

# oppaga Progress Report



May 2002

Report No. 02-30

## Manatee School District Makes Substantial Improvements and Is Now Eligible for Seal of Best Financial Management

### *at a glance*

On October 27, 1998, the Manatee County School Board agreed by a unanimous vote to institute the action plans in the Best Financial Management Practices Review (OPPAGA Report No. 98-19). OPPAGA developed these action plans to help the Manatee County School District implement the best practices, which would make the district eligible to receive the Seal of Best Financial Management from the State Board of Education.

Since OPPAGA's 1998 review, the district has made substantial progress in improving its management practices, increasing efficiency and effectiveness, and reducing costs. As of March 2002, the district implemented 68 of the 69 action plans contained in the original OPPAGA report and implementation of the remaining action plan was underway. The district estimates that it has saved \$14,760,238 to date by implementing report action plans.

The district should continue to monitor certain issues, such as its fund balance, and further strengthen management processes to ensure it maintains a strong financial position and continues to adhere to the best practices.

OPPAGA recommends that the State Board of Education award the Seal of Best Financial Management to the Manatee County School District.

### Purpose

This report provides the Florida Legislature with information on the status of the Manatee County School District's implementation of action plans included in the Best Financial Management Practices Review published in October 1998.<sup>1</sup> On October 27, 1998, the Manatee County School Board voted unanimously to implement the action plans and pursue the Seal of Best Financial Management.<sup>2</sup>

Florida law provides that district school boards that agree by a majority plus one vote to institute the action plans must submit an annual report to the Legislature, the Governor, the SMART Schools Clearinghouse, OPPAGA, the Auditor General, and the Commissioner of Education on the progress made towards implementing the plan and whether changes have occurred in other areas of

<sup>1</sup> Best Financial Management Practices Review Manatee County School District, [Report No. 98-19](#), October 1998.

<sup>2</sup> The 2001 Legislature passed the *Sharpening the Pencil Act*, [HB 269](#), which made substantial revisions to the Best Financial Management Practices Review process. One of 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. In addition, the act provides that these reviews are to be funded by the Legislature to the extent provided in the General Appropriations Act.

operation which would affect compliance with the best practices. The law also requires that such districts be reviewed annually by OPPAGA to determine whether they have attained compliance with the best financial management practices in the areas covered by the plan.

## Background

The 1997 Florida Legislature created the Best Financial Management Practices Review Program to increase public confidence and support for school districts that demonstrate good stewardship of public resources, to encourage cost savings, and to improve district management and use of funds.

The best practices, adopted by the Commissioner of Education on December 4, 1997, and readopted in October 2000, 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.

The Manatee County School Board requested a Best Financial Management Practices Review to provide the district with an external assessment of how its existing practices could be improved. Board members and administrative staff have indicated their desire to use the review to improve district operations. In accordance with the law, OPPAGA and the Auditor General conducted the review, which found

that the Manatee County School District was using a little more than half of the best financial management practices and thus was not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management at that time. (See Exhibit 1.)

For those areas in which the district was not using best practices, the 1998 report contained specific action plans that provided detailed, step-by-step actions the district should take in order to implement the best practices' principles within two years. By implementing the action plans and other report recommendations, we determined that the Manatee County School District could improve district operations, save money, and demonstrate good stewardship of public resources. For instance, OPPAGA estimated that implementing report recommendations would have a positive fiscal impact of approximately \$742,643 in Fiscal Year 1998-99 and \$35,288,243 over a five-year period.

### Exhibit 1

#### The Initial Review Found the District Was Using 56% of the Best Practices

Best Practices Area	Was the District Using Individual Best Practices?	
	Yes	No
Management Structures	4	9
Performance Accountability Systems	2	6
Personnel Systems and Benefits	3	6
Use of Lottery Proceeds	1	4
Use of State and District Construction Funds	2	2
Facilities Construction	24	16
Facilities Maintenance	14	10
Student Transportation	10	4
Food Service Operations	4	11
Cost Control Systems	27	4
<b>All Areas <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>91</b>	<b>72</b>

<sup>1</sup> In total, 69 action plans address the 72 best practices not met.

Source: The Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability.

This is OPPAGA's final review of the district's status in implementing report action plans. In February 2001, OPPAGA concluded that the district had implemented 24 (35%) of the 69 action plans contained in the original OPPAGA report and was not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. OPPAGA presented those findings in Report No. 01-09, released February 2001.<sup>3</sup>

## Implementation Status by Best Practices Area—

OPPAGA recommends to the State Board of Education that the district receive the Seal of Best Financial Management. Since October 1998, the district has made significant improvements in management, increased its efficiency and effectiveness, and reduced

operating costs. As of March 2002, the district had implemented 68 of the 69 action plans contained in OPPAGA's original report and was in substantial compliance with the best practices (refer to Exhibit 2 or to Appendix A for a more detailed presentation).<sup>4</sup> The district estimates that it has saved \$14,760,238 by implementing report action plans (refer to Appendix B).<sup>5</sup>

Although the district has implemented the vast majority of action plans, OPPAGA identified several issues that require continued monitoring or strengthening to ensure that the district maintains a strong financial position and continues to adhere to the best practices.

An overview of implementation status by best practices area is presented below.

<sup>3</sup> *Progress Report: Manatee District Not Yet Eligible for the State's Seal of Best Financial Management*, OPPAGA Report No. 01-09, February 2001.

<sup>4</sup> OPPAGA's conclusions on the implementation status of action plans contained in the original report are based on an examination of the district's annual self-report, on-site interviews of key district staff, and an inspection of available documentation provided by the district. If district actions varied slightly from the recommended action, but generally addressed the intent of the action plan included in the report, action plans were considered implemented.

<sup>5</sup> The Manatee County School District provided estimates of cost savings. OPPAGA's ability to verify district reported cost savings was restricted to a review of available documentation and conversations with district staff.

### Exhibit 2

#### District Has Implemented Most of the Action Plans in OPPAGA's Original Report

Best Practices Area	Total Action Plans	Status of Action Plans		
		Implemented	Implementation Underway	Not Implemented
Management Structures	9	8	1	0
Performance Accountability Systems	6	6	0	0
Personnel Systems and Benefits	6	6	0	0
Use of Lottery Proceeds	4	4	0	0
Use of State and District Construction Funds	2	2	0	0
Facilities Construction <sup>1</sup>	13	13	0	0
Facilities Maintenance	10	10	0	0
Student Transportation	4	4	0	0
Food Service Operations	11	11	0	0
Cost Control Systems	4	4	0	0
<b>All Areas</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Facilities Construction has 13 actions plans that address 16 best practices not met.

Source: The Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability..

### ***Management Structures***

In our initial report, the Manatee County School District was using 4 of the 13 best practices for management structures.

As of March 2002, the district implemented 8 of the 9 action plans for management structures and implementation of the remaining action plan was underway. It had updated its policies and procedures manual and clarified its assignment of authority to different organizational units. The board and superintendent had a good working relationship. The district had developed a strategic plan and was routinely assessing its progress in meeting the plan's goals and objectives. It had developed a system for linking its budget to its goals and objectives and worked to improve its management information systems. It was conducting periodic evaluations of its operations and programs, and it had taken steps to improve the cost-effectiveness of its legal services.

Despite the district's substantial progress, three concerns remain. First, the district has not yet put together a budget document that includes performance information for all programs. However, it has the necessary information and is planning to include it in the budget for the next fiscal year. Second, the district is still working on improvements to its information systems to meet user needs. However, users report that they can access needed information much more readily than they could in the past, and the planned acquisition of the TERMS system for student data should improve this current situation. Finally, although the district took steps to improve the cost-effectiveness of its legal services, it may not have been successful in doing so. The board needs to evaluate its current arrangement to ensure that the district is receiving needed legal services in the most cost-effective manner possible.

### ***Performance Accountability System***

Our original review found that the district's performance accountability system needed substantial improvement and that the district was using 2 of the 8 best practices in this area.

The final report contained 6 action plans to assist the district in strengthening its performance accountability system to ensure that its major programs are meeting their intended purpose in the most cost-efficient manner. These action plans included developing goals, objectives, and performance and cost-efficiency measures and benchmarks for major educational and operational programs; evaluating the effectiveness and cost of major programs and using evaluation results; and increasing public reporting.

