position, the district’s staffing for the community involvement function appears to be adequate. However, the district should periodically solicit and use staff feedback to review and adjust the organizational structure and staffing of the program to administer the community involvement functions as efficiently as possible.

Parents' Involvement

Goal B: **The district makes every practical attempt to include parents as full partners in the decisions that affect their children and families.**

6 The district has active Parent Teacher Organizations and other effective methods to involve and encourage parent leadership and participation.

The district has active, school-based Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs) that meet at least semi-annually and that such meetings are advertised in different forms of the media.

The District Has Active Parent-Teacher Organizations

The district has effective methods to involve and encourage parent leadership and participation. ValienteHernandez P.A. found, through the data gathered, that the district has active PTOs and School Advisory Councils (SACs). PTOs meet periodically and while most of them meet once a month, others meet every other month or even four times a year. Out of the 34 principals that completed a self-assessment, 21 (approximately 70%) reported that their school PTO has meetings at least monthly. The schools advertise PTO meetings and encourage participation via newsletter, Internet, and the local press.

To strengthen PTO dynamics and to ensure that the district maintains consistently active PTOs, we recommend that part of the responsibilities of the new Public Information Officer include the monitoring of parent involvement in its schools. This can be accomplished routinely collecting and reviewing information to ensure that PTOs and SACs remain active throughout the school year and to provide technical assistance when these groups encounter difficulties.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district assign the new Public Information Officer the responsibility of periodically collecting and reviewing information on PTO and SAC activities to ensure that these groups are remaining active and to provide technical assistance when necessary.*

Action Plan 16-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 16-2**Strengthening PTO Activity**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Assign the monitoring of PTO and SAC activities to the new position.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign the responsibility of the monitoring and the method of monitoring to the Public Information Officer.</p> <p>Step 2: Evaluate the results of the implemented actions for monitoring the PTOs.</p> <p>Step 3: Determine the findings and plan of intervention if necessary.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Public Information Officer.
Time Frame	December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be completed with existing resources.

7 The district provides activities that encourage families to be involved in the schools.

The District Encourages Families to Participate in Students' Education

Most educators believe that active involvement of a student's family in his/her education can make the difference between a student who succeeds and one who fails. Parent involvement has often been limited to membership in a school's parent-teacher organization or visiting the child's teacher during an annual open house.

Increasingly, however, the success of a student is determined by the extent to which parents and family support his/her education and commit to tutoring and mentoring, as well as assisting the student in all academic and extra-curricular endeavors. Schools, too, are changing the ways they utilize parents. Educational studies, particularly in the last few years, are proving that students with involved parents have:

- higher grades and test scores;
- long-term academic achievement;
- more successful programs; and
- more effective schools.

These studies also indicate that children from low-income and minority families have the most to gain when schools involve their parents. Parent-teacher organizations have provided a venue for parental participation for many years. However, they have often been unable to include all, or most, of these in a school and explicitly extend membership to other family members such as grandparents. As a further incentive to have active parent-led groups, certain federal and state programs mandate parent involvement.

The district has several programs to encourage parents to take an active role in their child's education. During the interview process ValienteHernandez P.A. was informed of programs such as the Migrant Program, Just On Program, and Price Reading Program, which promote parent involvement.

The Migrant Program is focused on providing tutors at home after school hours. The Just On Program allows students to take laptop computers home. The laptop gives the students additional opportunities to practice in their weak areas and gives parents an opportunity to work his/her child at home. Price Reading Program encourages parents to come to the school and receive training in tutoring; food and day care is provided as a motivation and assistance to the parents that participate.

At least three of the district programs are targeted toward migrant families due to the increasing numbers of migrant workers in the community. The district indicated that students who receive tutoring four days a week in Title I designated schools typically increase their grades from "C" to "B" or "A."

Community Involvement

Goal C: The district is actively involved in the community.

8 The district uses community resources to strengthen schools, families, and student learning and consistently offers school resources to strengthen communities.

The District Interacts With the Community

On the district-completed self-assessments, principals indicated that their schools keep parents and students informed and many pointed out they encourage parents and students to participate in other activities outside the schools. Several school principals indicated that the schools provide information through newsletters and flyers for community sports and scout organizations. Additionally, district school participate in food drives and community oriented activities such as March of Dimes and Junior Achievement. The school bands and chorus on occasions participate in parades; provide entertainment for concerts, and other local events. Also, it is not uncommon for schools to allow the community use of buildings.

The district has also developed a method to disseminate information to students, parents, and community through meetings that are organized by the families. The themes of the meetings are varied including health, culture, recreation, and social support. To encourage parent participation in these meetings, the district provides transportation to those who need it. On occasions, entertainment is provided by some of the students.

9 The district has developed school-business partnerships.

The District Has a Positive Relationship With the Business Community

There is an increase of competition for every public dollar, a common situation in every local government across the nation. Many believe that the era of big government is over and so is public indifference to the use of tax dollars. Today, many citizens demand the most out of funds contributed to public coffers.

This situation is particularly crucial in Florida, or may soon become so, where a flourishing student population requires new school facilities at an alarmingly rapid pace, and where public schools are feeling competition from quasi-public alternatives, such as charter schools and home schooling. A school district can only be successful in this environment if it can consistently prove that it has a solid product, namely a valuable education that is worth continued public and private investment. Due to increase of competition, the number of business partnerships and private contributions to the district are crucial to succeed.

The district currently has an active business partnership program with over 1,470 distinct business partners, as shown in Exhibit 16-4, from which 501 business partners work with more than one school. The district has begun to implement reporting requirements for business partnerships that should enable the district to continue to improve its program. While donation of goods and services is encouraged, the district has set as a priority forming partnerships that help students academically or experientially, such as arranging speakers for classes, assisting in developing curriculum at the academy, assisting in exploring career options, and providing training in technical skills.

Depending on the commitment, both by the school and the business, such partnerships can result in an enriched learning environment for students. The district appreciates the support of businesses. Participation by businesses depends, to a significant extent, as to how much time/resources the employees or owners of the particular business are able to devote to an activity outside of their business responsibilities.

Exhibit 16-4

Business Partners' Participation

School	1999-2000 Business Partners
Astatula Elementary	2
Beverly Shores Elementary	16
Carver Middle School	19
Clermont Elementary	23
Clermont Middle	(Included with Windy Hill Middle)
Cypress Ridge Elementary	9
Dabney Elementary	12
Eustis Elementary	23
Eustis Heights Elementary	4
Eustis High	1
Eustis Middle	4
Fruitland Park Elementary	3
Gray Middle	36
Groveland Elementary	16
Lake Hills	5
Lake Technical Center (LTC)	34
Lake Technical High	(Included with LTC)
Lee Education Center	(Included with LTC)
Leesburg High	240

School	1999-2000 Business Partners
Lost Lake Elementary	7
Mascotte Elementary	49
Mount Dora High	39
Mount Dora Middle	23
Oak Park Middle	12
Rimes Elementary	18
Roseborough Elementary	12
Seminole Springs Elementary	17
Skeen Elementary	33
South Lake High	12
Tavares Elementary	20
Tavares High	83
Tavares Middle	14
Treadway Elementary	27
Triangle Elementary	2
Umatilla Elementary	18
Umatilla High	130
Umatilla Middle	8
Villages Elementary School of Lady Lake	8
Windy Hill Middle	48
Lake County Schools at Large	10
School - to - work	433
TOTAL:	1,470

Source: Lake County School District.

Feedback Is Not Currently Sought From Business Partners

ValienteHernandez P.A. noted that currently there is no mechanism in place for district level staff to develop a picture of overall satisfaction levels among the business partners, nor to identify any programmatic weaknesses that need to be corrected.

This is another area upon which the new Public Information Officer could concentrate. A short, written survey developed by that person, distributed by the school coordinators, and returned directly to the originator would provide this kind of feedback. With this survey, the district would be able to measure overall program satisfaction, identify program shortcomings, and identify any problems with specific business partner coordinators.

Recommendation

- We recommend that a short survey should be done periodically to measure business satisfaction with the business partnership activity.

Action Plan 16-3 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 16-3

Improve Reporting For Business Partnership Program

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct a periodic survey to measure business satisfaction with the business partnership program and to solicit feedback on possible improvements to the program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Construct a short, written survey to measure the general level of business satisfaction.</p> <p>Step 2: Provide sufficient copies to each school business partnership liaison for distribution to business partners.</p> <p>Step 3: Request that the business partners return the surveys directly to the district office to ensure confidentiality of responses.</p> <p>Step 4: Review survey results and distribute to school liaisons.</p> <p>Step 5: Based upon the quality of the feedback and the value of the results, determine how frequently such a survey should be conducted (annually, every other year, etc.)</p>
Who Is Responsible	Community Development Officer
Time Frame	December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

10 District schools maintain active and effective volunteer programs to involve volunteers in the education process.

The district oversees the recruitment, training, development, recognition, and evaluation of volunteers and community involvement activities; it produces and provides volunteers with a *Volunteer Handbook*.

The District Has an Active Volunteer Program

For the 1999-2000 school year, the district reported a total of 5,109 total volunteers who logged 173,250 service hours. As of May 2001, 36 of the 42 schools reported 229,328 volunteer hours by 4,402 volunteers. These figures represent a major increase from 1997-98 school year, during which 1,513 volunteers accumulated 100,467 hours.

Exhibit 16-5 shows an analysis carried out by ValienteHernandez P.A. to assess the increase in volunteer participation over a three-year period. Having included only the schools that reported data during the three consecutive years, the analysis shows that volunteer participation generally has increased over the

last three years, especially from the 1997-98 school year to the 1998-99 school year, when the number of volunteers significantly increased 173% and the number of volunteer hours 37%.

An overseer/coordinator in prior years has worked with the school liaison to achieve the district objective. It would be in the district's best interest for the Public Information Officer to oversee/coordinate the program to ensure that program remains active both at the district and the school level. As illustrated in Exhibit 16-5, participation varies from school to school.

Exhibit 16-5

Volunteer Participation Has Significantly Increased Over Three Years

School	1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98	
	Hours	Volunteers	Hours	Volunteers	Hours	Volunteers
Beverly Shores Elementary	2,976	42	4,680	61	1,650	43
Clermont Elementary	2,757	109	3,950	310	6,226	97
Dabney Elementary	1,936	98	4,496	194	1,734	37
Eustis Elementary	1,610	63	2,515	150	1,542	58
Eustis Heights Elementary	3,000	40	3,600	152	3,104	26
Fruitland Park Elementary	1,976	33	2,698	125	1,872	55
Griffin Middle	1,680	15	400	20	232	4
Groveland Elementary	4,088	260	5,076	258	3,226	274
Lake Hills	1,861	16	1,396	21	219	7
Lake Technical Center (LTC)	246	2	60	6	335	1
Lee Education Center	1,224	31	1,200	30	1,062	21
Leesburg High	18,000	95	18,193	213	15,907	104
Mascotte Elementary	2,973	48	5,825	73	3,759	47
Minneola Elementary	5,803	201	6,461	238	2,000	45
Mount Dora Middle	863	14	3,978	35	1,933	104
Seminole Springs Elementary	4,649	240	9,205	325	3,717	80
Skeen Elementary	9,000	90	10,800	590	11,385	138
Tavares Elementary	8,306	181	4,576	168	11,221	83
Tavares High	7,830	65	6,785	66	1,756	6
Treadway Elementary	6,927	86	6,466	424	4,827	95
Umatilla Elementary	4,241	272	4,100	335	2,797	84
Umatilla High	4,389	182	6,562	149	1,847	35
Total analyzed:	96,335	2,183	113,022	3,943	82,351	1,444

Source: Lake County School District.

The District Tracks and Reports Most Volunteer Hours

The district tracks volunteer effort both at the school and at the district level. Schools submit reports to the district office on the total number of volunteer hours at the end of each school year.

It is at times a problem for many school districts to define for a school exactly what should be counted as a volunteer hour and how to collect that information. The state has defined volunteer activity as one that enriches the school environment, a definition that leaves much room for interpretation. The state's definition, however, allows the majority of volunteer activity to be tracked no matter the level of difficulty

to collect the information. For example, it is easier to track the volunteer who comes to a kindergarten class to read for an hour a week than it is to track the multitude of parents who participate in the myriad of activities surrounding a high school football game. It is also more difficult to monitor volunteer activity at a larger school, as high schools typically are.

To address these issues, the community involvement office has documented the tracking of volunteer hours and assignments. Different types of volunteer sign-in sheets for volunteers and mentors are made available to facilitate the accounting process. The first time a volunteer reports to the campus, a member of the school staff assigns him/her a sheet where each visit and volunteer hours are recorded. Volunteers that participate in after-office hours or off-campus events (athletics, band, choral, fieldtrips, or fundraisers events) do not keep a sheet, but the hours they contribute are still accounted by a designated staff member throughout the year.

The District Conducts Background Checks on Volunteers

To begin with, all volunteers are required to fill out a security check form. The form asks potential volunteers for their name, race, sex, birth date, place of birth, driver's license number, state of license issue, and the expiration date of the license. In addition, applicants are asked to answer yes or no to the questions below.

- Have you ever pled guilty to a criminal offense?
- Have you ever been convicted/fined in a criminal proceeding?
- Have you ever pled no contest in a criminal proceeding?
- Have you ever had adjudication withheld in a criminal proceeding?
- Have you ever received an expungement?

Volunteers must agree to submit a fingerprint card. A background check is done, and if the person has a criminal record, then the fingerprints are checked against FDLE databases. The district incurs the minimal cost of the fingerprinting; this action reinforces the idea that only the right volunteers, those not having a criminal record, are welcome on campus.

The District Effectively Recognizes Volunteers

The district has a program in place to effectively recognize volunteers and showing appreciation for their efforts, deemed to be essential to keep volunteers active in the schools. The district recognizes volunteers through an annual event. The district issues the awards below.

- Youth Volunteer of the Year (ages group under 21)
- Adult Volunteer of the Year (ages group 21-61)
- Senior Volunteers of the Year (age group 62-over)
- Business Partner of the Year

Also, the district participates in state volunteer recognition, *Five-Star School Award*, *Golden School Award*, and *Silver School Award*. These awards are presented annually to those schools that have shown evidence of exemplary community involvement. In order to qualify for the *Five-Star Award*, a school must achieve 100% of the established criteria in the categories of Business Partnership, Family Involvement, Volunteers, Student Community Service, and School Advisory Councils.

The number of distinguished schools in the district measures the level of effectiveness of the community involvement activity. Currently, there are 38 *Golden Schools*, 2 *Silver Schools*, and 4 *Five-Star Schools* in the district, which makes Lake a highly effective district.

The Golden School Award requirements are

- a staff training program in which a minimum of 80% of the school staff have participated during the school year;
- a School Volunteer Coordinator who has been designated to provide leadership for the school volunteer program through recruitment, placement, training, and supervision of participants; and
- a total number of hours in volunteer service, which equals twice the number of students enrolled in the school. These hours of volunteer service will be in the areas that support instruction. Hours donated in all forms of volunteering are to be included, (i.e., mentors, tutors, advisors and advocates).

The *Silver School Award* requirements are

- the sending school must have a school volunteer coordinator who will provide coordination of the program, placement of students, orientation and training for the students, and student and program evaluation;
- the receiving school must have a volunteer coordinator who will provide organization to the program, assist in the placement of the secondary students, provide orientation and training for the receiving staff, and assist in providing student and program evaluation;
- student volunteers and the receiving faculty must both receive orientation and training. Student volunteers must receive continuous supervision; and
- the composite student volunteer hours must equal at least one half the total number of students in the sending school (e.g., 2,000 students—1,000 volunteer hours.)

11 The district schools solicit and receive economic support through a school foundation.

Foundation Organization Is in Place

Like many school districts in the state, the district has a local education foundation, the Educational Foundation of Lake County, which assists the district in raising funds from local resources. The foundation seeks donations from individual, businesses, and other organizations to fund innovative and successful programs for the district. In the 2000-01 school year, the foundation raised \$155,000, all of which was distributed to the schools.

As of August 2001, the school district, in conjunction with the educational foundation, hired an executive director. Writing grants is one of the responsibilities of the executive director, with the expectation that this position would eventually pay for itself with the grants that it will generate. The foundation proposed an initial budget of \$71,000 for salary, benefits, and payroll taxes for this position, with the foundation paying for the first year and then the school district assuming responsibility in subsequent years. The foundation has estimated that the grant funds received should double the funds raised during the 2000-01 school year.



Action Plans

If the Lake County School Board agrees by a majority plus one vote to implement the action plans in this Appendix, the district could meet the best practices within two years and receive the seal of Best Financial Management from the State Board of Education.

