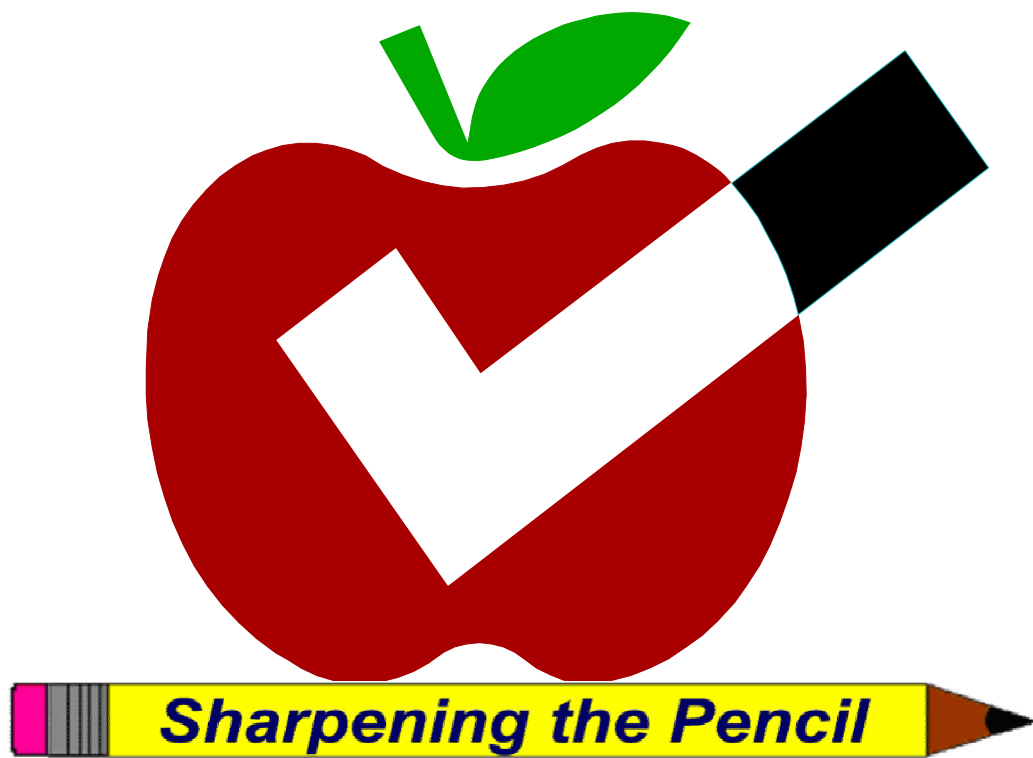*Sharpening the Pencil*

Best Financial Management Practices Review

Santa Rosa County School District

School Match®
by Public Priority Systems, Inc.

Oppaga

Office of Program Policy Analysis
and Government Accountability
an office of the Florida Legislature
Report 02-43

The Florida Legislature

OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

John W. Turcotte, Director

August 2002

The President of the Senate
The Speaker of the House of Representatives
The Joint Legislative Auditing Committee
The Superintendent of the Santa Rosa County School District
The School Board Members of the Santa Rosa County School District

I have directed that a Best Financial Management Practices Review be conducted of the Santa Rosa County School District. The 2001 Legislature directed that the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) contract for a best practices review of the district, and the results of this review are presented in this report. This review was made pursuant to the Sharpening the Pencil Act (HB 269) passed by the 2001 Legislature to improve school district management and use of resources and to identify cost savings.

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

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

Rae Hendlin was the contract manager for this review. Other OPPAGA staff included Yvonne Bigos, Mike Boland, Byron Brown, Jane Fletcher, Mark Frederick, Steve Harkreader, Benny McKee, Sarah Mendonca-McCoy, Nanette Smith, David Summers, David Tranchand, Martha Wellman, and Don Wolf under the coordination of Jane Fletcher. Auditor General staff included Jim Kiedinger under the supervision of David Martin.

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

Sincerely,

John W. Turcotte
Director

JWT/mc

cc: The Honorable Jeb Bush, Governor
        The Honorable Charlie Crist, Commissioner of Education
        Mr. Jim Horne, Secretary, Florida Board of Education

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

oppaga

Digest of the
Best Financial Management
Practices Review

Santa Rosa County School District

Results in Brief

The 2001 Legislature passed the Sharpening the Pencil Act, HB 269, to improve school district management and use of resources and to identify cost savings. The act directs the Commissioner of Education to adopt the best practices as standards for the Best Financial Management Practices Review and establishes meeting the best practices as the goal for all Florida school districts. The best practices are designed to encourage districts to

- use performance and cost-efficiency measures to evaluate programs;

- assess their operations and performance using benchmarks based on comparable school district, government agency, and industry standards;

- identify potential cost savings through privatization and alternative service delivery; and

- link financial planning and budgeting to district priorities, including student performance.