As of March 2002, the district had implemented all action plans for performance accountability. However, program-level accountability is a relatively new concept to district staff and needs to be more fully integrated into daily management decision-making processes. The district should continue to strengthen program-level accountability by following through with its plans to increase the linkages between budgeting and program objectives, measures and standards, and by making performance expectations more challenging.

### ***Personnel Systems and Benefits***

Our original review found that the Manatee County School District was using 3 of the 9 personnel best practices. The report contained 6 action plans that the district needed to implement in order to improve the personnel systems and benefits.

As of March 2002, the district had implemented all 6 of the action plans related to meeting the best practices in personnel systems and benefits. We found that the

district's personnel operations had significantly improved, and that the district had identified specific benefits that had resulted from the implementation of OPPAGA's action plans.

### ***Use of Lottery Proceeds***

Our original review found that the district needed to improve its management of the lottery dollars it receives and that the district was using only 1 of the 5 best practices for use of lottery proceeds.

The final report contained 4 action plans to improve how the district manages lottery funds appropriated by the Legislature to the district and lottery funds allocated to school advisory councils by the district. These action plans included defining educational enhancement, taking steps to ensure that the district uses lottery funds consistent with this definition, improving the processes the district uses to account for its use of lottery funds, and evaluating and reporting on the extent to which lottery funds have enhanced student education.

As of March 2002, the district had implemented all action plans related to the Use of Lottery Proceeds.

### ***Use of State and District Construction Funds***

Our original review found that while the district generally was using construction funds appropriately and for the intended purpose, it needed to increase exploring additional construction alternatives and improve its planning processes to increase efficiency. We concluded that the district was using 2 of the 4 best practices in this area.

The final report contained 2 action plans designed to improve cost-efficiency in the use of state and district construction funds and minimize maintenance and operations costs in new facilities. For example, we recommended that the district examine

year-round scheduling opportunities and include maintenance and operations personnel on all facility project teams.

As of March 2002, the district had implemented the both action plans for the Use of State and District Construction Funds.

### ***Facilities Construction***

Our original review found that the district used 24 of the 40 best practices for facilities construction, but needed to make improvements to provide quality facilities at the lowest possible cost.

The final report contained 13 action plans to address the 16 facilities construction best practices the district was not using. These plans included

- establishing written procedures for educational facilities planning;
- assigning one person with the responsibility to keep construction projects within budget and assigning the budget oversight for each project or groups of projects to a single project manager;
- developing guidelines for the development of educational specifications, forming educational specification committees, and developing educational specifications for each major project; and
- analyzing maintenance and operations costs at recently completed facilities.

As of March 2002, the district had implemented all 13 action plans in the facilities construction area.

### ***Facilities Maintenance***

Our original review concluded that the district generally was operating the Facilities Maintenance functions according to many of the best practices and was using 14 of the 24 best practices in this area. However, we found that the district could make

## *Progress Report*

improvements to its long-range facilities plan, staff training, and project management.

As of March 2002, the district had implemented all 10 action plans designed to improve the district's facilities, maintenance, and operations functions. As part of our verification review, OPPAGA identified the issues below that the district should continue to monitor or strengthen to ensure that it maintains a strong financial position and continues to adhere to the best practices.

- There is not a strong, clear connection between the maintenance department's objectives and performance measurement system and the district's budget process. The district should continue with its efforts to strengthen the linkage between the outcomes the maintenance department is trying to achieve and its resources.
- Deferred maintenance has risen dramatically from \$23 million during the initial review to \$88 million as of March 2002. District staff members indicate that this increase is due to several factors including better identification of maintenance needs and a new policy to schedule repairs found during routine inspections for a later date. Because it cannot eliminate deferred maintenance, the district ranks maintenance by priorities. The district needs to closely monitor and its long-range plan needs address the level of deferred maintenance.
- To reduce accident-related costs, the district has been collecting data on student accidents in a computer database for the past three years. District staff members indicated that in the future they plan to collect and use accident incident data more extensively. The district should follow through with these plans and use this additional data

to develop benchmarks to determine a cost-effective manner of meeting health and safety standards.

### *Student Transportation*

Our original review found that the district was using 10 of 14 best practices for student transportation. For instance, the district used best practices pertaining to its purchasing of vehicle maintenance equipment, staffing, recruiting, training, and safety procedures. However, we concluded that the district could improve by developing systems to evaluate transportation activities and developing a plan to replace aging buses.

The final report contained 4 action plans to improve student transportation by establishing performance benchmarks, developing a regular performance reporting mechanism, providing more information on transportation costs and performance, and initiating a school bus purchase plan to meet the school board policy on the age of buses.

As of March 2002, the district had implemented all 4 action plans in the area of student transportation.

### *Food Service Operations*

The Manatee County School District's food service program has made substantial operational and financial improvements after OPPAGA's initial review that found the district was using 4 of 15 best practices. OPPAGA proposed 11 action plans. As of March 2000, the district had implemented each of the 11 food service action plans. Program planning, monitoring, oversight, and fiscal performance have all improved as well as the district's procedures for ordering and warehousing food items. Meal prices were raised, breakfast programs were added, and customer feedback is now solicited and used to improve the program.

While the district has made notable improvements in the food service program, there are still some areas of concern. Meal participation rates have declined for each of the past three years and a la carte sales declined by \$240,000 in the last year. Though the program has taken steps to solicit and use customer feedback, it may need to increase or better focus these efforts to increase participation and ensure the program's financial stability.

Vending machines on campus are a problem in Manatee County as well as in other school districts across the state. While individual schools benefit from the profits of on-campus vending sales, national school lunch and breakfast program rules, as well as state Department of Education rules, restrict the sale of these items during meal times and in areas where students eat. Violation of these state and federal rules can result in the loss of meal reimbursement income to the food service program. In these cases, the food service program is financially penalized for a school-based violation over which the food service director has no control. The district should take steps to ensure that schools adhere to the federal and state rules regarding campus vending machine sales. Schools can continue to gain profit from these sales and the food service program can continue to maximize meal reimbursement monies if related restrictions are followed.

Though in the process, the district does not yet have a long-range equipment replacement plan. Such a plan is necessary to allow the food service director to project and budget for future equipment needs. Without this information, the food service director is forced to constantly 'catch up' with equipment needs. This situation could negatively affect overall operations if needed equipment is not available and does not provide the food service director the

information necessary to adequately manage the program's finances.

### *Cost Control Systems*

Our original review found that the Manatee County District School District had generally established adequate cost control systems and used all the best practices related to financial auditing, risk management, and purchasing. Overall the district was using 27 of 31 best practices for this area. The February 2001 report contained 4 action plans to assist the district in meeting the best practice standards in internal auditing, asset management, financial management, and information systems.

As of March 2002, the district had generally implemented the 4 action plans related to meeting the best practices in internal auditing, asset management, financial management, and information systems. However, while the district has made significant progress in meeting these best practices, several improvements are still needed. The district should include in its policy for reporting suspected improprieties provisions related to anonymity and feedback to employees who report suspected improprieties with immunity from reprisals. Also, the district should continue to address certain general controls over information systems.

Our review also found that, although the district's total fund balance in its general fund had dropped slightly from \$13,834,323 at June 30, 2000, to \$12,429,683 at June 30, 2001, unreserved fund balance had fallen significantly from \$6,937,299 to \$3,633,774.<sup>6</sup> As a percentage of general

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<sup>6</sup> In governmental funds, fund balance is composed of reserved fund balance and unreserved fund balance. Reserved fund balance is that portion of fund balance that is legally restricted for a specific purpose or is not available for general appropriation by the board. Unreserved fund balance represents that portion of fund balance that management has set aside for a specific purpose, termed unreserved fund balance-designated, or that which can be used for contingencies or financial emergencies, termed

## *Progress Report*

fund revenues, this unreserved fund balance represents 3.8% of revenues at June 30, 2000, and 1.8% of revenues at June 30, 2001, respectively. While the drop in unreserved fund balance may not indicate that the district is experiencing financial difficulties, in these circumstances, the district has fewer resources available for contingencies or other financial emergencies.

For the Fiscal Year 2001-02, the superintendent initiated a budget reduction plan to address anticipated shortfalls in revenue and expected losses in the district's health insurance program. The plan was approved by the school board on September 10, 2001, during the budget adoption process and subsequently revised on January 28, 2002. Actions to reduce the budget by \$11 million include an increase in teacher pupil ratio, a hiring freeze, a reduction in department budgets of 10%, the payment of maintenance costs from capital projects funds, budget cuts in the summer school

program, and the flexibility allowed by the legislature in use of categorical program funds.