Management Structures

Action Plan 3-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Finalize the planning calendar and make it available on-line as soon as possible.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resources produces the final version of the planning calendar to include dates of major events, contract expirations, and dates the board needs to take action to meet different legal requirements.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services and the MIS Supervisor meet to discuss requirements for making the calendar available on-line. They also discuss the possibility of allowing authorized staff to update and/or modify the calendar.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resources and the MIS Supervisor.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within the existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	All school board members establish an electronic address.
Action Needed	<p>Step 3: The Superintendent sends a communication to board members to establish an electronic address.</p> <p>Step 4: Board members create an electronic address.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and school board members.
Time Frame	May 31, 2001
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within the existing resources.

Action Plan 3-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Revise the Inventory Control List of the policy book and update as necessary. Make the tracing chart that links the old and new policies available on-line.
Action Needed	<p>Step 5: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services revises and updates the inventory of policy books distributed throughout the district.</p> <p>Step 6: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services and the MIS Supervisor discuss the requirements to make the tracing chart that links the old and new policies available on-line.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services and MIS department.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district hires a consultant to develop and/or update, and standardize procedure manuals for all functional areas.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services meets with the consultant and the supervisor of each functional area to identify all activities conducted by the department to develop a complete list of what procedures are needed.</p> <p>Step 2: The consultant reviews all documentation of procedures that exist (including those in memo format, old procedures manuals, handbooks, draft format, etc). In some cases, procedures may be sufficient in their current format. In other cases, they can serve as a basis that can be refined.</p> <p>Step 3: The consultant develops missing procedures with input from those department members most familiar with the process in question. Areas that currently do not have detailed procedures are financial accounting, risk management, purchasing, cash/debt management, auditing, FTE reporting, school improvement, program research and evaluation, facilities planning and development, grounds and warehouse maintenance.</p> <p>Step 4: The consultant compiles the results of the revisions of the operating procedures as well as the newly developed procedures into a standardized format.</p> <p>Step 5: The assistant superintendent assures the consultant cross-references the operating procedures to the originating board</p> <p>Step 6: The MIS department makes the procedures available on-line on both the intranet and the word wide web for all stakeholders' benefit.</p> <p>Step 7: The procedure manual should be updated as procedures change and reviewed annually to ensure the information in it is current and complete.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services, MIS Supervisor, and all other department supervisors and directors.

Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources. The district has already budgeted funds for the consultant.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	District develops a process for reviewing job descriptions on an regular basis as part of its performance evaluation process.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services and the Human Resources supervisor develop and document a procedure for reviewing job descriptions as part of the evaluation process.</p> <p>Step 2: The Human Resource supervisor should train all directors, principals, and other managers in how to incorporate the job description review into the evaluation process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services, the Human Resource supervisor, all directors, principals, and other managers.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 3-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Revise and update organizational charts at the department level describing each unit's functions and responsibilities.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The superintendent assigns the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability responsibility for working with the Human Resource department, assistant superintendents, and department directors to develop functional organizational charts.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent and assistant superintendents identify the functions of each organizational unit and develop a functional organization chart for each unit.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent, assistant superintendents, and the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability review the functional charts to ensure that they comply with the district's strategic plan and clearly delineate responsibility for implementing state directives and district initiatives.</p> <p>Step 4: The Human Resource department reviews, and if necessary revises, the job descriptions for key positions in each organizational unit to ensure that they are consistent with identified unit functions.</p> <p>Step 5: After correcting any inconsistencies, the Superintendent submits the revised job descriptions and functional organizational charts to the board for their approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Continually analyze different alternatives to maintain a reasonable span of control of upper level managers and monitor the current arrangement by which the assistant superintendents have split supervision of the principals among them and determine whether it is efficient and effective
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team assess the effectiveness of the current arrangement and seek input from a representative group of principals to determine if appropriate support is being provided.</p> <p>Step 2: Modifications are made if warranted.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent and the Leadership Team.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	<p>Continue to realign the organizational structure.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The Pupil Accounting function should continue to be under the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services (not transferred to the Finance department as recommended by FADSS).</p>
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the assistant superintendents meet to discuss the details and approve the following organizational changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer the allocation of instructional units to schools from the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to the Assistant Superintendent of School Administration and Human Resource. • Move the warehousing and distribution of textbooks from under the supervisor of Media and Staff Development to the Warehouse manager. <p>Step 2: The team seeks input from the employees involved in each of the changes to ensure all details are considered.</p> <p>Step 3: Changes are approved and submitted to the school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: The Human Resource department updates Job descriptions and organizational charts accordingly.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and assistant superintendents, and the Human Resource department.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources,

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Hire a consultant to conduct a job analysis and compensation study. Adjust the starting salaries for district level positions to be able to attract candidates once they become vacant.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services selects a consultant to conduct a job analysis and compensation study.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent, the three assistant superintendents, and the Finance Director review the results of the study and determine the extent to which salaries could be increased throughout the district.</p> <p>Step 3: The team identifies those positions that are in most need for an increase in starting salary. Base salaries are raised for the selected district level positions. This will not cost the district anything since the raised starting salaries will still be less than they pay those individuals who will be retiring.</p> <p>Step 4: The team submits recommendations to the Superintendent for review and approval.</p> <p>Step 5: The Superintendent submits the revised salaries to the board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and assistant superintendents.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	One-time cost of \$75,000 over the next five years. Adjusting the salaries will not cost the district since the raised starting salaries for selected district-level positions will still be less than they pay those individuals who will be retiring.

Recommendation 5

Strategy	Start developing candidates from within the organization to fill key district-level administrative positions once they become vacant.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team begins observing outstanding principals as potential candidates to fill district level administrative positions.</p> <p>Step 2: The Leadership Team compiles a list of individuals occupying key positions that are close to retiring. The list should include, at minimum, the department heads of Staff Development/Instructional Materials/Media, Student Services, Warehouse, Management Information Systems (MIS), and members of the Leadership Team (Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services).</p> <p>Step 3: At the same time, and after starting salaries of selected positions are adjusted (see Recommendation 5 above), the Leadership Team presents administrators with the data in Exhibit 3-14 or other similar data to illustrate that the existing salary contrast between school principals and district level administrators is typical in Florida.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership Team.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and ongoing.

Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.
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Action Plan 3-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Further the assessment of the cost of operating small schools.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish a task force composed of district administrators, budget staff, school principals, teachers, parents, and community leaders.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish the rationale and parameters of the task force.</p> <p>Step 3: The task force holds public meetings and gathers input from all stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 4: Information gathered by the task force is reduced to a preliminary report.</p> <p>Step 5: The preliminary report is discussed with the board at a board workshop.</p> <p>Step 6: Report is finalized and submitted for board approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource and Assistant Superintendent for Operations.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Further efforts to share staff among campuses to reduce operating costs especially in elementary schools.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource investigate a variety of ways for the district to staff schools by sharing staff among schools.</p> <p>Step 2: A plan is developed for sharing staff positions such as media specialists and nurses so that more services can be included.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent and board review and approve the plan.</p> <p>Step 4: The plan for organizational changes is implemented.</p> <p>Step 5: The plan is monitored for effectiveness.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Time Frame	May 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation will result in a positive fiscal impact for the district. The amount of the additional revenue however, cannot be quantified at this time.

Action Plan 3-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Obtain budgeting and finance training for school board members.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Determine the specific areas in which the board should receive training.</p> <p>Step 2: Contact the FSBA or another suitable organization to schedule training.</p> <p>Step 3: Complete board training.</p> <p>Step 4: School board members should also avail themselves to other FSBA services and meetings in which financial and budgeting information are covered.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School board
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Continue to conduct presentations to the school board as a group and on a one-to-one basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Finance Director organizes presentations to board members on issues such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the district's operations; • historical information on revenues, expenditures and fund balance by major function over the past two or three years; • information about the district's FTE calculations; • millage information; • budget calendar; and • use of lottery funds. <p>Step 2: The Finance Director provides this information to the board during workshops or regularly scheduled board meetings.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of the Finance Department and school board members.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Follow through with commitment to gain Master Board Certification.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Superintendent and school board members complete Master Board certification.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and school board members.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Action Plan 3-8

Recommendation 1

Strategy	Finalize the five-year strategic plan.
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Action Needed	Step 1:	The Superintendent and the Leadership Team, with input from administrators, teachers, parents and students, finalize the five-year strategic plan. The strategic plan should emphasize on involvement and decision making, from the board to every administrative level, in order to maintain consistency.
	Step 2:	The Superintendent submits the five-year strategic plan to the board for approval.
	Step 5:	To promote accountability, compensation of district administrators should be tied to achievement of each plan priority. The Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services examine the procedure needed to link administrator compensation to the achievement of each plan priority.
	Step 6:	Once the procedure is determined, the Superintendent submits it to the board for approval.
	Step 7:	The Superintendent and the Leadership Team employ the strategic plan as the starting point for the district's planning and management system and allocate resources according to the priorities developed in the strategic planning process.
	Step 8:	The Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services devise the procedure needed to track strategic plan priorities and associated expenditures.
	Step 9:	Procedure is finalized, tested and implemented.
	Step 10:	The Superintendent and the Leadership Team update the plan annually, using information on achievement of the prior year's goals and input from a broad group of stakeholders.
	Step 11:	Each year, the Superintendent submits district priorities to the board and demonstrates how these will help achieve the five-year goals and objectives.
	Step 12:	The board approves annual district priorities.
	Step 13:	Each administrator in the district completes an administrative work plan, stating what the administrator will do to help achieve objectives. Administrators are evaluated and compensated in part according to the achievement of the work plan.
	Step 14:	The district superintendent and assistant superintendents monitor plan implementation.
	Step 15:	The Superintendent makes the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability an integral part of the strategic plan implementation and monitoring process.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Leadership Team and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.	
Time Frame	March 31, 2001 and ongoing.	
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.	

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Carry out certain related activities to support and enhance the strategic plan and to contribute to creating a solid and significant documented process for the allocation of resources and improvement of the district's entire planning system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and Leadership Team discuss different activities that should be undertaken to enhance the five-year strategic plan and develop the entire planning system of the district.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent assigns the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability prime responsibility in this task. The Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability should assist in and coordinate the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopting annual priorities; • writing and updating school improvement plans; • following a program development cycle to review programs in all subjects; • developing a program evaluation system; • completing and monitoring existing administrative work plans (i.e. Technology Plan, Facilities Construction Plan, etc.), and developing or reactivating work plans for those administrative areas that currently do not have one in place; • maintaining an updated personnel evaluation system; and • using a management information system to track and record district progress. <p>Step 16: Once the group of strategic plan-related activities that will be undertaken is chosen and mechanics finalized, the Superintendent submits to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 17: The Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability communicates results of the activities to stakeholders.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent, Leadership Team and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	September 31, 2001 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Action Plan 3-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Designate the FTE Specialist as the district's FTE Administrator and standardize the FTE process.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team draft a job description of the position of FTE Administrator. The FTE Administrator is an upgrade of the position of FTE Specialist. The FTE Specialist is then designated as the district's FTE Administrator and given the responsibility for overseeing all facets of FTE and pupil accounting. The salary level of the FTE Administrator is adjusted accordingly. An increase of approximately \$25,000 (calculated as the difference between</p>

	the average salary of high school principals and the current salary of the FTE Specialist) is reasonable. However, the efforts of an effective FTE administrator will provide the district additional revenue in an amount equal to several times his or her salary. Evaluation of the FTE Administrator's performance should be based in part on the accuracy of FTE projections.
Step 2:	The job description of the position of FTE Administrator is submitted to the board for approval.
Step 3:	The Superintendent assigns the FTE Administrator the responsibility of developing and instituting specific procedures for conducting FTE projections and for collecting and reporting FTE data. Procedures for training and supervising all staff who have a role in the FTE reporting process are also instituted.
Step 4:	The FTE Administrator drafts the new procedures and submits to the Superintendent for approval.
Step 5:	The Superintendent approves the procedures and submits to the board to be formalized.
Who Is Responsible	The Leadership Team and the FTE Administrator.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	The efforts of an effective FTE Administrator will provide the district additional revenue in an amount equal to several times his or her salary.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Establish a district level FTE Committee.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services and the FTE Administrator form a district level FTE Committee composed of representatives from Finance, Pupil Accounting, MIS, Personnel, Pre-K, ESE, Vocational, Transportation, ESOL, Dropout Prevention, and Charter Schools, plus one Elementary, one Middle, and one High School Principal.</p> <p>Step 2: The assistant superintendents designate the FTE Administrator to be the chair of the committee.</p> <p>Step 3: This committee will be responsible for producing accurate FTE projections and assisting in the preparation for conducting the four annual FTE counts, and also in obtaining information from other districts regarding how they specifically link programmatic goals to financial planning and budgeting, including student achievement. This committee should also be involved in identifying training needed by data entry clerks.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resources and the FTE Administrator.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Develop an FTE training manual.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Business Support Services assigns the FTE Administrator the responsibility of developing an FTE training manual. The manual is developed with input from MIS and the district level FTE Committee.</p> <p>Step 2: The manual is finalized, approved and distributed throughout the district.</p> <p>Step 3: The FTE Administrator updates the manual as new FTE rules and regulations become available.</p>
Who Is Responsible	FTE Administrator.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002, and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Develop a written procedure to formalize annual performance audits that assess the accuracy of FTE reporting.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Business Support Services with input from the FTE Administrator drafts a procedure to conduct annual performance audits of the FTE reporting process. The performance audits are to be conducted on an annual basis by the district's internal auditor and can be a sampling of 25% of the schools each year on a rotating basis.</p> <p>Step 2: Procedure is submitted to the Superintendent for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent approves the procedure and submits to the board to be formalized.</p> <p>Step 4: The internal auditor conducts the reviews annually.</p> <p>Step 5: Audit results are submitted to the FTE Administrator who in turn looks for areas in the reporting procedure that need to be corrected.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Business Support Services and the internal auditor.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002, and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Can be attained within existing resources.

Action Plan 3-10

Recommendation 1

Strategy	Once the major educational and operational programs have developed goals and objectives, as recommended in Action Plan 4-1, Chapter 4, the district will be able to amend its current budgetary development process to include links with programmatic goals, including student achievement.
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Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team assign the Finance Director and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability the responsibility of strengthening the budgetary process by including links with programmatic goals.</p> <p>Step 2: The Finance Director and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability obtain information from other districts regarding how they specifically link programmatic goals to financial planning and budgeting, including student achievement. Districts that currently link programmatic goals to financial planning and budgeting include Polk and Leon.</p> <p>Step 3: The Finance Director and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability assess the current budgeting process in light of the process followed by other districts.</p> <p>Step 4: The Finance Director and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability prepare recommendations for board consideration that would alter the current financial planning and budgeting process to include linkage to district goals and objectives, including student performance.</p> <p>Step 5: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team select financial planning and budget development process alterations that suit the needs of the district, provide clear links to district goals and objectives, and provide opportunities to adjust financial planning and budgeting when warranted to meet goals.</p> <p>Step 6: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team implement a financial planning and budget development process that is linked to the district's goals and objectives, including student performance.</p>
	<p>Step 7: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team adopt a regular assessment process of the district's goals and objectives that includes adjusting financial planning and budgeting when warranted to meet goals.</p> <p>Step 8: The Superintendent reviews and approves the process and submits to the board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent, Leadership Team, Finance Director, and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Performance Accountability System

Action Plan 4-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Create an Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent direct appropriate Personnel department staff to draft job descriptions for the positions of Manager (or Supervisor) of Program Evaluation and Accountability and for the Testing Coordinator. The job descriptions should be developed with direct input from the Superintendent's leadership team and minimally include the activities below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise all testing and evaluation that occur in the district • Serve as liaison between the Department of Education and the district in all matters concerning testing and evaluation • Serve as a resource to the districts administrators, supervisors, principals, and teachers on issues of testing and evaluation • Responsible for reviewing and evaluating all research projects and programs submitted to the school board for approval • Provide testing and evaluation for programs administered by staff development <p>Step 2: The Superintendent secures approval from the school board.</p> <p>Step 18: The position of Testing, Evaluation, and Program Accountability is advertised and applications reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.</p> <p>Step 19: Minimal qualifications to occupy this office shall include a master's degree, certification in Administration and Supervision, and at least three years experience in working with and directing professional staff. Candidate must also demonstrate both theoretical and applied knowledge of testing, evaluation, and program accountability.</p> <p>Step 20: Interviews are held and an applicant is selected for the position.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Personnel Department staff at the direction of the Superintendent.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	\$402,900 over the next five years approximately (\$75,540 is the annual state average salary for a manager in Research and Evaluation plus the salary and benefits of the secretary \$19,378 average plus an annual 4% contractual increase).