In accordance with the Sharpening the Pencil Act, Santa Rosa County School District underwent a best practices review during Fiscal Year 2001-02.[1] Based on the recommendations contained in the report, the district could improve operations, save money, and demonstrate good stewardship of public resources. Currently, the district is using 79% (169 of 214) of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner and at this time is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. (See Exhibit 1.) A detailed listing of all the best practices that identifies the district's current

status in relation to each is on page 6 of this digest report.

As shown in Exhibit 2, implementing report recommendations will have a positive fiscal impact of $7,309,975 over a five-year period.

Exhibit 1
The District Is Using 79% of the Best Practices

Best Practice Area (Total Practices)	Is the District Using Individual Best Practices?		
	Yes	**No**	**N/A**
Management Structures (12)	10	2	0
Performance Accountability System (5)	0	5	0
Educational Service Delivery (16)	12	4	0
Administrative and Instructional Technology (20)	19	0	1
Personnel Systems and Benefits (15)	11	4	0
Use of Lottery Proceeds (5)	5	0	0
Use of State and District Construction Funds (4)	4	0	0
Facilities Construction (32)	26	6	0
Facilities Maintenance (26)	14	12	0
Student Transportation (20)	14	6	0
Food Service Operations (17)	14	3	0
Cost Control Systems (31)	30	1	0
Community Involvement (11)	10	0	1
All Areas (214)	**169**	**43**	**2**

---

[1] This review was conducted by SchoolMatch by Public Priority Systems, Inc., of Westerville, Ohio under contract to the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA).

Exhibit 2
The District Could Experience a Positive Fiscal Impact of $7,309,975
Over the Next Five Years by Implementing Recommendations

Recommendation(s) by Review Area	Projected Five-Year Net Fiscal Impact
Management Structures	
• The school board of the Santa Rosa County School District should review and update its Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations. (Action Plan 3-5)	($30,000)
Facilities Maintenance	
• Increase trade association memberships and publication subscriptions. (Action Plan 11-4)	($12,500)
• Upgrade computerized Maintenance System: (Action Plan 11-15)	
— If able to do in-house	$0
— If use outside system	(up to $50,000)
• Comprehensive Energy Management Program (Action Plan 11-18)	$2,600,000
• Review of Indoor Air Quality Plan by a CIH (Action Plan 11-19)	($2,500)
Student Transportation	
• Implement a three-tiered bus routing system to replace the current two-tiered system. (Action Plan 12-1)	$1,891,725
• Eliminate courtesy busing where safety is not an issue. (Action Plan 12-2)	$2,672,500
• Eliminate the position of district transportation director when a contract manager has been trained and is ready to assume the current duties of the transportation director. (Action Plan 12-13)	$422,000
Food Service Operation	
• The district should continue to allow the contractor to replace more district employees with less expensive contract employees to reduce cost. (Action Plan 13-2)	$200,000
Cost Control Systems	
• Complete a comprehensive risk assessment to identify the level of risk associated with the district's various financial areas and functions. Assuming the risk assessment supports the creation of an internal audit function, we recommend the district proceed accordingly. (Action Plan 14-1)	($321,250)
Community Involvement	
• The district should examine mechanisms for gathering feedback from school-business partners via an annual satisfaction survey. (Action Plan 15-9)	($60,000)
TOTALS	**$7,309,975**

.

Purpose

The purpose of Best Financial Management Practices Reviews is to improve Florida school district management and use of resources and to identify cost savings. Florida law directs the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability and the Office of the Auditor General to develop a system for reviewing the financial management practices of school districts. Florida law also provides that the best financial management practices, at a minimum, must instill public confidence by

1. addressing the school district's use of resources;

2. identifying ways that the district could save funds; and

3. improving the school district performance accountability systems, including public accountability.

Background

The 2001 Legislature passed the Sharpening the Pencil Act, HB 269, to improve school district management and use of resources and to identify cost savings. Two of the most important provisions of the act are that it specifies those districts scheduled to undergo a Best Financial Management Practices Review each year of a five-year-cycle and requires public input during the review process and after the distribution of the final report.

The act also directs that the Commissioner of Education adopt the best practices to be used as standards for these reviews and establishes meeting the best practices as the goal for all Florida school districts. The best practices are designed to encourage districts to

•   use performance and cost-efficiency measures to evaluate programs;

•   assess their operations and performance using benchmarks based on comparable school district, government agency, and industry standards;

•   identify potential cost savings through privatization and alternative service delivery; and

•   link financial planning and budgeting to district priorities, including student performance.