While the superintendent has taken actions to improve the district's financial position for Fiscal Year 2001-02, the board, and the superintendent should continue to closely monitor its budget and take the necessary actions to ensure that planned budget reductions are realized and that an adequate unreserved fund balance is maintained.

## OPPAGA's Home Page Contains More Information

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Additional information on the Best Financial Management Practices Reviews of school districts, is provided on the OPPAGA website, the *Florida Monitor*, at <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/>.

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unreserved fund balance-undesignated. In times of economic downturns or other forms of uncertainty, unreserved fund balance can be used with the most flexibility for emergencies and unforeseen situations.

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## Appendix A

### Status of Recommendations: Manatee County School District

Appendix A provides OPPAGA's conclusions on the implementation status of each action plan as of March 2002. Presented below by best practice area are OPPAGA's conclusions on the implementation status of the recommendations pertaining to each action plan.

#### *Management Structures*

##### Action Plan 3-1

##### Several Action Steps Are Needed to Implement Recommendations

Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1. Develop functional organization charts and written procedures describing each unit's authority and responsibility.	The district has developed a functional organization chart that includes a description of the functions performed by each organizational unit.	Implemented
2. Update and distribute the district's policies.	The school board adopted new policies in July 2001.	Implemented
3. Develop new procedures and distribute a policy and procedures manual.	The district has developed a new policy and procedures manual, which is available on its website. The most recent update to the procedures in the manual occurred in October 2001.	Implemented

##### Action Plan 3-2

##### The Board and Superintendent Need to Take the Following Steps to Implement Recommendations Pertaining to Board Oversight

Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1. The board should focus on district policy and the superintendent on day-to-day operations.	The board replaced the superintendent, and the board and superintendent have received master board training. According to board members, the superintendent, district staff, and board members are more focused on policy issues that they were under the previous administration.	Implemented
2. The superintendent needs to identify and implement strategies for improving communication with the board.	The new superintendent is meeting weekly or biweekly with board members. Communication has improved.	Implemented
3. The superintendent and board should take positive action to achieve common goals.	There are no longer tensions between the superintendent and school board. The new superintendent and board worked together to develop the strategic plan. In addition, the board had many informal workshops to review proposed policies and district staff's assessment of growth issues. Each board member held a focus group with his or her constituents, and the superintendent attended to facilitate input for the strategic planning process. The board and superintendent are now working together on a sales tax initiative.	Implemented

##### Action Plan 3-3

##### The District Needs to Take a Number of Steps to Clarify the Limits of the Principals' Authority

Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1. Clarify the responsibility and authority of principals.	The district developed and the board approved a matrix showing principals' responsibility.	Implemented

##### Action Plan 3-4

##### The District Needs to Take a Number of Steps to Develop Its Strategic Plan

Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1. Develop a five-year strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives.	The board developed and approved a strategic plan in June 2000.	Implemented

## Progress Report

<b>Action Plan 3-5</b> <b>The District Should Develop Performance Measures to Enable It to Routinely Assess Its Progress Toward Achieving Its Goals</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	
1. The district should routinely assess its progress towards achieving strategic goals and objectives.	The district has developed an accountability system, in which each program's objectives are linked with one or more of the district's three strategic goals.	Implemented	
<b>Action Plan 3-6</b> <b>The Manatee County School District Should Implement a Number of Actions to Link Performance to the Budget</b>			<b>Implementation underway</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	
1. Link performance to the budget.	The board has developed a mechanism to include performance data in its budget and has developed performance measures it intends to include in the budget for the upcoming year. However, it has not yet put together that budget.	Implementation underway	
<b>Action Plan 3-7</b> <b>The District Needs to Take Several Actions to Implement Improvements Its Information Systems</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	
1. Successfully implement the new finance and human resources system.	The district has implemented the new system, and users report that the system is providing them with the information they need to manage their programs.	Implemented	
2. Reduce programming backlogs by creating programs that allow administrative and instructional staff to access and analyze information in the student database.	The district is acquiring the TERMS system, which will allow better access to the student database. Educational department staff report that their access to student information has improved.	Implementation underway	
3. Improve the reliability and accuracy of data contained in the district's management information systems.	The district has developed procedures for giving schools responsibility for ensuring data accuracy and provided training for school-based staff and administrators regarding data accuracy. It also has developed internal controls to better ensure data accuracy.	Implemented	
4. Improve the reliability and accuracy of data contained in the district's management information systems by developing a process that would reduce the number of unconnected databases in the district.	The district has reviews each division's program-level databases and has either eliminated these data systems or connected them to its management information systems.	Implemented	
<b>Action Plan 3-8</b> <b>The District Needs to Develop Mechanisms for Guiding and Performing Formal Evaluations of Its Programs</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	
1. Conduct formal evaluations of programs and use the results to improve performance.	The district has developed a system to evaluate programs its staff has identified as being in need of improvements. It has evaluated some of these programs and used evaluation results to improve performance.	Implemented	
<b>Action Plan 3-9</b> <b>The District Should Take Several Steps to Evaluate Its Legal Costs and Reduce Its Risk of Lawsuits</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	
1. The district should evaluate its legal costs and, if necessary, take appropriate steps to reduce them.	The board evaluated its legal costs by comparing them to the legal costs of other districts. It decided to continue its contract with the attorney that had represented it in the past. However, the board then decided that the district needed a full-time attorney and offered the position to its contract attorney. The attorney refused the offer, and the district advertised for the in-house attorney position. The district hired a qualified in-house attorney; however, the board decided that it wanted a separate board attorney to represent it. The cost of the in-house attorney is	Implemented, but needs reevaluation	

approximately half of the average amount the district had previously paid for contracted attorney services. However, if the contracted board attorney continues to bill the district for a large number of hours of work, the current arrangement is likely to cost the district more than its previous arrangement. Thus, the district should monitor the costs associated with the board attorney as well as ensure that work conducted by this individual is appropriate.

## Performance Accountability Systems

### Action Plan 4-1

#### Develop Goals and Objective for Major Programs

Recommendation	Current Situation	Implemented Conclusion
1. Develop an accountability framework for each program.	The district created a new position, which is responsible for the oversight and coordination of recommendations to strengthen the district's performance accountability system. The district filled this position in June 1999. As a first step in developing an accountability framework for each program and prior to establishing program-specific accountability components, the district developed a strategic planning process and, in July 2000, drafted strategic plan. The district developed its accountability systems based on a framework provided that tied program level objectives, measures, and benchmarks to board's three strategic goals.	Implemented
2. Provide training on accountability.	<p>In January 2000, the district began strategic planning training in-house across a broad range of district staff. All top-level staff participated in a three-day workshop on strategic thinking under the Cambridge Group. District representatives also attended the Annual Sterling Conference where they attended sessions on the Six Sigma approach that has created significant interest in the district.</p> <p>In January 2001, the district conducted workshops with the board, and the board developed vision and mission statements, and core beliefs. The board chose to identify the following three strategic goal areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>highest student achievement,</li> <li>safe and secure environment, and</li> <li>efficient and effective operations.</li> </ul> <p>In June 2001, the director of Planning was trained as a facilitator in the strategic planning process through the Cambridge model.</p>	Implemented
3. Develop program level goals and objectives.	<p>The district developed goals and objectives for each major educational and operational program as part of the strategic planning process. Each program objective connects to one of the board's strategic goals and is based on the data available to program staff.</p> <p>As of March 2002, the district is focused on linking the budget to the performance accountability pieces and is in the process of developing a budget using the measurement information.</p>	Implemented

## Progress Report

Department heads are gradually improving their levels of sophistication in terms of making the connection between goals, objectives, budgets, and benchmarks, which is a critical step in this action plan. A common form with a common language has helped ensure alignment of major program activities with the board's strategic goals. Over the next year, the district will strengthen linkages among the program-level goals and objectives, school-level improvement planning, budgeting, and other program planning mechanisms and make improvement objectives more challenging.