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Develop an accountability framework for each major educational and operational program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team with input from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability, develop an accountability framework for each program to guide staff through the development of the district's program-level accountability system. The framework should contain a detailed format that reflects district expectations for program-level accountability systems and should include the items listed below and instructions to guide the development of each item.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program purpose • Unit administering the program • Person responsible for ensuring that the framework is completed and updated regularly • Program goals • Program objectives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance measures by program objective, including a short explanation of how each relates to the program objective • Processes by program objective—the answer to the question, “What processes will you put in place to accomplish this objective?” providing an overview of implementation strategies, the person responsible for implementation, resources needed and sources, and target date • Human resource development—the answer to the question, “What training is needed (and for whom) in order to accomplish this objective?” • Performance evaluation methods—including how often a performance assessment will be conducted, how, by whom, and the answer to the question, “How will you know you have progressed toward or successfully completed the objective (your evaluation criteria)?” • Administrative unit(s) responsible for implementing goals, objectives, and strategies and reporting results
	Step 2: The district should make use of the information in Exhibit 4-11 to guide this process.
Who Is Responsible	The newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Develop and distribute accountability handbook.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team with help from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability develop an accountability handbook that covers the topics below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basic concepts of program accountability including developing goals, outcome-based objectives, performance measures, and routine assessment techniques. • The use of the district accountability framework. • The relationship between program goals and objectives and those developed at various other administrative levels. This includes a description of the process that staff should follow to ensure that there is a logical, specific linkage rather than a loose, general association between program-level accountability systems and those included in documents such as the strategic plan, school improvement plans, and the district budget. • The district budget development process including district budget priorities and the connection between program goals and objectives and the allocation of program resources. <p>Step 2: Distribute the document the document to each department head and to appropriate program staff to enable them to develop accountability systems for their programs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Newly create Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability under the direction of the superintendent and her leadership team.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002

Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Develop adequate goals and objectives for major educational and operational programs and services.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent charge the director or supervisor of each educational and operational program with the responsibility of developing adequate goals and objectives for their respective program. The accountability framework and the accountability handbook described in Recommendations (2) and (3) above should be used as a foundation. Primary areas to develop goals and objectives include those below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offices of the three assistant superintendents and other areas reporting directly to the Superintendent such as the Education Foundation • Basic Education (K-3, 4-8, and 9-12) • Exceptional Student Education • Vocational • At-Risk (Dropout Prevention, Educational Alternatives, English for Speakers of Other Languages) • Facilities Construction and Facilities Maintenance • Personnel • Asset and Risk Management • Financial Management • Purchasing • Transportation • Food Services • Safety and Security <p>Step 2: Program director or supervisor identify the purpose of each major program (from federal or state law, grant specifications, etc.) and the primary services provided by the district.</p> <p>Step 21: Program director or supervisor identify district priorities, the strategic plan, existing goals and objectives, and major activities/initiatives that relate to each program.</p> <p>Step 22: Program director or supervisor develops broad goal statements that describe the primary outcomes (such as high student performance, efficient transportation services, etc.) the district expects each program to achieve. Goal statements should reflect the intent of each program, support school-based needs, provide a context for major program initiatives and activities, and clearly support goals and objectives developed at other administrative levels. Staff should use information in Exhibit 4-11 as a guideline.</p> <p>Step 23: Program director or supervisor develops short-term and mid-term objectives for each educational and operational program goal. Objectives should be based on the specific, measurable outcomes the district would like program to achieve. Each objective should relate to the program's goals, the program's intent and resources, children served, school needs, district-wide goals, and the district's expectations for the program.</p>

	<p>Step 24: Program director or supervisor identifies major initiatives and key strategies that the district will implement to achieve each program objective. These strategies will be later used to set priorities for day-to-day operations.</p> <p>Step 25: All program goals and objectives are finalized and submitted to the Leadership Team for review. The Leadership Team seeks input from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability to assure each system is aligned with the district's strategic plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Program directors supervisors, supported by the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability, and at the direction of the superintendent and her leadership team.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 5

Strategy	Review and align all the goals and objectives, and develop a mechanism to review and provide feedback to program staff.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team with help from the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability review program-level goals and objectives with staff of each major program to ensure that they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet district expectations set forth in the accountability handbook (refer to Recommendations 1 and 2 above) and • clearly and logically relate to the district's vision and mission statements, and goals and objectives developed at various other district administrative levels such as those in the strategic plan and those developed as part of the budget process. <p>Step 2: The Leadership Team with help from the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability review school improvement plans to identify school-based needs as they relate to specific programs. This information is also used to develop, refine, and align program-level goals and objectives to support school needs and improvement initiatives. (Refer to Action Plan 5-8, Chapter 5 for additional recommendations related to school improvement plans.)</p> <p>Step 26: The Leadership Team ensures the Curriculum and Instruction department clearly addresses all eight state educational goals through department goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 27: The Leadership Team provides specific feedback to program staff to revise and resubmit goals and objectives that do not meet district expectations or do not clearly align with those developed at other administrative levels.</p>

Who Is Responsible	<p>Superintendent, Leadership Team, and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.</p> <p>Alternatively, the Leadership team could form ad hoc working committees to review specific program areas. Each committee could include a representative from the Leadership Team and may include appropriate staff members from other district program areas to ensure that goals and objectives are realistic, related, and coordinated with other programs' goals and objectives. For instance, operational support areas such as Finance, Transportation, and Facilities could be included as members of the ad hoc working committees that review and provide feedback on educational program goals and objectives.</p>
Time Frame	September 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 6

Strategy	Clarify the relationship between program-level goals and objectives with the district's mission, values, priorities, and administrator performance expectations.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and her Leadership Team establish a committee made up of program directors/supervisors and supported by the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. The committee would be responsible for analyzing the goals and objectives of all educational and operational programs to clearly establish existing interactions between departments and programs. Secondly, the evaluation should concentrate on how the different systems interrelate and align with the district's long-term and short-term goals and objectives, mission and priorities. Lastly, the committee should review the relationship between goals and objectives and goals and objectives of school improvement plans.</p> <p>Step 2: The committee should make recommendations to the Superintendent and her Leadership Team to strengthen the linkages of all staff.</p> <p>Step 3: The Leadership Team should review the committees recommendations and direct program staff to revise the goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 4: Goals and objectives are finalized and implemented.</p> <p>Step 5: Program director or supervisor reassess goals and objectives two times each year based on legislative changes, changes in district goals, student needs, resources, needs identified in school improvement plans, etc.</p> <p>Step 6: At the end of each school year management evaluates the results of each program and administrator compensation is tied to achievements.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent and her Leadership team and program directors or supervisors, supported by the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	January 31, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 7	
Strategy	Revise and expand the existing accountability policy to address responsibility for accomplishing goals and objectives established at individual educational program level and to emphasize accountability.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and her Leadership Team, with input from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability draft an expanded accountability policy to describe how departments and programs within the district are to be charged with the responsibility of developing annual goals and objectives that relate to the district's mission, support State Education Goals, reflect the intent of the program, or incorporate state or federal requirements.</p> <p>The policy also should describe how departments and programs are to be held accountable for the success of reaching the established goals.</p> <p>Step 2: Updated policy is submitted to the board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Leadership Team, and school board.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 4-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop program performance and cost-efficiency measures and identify data needs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team should assign program directors and supervisors the responsibility of identifying performance measures for the major programs/services. The newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability assists program staff in researching appropriate measures.</p> <p>Step 2: Program directors and supervisors review Exhibit 4-16 and use it as a guide in developing the performance measures. Operational supervisors should review Exhibit 4-23, common performance measures of operational programs, as a source of information.</p> <p>Step 3: Program directors and supervisors review performance measures in the district's strategic plan document. While not program specific, the strategic plan includes broad, critical measures that should provide program staff with some direction in developing program-specific performance measures.</p> <p>Step 4: Identify detailed input and outcome measures and indicators of efficiency and effectiveness. Focus on desired results and outcomes, not just on activities. Clearly define each measure and make sure that it measures what is intended. Avoid measures that could easily be misinterpreted.</p> <p>Step 5: Identify how performance measures link to the budget and the measures in the district strategic plan.</p> <p>Step 28: For each performance measure, identify the data needed and provide the information below.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will collect performance data and how often? What is the source of the data (e.g., state or district reports)? • In what format is the data needed? • How often should the data be collected? • Who (program staff, department head, assistant superintendent, Superintendent, school board) will the data be reported to and how often? • How should the data be used?
	Step 29: Program directors and supervisors select a few critical performance and cost-efficiency measures that should be reported periodically to school board members and the Superintendent to demonstrate how well the program is performing.
Who Is Responsible	Leadership team, program supervisors and appropriate program staff.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Identify data needs and develop a process for approving data requests.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team, the directors of MIS and Finance with input from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability identify and prioritize data needs by classifying data into the following two categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data currently available, accessible, and in the format needed to determine progress toward program goals and objectives and • data currently either not available, accessible or in the format needed to determine progress toward program goals and objectives. <p>Step 2: Establish and implement a district-wide process for approving data requests made to the MIS department. This policy may include review and signoff from department managers or assistant superintendents and how the data relates to program goals and objectives.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership team, assistant superintendents, the Management and Information Systems (MIS) department, and the new office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	October 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Review and align performance measures.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign the responsibility to clearly identify the specific role and expectations for program staff to program directors and supervisors to ensure that performance measures are implemented and how they should relate to specific programs' performance measurement system. The new office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (Action Plan 4-1) is consulted as needed.</p> <p>Step 2: Review program-level performance measures with staff of each major program to ensure that they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet district expectations set forth in the accountability handbook (refer to Action Plan 4-1 Recommendation 3), the specifications outlined in Exhibit 4-11, elements of program performance and Cost-Efficiency Measures, and Exhibit 4-16, Input, Output, and Outcome Measures and • clearly and logically relate to those developed at various other district administrative levels such as those in school improvement plans and the strategic plan. <p>Step 30: Provide specific feedback to program staff to revise and resubmit performance measures that do not meet district expectations or do not clearly align with those developed at other administrative levels.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership Team, program supervisors and directors.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Develop benchmarks for each major program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent and the Leadership Team determine which major programs would benefit most from benchmarking and assign the responsibility to program supervisors and directors to develop benchmarks for the selected programs/services.</p> <p>Step 2: Program directors and supervisors of the selected programs/services identify key performance measures of cost, quality, and efficiency that should be compared.</p> <p>Step 3: For each program, a group of about five peer districts is identified using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • availability of program; • location of school district; • student population; • number of students served by program; • urban/rural nature of district; and • socioeconomic status of the district. <p>Step 4: For each program, select model organizations including government agencies or private companies that have similar programs.</p> <p>Step 5: Contact the peer districts or search for the required data in appropriate</p>

	sources.
	Step 6: Identify standards, such as trend analysis data, minimally acceptable performance, or generally accepted industry standards, to judge program performance or cost-efficiency. Examples of standards might include being in the top of the state's districts, in the middle of peer districts, within 10% of the industry average, etc.
	Step 7: Determine how the data will be used to draw conclusions on the different programs. For example, whether the district will be compared to the average of the peer districts, the highest performing organization, the organization with the lowest cost, etc.
	Step 8: Set a schedule to collect performance data from benchmarking organizations, staff responsible for collecting the data, source of the benchmark data and timelines for collecting and reporting results.
	Step 9: Collect the data, measure the performance, and identify gaps between the Lake programs and the peer districts.
	Step 10: Program directors and supervisors or selected programs/services present results to the Superintendent and later, to the school board.
Who Is Responsible	Leadership Team, Program supervisors and directors, and appropriate program staff with the assistance of the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	January 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Action Plan 4-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a top-down directive for staff to conduct ongoing assessments of selected programs and services.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team develops a directive for staff to conduct ongoing assessments of programs and services. Program assessments should include information such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • program purpose, goals, objectives, delivery methods, and program resources (dollars and staff); • the extent to which the program achieved its annual goals and objectives using performance and cost-efficiency data and established benchmarks; • amount of workload accomplished (outputs); • numeric indicators of program results that indicate quality, effectiveness, and amount of "need" that is or is not being served (outcomes); • amount of input related to (divided by) amount of output or outcomes (efficiency); • elements substantially out of the control of the school district or program that affect program accomplishments; and • elements over which the district has significant control, such as staffing patterns

	Step 2: The Leadership Team selects the programs and services that will be monitored on a regular basis and assigns this responsibility to program directors or supervisors. The new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability is consulted as needed.
	Step 3: Performance is monitored and results are presented as agreed.
Who Is Responsible	Leadership team, program directors, supervisors or assigned staff, and the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	October 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Provide training to district administrators on performance reporting
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of MIS and the office of Program Evaluation and Accountability jointly deliver training to administrators on performance reporting, how to identify and prioritize data needs, and on the reports already available from TERMS.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent and her Leadership team work together to establish a mechanism for soliciting ongoing input from district employees on changing data and reporting needs; prioritizing these needs; communicating them to the MIS Department; and creating performance reports.</p> <p>Step 3: The MIS Director establishes a mechanism for encouraging and soliciting ongoing input from district employees on changing data and reporting needs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Leadership Team; director of MIS, and the office of Program Evaluation and Accountability
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Action Plan 4-4

Recommendation 1

Strategy	Develop an evaluation model to guide the review of major district programs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability develop an evaluation model to use in reviewing major district programs. Benchmarking with peer districts can be useful in this step.</p> <p>Step 2: The Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability work with the Leadership team to identify criteria to determine when to outsource the evaluation or when it should be conducted in-house.</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent presents evaluation model is presented to the school board and communicated to district staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability in cooperation with the Superintendent's Leadership Team.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Comprehensively evaluate district educational and operational programs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability in cooperation with the leadership team develop a schedule to formally evaluate the districts major operational and educational programs on a regular basis. The schedule should be revised annually and project planned evaluations for the next two years. (It may take as many as three years to evaluate all major programs, given program complexity and availability of staff hours.) The objectives of each evaluation and the unit responsible for completing each evaluation should be determined in advance.</p> <p>Step 2: Present the list to the board annually for approval.</p> <p>Step 31: Implement evaluation schedule.</p> <p>Step 32: Each program evaluation should be in writing and address program goals and objectives described as Action Plan 4-1, using data collected for performance and cost-efficiency measures, and benchmarks as described in Action Plan 4-2. Each evaluation should include recommendations to improve program performance and reduce costs.</p> <p>Step 33: The Leadership Team and program administrators utilize evaluation results to reassess program goals and objectives, improve performance and reduce costs, revise performance measures and benchmarks (as needed), identify program resource needs, and identify program staff training needs.</p> <p>Step 34: A final report of each evaluation is issued. The report should clearly disclose the evaluation objectives and a description of the evaluation's scope and methodology. The report should be distributed to the high-level district administrators, program managers, the school board, and others responsible for taking action on report findings and recommendations. Copies of the report should be distributed to or made available for inspection by the public.</p> <p>Step 35: Recommendations for program improvement are implemented as appropriate.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability in cooperation with the Leadership Team, program supervisors, and appropriate program staff.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Implement a cost savings identification mechanism.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Leadership Team with input from the new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability develop procedures for soliciting ideas about cost savings, and for alternative methods of providing services.</p> <p>Step 2: Program is publicized, including its incentives, to district employees.</p>

	Step 3: The Leadership team and the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability collect, analyze, implement, and track the ideas generated.
	Step 4: Employees, whose ideas saved money, are recognized.
Who Is Responsible	The Leadership Team and the new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation has the potential of generating additional funds and/or cost savings. The fiscal impact, however, cannot be determined at this time.