In the 2001 General Appropriations Act, the Florida Legislature directed that OPPAGA contract for a Best Financial Management Practices Review of the Santa Rosa County School District.

With close to 23,000 students the Santa Rosa County School District is the twenty-seventh largest school

district out of 67 districts in the state. Located in panhandle of northwest Florida, the district operates 38 schools including 16 elementary schools, 7 middle/junior high schools, 6 senior high schools and 9 other educational facilities.

In accordance with Florida law, OPPAGA contracted with SchoolMatch by Public Priority Systems, Inc., of Westerville, Ohio, a private consulting firm, to conduct this review. SchoolMatch by Public Priority Systems, Inc., was primarily responsible for fieldwork and developing report findings and recommendations. OPPAGA and the Auditor General staff monitored the firm throughout the review process to ensure that the best practices and indicators were applied in the district consistent with reviews by consultants and OPPAGA in other districts. OPPAGA and the Auditor General staff attended site visits and provided assistance to the consultant during the course of the review, which included report drafting.

The consultant's report contains findings related to each best practice and detailed action plans to implement each report recommendation. These action plans were developed with input from the school district and detail the specific steps the district should take if it decides to implement the recommendation within two years. Pursuant to s. 230.23025, *Florida Statutes,* OPPAGA made the final determination on whether the school district is using best practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education based on information in the final report and the independent assessment of the district's use of each best practice.

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

General Overview and District Obligations

Currently, the Santa Rosa County School District is using 79% of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner, and at this time, is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. Appendix B of this report contains an action plan detailing how the district could meet the best practices within two years.

Within 90 days after receipt of the final report, the school board must

- decide by a majority plus one vote, whether or not to implement the action plan and pursue a Seal of Best Financial Management, and
- notify OPPAGA and the Commissioner of Education in writing of the date and outcome of the school board vote on whether to adopt the action plan. If the school board fails to vote on whether to adopt the action plan, the superintendent must notify OPPAGA and the Commissioner of Education.

After receipt of the final report and before the school board votes whether to adopt the action plan, the school district must hold an advertised public forum to accept public input and review the findings and recommendations of the report. The district must advertise and promote this forum to inform school and district advisory councils, parents, school district employees, the business community, and other district residents of the opportunity to attend this meeting. OPPAGA and the consultant will attend this forum.

If the school board votes to implement the action plan, the district must submit two annual status reports, the first report no later than one year after receipt of the final report and the second report one year later.

After receipt of each status report, OPPAGA will assess the district's implementation of the action plan and progress toward implementing the best financial management practices in areas covered by the plan and issue a report indicating whether the district has successfully implemented the best financial management practices.

If the school district successfully implements the best financial management practices within two years, it will be eligible to receive a Seal of Best Financial Management from the State Board of Education, a designation that is effective for five years. During the designation period, the school board must annually notify OPPAGA, the Auditor General, the Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of Education of any changes that would not conform to the state's best financial management practices. If no such changes have occurred and the school board determines that the school district continues to conform to the best financial management practices, the school board must annually report that information to the State Board of Education, with copies to OPPAGA, the Auditor General, and the Commissioner of Education.

Conclusions by Best Practice Area

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

Management Structures

The district meets 10 of 12 best practices established for management structures. The Santa Rosa County School District has a strong structure to support management efforts. The district could improve its management oversight with clarification and routine updates to policies and procedures. Additional minor adjustments, for example in district's staff's scope of responsibility, evaluation and training of school board members and efforts to expand citizen involvement, would make district's management truly exemplary.

Performance Accountability System

Currently, the district meets none of the five performance accountability best practices. While the district has established generally effective performance accountability systems to support educational programs, for the most part no such systems are in placed to support operations. This is especially critical since many operational services are contracted, and this accountability is needed to ensure the district hold contractors accountable and that the district can make informed decisions about the contracting process.

Educational Service Delivery

The district is using 12 of the 16 best practices for education service delivery. The Santa Rosa County School District generally provides effective educational services and programs, evidenced by the fact that student's scores are among the highest in the state on state-mandated assessments and on other state and national comparisons of student achievement. The district could improve management of lost and damaged textbooks and could further enhance its educational efforts by increasing its accountability for student outcomes and school improvement plans, targeting efforts to improve reading achievement in upper grade levels, and addressing teacher absenteeism, which is average for the state.