<b>Action Plan 4-2 Action Plan to Develop Performance and Cost-Efficiency Measures for Major Programs</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>

1. Develop program performance and cost-efficiency measures and identify data needs.	Starting in July 2001, the district focused on developing program-level performance measures and benchmarks and pulling the individual units into one system. As of March 2002, each major program has performance measures and benchmarks that enable program managers to determine the extent to which program objectives are being met. Program managers are using this data to identify how to reduce operational costs, in areas such as energy management and facilities maintenance.	Implemented
2. Identify data needs and develop a system for approving data needs.	The district has a process to identify and approve data needs. Under this process, school and district-level administrators determine data needs and submit requests to the supervisor of Technology and Information Services. If the data request involves the business system, then the request is forwarded to the JD Edwards Team leaders for approval. If the data involves the student information system, then it is forwarded to the Academics Division for approval.	Implemented

<b>Action Plan 4-3 Developing Benchmarks</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>

1. Develop benchmarks.	See Action Plan 4-2.	Implemented
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<b>Action Plan 4-4 Evaluate District Programs</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>

1. Develop an evaluation schedule and expand program evaluations.	<p>The district has developed an ongoing evaluation schedule and issued a request for proposals to create a pool of qualified firms to conduct future evaluations. The district will select from this pool when it has the need to contract for an evaluation.</p> <p>Factors that will trigger future evaluations will include funds to the programs, cost per student, request by teachers or principals, grant requirements, requests to expand the program, and interest among program staff.</p>	Implemented
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<b>Action Plan 4-5 Increase Use of Evaluation Results</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>

1. Develop an annual report on performance and cost-efficiency of major district programs.	The district adopted school board policy in July 2001 to provide for an annual report on performance and cost-efficiency of major district programs to the community. The annual report includes each major program's objectives and accomplishments related to those objectives. In addition, each department must evaluate its	Implemented
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performance and submit this information to the superintendent three times a year.

Action Plan 4-6 Increase Public Reporting		Implemented
Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1. Publicly report additional information on the performance and cost-efficiency of major district programs.	The district currently provides a student accountability report for every which is coordinated through the Community Relations office. The district will be providing an annual report on its accomplishments in terms of our business practices pursuant to the passage of the annual report policy. Refer to Action Plan 4-5.	Implemented

## Personnel Systems and Benefits

Action Plan 5-1 Consider Market Value of Services When Determining Employee Compensation		Implemented
Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1. Consider the market value of similar positions in comparable school districts, and when appropriate, the private sector, when determining compensation.	The district completed a review of comparable districts in 1999. Data was initially presented to the school board on August 3, 1999.	Implemented
2. Use the results if the market value of services in determining salary increments and bargaining positions.	The district used information on the market value of positions to propose pay increases for certain employees in negotiations for the 2001-2002 school year. However, in a budget year in which across the board pay raises were limited, the union was not willing to single out some individuals for greater pay. It agreed to revisit the issue during negotiations for the 2002-2003 school year.	Implemented

Action Plan 5-2 Improve Staff Development		Implemented
Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1. Include staff development as a means to increase productivity and achieve overall district and school goals and objectives in the district's strategic plan.	Staff development has been included in the most recent strategic planning process. The overall district goals are clearly articulated in the district's professional development calendars.	Implemented
2. Identify, coordinate, and align all district training programs and resources with overall district and school goals and objectives.	This has been done in the professional development training calendars for all districtwide training. In addition, the district has implemented an incentive-based training plan for employees in positions not covered by employee unions.	Implemented
3. Develop and implement a comprehensive orientation package for all district employees that clearly communicates their role in helping the district achieve desired outcomes and the performance that the district expects of them in this role.	The district considered the feasibility of developing and implementing an electronic-based orientation system for new employees, but determined that such a system was both cost and time prohibitive. Human Resources, Risk Management, and Payroll conducts a districtwide orientation for all new employees. In addition, each school site or department has been advised as to the appropriate components that should be included within a local orientation for new employees.	Implemented
4. Identify the training needs of all district staff through personnel evaluations, employee feedback, and supervisory input to help staff achieve desired district outcomes.	The district has conducted needs assessments and has made improvements in its evaluations and planning processes to assist in the identification of training needs.	Implemented

Action Plan 5-3 Communicate Performance Expectations to Each Employee		Implemented
Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1. Inform district staff of general performance expectations.	The district has included a new Code of Ethics section in its Employee Handbook, and the handbook has been placed on the district website. The expansion of the	Implemented

## Progress Report

	orientation program for substitute teachers also assists with this recommendation.	
2. Communicate performance expectations specific to each position to staff.	School administrators have been instructed to provide position-specific expectations for staff as they begin the 2001-2002 school year. The district has provided some formal structure to previously informal supervisory practices.	Implemented

<b>Action Plan 5-4 Periodically Evaluate Personnel Practices</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's personnel practices.	The district has evaluated recruiting, and reports that it has included review of other practices in strategic plan. As a result of the evaluation of recruiting, the district identified certain practices that were not cost-effective (i.e., certain out-of-state trips), and did not make those trips during the current fiscal year. In addition, the Teacher Job Fair for this year was cancelled due to a diminished need for teachers this year.	Implemented
2. Determine if the ethnicity of district staff compares to that of its community and students.	The district has monitored ethnicity, absenteeism, and turnover, and certain patterns have been noted. The district has improved the percentage of minority employees since the initial review.	Implemented
3. Identify the absenteeism rates for teachers and school site administrators and compare Manatee County to peer districts.	The district has reviewed these rates and set goals for lowering the rates.	Implemented
4. Identify the absenteeism rate of district administrative positions and compare Manatee County to peer districts.	The district has reviewed these rates.	Implemented
5. Identify the turnover rate of district administrator positions and compare Manatee County to peer districts.	The district has reviewed these rates.	Implemented

<b>Action Plan 5-5 Properly and Efficiently Maintain Personnel Records</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Identify an alternative method to retain leave records.	The district has decided that leave records will be retained at the school or department site rather than in the district's personnel office. A policy has been established.	Implemented
2. Increase the use of technology to reduce and eliminate unnecessary paperwork.	The district is increasing the use of technology in managing personnel records.	Implemented
3. Develop a formal records management program that includes personnel records.	The district has developed a formal record management program.	Implemented

<b>Action Plan 5-6 Ensure That Employee Benefit Costs Are Reasonable</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Implement procedures to periodically review the cost of employee benefits insurance.	The district reports that this process has been implemented. A Request for Proposals for a variety of benefits related services was issued in March 2001.	Implemented

## Use of Lottery Proceeds

<b>Action Plan 6-1 Define Educational Enhancement</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Define educational enhancement.	The district revised its definition of educational enhancement to address OPPAGA's recommendation. District staff incorporated input and feedback from principals, school staff, school advisory council members, and the Joint Parent Organization (a representative parent group from each school community). The Director of	Implemented

Finance made final revisions and presented the definition to the school board, which approved it on August 2, 1999.

<b>Action Plan 6-2</b>		
<b>Ensure That the District Uses Its Lottery Funds Consistent With Its Definition of Enhancement</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Develop a procedure to ensure that lottery fund expenditures are consistent with the district's definition of enhancement after the district defines enhancement.	The district has developed guidelines for schools to use in developing school improvement plans and using lottery funds. The guidelines require the student advisory councils to approve how money allocated to the schools for school improvement will be spent. Allocated funds may only be expended on programs or projects approved by the school advisory council in accordance with the board-approved definition of enhancement. The district has developed a Plan For SAC Expenditure Statement, which is to be used by school principals and school advisory councils in outlining the planned expenditure of lottery funds.	Implemented
2. Develop a mechanism to collect and report information on how the SACs spend their lottery funds.	The district has developed a SAC Expenditure Statement, which each school uses to report its lottery fund expenditures to the community and the central office.	Implemented
3. Inform SAC of available funds (new allocations and carry forward).	The district's Plan For SAC Expenditure Statement includes both the current year's allocation and carryover funds from the previous year.	Implemented

<b>Action Plan 6-3</b>		
<b>Improve the Process by Which the District Accounts for the Use of Its Lottery Funds</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Use written guidelines to ensure the appropriate management of lottery funds.	The director of Finance provided written direction to the budget manager on the procedure to be followed to ensure the proper use of lottery funds. These guidelines, if effectively implemented, also should ensure that expenditures do not exceed the amount allocated.	Implemented