Action Plan 4-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Publicly report additional information on the performance and cost-efficiency of major district programs.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Leadership Team in cooperation with the new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability ensure that annual reports on the performance and cost efficiency of selected educational and operational programs are presented to school board, district administrators, to various district-wide committees and to others upon request. Refer to Action Plan 4-1 through 4-4, for more information.
Who Is Responsible	The Leadership Team and the new Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability
Time Frame	June 2003
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Educational Service Delivery***Action Plan 5-1***

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish a policy to strengthen the evaluation and accountability components of the student performance review mechanism.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction with input from his educational program supervisors develops the draft of a policy that emphasizes evaluation based not only on the results of student assessments but on the results of the PACE Plan developed by individual schools. The policy holds school administrators accountable for the accomplishment of the PACE Plan and is tied to their yearly evaluations.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Services gives input as to linking achievement to employee evaluation</p> <p>Step 3: The Superintendent reviews the draft and prepares for board approval.</p> <p>Step 4: The board approves the new policy.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource, and school board.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Include peer information in the summary reports issued for each assessment test.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction with input from his supervisors and the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability select peer groups that will be used for comparisons.</p> <p>Step 2: Peer groups should include peer districts and schools within the district that have similar resources or have students with similar social and economic characteristics.</p> <p>Step 3: The newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability or alternatively, the Testing Department, collects peer information available in the Florida Information Resource Network (FIRN).</p> <p>Step 4: Peer information is included in the summary reports of the different student assessment tests.</p> <p>Step 5: Based on comparisons, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor for Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction evaluate alternatives to develop, modify or enhance educational programs as needed.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction and newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (see Action Plan 3-4 Recommendation 2).
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Collect cohort student performance data of targeted subgroups as data is generated and as technology becomes available.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (the Testing Department alternatively) develop a plan to conduct cohort analyses including the types of data to be collected.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent approves the plan.</p> <p>Step 3: The newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (the Testing Department alternatively) oversees the process of collecting the cohort data by subgroup and generating reports.</p> <p>Step 4: Incumbent staff, with the support of the Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, enhances or modifies instructional programs as needed.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, and newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (see Action Plan 3-4, Recommendation 2).
Time Frame	May 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Take the necessary steps to provide thorough accessibility to disaggregated data and establish strategies to improve performance of selected subgroups of students.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, MIS and the Testing Department add the electronic component to the assessment review tool used to track and analyze disaggregated data.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction and the Testing Department model a disaggregation analysis process to be implemented district-wide.</p> <p>Step 3: Procedures are instituted and training sessions for school administrators are established.</p> <p>Step 4: Student performance data for selected subgroups is collected and documented in report form.</p> <p>Step 5: Reports are disseminated to stakeholders as needed.</p> <p>Step 6: School administrators modify or enhance programs as needed.</p> <p>Step 7: Results are reported to stakeholders as needed.</p> <p>Step 8: Once disaggregated data procedures are instituted, identify specific strategies for improving performance of subgroups (e.g., economically disadvantaged students).</p> <p>Step 9: School administrators look for and identify characteristics and practices that can be replicated at other schools and continually seek innovative ways to meet the needs of diverse populations.</p> <p>Step 10: School administrators develop strengths through a collaborated effort that can include: frequent training, targeted small class sizes, strong parent/school partnerships, good relations between school principals and faculty, successful school-based granting efforts, etc.</p> <p>Step 11: Results are reported as part of the annual evaluations.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, and newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. Consultations with the MIS department as needed.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 5	
Strategy	Further the use of nonacademic data.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction holds a session with all the program supervisors to analyze what nonacademic data currently tracked by certain departments can be of use by others.</p> <p>Step 2: The team also determines what other nonacademic data should be tracked by the district and establishes what shop should be responsible.</p> <p>Step 3: For this purpose, parties should use the resources available such as FIRN (Florida Information Resource Network) and other DOE databases.</p> <p>Step 4: Student nonacademic performance data is then collected for the selected subgroups.</p> <p>Step 5: Data is documented in report form.</p> <p>Step 6: Reports are disseminated to incumbent parties and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 7: The team resumes and based on the analysis of the reports, modifies or enhances instructional programs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, and newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. Consultations with the MIS department as needed.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.
Recommendation 6	
Strategy	Integrate all the formal and informal information systems currently in place to create a district-wide student performance review mechanism.
Action Needed	<p><i>The purpose of this mechanism is to centralize the monitoring of student performance, evaluate the progress made by individual schools, emphasize accountability for improvement and can be used to establish the cost-effectiveness of the educational programs. This mechanism should be the responsibility of the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.</i></p> <p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in conjunction with the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability and the Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction take inventory of the different information systems currently in place that can be part of the district-wide student improvement mechanism.</p>

	<p>Step 2: The office of Program Evaluation and Accountability should be responsible for creating individual school progress profiles and analyses of the scores for previous years as well as projections. The projections can be based on FCAT passing rates and involve a comparison between projected passing rates and the district's goal.</p> <p>Step 3: The analysis should be completed for all areas tested, for different ethnic groups, and for economically disadvantaged (eligible for the federal free or reduce price lunch program) students.</p> <p>Step 4: Data from the previous three years is used to make projections for the next two years by subject, ethnic groups, and economically disadvantaged students for each campus.</p> <p>Step 5: The Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability prepares individual school profiles and distributes them to campuses.</p> <p>Step 6: These school profiles are to be used in conjunction with the blueprint developed during the annual PACE workshop to produce the individual PACE Plans.</p> <p>Step 7: The principals and teachers adjust teaching and curricula to address identified areas of weaknesses and monitor changes in student performance in areas of weakness.</p> <p>Step 8: The Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability routinely monitors the progress of schools in meeting the goals.</p> <p>Step 9: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, the Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability, and the incumbent school principal jointly analyze the results of the improvement process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability, and school principals. Consultations with the MIS department as needed.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Action Plan 5-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Provide incentives to and recognize exceptionally successful teachers and promote and contribute to the diffusion of their exemplary practices.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and program supervisors hold regular meetings with the purpose of looking for innovative methods to provide incentives to exceptionally successful teachers.</p> <p>Step 2: During the meeting, administrators of low performing schools are given the opportunity to be paired with higher performing schools and encouraged to visit them to identify strategies that might be suitable for their operation.</p>

	<p>Step 3: The monthly or weekly publications are produced and distributed to principals and district administrators on relevant information on district events, changes in procedures, etc. Another forum for sharing best practices are the monthly curriculum contact meetings.</p> <p>Step 4: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, and the MIS Department explore the alternatives for creating a unit or lesson plan data bank to share best practices.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Action Plan 5-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Further the use of nonacademic data related to ESE students to improve performance such as placement in the least restrictive environment.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The ESE Department uses the resources available in FIRN (Florida Information Resource Network) and the School Indicators Report produced by DOE.</p> <p>Step 2: Collect student performance data and document in report form.</p> <p>Step 3: Plan to develop, modify or enhance program as needed.</p> <p>Step 4: Report to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and instruction and other interested stakeholders.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Exceptional Student Education. Consultation with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability is made as needed.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Find alternative methods to increase the number of children identified as gifted.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the ESE Supervisor establish a procedure by which screening of all students at the elementary level be required utilizing the group test results.</p> <p>Step 2: Superintendent approves the new procedure.</p> <p>Step 3: The ESE Supervisors seeks input from the newly created Advisory Committee (see recommendation X below) to find innovative program delivery methods.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and ESE Supervisor.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Begin filing for Medicaid Direct Services Reimbursement and return a portion of the reimbursement for administrative services back to the Exceptional Student Education and Student Services child programs that earn these special revenues.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The ESE Supervisor chooses and contacts a Medicaid billing representative to review the contractual arrangements of other school districts that contract for Medicaid billing, and determine what services will maximize the district's reimbursements.</p> <p>Step 2: The ESE Supervisor director asks the Purchasing Department to submit a request for proposal for professional Medicaid billing services based on research of available services.</p> <p>Step 3: The Purchasing Department reviews and evaluates proposals, and selects a qualified vendor.</p> <p>Step 4: The board reviews the administration's proposal and approves this plan.</p> <p>Step 5: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction devises a mechanism by which a portion of the reimbursement for both administrative and direct services are to go back to the Exceptional Student Education and Student Services child programs that earn these special revenues.</p> <p>Step 6: The Superintendent reviews the mechanism and submits to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 7: The Director of the Finance Department ensures the claims are processed on an ongoing basis.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor of ESE, Purchasing Department, Finance Department, and school board.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Additional revenues of as much as \$256,000 annually and approximately \$1.28 million over a five-year period.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Develop an Advisory Council for Exceptional Student Education.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The ESE Supervisor forms Advisory Council for Exceptional Student Education made up of teachers, parents, and other constituents.</p> <p>Step 2: The ESE Supervisor drafts the proposal for creating the council including purpose, duration, membership, frequency of meetings, etc and submits to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and instruction reviews the proposal, approves and submits to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: The school board approves the creation of the Advisory Council for Exceptional Student Education.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, ESE Supervisor, and school board.

Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Action Plan 5-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Use annual state reports to compile and analyze ESOL data on a continual basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction designs a system for comprehensive evaluation of ESOL program.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction develops tools and reports that summarize student performance by grade level and school.</p> <p>Step 3: The Supervisor of ESOL jointly with Testing department identifies "danger-zone" students.</p> <p>Step 4: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction provides feedback to administrators on revising teaching strategies.</p> <p>Step 5: The board adopts policy to incorporate program throughout district.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Supervisor of Federal Compensatory Programs. Consultation with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability (see Action Plan 3-4, Recommendation 2) as needed.
Time Frame	November 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Disaggregate and study ESOL students' standardized test scores, and adjust curriculum according to findings.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability disaggregates ESOL students' standardized test scores, disseminate results to schools, and provide assistance to help the ESOL contacts to understand the data.</p> <p>Step 2: Program modification and curriculum changes both at the district and school level should be implemented as a result of an evaluation of the scores.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Federal Compensatory Programs and office of Program Evaluation and Accountability. Consultation with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability is made as needed.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Take additional measures for unforeseen demands for ESOL services.

	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor for Federally Compensatory Programs look for methods that guarantee that in case the LEP population boosts, and there is a high demand for certified teachers, the district is able to respond immediately.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor for Federally Compensatory Programs make provisions for having immediate training availability or establishing the goal of having at least one certified teacher in each school.</p> <p>Step 3: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor for Federally Compensatory Programs maintain open communication with OMSLE as a resource that can be used to initiate training for ESOL certification in case of sudden demand.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor for Federally Compensatory Programs.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Improvements that are continually made by the ESOL Program are presented to stakeholders the with the purpose of bettering the public's perception of the program.
	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor of Federally Compensatory Programs routinely prepares progress reports of the ESOL Program.</p> <p>Step 2: The Supervisor for Federally Compensatory Education Program in conjunction with the new Public Information officer selects the best method to disseminate progress report to stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 3: Progress reports and success stories of the ESOL program are disseminated to stakeholders.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Federal Compensatory Education and Public Information Officer.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with exiting resources.

Action Plan 5-6

Recommendation 1

Strategy	Formulate specific teaching strategies.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction identify a Curriculum Committee made up of teachers and staff.</p> <p>Step 2: The committee assesses the need for curriculum development or modification to include teaching strategies.</p> <p>Step 3: Committee members draft the new curricula.</p> <p>Step 4: The assistant superintendent ensures that teachers are trained to use the new curricula.</p>

	Step 5: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction seeks feedback from teacher so that on-going adjustments can be made.
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction
Time Frame	August 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Expand the PK-12 Curriculum and Instruction department by creating two positions of Program Coordinator: one Coordinator for PK-5 Programs to support and oversee district PK-5 curriculum development, one for middle and high school programs to support and oversee district's secondary schools curriculum development.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services propose the positions and job description of Coordinator for PK-5 Programs and Coordinator for Middle and High School Programs.</p> <p>Step 2: The school board approves the position and job description.</p> <p>Step 3: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services posts the job.</p> <p>Step 4: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and the Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction interview and hire the Coordinators.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services, and Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	June 30, 2003
Fiscal Impact	\$385,900 in salary and benefits over the next five years as shown in Exhibit 5-35.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Maximize the curriculum and instruction capacity of principals and/or assistant principals through effective training with the purpose of developing principals and assistant principals to be successful instructional leaders at the middle and high schools.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of Staff Development carry out extensive research and benchmarking with peer districts to determine the type and amount of training necessary to build up curriculum and instructional skills to develop principals and assistant principals into successful instructional leaders.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of Staff Development and the Supervisor of Basic K-12 Curriculum and Instruction develop a top-down directive to ensure that school administrators attend established training sessions.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of Staff Development.

Time Frame	July 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.
Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Refine and formalize a Curriculum Management Plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent assigns the responsibility for formalizing a Curriculum Management Plan to the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.</p> <p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, with appropriate input from staff members, defines and secures approval of the roles of various stakeholders in the design and development process.</p> <p>Step 3: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction takes steps to ensure that the commitment to the instructional program would be such that systemic planning becomes a reality. Such steps must include involvement of all stakeholders in embracing a clear and compelling shared vision of schooling for the students of Lake County Schools, which clearly defines the instructional focus of all elementary, middle, alternative, special education, and high schools in the district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How or when the evaluations of curriculum will occur, • Specific roles and responsibilities for curriculum, • Processes for long-range planning, • Monitoring of curriculum delivery, and • Requirement for data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning. <p>Step 4: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction develops a plan for action at both the district and school levels to formalize the curriculum management system to be used systematically and uniformly by all instructional leaders and staff.</p> <p>Step 5: As appropriate staffing levels and capacities are realized, the role of the district-level instructional team is reassessed to rightfully assume responsibility for researching curriculum trends and developments, state directions, state-of-the-art best practices, and promising instructional strategies and for disseminating this information to schools through written and verbal communication, meetings, and staff development activities.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	December 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Action Plan 5-8

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish a district wide commitment to recognize School Advisory Council members each year.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction with input from the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability and school principals (refer to Action Plan 3-4 Recommendation 2) devises a mechanism to recognize the members of the district's SAC members each year. One of the inexpensive methods that could be used is a Certificate of Appreciation for Service.</p> <p>Step 2: One or more methods is implemented.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	The cost of printed certificates is immaterial.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Provide training to SAC members with the purpose of producing more adequate and meaningful School Improvement Plans.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, the office of Staff Development and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability develop a training program focused on performance measurement directed towards SAC members in charge of developing the School Improvement Plans. The purpose of the program is to deliver the basic concepts of goals, objectives, strategies and performance. As a result, future SIPs will contain short term and long term objectives and strategies that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are Measurable and quantifiable; • easy to understand; • specific; • reasonable; • are clear about the data needed to assess progress; • show reasonable deadlines; • clearly identify all the resources needed; and • indicate the performance outcome (result) or improvement desired.
Who Is Responsible	The Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, the office of Staff Development and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability
Time Frame	May 31, 2001 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Further strengthen the evaluation and accountability component of the School Improvement Plan process.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction in collaboration with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability establish the procedure needed to formally incorporate the PACE Plan onto the School Improvement Plan under Educational Goal No. 3.</p>

	<p>Step 2: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction in collaboration with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability establish a mechanism to continually evaluate SIPs to determine whether progress is being made towards the accomplishment of the goals.</p> <p>Step 3: The SIP should have an additional section where from year to year, it is explained what or how much was accomplished from the previous year.</p> <p>Step 4: The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services discuss the feasibility and the steps necessary to link the accomplishments or results of the SIP as part of the annual evaluation of school principals.</p> <p>Step 5: All changes are formalized, submitted to the Superintendent and subsequently to the school board for approval.</p>
Who is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction in collaboration with the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	October 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Action Plan 5-11

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Formally evaluate expenditures and staffing levels of selected services against comparable districts and/or to state or national benchmarks on a regular basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor of Student Services with cooperation from the newly created office of Program Evaluation and Accountability use available data to evaluate the expenditures and staffing levels of selected services on an annual basis. Comparisons are made against comparable districts and/or to state or national benchmarks.</p> <p>Step 2: Results of the comparison/evaluations and associated actions to fix deficiencies (if found) are presented to the Superintendent and to the school board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Supervisor of Student Services and the newly created Office of Program Evaluation and Accountability.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Carry out an awareness program that facilitates the understanding of the required process for the identification and assessment of ESE students to improve the generalized perception that the process is too lengthy.