<b>Action Plan 6-4</b>		
<b>Annually Evaluate and Report the Extent to Which Lottery Fund Expenditures Have Enhanced Student Education</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Annually evaluate the benefits of projects and activities supported with lottery funds.	The school advisory council of each school conducts a self-evaluation annually. This self-evaluation is conducted in the spring and submitted to the school improvement specialist no later than June 1. As part of the self-evaluation process, the school advisory council must describe how school advisory council lottery funds were spent and the effectiveness of the school advisory council lottery dollars in achieving goals and objectives.	Implemented
2. Communicate to the public, on a quarterly basis, how the district is using its lottery funds, including the benefits derived from the use of these funds.	The district has provided information in its newsletter on the use of lottery funds. The newsletter is mailed to every parent in the community four times annually.	Implemented

## ***Use of Construction Funds***

<b>Action Plan 7-1</b>		
<b>Improve Cost-Efficiency in the Use of Construction Funds</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Examine the year-round schedule opportunities.	The school board held a workshop to examine year-round schools with input from staff and the community.	Implemented
2. Implement value engineering.	Value engineering has been defined in the procedures manual. The district implements this definition in its construction projects.	Implemented
3. Develop facilities design manual.	The district has written a design manual that appears to be complete. The manual is updated as processes change.	Implemented

## Progress Report

<b>Action Plan 7-2</b>		
<b>Minimize Maintenance and Operations Costs in New Facilities</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
1.	Include maintenance and operations personnel on the committee to develop a design manual in order to better identify standardized materials that are cost-effective from the user's point of view.	The district included seven Maintenance Department personnel and seven Department of Construction Services personnel on the committee that developed the design manual. In addition, maintenance staff is involved in routine updates of the manual.
2.	Include maintenance and operations personnel on all facility project teams.	The director of maintenance is a member of all facility project teams. Maintenance staff indicated they are involved in any design changes to projects.
<b>Facilities Construction</b>		
<b>Action Plan 8-1</b>		
<b>Establish Written Procedures for Educational Facilities Planning</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
1.	The district should provide written procedures that will allow for full implementation of the flexible organizational chart and provide a strong framework for carrying out the facilities planning function of the district. The facility needs are well documented within the five-year plan and, since the amount of actual construction will depend on the funding availability, the procedures will need to allow for a reasonable process to be utilized as the needs and resources change.	The district has included the recommended organizational chart in its procedure manual along with the roles and responsibility of each position. The current organizational chart reflects the current staff per project need of the district.  Changes in the number and size of the projects would be needed to ensure that the district has implemented the flexible nature of the organizational chart. The district anticipates adding new staff in the near future to begin to handle an increased construction program over the next few years.
2.	Procedures and guidelines need to be developed and implemented that will guide the personnel involved with the facility planning process. The implementation of the new organizational chart will require that both new job descriptions and facility planning procedures be developed.	The procedures manual includes a step-by-step checklist of facility planning procedure for projects and who is to be responsible for each particular step. In addition, new position descriptions have been developed for staff in the construction department. Construction managers indicate that the new position descriptions better describe the duties of each position.
<b>Action Plan 8-2</b>		
<b>Establish a Standing Facilities Committee</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
1.	Establish a facilities standing committee.	The superintendent has appointed the Standing Facilities Committee, and the committee has met. The district has outlined the responsibilities of the committee. The committee has a long-range planning timeline with the end result presenting the needs of the district to the school board.
<b>Action Plan 8-3</b>		
<b>Assign One Person With the Responsibility to Keep Construction Projects Within Budget</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
1.	Assign one person with the responsibility and authority to keep construction projects within budget.	The director of Construction Services has been the person assigned with the responsibility and authority to keep construction projects within budget.
<b>Action Plan 8-4</b>		
<b>Assign the Budget Oversight for Each Project or Group of Projects to a Single Project Manager</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
1.	Assign the budget oversight for each project or group of projects to a single project manager.	Each project is assigned a project director who is responsible for the oversight of the project.



<b>Action Plan 8-5</b>		
<b>Form a Districtwide Site Selection Committee</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
		<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Form a districtwide site selection committee.	The superintendent appointed a districtwide site selection committee. The committee's has met approximately monthly since its first meeting July 11, 2001.
2.	Include an architect and local government planner on the site selection committee.	The district has included an architect and government planner on the site selection committee. As the district is using members of the long range planning committee the community representation is limited.
<b>Action Plan 8-6</b>		
<b>Conduct a Thorough Review of All Facilities</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
		<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Conduct a thorough review of all facilities to determine and rank physical condition, educational condition, technological readiness, and utilization rate.	The district conducted a review of all facilities ranking them on physical condition, educational condition, technological readiness and utilization rate. The district then used this evaluation to prioritize maintenance and remodeling projects for the next few years.
<b>Action Plan 8-7</b>		
<b>Development of a Process of Architect Evaluation</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
		<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Develop a formal process for architect evaluation.	An architect performance evaluation has been included in the procedures manual. In addition, the district has begun using this process and provided examples of how it was used.
<b>Action Plan 8-8</b>		
<b>Develop Guidelines for the Development of Educational Specifications</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
		<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Develop guidelines for the development of educational specifications.	The procedures manual includes guidelines for the development of education specifications along with a sample Educational Specification. The districts revised process provides for more input from the educators in the design of the school.
<b>Action Plan 8-9</b>		
<b>Formation of Educational Specification Committees and the Development of Educational Specifications for Each Major Project</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
		<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Formation of education specification committee and the development of a complete set of educational specifications for each major project.	The district has implemented an Education Specification Committee. The district provided a list of members of the committee for a middle school currently under construction and provided education specifications for a current project. This is an on-going recommendation. The district will need to ensure that the implementation of the recommendation continues.
<b>Action Plan 8-10</b>		
<b>Utilization of the Educational Specifications in the Evaluation of the Design Solution</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>
		<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	At the value engineering phase, and at the completion of each project, evaluate the final design solution based on the program goals as defined in the educational specifications.	Depending on the definition of value engineering used the district has procedures in place for the use of value engineering.

## Progress Report

Action Plan 8-11 Conducting an Analysis of Utilizing the Traditional System or an Alternative System of Facilities Construction			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Conduct a thorough analysis of the pros and cons, including the possible costs and cost savings of project management, construction management, design build and traditional design-bid processes.	The district provided a comparison of construction management approach to that of a traditional architect. It provided a comparison of owner advantages secured by the construction management process versus the traditional lump sum bids. The district used the results of a survey conducted at the Florida Education Facilities Planner Association seminar held February 1, 1999. The school board adopted rule number 704.15 implementing construction management at Risk as the type of facilities construction management.	Implemented
Action Plan 8-12 Conducting Post-Occupancy Evaluations			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Regularly conduct post-occupancy evaluations.	The district has included post-occupancy surveys in the annual survey to allow both maintenance and construction services personnel to be involved. This is to eliminate multiple trips to each facility. The policy and procedures are in place for the district to conduct the evaluations. The district surveys the users of new buildings, monitors the utility costs, and conducts post occupancy review meetings with the architect of the project.	Implemented a modified version
Action Plan 8-13 Analyze Maintenance and Operations Costs at Recently Completed Facilities			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Analyze maintenance and operations costs at recently completed facilities.	The district provided an operational and maintenance costs comparison of a new school with an older school. The district found that it is more cost-effective to operate single story single building schools. This information will be used when planning for new facilities.	Implemented a modified version
Facilities Maintenance			
Action Plan 9-1 Develop Board Approved Guidelines			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Develop board-approved written guidelines for the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replacement and selection of equipment</li> <li>Purchasing of supplies and materials</li> <li>Standards for maintenance of facilities</li> <li>Maintenance and operations budget criteria</li> <li>Personnel staffing levels</li> <li>Personnel training</li> <li>Personnel accountability, productivity, and performance standards</li> </ul>	The district has incorporated the board-approved written guidelines for the identified items in the procedure section of the board policy and procedures manual.	Implemented
Action Plan 9-2 Develop and Improve Staffing Formulas			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Develop a staffing formula for the maintenance trades.	The district has developed a maintenance staffing formula consistent with OPPAGA's recommendation. This formula is based on the excessive backlog of work. The district recognizes that when the backlog has been minimized, staffing levels will have to be modified.	Implemented

2.	Adjust the current custodial staffing formula to reflect a staffing level of 1:19,000.	The district has adopted OPPAGA's recommendation for a custodial staffing level of 1:19,000.	Implemented
3.	Develop a custodial staffing budget to reflect a staffing level of 1:19,000.	The district has developed a staffing custodial budget to reflect a 1:19,000 staffing level.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 9-3</b>			
<b>Update Job Descriptions</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Expedite the process of updating the job descriptions for the Maintenance and Operations departments.	The job descriptions for the maintenance and operation departments were completed, reviewed by the attorney, and approved by the board.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 9-4</b>			
<b>Develop Performance Standards and Improve Staff Performance</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	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.	The district has developed standards for frequently repeated tasks. The district has begun to analyze the efficiency of processes used to complete several of these tasks and made changes to increase facilities maintenance department productivity. The department should continue with its plans to analyze and increase the productivity of other parts of its operations using these standards.	Implemented
2.	Develop a training program for the maintenance and operations staff, which targets improving job performance.	The Professional Development Council for Support Services developed a training program for all district support services staff that was implemented in January 2001. Additionally, the district has implemented a training incentive program whereby non-bargaining staff can earn salary incentives based on training hours.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 9-5</b>			
<b>Develop a Staff Development Program</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	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.	<p>The district has developed and/or provides training for maintenance and operations staff. The Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department partners with the Personnel Department to provide general staff development for computer skills, CPR, and general staff training. In the past, the district had not offered these courses to support staff to any great extent. Also since the initial review, the district instituted an initiative that adds \$.10/hour to the wages of staff who attain additional certification for vehicle maintenance. The district benefits from the additional certification and the staff members are motivated to get the training by getting raises. This pays people for their knowledge and skills, and they don't leave.</p> <p>The district should aim to evaluate both the quality of the delivery of training as well as the effect of the training on actual performance. The district should make every effort to ensure that training evaluations allow employees to provide critical comments as well as positive. The current evaluation form used by the consultant training company does not meet this standard and is more suited to company marketing than actual training evaluation. The district should supplement the contractor's evaluation form with the district's own internal evaluation form.</p>	Implemented

## Progress Report

Action Plan 9-6			
Develop Budget Guidelines for Maintenance and Operations		Implemented	
	Recommendation	Current Situation	
1.	Develop guidelines for budgeting in each budget category for maintenance and operations.	The district has completed and implemented budgeting guidelines in each of the budget categories for maintenance and operations.	Implemented
2.	Associate the goals and objectives of the maintenance and operations department with budget amounts.	As part of the strategic planning process, the district required all departments to link goals and objectives to measures and budget requests. The Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department developed its objectives that were tied to the board goals. The department will link its budget for the 2002-03 fiscal year to the goals and objectives to ensure a much tighter connection between the outcomes the department is trying to achieve and its resources.	Implemented
3.	Develop a long-range (10-year) maintenance plan which will eliminate all the deferred maintenance in the district and disallow new projects.	The district has developed a 10-year deferred maintenance plan that is being updated as facility assessments are completed and approved by the board. Deferred maintenance has risen dramatically \$23 million during the initial review to \$88 million as of March 2002. District staff members indicate that this increase is due to several factors including better identification of maintenance needs and a new policy to schedule repairs found during routine inspections for a later date. Because it cannot eliminate deferred maintenance, the district ranks maintenance by priorities. The district needs to closely monitor and its long-range plan needs address the level of deferred maintenance.	Implemented

Action Plan 9-7			
Effectively Provide Adequately Maintained Facilities in Accordance with Existing Facility Standards		Implemented	
	Recommendation	Current Situation	
1.	Develop a long-range (five-year) plan which identifies the manpower, budget, and equipment needs to meet the goals and objectives of the plan.	The district will use the completed facility assessments to develop the manpower, budget, and equipment needs for presentation and discussion during the budget planning process. The district reports that, at this time, the available dollars for this purpose have not been clarified sufficiently to develop a budget plan. The department will use the plan to develop its 2002-03 budget request. District staff members report that the plan's implementation will be contingent on the passage of the sales tax in May 2002. The district should develop a contingency plan should the sales tax not pass so that goals and objectives can be met within existing resources.	Implemented
2.	Develop and implement an annual survey of the customers of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department.	The district conducts an annual customer survey and results are reviewed by the maintenance staff to identify areas for improvement. The district should be able to demonstrate that these survey results are shared with the board.	Implemented
3.	Develop management practices which utilize work order completion data to more effectively manage the department.	The district is using the JD Edwards system to manage the department's workload and review current processes to identify opportunities for improvement. The system allows the department to track operations in a variety of ways. For more detail see "current situation" for Action Plan 9-1.	Implemented

Action Plan 9-8			
Prioritize Establishment of Inventory Tracking System		Implemented	
	Recommendation	Current Situation	
1.	Develop plan to prioritize the establishment of an inventory tracking system.	The inventory tracking system of the J.D. Edwards system is in place and operational.	Implemented

Action Plan 9-9 Develop External Benchmarks for Health and Safety			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Use external benchmarks in determining a cost-effective manner of meeting health and safety standards.	The district has been collecting data on the student accidents in a computer database for the past three years. Playground accidents are the most common. The district has been able to identify the kinds of playground accidents are occurring and what schools are having the most playground accidents. The district also is working with a playground safety consultant to identify the equipment (by school) that needs to be fixed or replaced. In the future, the district plans to collect and use accident incident data more extensively. To fully implement this action plan, the district should use this additional data to develop benchmarks to determine a cost-effective manner of meeting health and safety standards.	Implemented

Action Plan 9-10 Increase the Accessibility of All Facilities			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Increase the accessibility of all district facilities to persons with disabilities.	The district has developed a comprehensive ADA compliance report and review. Monies have been budgeted over the next five years for completion of the identified needs.	Implemented

## Student Transportation

Action Plan 10-1 Develop Performance Benchmarks			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Adopt cost-comparison and other performance benchmarks as appropriate for both student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance.	<p>The district has identified performance benchmarks for student transportation and established a set of measures through its planning process that the transportation function will be evaluated against. Student transportation staff has identified performance measures and data that is available to track and report on performance. Department managers routinely receive reports on the performance of the transportation program based on the performance measures and use this information in decision making. These performance measures rely on data contained in the Department of Education's annual Quality Link report as well as data collected and maintained in district data systems.</p> <p>However, the district's process to use measures to hold the transportation program accountable for its performance through the strategic planning and budgeting process has just begun, and its success is uncertain at this time.</p>	Implemented

Action Plan 10-2 Develop a Regular Performance Reporting Mechanism			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Develop a regular reporting mechanism as part of the new information management system to provide information on performance in the student transportation area.	[See the response at Action Plan item No.10-1, recommendation No.1.]	Implemented

## Progress Report

Action Plan 10-3 Ensure Increased Information on Costs and Performance			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Implement a more comprehensive management information system to provide accurate information on student transportation performance and costs.	District staff members now have access to more comprehensive information on program performance and costs. The Transportation staff's ability to track performance and cost information in the student transportation area has improved. Data that were not readily available at the time we prepared our original report can now be reported (e.g., data to establish benchmarks for repetitive tasks such as preventative maintenance, road call response time, miles per gallon per vehicle, cost by vehicle trip, better tracking of parts and equipment components).	Implemented
Action Plan 10-4 Initiate a School Bus Purchase Plan to Meet the Board's Policy on the Age of Buses			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Create a school bus fleet with an adequate number of operational buses no more than 15 years old.	Based on the district's current inventory of buses and after the districts purchase of 40 buses purchased this year the oldest buses would be 1989 models, 13 years old.	Implemented
Food Service Operations			
Action Plan 11-1 Recommendations to Improve Program Control			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Adhere to board policies and procedures regarding the evaluation of cafeteria managers.	The district developed a Food Service Responsibility and Authority Matrix that outlines how cafeteria managers will be evaluated, which adequately addresses this recommendation.	Implemented a modified version
2.	Revise the evaluation form for cafeteria managers to include areas specific to food production.	The district has revised the cafeteria manager evaluation form and distributed it to cafeteria managers for use in the 2001-02 school year.	Implemented
3.	Establish a policy in the school board policies and procedures governing the dismissal of a cafeteria manager. The policy should require input from both the food service supervisor and the school's principal before a cafeteria manager can be dismissed.	The responsibility and authority matrix requires input from principals and the food service supervisor for the dismissal of a cafeteria manager.	Implemented
4.	Where feasible, implement a breakfast program in schools without one.	All of the eight schools without breakfast programs have now instituted breakfast programs.	Implemented
5.	Make food service policies and procedures available to all food service employees.	The policies and procedures manual was duplicated and placed in each cafeteria. To be fully implemented, however, the district must alert employees to the availability of this information and encourage them to review the manuals as indicated in the action plan.	Implemented
6.	Adhere to the food service mission statement.	The food service program has its own mission statement that is linked to the district's philosophy. Training has been extended to all food service employees and not just cafeteria managers. The district should take care to ensure that there is an evaluative component associated with the training as the courses are self-administered and/or scripted. While these delivery mechanisms are potentially effective, it is important for the district to ensure that the information is actually learned and being put into practice.	Implemented