Action Needed	Step 1: The Supervisor of Student Services and the Supervisor of ESE, with input from the Supervisor of Staff Development develop an awareness program focused on the different phases of the assessment and placemen process. The program is to be shared among administrative staff through a mini-workshop or through written material.
Who Is Responsible	The Supervisor of Student Services and the Supervisor of Exceptional Student Education.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Refine and expand accountability system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Student Services department takes the necessary steps to compile a summary report of the activity of assessment staff on a monthly basis by campus and by diagnostician. The report should include summary of the number of evaluations and meetings assessment staff attended and report the evaluations that are initial referrals, three-year evaluations, re-evaluations, etc.</p> <p>Step 2: The summary reports are presented to district schools on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Step 3: The overall results of the measurement can also be published on a bi-annual basis. One means that can be utilized is the district's website.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Student Services and assessment staff.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Administrative and Instructional Technology

Action Plan 6-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Restructure the School Board Appointed Technology Committee.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Create a governance document for the committee.</p> <p>Step 2: Obtain board approval for the governance document.</p> <p>Step 3: Create regularly scheduled meetings of this committee.</p> <p>Step 4: Provide for subcommittees based on functional activities.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent and the school board.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Restructure the DATA Committee.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Create a governance document for the committee that ensure representation from all technology users.</p> <p>Step 2: Obtain board approval for the governance document.</p> <p>Step 3: Create regularly scheduled meetings of this committee.</p> <p>Step 4: Provide for subcommittees based on functional activities.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Superintendent and the school board.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Perform a broad needs assessment.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish the appropriate subcommittee and assessment team.</p> <p>Step 2: Determine the scope of the needs assessment.</p> <p>Step 3: Perform the needs assessment.</p> <p>Step 4: Report on the needs assessment and solicit board approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee.
Time Frame	June 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Modify the draft version of the Technology Plan based on valid stakeholder comments.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Designated subcommittee reviews stakeholder comments for valid comments.</p> <p>Step 2: Summarize stakeholder comments to facilitate consideration by the full DATA Committee and the School Board Appointed Technology (TOC) Committee.</p> <p>Step 3: After consideration of stakeholder comments, modify the draft version of the technology plan prior to board adoption.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	October 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.
Recommendation 5	
Strategy	Publish a draft version of the District's Technology Plan on the district's website.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Obtain necessary approval from the Superintendent to publish draft plan for comments.</p> <p>Step 2: Format draft plan to facilitate comments (number paragraphs).</p> <p>Step 3: Design a web page that includes the draft plan, comment form and a submission mechanism-e-mail or submission page.</p> <p>Step 4: Publish web page.</p> <p>Step 5: Promote awareness of the web page through existing publications.</p>

Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee, the DATA Committee, and the district's webmaster.
Time Frame	August 15, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 6

Strategy	Designate subcommittee to review stakeholder comments.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Based on the governance provisions of the DATA Committee, select members of a subcommittee that will receive, summarize, review and recommend comments from stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 2: Review and summarize the comments.</p> <p>Step 3: Prepare a summary of valid comments.</p> <p>Step 4: Recommend changes as appropriate.</p>

Who Is Responsible	The DATA Committee.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 7

Strategy	Conduct annual assessments of the district's technology needs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Annually, review and summarize the technology assessment of needs provided by the schools.</p> <p>Step 2: Annually, create or modify technology assessment of needs for administrative purposes.</p> <p>Step 3: Annually, create or modify technology assessment of needs for district-wide purposes after considering school-level and administrative needs.</p>

Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	Before June 30 in each year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 6-2

Recommendation 1

Strategy	Draft an update to the district's Technology Plan (See also Action Plan 6-1, Recommendations 3 through 6)
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish the appropriate subcommittee and section teams.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish the plan framework.</p> <p>Step 3: Begin soliciting stakeholder input.</p> <p>Step 4: Write the plan in draft form.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The DATA Committee.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002, through August 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Updating the district's Technology Plan (See also Action Plan 6-1, Recommendations 4 through 7)
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop the framework for the plan.</p> <p>Step 2: Assign manageable tasks to appropriate subcommittees.</p> <p>Step 3: Collaborate on a draft document.</p> <p>Step 4: Publish the draft document and solicit input from stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 5: Consider the stakeholders comments and revise document as necessary</p> <p>Step 6: Solicit school board approval for the technology plan.</p> <p>Step 7: Publish the technology plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee
Time Frame	August 1, 2002, through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Consider including elements from Exhibits 6-6 and 6-7 in the Technology Plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: When developing the plan's framework include consideration of these elements.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider these elements again during collaboration.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002, through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 4

Strategy	Design and implement a system to monitor outcomes and relate them back to the Technology Plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: During the design of the technology plan consider how achieving goals and objectives will be measured.</p> <p>Step 2: Design a system to monitor outcomes in relation to the technology plan.</p> <p>Step 3: Report on these outcomes.</p> <p>Step 4: Consider modifying the technology plan for those goals and objectives not be achieved.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	October 1 through May 30 of each year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 5

Strategy	Conduct an annual review of the Technology Plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Consider the monitoring reports.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider changes in technology.</p> <p>Step 3: Consider the district's annual needs assessment.</p> <p>Step 4: Propose changes to the district's technology plan as necessary.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The school board-Appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.

Time Frame	Before May 30 of each year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 6-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish performance criteria that include technological skills.
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish performance criteria, which includes technological skills, applicable to administrators based on job descriptions. Step 2: Measure these criteria. Step 3: Provide feedback to individuals.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Director of Human Resources, and Supervisor of the Professional Development Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002, through September 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Include Professional Development Guidelines and Opportunities on the district's website.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine information to include (e.g., descriptions, times, MIP points). Step 2: Design web page. Step 3: Publish on web site.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, Professional Development Department, and the District's Web Master.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 6-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Restrict administrative functions provided by In-Service Trainers.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review the administrative work performed by In-Service Trainers. Step 2: Consider reassigning these functions within existing staff. Step 3: Provide in-service trainers with more time to provide professional development opportunities within the district.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, MIS Department
Time Frame	May 1, 2002 through August 31, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Improve professional development opportunities for instructional technologies.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: As part of Action Plan 6-1, Recommendation 5, include in the needs assessment a section for the district's professional development, specifically on integrating technology into the curriculum.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider how to best meet those professional development needs.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop a plan to meet those needs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, Professional Development Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002 through October 1, 2002.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Develop a better system to measure in-service training effectiveness.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish measurable performance criteria for determining training effectiveness.</p> <p>Step 2: Measure these criteria.</p> <p>Step 3: Provide feedback to in-service trainers.</p>
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented within existing resources.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002 through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Improve professional development opportunities for administrative and non-instructional staff.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: As part of Action Plan 6-1, Recommendation 5, include in the needs assessment a section for the district's professional development of the administrative and non-instructional staff.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider how to best meet those professional development needs.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop a plan to meet those needs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, Professional Development Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002 through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 5	
Strategy	Provide staff with more professional development time.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Determine ways that time that staff can work professional development into their normal work schedule.</p> <p>Step 2: Provide more professional development opportunities to the staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, Supervisor, Professional Development Department.
Time Frame	June 1, 2002

Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
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Action Plan 6-8

Recommendation 1	
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Strategy	Conduct annual reviews of major technology decisions.
Action Needed	Step 1: Include as part of Action Plan 6-1, Recommendation 7, an assessment of the costs related to major technology decisions.
Who Is Responsible	The School Board's TOC Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	By June 30 of each year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
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Strategy	Reevaluate the possible implementation of <i>Abacus™</i> as a pilot project.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Commit to making the project successful.</p> <p>Step 2: Determine schools are each level that a candidates for the pilot project.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop a realistic project plan that considers prior implementation deficiencies as described above.</p> <p>Step 4: Reinstall <i>Abacus™</i> server software.</p> <p>Step 5: Install <i>Abacus™</i> client software a pilot sites.</p> <p>Step 6: Provide support, through professional development to the pilot sites.</p> <p>Step 7: Evaluate the project.</p> <p>Step 8: Determine the next step.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Supervisor of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction; Supervisor, MIS Department; Supervisor, Professional Development Department; Supervisor, Testing and Evaluation Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002 through October 1, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	Since it is extremely likely that the district will need to utilize some sort of instructional management software as it improves its curriculum, the district will save approximately \$ 1,000,000 by keeping its current software. This is assuming that replacement software will cost an equivalent amount.

Recommendation 3	
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Strategy	Modify work order system to track and report technician time by cost center.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Determine if modification is practical.</p> <p>Step 2: Modify work order screen to capture information.</p> <p>Step 3: Include data in database.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop management reports.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, MIS Department.
Time Frame	May 1, 2002, through October 1, 2002.

Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
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Action Plan 6-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish standards for acquiring new programs and digital content.
Action Needed	Step 1: Form a subcommittee to discuss the issue. Step 2: Define these standards. Step 3: Seek board approval. Step 4: Publish these standards and include on the district's website.
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed TOC and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	October 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Explore ways to more equitably distribute technology throughout the district.
Action Needed	Step 1: Consider as part of the needs assessment process. Step 2: Discuss this issue at board meetings. Step 3: Seek input from a broad range of stakeholders. Step 4: Develop strategies.
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed TOC and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Seek more outside resources.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop strategies in which the district and individual schools can create partnerships between schools and outside resources for support. Step 2: Provide individual schools with ways to implement these strategies. Step 3: Recognize and assist in nurturing these partnerships.
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 6-11

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Complete a general computer controls operating and standards manual.

Action Needed	Step 1: Determine what is to be included. Step 2: Develop an outline. Step 3: Write a draft version. Step 4: Solicit comments. Step 5: Complete manual. Step 6: Obtain required district approval. Step 7: Make manual available for systems users.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, MIS Department.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The needs to have a contingency plan for the loss of key personnel.
Action Needed	Step 1: Cross-train technology managers. Step 2: Develop strategies to expedite the replacement of key personnel should their services no longer be available.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor, MIS Department.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 6-13

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implement a district-wide document imaging system for electronic storage and retrieval of documents.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop a task force to study the issue. Step 2: Develop desirable system attributes based on a needs assessment. Step 3: Select a system. Step 4: Train staff and implement the system. Step 5: Review the implementation and correct problems.
Who Is Responsible	The school board-appointed Technology Committee, and the DATA Committee.
Time Frame	September 30, 2003
Fiscal Impact	If implemented successfully, this system could provide savings of \$450,000 over the next five years to the district. Cost savings are primarily based on a decreased need to use photocopy equipment, thereby reducing these costs. Cost of the document imaging system is estimated at \$300,000 and annual estimated cost savings is expected to be \$375,000.

Personnel Systems and Benefits

Action Plan 7-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a strategic plan to coordinate the training provided to non-instructional staff through the district's staff development program
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Supervisor for Staff Development and Instructional Media should develop, in conjunction with department heads, clear and succinct expectations for what should be included within the non-instructional training plans.</p> <p>Step 2: An annual needs assessment component should be included within the training plan for non-instructional staff.</p> <p>Step 3: The staff development center should work with department heads to develop tools to assist with the recording and evaluating of orientation and training received by each employee.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Staff Development and Instructional Media
Time Frame	September 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 7-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish and implement accountability mechanisms to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Personnel department through a formal plan of action and subsequent evaluation. Select and utilize appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures and benchmarks, including comparisons to adjoining districts.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services should work with Personnel department staff to identify the most important functions performed by the department, and then to identify possible output and outcome measures of these functions. The district should utilize the list of performance measures shown above as a starting point in the selection of adequate measures.</p> <p>Step 2: Over the next year, the Personnel department should collect data on the measures identified to determine appropriate performance benchmarks, and to determine whether the most efficient means of collecting data on performance.</p> <p>Step 3: By the 2003-2004 school year, the Personnel department should develop a set of performance measures that will be used to evaluate the performance of the department.</p> <p>Step 4: At least annually, the Personnel department should report its performance on its measures to the School Board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for School Administration and Human Resource Services

Time Frame	September 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources. Potential savings created by efficiency.

Action Plan 7-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and implement a formal plan and schedule periodic assessments to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's personnel practices.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: After it has established performance measures and benchmarks as set forth in Action Plan 7-5, the district should establish a plan for periodically reviewing its personnel practices to assure that services are being delivered efficiency, effectively and cost-effectively.</p> <p>Step 2: Such a plan should identify who would be responsible for these periodic reviews, whether by standing committee, special task force, or other entity.</p> <p>Step 3: Evaluation is made part of the district's policy manual, approved by the Superintendent and school board.</p> <p>Step 4: Identify areas of concern and implement changes to policies and practices as required.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; assistant superintendents; Personnel Supervisor, principals, department heads. Reporting and approval by the school board.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Use of Lottery Proceeds**Action Plan 8-1**

Recommendation 1	
Strategies	To provide SAC members information regarding laws applicable to the SACs. Also, to inform SAC members of the total proceeds available to them and the process for budgeting and monitoring these proceeds.
Actions Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop SAC workshop agenda that includes, at a minimum, the activities below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on laws applicable to SACs and the appropriate use of proceeds available to them. This update should include applicable general appropriations act requirements. • Identification of contact sources and persons, which SAC members can use to seek interpretations and resolve issues. • Financial information for each SAC, which shows total amounts available, including carry over balances, instructions for budgeting and accounting for the proceeds and reports available to the SACs for monitoring the use of the proceeds.

	<p>Step 2: Conduct workshops ensuring that representatives from all SACs attend. Develop standard form that summarizes information provided at the workshops. This form should include, for each individual school's SAC, a summary of financial information, including available proceeds.</p> <p>Step 3: SAC representatives that attended the workshop should distribute the summary form to all school advisory council members. Each member should acknowledge receipt of this form by signing it.</p>
Who is responsible	Finance Director, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, and School Advisory Councils.
Time Frame	December 31, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 8-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Distribute financial and other information to the public on a quarterly basis showing how lottery proceeds have been used.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Compile financial information relating to the expenditure of lottery proceeds and distribute this information to all interested stakeholders, on a quarterly basis. The community resource officer should ensure that this financial information is distributed to the community by inclusion of financial information related to Lottery expenditures with other information that is sent to parents in the district.</p> <p>Step 2: Inclusion of the financial information on the school district website.</p>
Who is responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Time Frame	June 30, 2001
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Use of State and District Construction Funds**Action Plan 9-1**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implementation of continuing procedures and a formal policy by which the district attempts to utilize existing resources and evaluates different alternatives to new construction in order to select the most cost-efficient.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The school board sets a clear policy to document this recommendation.</p> <p>Step 2: The district develops a mechanism to implement the school board policy.</p>

	<p>Step 3: The Superintendent creates a team lead primarily by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and secondarily by the assistant superintendents for Curriculum and Instruction and for School Administration and Human Resource Services.</p> <p>Step 4: Additionally, the team should include the planning section, Transportation Supervisor, Finance Director, instructional staff representation, representatives from the communities that will be impacted, and representative from the Lake County government's planning department (anticipated needs should include projected growth).</p> <p>Step 5: The purpose of the team is to methodically analyze all possible alternatives to new construction. Said alternatives include but are not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revising attendance boundaries and grade configuration; • revising the timing of the school day and school year (i.e., extended day schedules and year-round schools); • using relocatable facilities (portable classroom units); and • conversion of underutilized properties to alternative uses (i.e., changing elementary schools to middle schools). <p>Step 6: The team reports the results of the analyses to the Superintendent who approves or rejects the proposed changes</p> <p>Step 7: The final result is communicated to the school board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School Board; Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	Implementation may be made with existing personnel. Possible savings cannot be determined at this stage.

Action Plan 9-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Formally incorporate the recommendations of the Soundly Made, Accountable, Reasonable and Thrifty (SMART) Schools Clearinghouse into the construction planning and development operations.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Obtain SMART recommendations from the state, and summarize those that are applicable to the district.</p> <p>Step 2: Consult the SMART schools directory for the potential use of already approved plans.</p> <p>Step 3: Establish procedures to include the SMART recommendations as an integral part of the process to select, plan and construct schools.</p> <p>Step 4: Implement a clearly defined step in the approval process to include evidentiary support that SMART recommendations were in fact included in the process.</p> <p>Step 5: Evaluate SMART schools guidelines, in writing, for each proposed construction project.</p>

	<p>Step 6: Document the efficiencies and/or cost savings that were considered as well as the outcomes of these considerations.</p> <p>Step 7: Establish a “Team Building” program for construction projects and ask those involved in the design and construction, including external professionals and interested citizens, to participate.</p> <p>Step 8: Obtain approval through established channels.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Manager; Fiscal Director.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	Implementation can take place with existing personnel. Fiscal impact cannot be properly measured because of the prospective nature of the recommendation and the many variables associated with it. However, based on past experiences between 1998-01, cost savings of approximately \$150 per elementary student station, depending on the number of variables, is possible for new construction. During the period mentioned, approximately \$650,000 could have been saved (based on 4,323 new elementary work stations added). Lesser amounts may be possible, again depending the variables present, for renovation projects.

Action Plan 9-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Factors that tend to minimize future maintenance and operational costs of a planned new facility are enhanced by including “life-cycle costing” into the process.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Life-cycle costing is defined and incorporated into the planning process of new facility construction.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent and school board approve the concept and incorporate into the district’s written policies and procedures.</p> <p>Step 3: Incorporate life-cycle costing into the five-year planning process.</p> <p>Step 4: Utilize current information as to design, systems, materials, construction processes and labor techniques that when used as part of the planning process, and if approved and implemented, will reduce future maintenance and operating costs.</p> <p>Step 5: Identify specific factors that are proven reasonable related to the maintenance and operations costs of new facilities.</p> <p>Step 6: Incorporate the results of the life-cycle analyses in design, construction, equipment selection, and furnishings to minimize maintenance and operational costs.</p> <p>Step 7: Quantify the future costs savings vs. additional construction costs to evaluate the feasibility of implementing the particular suggestion.</p> <p>Step 8: Regularly (i.e., annually) assess and revise the factors identified above against actual results and compare to other districts.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School Board; Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent; Facilities Director; Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002 and ongoing.