7	Develop a five-year food service strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives.	The food service program has developed goals and strategies as part of the district's five-year strategic plan. In those cases where the district is relying on a measure of the number of employees trained, the district should consider adding an evaluative component as a measure of success. While it is important to ensure that all staff are trained, it is as equally important to ensure that the training is effectively operationalized.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 11-2 Increasing Meal Participation Rates</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Develop a districtwide food service promotion campaign to increase meal participation rates.	The responsibility and authority matrix identifies the cafeteria manager and principal as responsible parties.	Implemented
2.	Obtain food service customer feedback to identify barriers to meal participation.	The district has surveyed its customers. Food service has tabulated and analyzed the data and implemented corrective actions to address identified issues.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 11-3 Improving Program Monitoring and Administration</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Identify program benchmarks to assess program performance.	The food service department has developed benchmarks for program performance using the Analytical Model for Food Service Operations in Florida Public Schools.	Implemented
2.	Review the food service supervisor duties, compensation, and responsibilities to ensure that they are commensurate with the position's authority.	The district reports that it surveyed 'like-sized districts' and found that the food service supervisor's salary and duties are commensurate with the position's authority. The district should be prepared to explain how it defined 'like-sized districts' and how many were surveyed for this comparison.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 11-4 Evaluating Program Performance</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Develop food service program benchmarks to identify areas to increase revenue and cut costs.	The food service department has developed benchmarks to increase revenue and cut costs using the Analytical Model for Food Service Operations in Florida Public Schools. While this process clearly identifies how the district is performing in relation to peer districts, it is important that the district use the information to plan future goals and not simply compare performance after the fact year after year.	Implemented a modified version
2	Identify per meal costs and provide cost information to cafeteria managers to allow for alternative meal cost calculations.	The meal costs have been broken down by school level and types of menus. The analyses have been completed and disseminated to cafeteria managers to allow for alternative meal cost calculations.	Implemented
3	Establish an acceptable per meal cost range that ensures production costs do not exceed the income for the meal.	The district has identified a per meal cap of 78 cents.	Implemented
4	Evaluate food service employee wages, salaries, and benefits.	The district indicates that it compiled and analyzed peer district data. The district should document how many peers were contacted and how the analysis was conducted, so OPPAGA can verify this process and the district can replicate the evaluation over time.	Implemented
5	Obtain food service customer feedback.	Student surveys were conducted at all schools. The district should, however, make an effort to seek input from other customers such as teachers and staff to increase the potential market. Furthermore, the survey return rate should be examined to ensure adequate response to assist in program development/improvement.	Implemented

## Progress Report

<b>Action Plan 11-5</b>		
<b>Assessing Delivery Alternatives and Additional Nutritional Programs</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Compare food service delivery systems.	The district conducted a comparative analysis of food service delivery systems to identify the most cost-effective.	Implemented
2. Assess vendor direct delivery of food to determine if predicted cost savings have been realized.	The district provided evidence of item price audits. While this does not directly address the original recommendation, as a result of the delivery cost comparison, this recommendation is negated.	Implemented
3. Determine whether additional nutritional programs could be added to district schools.	The district indicated that it added an after school snack program. The district should document which nutrition programs it explored, so that OPPAGA can verify the adequacy of its process.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 11-6</b>		
<b>Improving Fiscal Monitoring</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Develop food service program fiscal goals.	The district identified food and labor cost goals.	Implemented
2. Review revenue and expenditure projections and actual and budgeted expenses on a regular basis and compare these figures to the established program fiscal goals.	All district schools are using all portions of the Horizon POS System and the data needed for revenue and expenditure comparisons is available and used.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 11-7</b>		
<b>Improving Financial and Management Practices Review</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Review financial and management performance to identify necessary adjustment to minimize program costs.	All district schools are using all portions of the Horizon POS System and the data needed to review the program's financial performance is available and used.	Implemented
2. Evaluate and recommend a food service automation package to be used in conjunction with the new management information system.	The food service program recommended a point of service automation system for purchase and the school board approved the purchase in April 2000.	Implemented
3. Increase the charge per meal for elementary paid lunches and all breakfasts.	The district increased the prices as recommended.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 11-8</b>		
<b>Improving Purchasing Practices</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Evaluate food service purchasing practices.	The district is adequately evaluating food service purchasing practices. The district should be prepared to demonstrate that purchasing changes have been documented.	Implemented
2. Review and document food service bid specifications.	The food service bid specifications have been reviewed and documented. The bid specifications have been updated for items that are not prepackaged.	Implemented
3. Develop and adopt a policy requiring the Purchasing supervisor and one other person verify bid analysis and document this analysis.	A new district policy requiring the purchasing supervisor to work in conjunction with the food service supervisor to verify bid analysis has been developed. The policy is scheduled for board approval July 16, 2001.	Implemented
4. Identify why vendors are not submitting bids and adjust the request for bid process as necessary.	The district has completed a vendor study and has met the recommendation.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 11-9</b>		
<b>Improving Inventory Control</b>		<b>Implemented</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1. Until the food service inventory is automated and can be regularly monitored, compare inventory reports, production reports, and vendor delivery receipts for each school.	The district hired a new accounting clerk to reconcile inventory and delivery receipts.	Implemented



2.	Develop and implement procedures for the receipt, handling, and storage of food items.	The district developed and implemented appropriate procedures.	Implemented
3.	Reduce the overall inventory presently in the contracted storage facility by half and establish a policy restricting how much inventory individual schools can maintain at any given time.	The district has reduced its commodity inventory by approximately half since September 30, 1999.	Implemented
4.	Spot-check the private storage facility to ensure first in first out (FIFO) and pack date information is being noted and monitored to ensure the oldest items are being issued first.	The district conducts an annual review of each state-contracted warehouse and a quarterly on-site monitoring visit.	Implemented
5.	Conduct an inventory at the private storage facility to ensure record accuracy and the notation of item pack date.	The district conducts an annual review of each state-contracted warehouse and a quarterly on-site monitoring visit.	Implemented
6.	Purchase and install external thermometer readings on freezers to reduce the need for key access.	The district has installed a thermometer and alarm system.	Implemented
7.	Develop and implement a key control policy to restrict access to food items.	The district has implemented a key control policy to restrict access to food items.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 11-10</b>			
<b>Improving Equipment Utilization and Maintenance</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Develop a long-range equipment replacement and preventative maintenance plan.	The district reports that the maintenance department has developed a preventative maintenance and equipment replacement plan.	Implemented
2.	Assess the need for existing kitchen equipment and sell or trade unneeded or underutilized equipment.	The district has a policy governing the sale or trade of unneeded equipment and as schools are upgraded all other kitchens are given the opportunity to get equipment that would otherwise be auctioned.	Implemented
3.	Identify kitchen design flaws that result in increased reliance on disposable items and outline costs to remedy the situation.	The district has assessed all of the schools for design flaws, has identified pricing, and is budgeting to correct the flaws.	Implemented
<b>Action Plan 11-11</b>			
<b>Improving Meal Production</b>			<b>Implemented</b>
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1.	Improve USDA commodity ordering to minimize waste and maximize the USDA commodity allocation.	The district has altered its commodity ordering to ensure that items are used within three menu cycles.	Implemented
2.	Reduce on-hand inventory by half resulting in a reduction in storage costs.	The district has reduced its inventory by approximately half since September 30 1999.	Implemented
3.	Include serving utensil information and under-production on cafeteria production reports and require the reports be sent to the central office.	All central level positions have access to the data produced by New Horizons, and the menus currently reflect the required information.	Implemented
4.	Train all food service staff in portion control.	The district reports that all food service employees and managers received portion control training during 1999. The district should be able to show that future employees will receive this same training.	Implemented
5.	Require notation of waste and over-production on the cafeteria site review instrument.	The district has completed the food service operation visitation report and it has been approved and distributed for use in the 2001-02 school year.	Implemented
6.	Increase the number of meal recipes available to cafeteria managers. Obtain customer feedback before adopting the recipes for repeated use.	The district reports that a committee of food service managers developed and tested recipes with students and staff in 'cook-offs'.	Implemented
7.	Identify per meal costs and provide cost information to cafeteria managers to allow for alternative meal cost calculations.	The meal costs have been broken down by school level and type of menu. The analyses have been completed and disseminated to the cafeteria managers to allow for alternative meal cost calculations.	Implemented