Fiscal Impact	Possible major savings, presently undeterminable, at little or no additional cost.
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Facilities Construction

Action Plan 10-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district needs to update its organizational chart, and job descriptions to accurately reflect the desired design of the facilities planning process. Establish procedures that will provide a desired framework for carrying out the facilities planning function of the district.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish an organizational chart that considers facilities planning and accurately reflects the framework of the function</p> <p>Step 2: Prepare written procedures that will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarify the role and responsibilities of the planning function for both staff and the school board; • provide for the implementation of the lines of responsibility as show in the organizational chart; • provide for regular lines of communication among the managers that report to the director of facilities; • provide for regular lines of communications among the directors and supervisors that report to an assistant superintendent; and <p>Step 3: Periodically review policies in order to keep them current and eliminate any that are outdated</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	April 30, 2001
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Use the facilities evaluation process and the district's facility planning committee to assist with the setting of priorities within the five-year plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Recently established committee should meet to develop long-range facility plans.</p> <p>Step 2: Committee should utilize new plant survey, and district's assessment of needs to develop five-year plan.</p> <p>Step 3: Present new five-year plan to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop a ten- and twenty-year facilities plan using the same evaluation process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002

Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The board should establish not-to-exceed spending levels that are consistent with state standards for construction.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop proposed “not to exceed” spending levels that are consistent with state standards for construction.</p> <p>Step 2: Draft policy establishing spending levels that are consistent with state standards.</p> <p>Step 3: Submit policy to board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School Board; Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Compare enrollment projections to 100% of capacity to determine needs.
Action Needed	Step 1: Utilize FISH data provided in new plant survey and compare enrollment projections to 100% of capacity at grade level in development of the five-year plan.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director; Planning Personnel
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should include available demographic data in enrollment projections.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop supporting enrollment projection schedules that show ethnicity, income status, and other available demographic data.
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	The district should utilize local comprehensive plans in developing enrollment projections.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish guidelines that require the utilization of local comprehensive plans.</p> <p>Step 2: At a minimum the district will need to consider the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land use, • geographical limitations and developable land, • local ordinances that regulate the growth of the area, • forecast of economic conditions reported by the private sector, • vocational opportunities in the community, • availability of community services, and • major highway and street networks and their probable future development. <p>Step 3: Utilize this information when deciding where schools should be built.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-5

Recommendations 1	
Strategy	Hire a consultant to conduct a complete evaluation of facilities using a comprehensive format and develop a detailed, uniform checklist of the evaluation criteria, and utilize the results of these evaluations to prioritize needs to be included in the five-year plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Update FISH data and have verified by independent party.</p> <p>Step 2: Conduct a complete evaluation of facilities using a comprehensive checklist. The list should include items listed above.</p> <p>Step 3: This evaluation instrument should assign a score of 1 to 100 to each facility based on detailed analyses.</p> <p>Step 4: Utilize this information in preparing five-year work plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	We estimate a cost of approximately \$100,000, based on a similar evaluation study conducted in another school district (Martin).

Action Plan 10-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Upon completion of the utilization review and demographic study, the district needs to examine the alternatives to new construction, including an analysis of short-term and long-term implications.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Enumerate alternatives to new construction.</p> <p>Step 2: Breakdown the alternatives into short-term and long-term.</p> <p>Step 3: Determine cost implications of different alternatives.</p> <p>Step 4: Enumerate advantages and disadvantages of different alternatives.</p> <p>Step 5: Conduct a complete evaluation of different alternatives, giving weight to pedagogical, operational, and fiscal factors.</p> <p>Step 6: This evaluation conducted by senior personnel and professionals.</p> <p>Step 7: Utilize this information in preparing five-year work plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendents; Facilities Director; Finance Director. Approved by the school board.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	The district may avoid the cost of construction of additional student stations.

Action Plan 10-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop guidelines for the development of educational specifications for each new school, or group of projects, and for major renovations to existing properties.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop guidelines regarding the general statements that are to be included in the educational specifications for each project. These will provide guidance to educational specifications committees regarding the need for project rationale, historical perspectives, etc. They will also provide district standards regarding the size of instructional spaces, square footage cost, etc.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Form educational specification committees for each major project, which need to include administrative, instructional, other staff, community members and design professionals.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Superintendent, or designee, to select persons to form educational specification committee(s) that include staff, parents, community members, and design professionals associated with each major project that are qualified, willing and able to devote required time to this function.</p> <p>Step 2: School board appoints persons based on recommendation from the Superintendent.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; approval by school board.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Develop educational specifications for each project (or group of projects).
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop criteria for the development of project specific educational specifications that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • state the project rationale, • provide a narrative description of the project, • state the program goals and instructional philosophy, • addresses school-community relationships, • state whether the project will serve all or parts of the district on an open enrollment basis.
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-8

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish a formal process of matching educational specifications against architectural plans to ensure the plans meet the district's needs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: A complete set of educational specifications for each individual project should be developed as noted in <i>Action Plan 10-7</i>.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop a formal process that will enable the planning leader, the users of the facility and the architect to match the educational specifications against the final plans to verify that the final plans represent the district's educational program goals.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Form a site selection committee for acquiring sites. People chosen should have appropriate qualifications to carry out the related tasks.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district should develop a site selection committee comprised of various stakeholders.</p> <p>Step 2: The district should provide procedures to be followed for the evaluation of sites that ensures all legal requirements are being met.</p> <p>Step 3: The district should establish criteria for the site selection process and put it into an evaluation document to be used during the evaluation process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director.

Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-10

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop goals and measurable objectives to ensure the accountability for the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the construction program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district develops goals and measurable objectives and follows with a mechanism to ensure that the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its construction program be documented and accountable to the general public</p> <p>Step 2: The district designs procedures to be followed and measured to validate the site selection process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-11

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Adopt the SMART Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards that are considered appropriate, and endorse/support the “team building” program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district weighs the positive effects of the SMART Schools Clearinghouse and the Frugal Construction Standards. A mechanism to obtain accurate and well-developed information is established.</p> <p>Step 2: The desired information is gathered, analyzed and reported to the Superintendent and, ultimately, to the school board.</p> <p>Step 3: The school board decides whether the SMART Schools Clearinghouse and the Frugal Construction Standards are made part of the district’s operating policies.</p> <p>Step 4: After board approval, a system is developed to incorporate the SMART concepts into action.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Facilities Director; ultimate approval by the school board.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Utilizing SMART School Frugal Construction Standards can significantly impact the reduction of cost for construction and maintaining. Also applying Frugal Construction Standards may assist the district in qualifying for a School Infrastructure Thrift Award (SIT Award).

Action Plan 10-14

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and implement comprehensive orientation programs for all new facilities and major renovations.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Use the newly formed opening coordinating committee for that AAA high school to develop an orientation program.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify and prepare a prototype orientation program to include modules for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintenance personnel, architect, contractor(s,) facilities department personnel, and the site administrator in attendance that involves the specifics of the mechanical systems; • instructional staff; and • students, parents, and the community that includes a walk through conducted by the site administrator. <p>Step 3: Prepare prototype user manuals for both teachers and maintenance staff that can be adapted for individual schools.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources

Action Plan 10-15

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Regularly conduct post-occupancy evaluations.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop procedures to ensure that post occupancy evaluations regularly occur. These procedures should include educational adequacy, function, safety, efficiency, and suggestions for future improvements.</p> <p>Step 2: The evaluation should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an analysis of the educational program improvements for consideration by future educational specification committees; • an operational cost analysis; • a comparison of the finished product with the educational and construction specifications; and • recommendations for future changes.
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-16

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Analyze maintenance and operations costs at recently completed facilities.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop a procedure to ensure that post-occupancy evaluations include an analysis of the maintenance and operations costs. Compare these costs with other district facilities.
Who Is Responsible	Facilities Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Facilities Maintenance**Action Plan 11-1**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a mission statement for the Maintenance department.
Action Needed	Step 1: As part of its strategic planning effort, district staff should establish a mission statement for maintenance. See example on page 5. Step 2: The mission statement should be presented to the board for approval.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Maintenance Supervisors
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be completed with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Document policies and procedures for the Maintenance department.
Action Needed	Step 1: Conduct research through national organizations to identify sources for procedures manual components. Step 2: Develop table of contents for maintenance procedures manual Step 3: Prepare a written draft of the maintenance procedures manual Step 4: Incorporate and update custodial handbook into maintenance procedures manual Step 5: Put procedures manual on server, allowing access by maintenance staff and campus staff. Step 6: Revise applicable sections as needed during a one- to two-year period.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be completed existing resources.

Action Plan 11-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Document specific goals and objectives responsive to the Mission Statement for the Maintenance department.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Facilities Director and Maintenance Supervisors need to analyze the department's mission statement and write specific goals and objectives to accomplish the mission. These goals and objectives need to be communicated through proper channels to the Superintendent, who will approve or amend them.</p> <p>Step 2: The Superintendent, after her approval, presents the long-range plan to the board.</p> <p>Step 3: The board reviews and considers approving the plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School board; Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent; Facilities Director; Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop a long-range (five-year) plan that identifies staff, budget, and equipment needs to meet the goals and objectives of the district.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Facilities Director and Maintenance Supervisors shall analyze the existing list of needed facility improvements. The director shall project manpower, budget, and equipment needs to complete all of the needed facility improvements.</p> <p>Step 2: The director needs to prioritize the needs assessed in prior steps, and develop a five-year plan with clearly stated goals and objectives for each year.</p> <p>Step 3: The director researches through national organizations publications and other authoritative means to identify sources for creating maintenance standards for and procedures to accomplish the desired goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 4: Conduct research of the above sources and prepares standards with short-term and long-term components.</p> <p>Step 5: The director, with the Assistant Superintendent, develop projections for the five-year plan considering resources needed to accomplish the department's objectives and to comply with approved standards.</p> <p>Step 6: Prepare a written request including, at a minimum,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • desired levels of physical conditions; • manpower requirements to reach the desired levels; • equipment requirements to reach said levels; and • prioritize to consider budgetary constraints. <p>Step 7: Obtain approval from Superintendent and school board.</p> <p>Step 8: Document in five-year plan and current year's budget.</p> <p>Step 9: Revise applicable sections as needed during a one-year period.</p>

Who Is Responsible	School board; Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent; Director of Facilities; Director of Finance; Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be completed with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop performance standards for frequently repeated maintenance tasks. The standards shall clearly define the task and the number of staff hours necessary to complete the task in an efficient manner.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The supervisors of Building Maintenance and Warehouse and Grounds shall identify tasks, which are appropriate for the application of performance standards.</p> <p>Step 2: The supervisors shall research any existing industry/military standards, which are applicable.</p> <p>Step 3: Utilizing the work order tracking software, the supervisors and their lead forepersons shall develop performance standards for the most commonly repeated tasks.</p> <p>Step 4: The supervisors and the lead forepersons shall hold staff meetings to explain the performance standards. The standards shall be made available to all staff members. Sanitation and Grounds should communicate the performance standards for custodians to the site administrators.</p> <p>Step 5: The supervisors shall track the performance of their staff as measured against the performance standards for six months and adjust the performance standards as needed to reflect the most efficient standards.</p> <p>Step 6: The director shall review the performance standards with the board.</p> <p>Step 7: The board shall approve the use of the performance standards for the performance evaluations of staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a set of construction standards to be used throughout the district.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities, Supervisors of Maintenance, and Architect should meet with the goal of developing a uniform set of construction standards with the purpose of developing and adopting a standard building management system.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider construction products, materials, and systems that create an efficient and user-friendly environment for maintenance staff.</p> <p>Step 3: Have the construction standards approved by the board.</p> <p>Step 4: Update construction standards for new and implemented technology.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	<p>An example of savings that result from standardizing equipment used in schools is demonstrated by implementing a standard building management system. A standard building management system would eliminate both the inventory and labor cost associated with operating the number currently being used in the district. If the 13 systems currently in place were reduced to one system, the district could save approximately \$49,400 for a full year (\$38,000 for reducing labor time plus \$11,400 for reducing/eliminating inventory). Any incremental costs on the first year of implementation are considered to be negligible. Furthermore, there may also be additional costs saving in other areas as a result of utilizing construction standards, which have not been herein quantified.</p>

Action Plan 11-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and implement an annual survey of the customers of its Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations shall oversee the development of a customer survey.</p> <p>Step 2: The director will implement the necessary mechanism so that an annual survey (conducted at approximately the same time every year) by a responsible staff person.</p> <p>Step 3: The results of the annual surveys shall be reported to the Superintendent and the school board, and used as a tool in planning how to improve the operations of the department.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop and implement procedures to measure the efficiency of its maintenance personnel by gathering and comparing performance data.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of facilities and maintenance supervisors develop an evaluation form to measure the actual time versus scheduled time for the particular work order.</p> <p>Step 2: The director will implement the necessary procedure to ascertain that each work order is reviewed in this fashion.</p> <p>Step 3: The result of these analyses is to be periodically conveyed by each supervisor to the director (weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, but not any longer), who investigates actions taken to improve performance.</p> <p>Step 4: The director will report to the Assistant Superintendent of achieved, or unachieved, improvements in productivity.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent; Director of Facilities; Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district needs to implement accountability mechanisms to ensure the Maintenance programs' performance, effectiveness, and efficiency.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities and Maintenance supervisors oversee development of a survey of stakeholders of the Maintenance department activities (its "customers").</p> <p>Step 2: The director designs and implement the necessary mechanism so that an annual survey is conducted at approximately the same time every year by a responsible staff person.</p> <p>Step 3: The results of the annual surveys are reported to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, the Superintendent, and the school board.</p> <p>Step 4: The survey is to be used as a tool in planning how to improve the operations of the department; the analyses are to be periodically conveyed by each supervisor to the director (weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, but not any longer), who investigates actions taken to improve performance.</p> <p>Step 5: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, the Director of Facilities, and assigned subordinates ("the implementation team") develop goals and objectives based on criteria developed from surveys and their own knowledge of the department's mission and resources available.</p> <p>Step 6: Research is made by the implementation team of appropriate and acceptable cost-efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks to evaluate the program on an on going basis.</p> <p>Step 7: The Director of Facilities periodically reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services of achieved, or unachieved, improvements in productivity, potential cost savings, alternatives and recommended course(s) of action.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Director of Facilities; Maintenance Supervisors.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should develop guidelines for estimating cost for major projects.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop guidelines for estimating cost that should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • past experience, • professional cost standards, and • market conditions <p>Step 2: Periodically evaluate cost estimates to improve future estimates.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This may be implemented with existing resources

Action Plan 11-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district's budget for the Maintenance department is supported and tied to goals and objectives for the Maintenance department as reflected in the district's five-year plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district's budget needs to tie each budget item to the detailed goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 2: The district's finance department ensures that these goals and objectives are reflected in the annual budget.</p> <p>Step 3: The maintenance department periodically reports on results comparing actual versus budget items, and whether the actions being reported are cost effective.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Supervisors of Maintenance; Finance Director.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Formally evaluate existing services to determine those suitable for privatization

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify maintenance trade functions that could be privatized.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify criteria for use in determining cost to privatize these functions.</p> <p>Step 3: Perform analysis comparing vendor cost to in-house cost.</p> <p>Step 4: Consider non-monetary variables when performing this evaluation.</p> <p>Step 5: Determine feasibility of privatizing maintenance trade functions based on the results of the comparison.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance; Finance Director.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-11

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district needs to undertake measures to create, and implement a program to use preventative maintenance practices to reduce costs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district prepares a list of potential areas where preventive maintenance is attainable and projects attainable costs reductions.</p> <p>Step 2: The district, through its maintenance department, dissects the list into logical components and designates a lead person for each category.</p> <p>Step 3: The district's maintenance department prioritizes the projects and assigns target dates for accomplishing them.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district establishes periodic reviews of the preventative maintenance practices to ascertain whether costs are successfully and systematically reduced as a result of carrying this program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify how the measurement of items to be compared will take place (dollars; efficiency; postponement of adverse conditions when major repairs take place).</p> <p>Step 2: Comparison is made between the additional costs of preventive maintenance, after considering the time lapsed during which the preventative maintenance needs to take place, versus the costs of replacement and the costs of disrupting operations when major repairs take place.</p> <p>Step 3: Prepare a detailed listing of items selected under Step 1 above.</p> <p>Step 4: Determine the costs savings, by each category, or projects.</p> <p>Step 5: Inform Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, and school board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent; Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance; Finance Director.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002

Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
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Action Plan 11-12

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Routinely perform a formal review of the maintenance organizational structure.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent, Facilities Director, and Maintenance Supervisors shall identify ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the maintenance structure.</p> <p>Step 2: Research industry and other district to gather ideas on ways of improving current structure.</p> <p>Step 3: Clearly define any structural changes in writing</p> <p>Step 4: Submit to the board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Document plans of establishing plant manager at each of the schools.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Research industry and other district to gather ideas on ways of implementing this process.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish job descriptions for these positions.</p> <p>Step 3: Assign staff to each of the schools.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop procedures adequately defining the roles and responsibilities of the staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	The increase in salary and benefits can be offset by the reduced need for maintenance vehicles. This will eliminate the cost associated with those vehicles. Also, the cost associated with the driving time (or down time) between facilities will be reduced.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Reallocate custodial staff to achieve maximum productivity of 20,000 square feet per custodian
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign custodial staff based on square footage or building space, modified based on age of facility. Total productivity for the district should be 20,000 square feet per custodian.</p> <p>Step 2: Reassign custodial staff among campuses.</p> <p>Step 3: Achieve reductions in staff through attrition where possible.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002