## Cost Control Systems

Action Plan 12-1 Internal Auditing			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Establish specifications for committee size, qualifications, and length of service.	The board has approved a revised charter for the Internal Audit Committee that addresses size, qualifications, and length of service.	Implemented
2.	Develop a mission statement that incorporates committee's overall risk assessment.	The Audit Committee has developed a mission statement that has been approved by the board.	Implemented
3.	Develop a long-range plan to meet mission objectives.	The Audit Committee in association with the senior internal auditor has developed a long-range plan audit plan that meets mission objectives.	Implemented
4.	Develop short-range (annual) plans with related time budgets and staffing plans.	Short-range [annual] plans have been developed which describe the tasks to be performed, the desired time frames, and the staff assigned.	Implemented
5.	Determine resource needs of Internal Audit Department based on long- and short-term plans.	The Audit Committee has determined the resource needs of the Internal Audit Department.	Implemented
6.	Develop performance criteria for the internal audit function based on long- and short-term plans.	The Audit Committee has approved the performance criteria for the Internal Audit Department.	Implemented
7.	Develop process for presenting and reporting internal audit plans.	The Audit Committee has approved a process for the presentation and reporting of internal audit findings. This process, however, does not always require management to include their response to the Internal Audit Department's findings in the reports.	Not Implemented
Action Plan 12-2 Project Accounting			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Ensure the accuracy of management reports detailing capital outlay activities.	The Finance Department currently uses its new accounting system to generate project ledgers to track expenditures related to capital outlay activities.	Implemented
Action Plan 12-3 Management Control Methods			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Determine the district's position on its commitment and support of strong internal controls.	The board has adopted a position in support of strong internal controls as part of its ethics policy.	Implemented
2.	Develop and maintain detailed procedures manuals for all financial management activities.	The Finance Department has developed written accounting policy and procedures for many financial management activities. These accounting policies and procedures include the principal accounting records, various recurring and nonrecurring accounting entries, the individuals responsible for these activities, and the requirements for documentation and approval. The district has also developed several administrative procedure manuals for supervisors and department heads. These include a records retention manual, human resources manual, and board manual. However, we noted that the human resources manual and the board manual are not final and still appear to be in draft form.	Implemented
3.	Identify critical finance processes and develop a cross-training policy.	Many critical financial processes have been identified and employees have been cross-trained.	Implemented
4.	Develop a district policy for reporting of suspected improprieties.	The board has adopted a policy on the reporting of suspected improprieties. However, the policy does not include provisions related to anonymity, feedback to employees who report suspected improprieties, and immunity from reprisals.	Not Implemented

Action Plan 12-4 General Controls			Implemented
	Recommendation	Current Situation	Conclusion
1.	Require all network technicians to report to the Information Systems function.	All network technicians currently report to Technology and Information Services.	
2.	Through the district's Technology Council, ensure that a common network platform is developed that is suitable for all district functions.	According to district personnel, all computer equipment connected to the districtwide area network is operating properly. Also, the district's Technology Council reviews all planned hardware and software needs to prevent potential conflicts.	Implemented
3.	Require computer programming changes to be reviewed and approved by appropriate Information Services staff. Document review and approval including approval by user requesting the change.	The district's procedures required testing and documenting user management authorization of programming changes. However, the district implemented program changes without consistently testing the program changes or obtaining user management authorization.	Not Implemented
4.	Require that changes be loaded into production files by employees other than the ones making the changes.	Programs were sometimes moved into production by someone not independent of those who made the program changes. According to district personnel, Technology and Information Services does not have the resources needed to change the current practice.	Not Implemented
5.	Establish methodology for allocating time spent on programming changes to be charged to workorders.	The district established a procedure to require programmers to charge time spent on programming changes to daily time entry sheets. This procedure stopped in the summer of 2000, however, when the Systems and Programming Manager realized that a more powerful management tool was needed as the district prepared to acquire and implement a new student information system. The district now uses software to manage timelines and milestones relevant to a project and a variety of reports/views are available for analysis.	Implemented
6.	Restrict access of Information Services programmers to data files.	Programmers had inappropriate access to data files. Also, programmers and operations staff had access to by-pass the district's change management system and update production programs without their actions being logged. The programmers could then submit these or other programs for execution. Technology and Information Services is currently investigating software and system settings that will allow the logging of data file access. They are also, investigating changes to prevent the bypassing of the change management system.	Not Implemented
7.	Establish procedure to notify Information Services of employees who require password status changes due to termination or transfer.	According to the director of Technology and Information Services, operations staff are currently working closely with the Human Resources Department in getting the termination information in a timely manner. Twice a month, Technology and Information Services gets a report from Human Resources that include resignations, transfers, retirements, etc. That information is crosschecked with the AS 400 withdrawal forms. Also, access is disabled if a user has not signed on for 90 days.	Implemented

## Progress Report

### Appendix B

#### The District Estimates It Has Saved \$14.8 Million To Date by Implementing Report Recommendations

Recommendations by Best Practice Area	OPPAGA Report	School District Calculations	
	Projected Five-Year Net Fiscal Impact	Original Cumulative Five-Year (Cost)/Savings	October 1998 Through Fiscal Year 2001-02 (Cost)/Savings
<b>Management Structures</b>			
Contract for a study of district-level management and support staffing levels	(35,000)	(12,500)	(12,500)
Reduce purchasing staff by five positions	657,000	754,905	452,943
Provide training to board members	(45,000)	(38,500)	(38,500)
Improve projections of the number of at-risk and exceptional students the district will serve	14,400,000	15,785,641	6,578,795
Academics Division reorganization	<i>Not in original report</i>	(271,569)	(92,325)
Compensation Study	<i>Not in original report</i>	(37,500)	(37,500)
Staffing of Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation	<i>Not in original report</i>	(772,771)	(422,771)
Internal Audit risk assessment	<i>Not in original report</i>	(16,350)	(16,350)
<b>Personnel Systems and Benefits</b>			
Reduce cost of employer health benefits. If district elects to pay 100% of single coverage, contribute no more than the highest peer district for family coverage, and split the savings for the other family options.	10,250,000	0	0
<b>Use of Construction Funds</b>			
Implement year round programs to reduce need for new facilities	4,400,000	0	0
Utilize value engineering to reduce the cost of construction	730,000	1,687,976	271,157
Standardize materials to lower future maintenance cost	50,000	0	0
<b>Facilities Construction</b>			
Complete facilities evaluation	(150,000)	0	(11,925)
Use construction alternative	3,700,000	4,035,397	6,177,812
<b>Facilities Maintenance</b>			
Develop standards to improve maintenance staff efficiency	593,200	224,500	44,900
Develop a comprehensive staff development program for maintenance staff	(33,600)	0	0
Increase custodial staffing to meet the best practices staffing ratio	(1,358,504)	795,020	(245,660)
Facilities Needs Assessment (Deferred Maintenance)	<i>Not in original report</i>	5,434,863	0
Bus Maintenance Savings	<i>Not in original report</i>	16,228	3,245
<b>Student Transportation</b>			
Replace school buses that exceed 15 years of age	(1,662,000)	0	0
Implement procedures to receive Medicaid reimbursement for a portion of the cost of transporting exceptional students	365,000	0	0
Discontinue bus service to students who could walk to school	805,000	1,700,694	1,360,555
Charge school groups for field trips to recover the full cost of the trip	185,000	224,750	179,800
<b>Food Service Operations</b>			
Implement breakfast programs in all district schools	152,928	215,483	132,808
Implement a promotional campaign and use customer feedback to increase meal participation rates	233,628	0	0
Raise selected meal prices	1,820,191	0	272,289
Increase food security by installing external freezer thermometers	(2,100)	(6,058)	(6,058)
Reduce storage costs by decreasing on-hand inventory by half	232,500	211,561	169,523
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$35,318,243</b>	<b>\$29,931,770</b>	<b>\$14,760,238</b>

Not in original report = Fiscal impacts associated with actions taken to fully implement report action plans.

Source: The Manatee County School District