Fiscal Impact	Increasing district-wide productivity to 20,000 square feet per custodian would allow the district to eliminate 22 custodial positions. With the district average salary and benefits package of \$15,000 per custodian, the district could save approximately \$330,000 per year.
Recommendation 4	
Strategy	The district should develop a staffing formula for each job category in the maintenance function
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities, assisted by the supervisors in the maintenance department, research different staffing formulas, including comparisons with peer districts.</p> <p>Step 2: This group will obtain industry information related to staffing levels for various maintenance trades, including published materials, periodicals, and internet sites.</p> <p>Step 3: The director and supervisors will develop a staffing formula that will enable the district to maintain the facilities with good quality, but at minimal cost.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-13

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff in the areas of job skills, job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations and the supervisors will meet with the respective staffs to determine the types of training that are needed.</p> <p>Step 2: The director and the supervisors shall meet with the Staff Development team and develop staff training in the following areas at the least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job safety, • team work, • use of tools, • interpersonal communications, • work habits, and • job skills. <p>Step 3: Staff Development shall prepare a training schedule, which allows for all Maintenance and Operations staff to receive at least two training sessions per year.</p> <p>Step 4: The Director of Facilities shall develop a training budget based on the schedule prepared by Staff Development.</p>

	Step 5: The Director of Facilities and the Director of Staff Development shall present the training curriculum, schedule, budget, and expected outcomes to the board.
	Step 6: The board shall review, revise, and consider the approval of the training program.
	Step 7: The program will be evaluated annually. Staff feedback will be part of the basis for the evaluation.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Director of Staff Development.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-14**Recommendation 1**

Strategy	Develop a plan to prioritize the establishment of an inventory tracking system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Facilities, Manager of Maintenance, Manager of Warehouse/ Grounds, and Director of MIS should meet to determine necessary steps to the establishment of an inventory tracking system.</p> <p>Step 2: Utilize appropriate resources determined in step one to implement the system.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be developed with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Routinely generate reports from the new work order system to analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of maintenance crews.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Have procedure in place where work order reports are routinely generated and analyzed.</p> <p>Step 2: Area supervisors meet monthly to discuss results from report analysis.</p> <p>Step 3: Supervisors should troubleshoot and discuss ways to be more efficient and effective with productivity.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Supervisors meet monthly to discuss productivity levels and expectations of their staff.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish a procedure for supervisors to meet monthly to discuss productivity levels and expectations of their staff.</p> <p>Step 2: Area supervisors meet monthly to discuss results from report analysis.</p>

	Step 3: Supervisors need to discuss with their staff expectations and ways to be more efficient and effective with productivity.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and supervisors.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-15

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop formal guidelines for the prioritization of maintenance needs. Ongoing maintenance should be tied to educational program needs, changing enrollment projections, or long-term facility planning.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish written guidelines for prioritizing maintenance needs.</p> <p>Step 2: This should provide criteria for ranking ongoing maintenance needs. The criteria used for ranking should be more specific than routine, emergency, and vandalism.</p> <p>Step 3: Guidelines need to consider educational program needs, changing enrollment projections, and long range-facility planning to determine the priorities</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-16

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a comprehensive energy management plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Director of Facilities and Maintenance Supervisors should conduct research on different energy management programs. This would include communication with different organizations.</p> <p>Step 2: Conduct process to hire a person qualified to perform the responsibilities of the recently approved Energy Manager position.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop a comprehensive program that would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> conducting an energy audit to determine ways of reducing energy consumption and cost; energy measures to be tracked by facility; energy management training for students, teachers, administrators, and maintenance workers; energy conservation checklist for students, teachers, administrators, and maintenance workers; incentive programs for schools to promote and reward student and staff for participation;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plans for improving HVAC systems; and monitoring and improving indoor quality.
	Step 10: Present this plan to the Superintendent for approval.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities and Supervisors of Maintenance.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation may result in future energy savings. However, until an assessment of the district's current situation is completed, savings cannot be reasonably estimated.

Student Transportation

Action Plan 12-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Review the current 10-year bus replacement schedule and determine if it would be cost-effective to extend the schedule to a 12-year span and continue to implement the plan to bring the age of the fleet into compliance with current school board policy.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns the Supervisor of Transportation and the Director of Finance the responsibility of carrying out an assessment to determine whether it would cost-effective to adopt a 12-year bus replacement schedule. Part of the assessment should include an analysis of all the variables that impact the life cycle of the current fleet such as safety, specification and design, and economy and efficiency. The assessment could also include consultations with the Hillsborough and the Miami-Dade school districts, and with DOE.</p> <p>Step 2: If a 12-year bus replacement schedule results more cost-effective, the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services prepares a report including the cost savings and presents it to the school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: If a 12-year schedule is not beneficial, during the budget process the Transportation Supervisor communicates bus purchase needs for the upcoming year based on the 10-year replacement plan. Because this option entails purchasing three extra buses annually (in addition to the ones already budgeted), funding would have to be increased to approximately \$192,000 annually over the next five years.</p> <p>Step 4: The related school board policy is modified contingent upon Step 1.</p> <p>Step 5: As buses are removed from service and replaced, they should go to auction to recover as much cost as possible.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School board, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services, Transportation Supervisor, Purchasing department staff, and property control staff
Time Frame	By end of September 2002.

Fiscal Impact	Cannot be established at the present time. This particular recommendation presents two options to the district one that may yield to savings, the other to additional costs.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	The Transportation department use information from the consulting firm that was hired to address the redistricting issue, to better anticipate future transportation needs within its service area.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Transportation Supervisor includes the growth data from the consultant and Lake County government to identify future transportation needs. This increased data should help the district determine how many new buses will be needed to accommodate expected growth.</p> <p>Step 2: The transportation and finance department, working with other district staff, determine the increased costs required to acquire additional buses due to growth.</p> <p>Step 3: The district's long-range plans incorporate these estimates.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School board, Superintendent; appropriate Assistant Superintendent(s), Transportation Supervisor, Finance and Planning departments.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	Can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 12-11

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Financial information timely and consistently provided to the Transportation department, comparing actual vs budget.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services directs the Finance Director to provide monthly, timely and consistent financial information to the Transportation department.</p> <p>Step 2: The Finance Director assigns a subordinate to complete the task.</p> <p>Step 3: The Transportation Supervisor, or a subordinate, reviews the monthly report being provided by the fiscal area. Reconciliation needs to be made by the Transportation department of credits being given to it for "billings" to other departments and from other sources with internally maintained records.</p> <p>Step 4: Once established, the process needs to be repeated each month.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; Fiscal Director.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop a formal technology plan that includes budget reporting, parts and fueling reporting and routing data. This plan needs to be reviewed, updated, and revised annually

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Transportation and MIS department jointly develop a technology plan that includes elements that will make it compatible with other systems already, or known to be soon, implemented by the district. Among those already identified by the department as updated technology are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need for a new telephone system, • a computerized routing system, and • a new fleet maintenance software. <p>Step 2: The plan for new software needs to include provisions for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budget reporting, • parts acquisition, • fueling reporting, and • routing data. <p>Step 3: The plan including hardware and software requirements is drawn, under the principal direction of the MIS department, with full concurrence from the Transportation department.</p> <p>Step 4: The plan is submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services for this person's review, modification, and approval. At this level, the plan is documented for its fiscal implications.</p> <p>Step 5: Approval by the Superintendent and inclusion in the budgetary process.</p> <p>Step 6: Annually, the plan is updated and modifications and revisions are made.</p>
Who Is Responsible	MIS department; Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; Purchasing department; involvement by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	August 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	Can be implemented with existing resources. Cost of software is not material and can be included and covered by the existing budgetary process.

Action Plan 12-12

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a list of performance indicators that would be useful to the school board and general public to provide accountability for student transportation performance. Each performance indicator should be associated with a performance target to evaluate performance, and a "report card" style annual report should be made to the school board.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Review benchmarks that are appropriate, feasible, and useful for both student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance. Selected benchmarks should support the district strategic plan. Staff should consider the list of performance measures for student transportation operations shown below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per mile for school bus operations • Failure to comply with pick-up or delivery schedules within

	<p>prescribed time ranges (late arrivals), measured as incidents per month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service evaluation rating as good, as measured by routine customer service surveys of principals and parents • Number and percentage of students who have scheduled bus ride times that exceed the district's standards • Number of all accidents, measured as incidents per 100,000 miles • Parent complaints, measured by number of phone calls and categorized by type of complaint (on-time, discipline, safety concerns, vehicle maintenance, driver performance, etc.) <p>Step 2: For vehicle maintenance staff should consider the performance measures shown below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Down time of buses, measured as days out of service • Number of breakdowns per 100,000 miles • Maintenance cost for each vehicle, measured against average for all comparable vehicles • Turnaround time for scheduled and corrective maintenance by type of vehicle • Vehicle maintenance hours as a percentage of total hours charged • Vehicle to mechanics ratio • Average maintenance cost per mile by type of school bus • Safety inspections, measured as a percentage of all repair work time. Other performance indicators may be selected based on local interest and data availability. <p>Step 3: For all performance measures that are selected, devise a reporting mechanism and frequency appropriate for that particular measure.</p> <p>Step 4: Collect information on actual performance and report on it at selected intervals.</p> <p>Step 5: Establish performance standards for future school years.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Student Transportation supervisor and service manager, in consultation with Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.
Time Frame	<p>March 31, 2002: Identify which benchmarks are appropriate and feasible, and establish the mechanism for measuring them.</p> <p>June 30, 2002: Begin collecting performance information for the 2001-02 school year for each of the established benchmarks.</p> <p>June 30, 2002: Present school board with first annual report on student transportation performance.</p>
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Action Plan 12-13

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conceptualize a five-year plan, with obtainable objectives, documented, and incorporated into the district budgets during the period being planned.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services assigns to the Finance Director the responsibility of assigning a competent employee to assist the Transportation department in developing an obtainable, documented operating plan, spread into a five-year time period.</p> <p>Step 2: The Transportation department develops, with assistance provided a draft of objectives to be attained, how to achieve them, resources needed to do so, and projects these into a five-year plan that is attainable and used a road map during the near future.</p> <p>Step 3: The components of the five-year plan are incorporated into the district's annual budget.</p> <p>Step 4: Periodic comparisons between actual results and budgeted amounts are analyzed; annually, the department's five-year plan is updated, revised, and approved.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Finance Director; Transportation Supervisor; subordinate personnel; and those involved in district planning
Time Frame	Implement during school year 2001-02; use this period as a learning period and implement for the Fiscal Year 2002-03.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Involve Transportation department management in the planning of new school locations and construction and other actions the district takes to deal with enrollment changes.
Action Needed	Step 1: Include department management in school planning so they can provide input from a transportation point of view and be able to take planning assumptions into account in planning for future transportation needs.
Who Is Responsible	The Transportation Supervisor and those involved in district planning
Time Frame	Beginning in the 2001-02 school year and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Action Plan 12-14

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Effectively track and evaluate departmental costs and make routine periodic analyses between actual and budgeted amounts.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Finance department provides monthly financial information to the Transportation department showing actual results compared to budgeted amounts.</p> <p>Step 2: The Transportation department uses the monthly financial information being provided to analyze its results of operations, compare these to budgeted amounts and determines alternate course(s) of action to remedy any discrepancies.</p> <p>Step 3: The Transportation Supervisor provides the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services his/her recommendations based on the information derived from analytical review, inquiries and corrective action taken.</p> <p>Step 4: Suggested amendments to the current year's budget may be suggested for material discrepancies. Corrections in courses of actions may be necessary.</p> <p>Step 5: Similar suggestions may be made for periods extending past the current fiscal year. This would necessitate a revision to the five-year plan.</p> <p>Step 6: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services brings those recommendations he/she has approved to the Superintendent for comments, changes and corrective action, if needed.</p> <p>Step 7: Bring to the school board any corrective action that may require its approval, such as a change in the five-year plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Finance Director, subordinate personnel; Transportation Supervisor, subordinate personnel. Superintendent and school board for consent and approval.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002 and on-going.
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Action Plan 12-17

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct an annual review of the student transportation program's organizational structure and staffing level to minimize administrative layers and process.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Update organizational chart to include all positions and lines of authority. Also review and update job descriptions.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish criteria and benchmarks to base review on.</p> <p>Step 3: Conduct annual review of department.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The supervisor of transportation and assistant superintendent for business and support services.
Time Frame	<p>Summer 2001: Update organizational chart and job descriptions. Identify which benchmarks and criteria review will be based on.</p> <p>Spring 2002: Perform review of department based on established benchmarks and comparisons with peer districts.</p> <p>Summer 2002: Present school board with any findings.</p>

Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.
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Action Plan 12-10

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implement procedures to strengthen the purchasing function by soliciting bids, where quantities purchased warrant it. For items and services not currently purchased through competitive bids, the district should continue to “piggyback” other districts and counties bids. The district should evaluate whether it would be better off by issuing its own request for proposals.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Purchasing and Transportation departments agree as to which parts, supplies and services are purchased in enough quantities to merit having a separate bidding process from the current “piggy backing” of other governmental units’ prices.</p> <p>Step 2: For those parts and supplies found to be candidates for separate bidding (after Step 1 above), the Purchasing department, working with the Service Manager and warehouse personnel, determines how to procure these through a sealed bidding process.</p> <p>Step 3: For services found to be appropriate to solicit prices, the Purchasing department working with the Service Manager, decide whether to use sealed bidding or a request for quotation process. When procuring services, the risk management department should be consulted about any insurance coverage that may be required from prospective vendors.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; Purchasing department, Risk Manager.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Undetermined, but should produce cost savings. Can be accomplished with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Recouping warranty costs by contacting International and discussing the possibility of becoming a service center
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services authorizes the Transportation Supervisor, or his designee, to commence or continue the process to become an authorized service center for International buses.</p> <p>Step 2: The Transportation Supervisor, or his designee, obtains the necessary documentation from International and commence the process. Other departments, such as fiscal, that may be better suited to provide the information required by the manufacturer, should provide assistance.</p> <p>Step 3: The Risk Manager, Finance Director, and others within the organization may need to provide input in order to obtain approval by the manufacturer.</p>

	<p>Step 4: After approval is obtained to become an authorized service center (where warranty work done is reimbursed by the manufacturer), a system needs to be implemented to recoup the contractually authorized costs and billing these to the manufacturer.</p> <p>Step 5: The district needs to maintain adequate records for an agreed period of time in order for a manufacturer's representative to inspect replaced parts, amount of time allocated to the repair and other support typically required by a manufacturer to reimburse a dealer or service provider for warranty work.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Transportation Supervisor; Service Manager; Finance Director; Risk Manager.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources. Potential savings in time not spent in bring the International buses to Ocala for warranty work.

Food Service Operations

Action Plan 13-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implementation of a strategic plan for the Food Service Program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Superintendent directs the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Support Services to develop a strategic plan, which includes a board approved mission statement, long-range goals, strategies to accomplish goals and plans of action, for the food services program. Assigns the project to a committee of the Food Service Supervisor, the field technicians, and a representative group of 3-5 principals or assistant principals.</p> <p>Step 2: After reaching consensus, the food services supervisor along with other committee members develop the detailed action plan. The plan needs to be approved by the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and by the Superintendent. The School Board should also approve the plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services; Food Service Supervisor; Principals; Assistant Principals; Food Service Managers.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 13-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Adjust cafeteria staffing based on actual enrollment figures four to six weeks after the beginning of the school year.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Food Service Supervisor directs the field technicians to determine cafeteria staffing needed based on actual enrollment no later than six weeks into the new school year.</p> <p>Step 2: Based on the information prepared by the field technicians, the Food Service Supervisor adjusts cafeteria staffing.</p>
Who is Responsible	Food Service Supervisor
Time Frame	October of each year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 13-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a formal process for obtaining input from students, their parents, and teachers about the Food Service Program at each school. Identify barriers to participation and seek to implement changes that remove or reduce impact of these barriers.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Food Service Supervisor forms an ad hoc committee of several food service managers and principals to brainstorm ideas on how to formally obtain and use input from students and parents regarding food service issues. In implementing this recommendation, the district should consider establishing food advisory committees composed of students, distributing surveys to students and parents, and conducting student taste tests in the menu development process. The district could also work with its food service vendors to test promotional items.</p> <p>Step 2: Implement the developed plan.</p> <p>Step 3: Work to eliminate the identified barriers.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services should direct the Food Service Supervisor to develop and implement, in coordination with the principals and food service managers, a formal process for obtaining feedback from students and parents.
Time Frame	Beginning with the 2001-02 school year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 13-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Identify program benchmarks to assess program performance.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop program benchmarks which include the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meals per labor hour, • cost per meal, • overall meal participation for Breakfast, lunch, and other feeding programs, and • satisfaction with menu selections from customers.

	<p>Step 2: Identify school districts with exemplary Food Service Programs in order to compare the Lake County Food Service Program performance.</p> <p>Step 3: Conduct regular comparisons of the program performance to established benchmarks and to the other previously identified Food Service Programs.</p> <p>Step 4: Communicate food service benchmarks to food service personnel, appropriate school administrators, and other interested stakeholders such as community members.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services directs the Food Service Supervisor to develop and implement food service benchmarks and to communicate program performance to food service personnel, appropriate school administrators, and other interest stakeholders.
Time Frame	Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 13-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Use developed food service benchmarks to evaluate the overall Food Service Program and identify areas to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: See Action Plan 13-5, Recommendation 1.</p> <p>Step 2: Design a routine system for periodically evaluating performance using developed benchmarks versus actual performance.</p> <p>Step 3: Evaluate performance and initiate corrective action as needed. Implement program changes that would ultimately reduce cost and/or increase revenue.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services should direct the Food Service Supervisor to develop food service benchmarks and a system for evaluation and action. The Food Service Supervisor should conduct the evaluation and take corrective action as needed.
Time Frame	During the 2002-2003 school year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 13-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Determine whether additional nutritional programs could be added to district schools.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Food service managers should work cooperatively with the Food Service Supervisor to identify and select pilot breakfast programs in selected middle and high schools.</p> <p>Step 2: Meet with principals to obtain support and feedback of breakfast programs in middle and high schools.</p> <p>Step 3: Assess the pilot project outcome and submit a written report to the Superintendent and respective principals recommending either expansion or discontinuation based on pilot program results.</p> <p>Step 4: Obtain feedback from and brainstorm with food service managers and principals to identify other potential events or opportunities to increase food service revenue, e.g., catering, banquets, meetings, contracting with other agencies and organizations.</p> <p>Step 5: The Food Service Supervisor should oversee the implementation of any additional services, document costs and income, and report this information to the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services is responsible for directing the Food Service Supervisor to outline and implement additional nutritional programs.
Time Frame	<p>During the 2001-02 school year, implement pilot breakfasts program in selected middle and high schools and explore other opportunities for increasing food program revenues.</p> <p>Assess the pilot project at the end of the 2001-02 school year and do a written report outlining either expansion of the project or discontinuation by June 2002.</p>
Fiscal Impact	With an initial 20% and 10% participation for middle and high schools, respectively, implementing a breakfast program in middle and high school could increase the district's net income by over \$67,000 annually.

Action Plan 13-8

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop Food Service Program fiscal goals.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop the food program fiscal goals that guide the annual budget development process. Program fiscal goals should be part of the strategic plan.</p> <p>Step 2: Validate the accuracy of the reporting system</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services is responsible to direct the Food Service Supervisor to establish program fiscal goals as part of the strategic plan and validated system for analyzing these goals versus the budget.
Time Frame	In-place for preparation of the Fiscal Year 2002-03-budget.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Review budgeted versus actual revenue and expenses on a regular basis. Use this information to make informed management decisions.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Track actual revenue and expenditures projections versus actual in a format that can be easily compared.</p> <p>Step 2: The Food Service Supervisor, purchasing supervisor, and the finance and accounting supervisor should meet to review and analyze budgeted versus actual expenditures and revenue to discuss plans for making necessary program adjustments to minimize costs and maximize revenue.</p> <p>Step 3: Make management decisions based on this information and plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services is responsible for ensuring that parties from each department (food services, purchasing, and finance and accounting) meet to review Food Service Program projected expenditures, revenue, and actual expenditures and report meeting results and recommended program adjustments.
Time Frame	The Food Service Supervisor, purchasing supervisor, and finance and accounting supervisor should meet every operational month beginning with the 2001-02 school year to review projected expenditures, revenue, and actual expenditures. Program adjustments should be made as necessary following these meetings.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 13-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a long-range equipment replacement and preventive maintenance plan.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Inspect and document current equipment conditions.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify equipment replacement needs and costs for the next five years.</p> <p>Step 3: Obtain input from food service managers on additional equipment needs, equipment that is not used, and move equipment accordingly.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop equipment maintenance plans to maximize the life of the item and minimize replacement costs. The preventive maintenance plan for the Food Service Program should be in line with a district-wide preventive program described in Action Plan 11-11, Facilities Maintenance, Chapter 11 of this report.</p> <p>Step 5: Submit the equipment replacement and maintenance plans to the maintenance department for inclusion in an overall equipment plan.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Food Service Supervisor
Time Frame	During the 2001-02 school year.
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Cost Control Systems

Action Plan 14-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Subsequent to the initial risk assessment performed by an independent certified public accountant, conduct a risk assessment annually. Determine if it is cost beneficial to establish an internal audit function to address risks identified by the risk assessment.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Contract with an appropriate organization to conduct the first risk assessment. The contract should include as deliverables a risk assessment methodology and materials appropriate to Lake School District that the district can use to perform subsequent annual risk assessments in-house. The contracted risk assessment should include estimates of the financial impact for all risks identified through the assessment.</p> <p>Step 2: Prioritize identified risks.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop strategies to eliminate or minimize these risks.</p>
Who is responsible	In the absence of an internal audit function, the Finance Director.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	One-time cost of \$ 15,000 (estimated one-time cost of a risk assessment conducted in one of the peer districts, Manatee county). After the initial risk assessment, the recommended annual risk assessment process can be done with existing resources

Action Plan 14-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To address and correct findings in the external audit report within one year after the receipt of the findings.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign responsibility for resolving audit findings to appropriate staff.</p> <p>Step 2: Assigned staff should meet with affected departments and develop an action plan that will resolve the finding. Action plans should include deadline dates.</p> <p>Step 3: Assigned staff should report the status of audit finding resolutions to the board each quarter.</p>
Who is responsible	All departments impacted by audit findings
Time Frame	September 30, 2002 for existing findings, and one year after receipt of audit findings in all subsequent years.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 14-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Provide additional resources to the internal accounts audit function by expanding the in-house staff with the addition of a Fiscal Assistant II. This action will enhance the timeliness of the audits of the schools internal funds, and the independence of the internal accounts auditor, and help the district develop a true internal audit function.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Review and evaluate all of the job functions performed by the internal auditor and develop time requirements/budgets for these job functions.</p> <p>Step 2: Determine the extent to which time for job requirements differs from standard work hours of internal accounts auditor.</p> <p>Step 3: Advertise for and hire a Fiscal Assistant II for the internal auditing department.</p> <p>Step 4: Reallocate internal accounts audit function responsibilities to maximize efficiency and independence. Assign the more complex tasks to the internal funds auditor and less complex tasks to the fiscal specialist (including assistance to school bookkeepers).</p>
Who is responsible	Human Resources and Internal Accounts Auditor.
Time Frame	May 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Total salary and benefits annually would be \$24,500. This calculation is based upon the current lowest full time salary of Fiscal Assistant II of \$18,376 and a benefits package of one-third of salary, or \$6,124. Because we recommend that the position would be added by February 28, 2002, only four months, or 25% of the salary would be incurred in the first year, approximately \$8,200. If there were a four percent contractual increase in salary every year, plus a one-time cost of \$7,500 for computer, training and other overhead costs, the five-year impact to the district would be \$123,900.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Increase the timeliness of the reports for the internal funds accounts to the school board by submitting the audit reports for each school as they are completed.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and the Director of Finance evaluate the procedure by which internal accounts audit reports are submitted to the board. The new procedure should be such that reports are submitted to the board as they are completed rather than presenting multiple reports at one time.</p> <p>Step 2: New procedure is approved and implemented.</p>
Who is responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services and the Director of Finance.
Time Frame	June 30, 2001
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Action Plan 14-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To fully implement the accounting functions of the New TERMS upgrade and update fixed asset transactions as they occur, thus establishing the general ledger as the control account.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: After the New TERMS upgrade has been fully implemented, select a cutoff date (one-two weeks prior to month end). Put a freeze on all non-essential fixed asset purchases to allow the property clerk to update the fixed asset subsidiary records. At month-end, run a complete listing of the subsidiary ledgers and update the general ledger balance to the balance in the subsidiary ledgers.</p> <p>Step 2: As the transactions occur, update fixed asset general ledger accounts.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Property Clerk, FTE Analyst, and Finance Department.
Time Frame	April 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	To annually reconcile the additions shown to fixed asset accounts on the subsidiary ledger to the additions shown on the general ledger.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: At the end of the fiscal year, obtain a detailed printout of all asset additions shown by the property clerk, as well as the detailed records of additions to land, improvements other than building, buildings, construction in process, and computer software.</p> <p>Step 2: Set up a workshop among the selected personnel from property control, FTE, and finance to compare the values shown in the subsidiary ledgers with those in the general ledger.</p> <p>Step 3: Begin the process of reconciling the subsidiary ledgers to the general ledgers.</p> <p>Step 4: Examine and reconcile all discrepancies between the subsidiary property records and the general ledger.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Property Clerk, FTE Analyst, and Finance Department.
Time Frame	March 31, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Performance of an annual reconciliation of the capital expenditures to the capital additions shown on the general ledger accounts.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: At the end of each fiscal year, review purchase invoices for all additions that would be classified as capital expenditures (greater than \$500).</p> <p>Step 2: At the end of each fiscal year, review all additions to the capital accounts on the general ledger.</p> <p>Step 3: Begin the process of reconciling the capital additions to the general ledger.</p>

	Step 4: Examine and reconcile all discrepancies between the capital expenditures and the capital additions shown on the general ledger.
Who Is Responsible	FTE Analyst and Finance Department.
Time Frame	March 31, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 14-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To reconcile and investigate significant discrepancies between the actual inventory and the inventory recorded in the district's financial records.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Working together, the Finance, MIS, and Warehouse departments should investigate and reconcile physical inventory count balances and the inventory balances recorded in the district's general ledger. This should be accomplished by comparing physical documentation (inventory requisitions, warehouse return receipts) with the computerized inventory records and ensuring that the same inventory cutoff dates have been observed on all inventory records.</p> <p>Step 2: After all discrepancies have been resolved, document and adjust the general ledger or perpetual inventory as appropriate.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Warehouse Manager, MIS, and Finance Department.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	To provide safeguards for inventory custody.
Action Needed	Step 1: The alarm system should be set during hours of operation. Develop procedures to provide authorized district staff with the alarm code. The alarm code should be changed every 30 days.
Who Is Responsible	Warehouse Manager, MIS, and Finance Department.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 14-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To institute a purchase card system for the purchase of supply items currently stocked in warehouse.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Perform an examination of the current inventory requisitions received from each cost center.</p> <p>Step 2: Consider type (bank or store), authorized users, and limits that should be placed on each purchase card.</p>

	Step 3: Present a detailed outline of results of examination of costs and benefits of a purchase card system to the school board for approval.
	Step 4: Use purchase card, initially to reduce inventory at main warehouse and eventually to purchase items currently stocked in main warehouse.
Who Is Responsible	Warehouse Manager, School Principals, and Finance Department.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Cost savings of \$53,960 in the first year of implementation. If cost savings were to remain constant \$215,840 over the next five-years ¹

Action Plan 14-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Compile and institute the use of a written policies and procedures manual that would demonstrate a commitment by district personnel to a strong internal control environment.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Form a committee of key personnel in the finance department to identify and prioritize critical financial process and document them.</p> <p>Step 2: Present a draft of the policy that has been written to the Finance Director for revision and submission to the school board.</p> <p>Step 3: Present the revised policy to the school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: Review and update the procedures manual on an annual basis.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Finance Director and Finance Department.
Time Frame	September 30, 2002, and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with no fiscal impact.

Action Plan 14-8

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To cross-train one or more other individuals to perform the bank reconciliation if the primary accountant should become unavailable, and to rotate duties, when applicable.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Outline the critical processes in the bank reconciliation function.</p> <p>Step 2: Select employee(s) to be cross-trained in the bank reconciliation process.</p> <p>Step 3: Train the employee(s) to perform the bank reconciliation and supervise their preparation of the bank reconciliation the following month.</p> <p>Step 4: Design a confidential plan of rotation of duties, with the specific intention of having the bank account periodically reconciled by an employee other than the person specifically assigned that duty.</p>

¹ Estimated cost savings might vary in Lake County based upon discounts with individual vendors, and salaries of specific individuals and implementation of recommendation by the district.

Who Is Responsible	Finance Director, Assistant Finance Director, and assigned accounting personnel.
Time Frame	March 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 14-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To implement the use of purchase cards for the purchase of supply items up to \$500 currently obtained from the warehouse or through purchase requisitions.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Discussion between the schools/departments, purchasing, and finance departments on the implementation of a purchase card.</p> <p>Step 2: Discussion of the type of features that a purchase card would have among the items to be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dollar limit on transactions (\$500 is recommended). • The types of transactions that are acceptable (recommendation initially • Supply (0510) items). • Level of implementation (recommendation pilot program of five schools and one department). • Type of card to be used (recommendation – bank card). • Authorization level (most peer districts have principal, bookkeeper, and department heads and secretaries). • Budget (\$10,000 a month recommended). <p>Step 3: Present purchase card implementation plan to principals and department heads for review and comments. Choose a tentative pilot group.</p> <p>Step 4: Present purchase card plan to school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 5: If plan is approved, meeting between representatives from schools/ departments, finance and purchasing departments.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Purchasing, Finance, Schools/Departments.
Time Frame	Initial Implementation by October 1, 2002. Full Implementation by October 1, 2005.
How to Evaluate	Reduction in expenditures of time and resources to fill inventory and purchase requisitions.
Fiscal Impact	Implementing this recommendation may save the district \$57,600 a year when implemented. If the cost savings remain constant, the savings to the district will be \$230,400 over the next five-years. ²

² Cost savings in Lake County could vary from the amount of estimated cost savings.

Safety and Security

Action Plan 15-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Re-evaluate the district's dropout prevention program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Review the dropout prevention program as it is currently structured.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify programs that are (or were) effective and evaluate whether they should be continued.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify peer districts that could supply relevant data for benchmarking purposes and draw conclusions.</p>
Who Is Responsible	SAFE Schools Coordinator under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent.
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be attained with existing resources.

Action Plan 15-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Assess current school safety security systems.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Conduct a security system review of all district facilities.</p> <p>Step 2: Consult with security professionals regarding security systems selection and installation. These professionals include the fire marshal, police and security experts</p> <p>Step 3: Include the costs associated with installing new security systems in the next budget year.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance under the direction of an Assistant Superintendent.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002 and ongoing.
Fiscal Impact	The fiscal impact cannot be reliably determined as it would be dependent on outcome of security review.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Ascertain and ensure that each district school maintains an evacuation kit that includes copies of all necessary records and basic equipment needed to operate.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop a system to verify the existence of evacuation kits at each school.</p> <p>Step 2: Circularize all principals on the objects and requirements of the project.</p> <p>Step 3: Ask each principal to make an inventory of materials documents that should be included in the evacuation kit. Evacuation kits should include, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School floor plans. • Student and staff rosters. • Emergency contacts for students and staff.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick record of police, fire and other emergency numbers.
Step 4:	Parts of the evacuation kit should be created, both in hard copy (paper) and electronic version.
Step 5:	Each school remits to the district headquarters a photocopy of the items that are in the inventory of documents in the evacuation kit; duplicates of hard to replace documents should be made and sent to headquarters with the list.
Who Is Responsible	Principals; Risk Manager; Safety and Security Officer.
Time Frame	July 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	No direct fiscal impact; this can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 15-8

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Training for students and school personnel in dealing with dangerous equipment or chemicals. Acquiring necessary protective equipment and supplies to minimize the number and extent of possible injuries related to athletic activities.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify the different positions within the district that require specialized safety training</p> <p>Step 2: Determine what types of safety training are currently offered and expand, if necessary, to cover all positions identified in Step 1.</p> <p>Step 3: Compare the results in the previous two steps to determine “who needs what” safety training.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop a training program for the entire district so that whenever safety training is required, the central office can schedule it and track it for future reference.</p> <p>Step 5: Determine whether new or additional equipment and/or supplies need to be replaced or acquired in order to minimize the number of injuries.</p> <p>Step 6: Budget the cost of said replacement or new equipment and/or supplies.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance under the direction of an Assistant Superintendent; Finance Director.
Time Frame	As early as possible, but not later than March 31, 2002.
Fiscal Impact	Cost of replacement or new equipment should be covered by the normal operating budget.

Community Involvement**Action Plan 16-1**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Assign the accountability to the new position and develop performance measures to evaluate efficiency of the Community Involvement Program.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign the responsibility of the program and the development of performance measure to the Public Information Officer.</p> <p>Step 2: Analyze the mission statement and goals/objectives as stated for the Community Involvement Program.</p> <p>Step 3: Determine the desired results and completion time frame for each performance measures.</p> <p>Step 4: Evaluate the cost/benefit of the implementation actions for the program.</p> <p>Step 5: Periodically report findings and suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>Step 6: Superintendent reviews and determines alternatives for improvements.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and Public Information Officer.
Time Frame	July 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be completed with existing resources.

B Geographic Location of Lake County Schools

This Appendix includes the map showing the geographic location of Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