Administrative and Instructional Technology

The Santa Rosa County School District is using 19 of the 20 best practices related to administrative and instructional technology functions. The district implements its administrative and instructional

technology through a regional consortium, which provides cost effective administrative computing services to the central office and schools. In addition to traditional administrative computing programs, such as finance, attendance and scheduling services, a concerted effort is made to provide program support for instructional decision making. The district could improve its technology efforts by developing accountability mechanisms that demonstrate how use of technology benefits student achievement.

Personnel Systems and Benefits

Overall, the district is using 11 of the 15 best practices in this area. The personnel function effectively recruits and retains teachers, a critical effort for any school district. Additional improvement is possible, however, in the areas of teacher evaluation and analysis of results to identify systemic training needs, as well as implementation of standard reviews of the human resource department's staffing and services.

Use of Lottery Proceeds

The district uses all five best practices pertaining to the use of lottery proceeds. The district has defined enhancement, allocates lottery proceeds to school advisory councils and charter schools as required by law, and reports the costs of specific activities supported with lottery proceeds

Use of State and District Construction Funds

Overall, the district uses all four best practices pertaining to the use of state and district construction funds. The Santa Rosa County School District uses construction and operational funds appropriately including a focus on cost-effective projects that are in compliance with law and the district's plan as well as consider action of long-term operational costs.

Facilities Construction

The district is using 26 of the 32 best practices related to facilities construction functions. The Santa Rosa County School District successfully plans and builds facilities by relying on experienced staff. However, the district lacks systematic approaches that will ensure the program successfully continue if faced with staff changes. By formalizing the planning process, and improving feedback from users and analyzing costs associated with completed buildings the sound performance of school construction activities will be enhanced.

Facilities Maintenance

The Santa Rosa County School District is using 14 of the 26 best practices for facilities maintenance. The district's facilities maintenance and operations functions are reasonably effective with dedicated and experienced maintenance staff keeping facilities in good operating condition, and contracted custodial services. However, the district has the opportunity to significantly improve since few operating procedures are written and performance standards are missing.

Student Transportation

The district is using 14 of the 20 best practices established for student transportation. The district, through a contracted vendor, safely transports approximately 14,000 students to and from school each day. While district and vendor staff work seamlessly on a daily basis, the district has not established formal accountability, performance standards or goals, nor has it effectively demonstrated the cost-effectiveness of its contracted strategy.

Food Service Operations

The district is using 14 of the 17 best practices in food service operations. Overall, the Santa Rosa County School District has an effective food service operation. The program provides nutritious meals and does a good job of promoting its programs. Although the district has had a history of being dependent on the general fund to cover operational loses, the district may finally be poised to be self sufficient and capable of building and maintaining an adequate fund balance.

Cost Control Systems

The district is using 30 of the 31 best practices established for cost control systems. While the district has adequate cost control systems in the areas of asset management, inventory management, risk management, financial management, purchasing and payment processing, establishing and internal audit function to, at a minimum, complete an annual risk assessment of operations and activities, would ensure district operations are effective and efficient.

Community Involvement

The district is using 10 of the 11 best practices related to community involvement. The Santa Rosa County School District has developed a comprehensive set of programs designed to support meaningful community involvement across all areas of the education process. Strengthening service efforts will promote even stronger relationships among the schools, families, and other community stakeholders.

Santa Rosa County School District
Best Financial Management Practices

Currently, the Santa Rosa County School District is using 79% (169 of 214) of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education, and at this time, is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. This appendix provides a detailed listing of all the best practices and identifies the district's current status in relation to each.

Best Practices	*Is the District Using Best Practices?*		
MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
1. The roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent have been clearly delineated, and board members and the superintendent have procedures to ensure that they have effective working relationships.	✓		3-8
2. The board and superintendent have procedures to ensure that board meetings are efficient and effective.	✓		3-12
3. The board and superintendent have established written policies and procedures that are routinely updated to ensure that they are relevant and complete.		✓	3-14
4. The district routinely obtains legal services to advise it about policy and reduce the risk of lawsuits. It also takes steps to ensure that its legal costs are reasonable.	✓		3-20
5. The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority.		✓	3-23
6. The district periodically reviews its administrative staffing and makes changes to eliminate unnecessary positions and improve operating efficiency.	✓		3-26
7. The superintendent and school board exercise effective oversight of the district's financial resources.	✓		3-29
8. The district has clearly assigned school principals the authority they need to effectively manage their schools while adhering to district-wide policies and procedures.	✓		3-32
9. The district has a multi-year strategic plan with annual goals and measurable objectives based on identified needs, projected enrollment, and revenues.	✓		3-33
10. The district has a system to accurately project enrollment.	✓		3-36
11. The district links its financial plans and budgets to its priority goals and objectives, and district resources are focused towards achieving those goals and objectives.	✓		3-37
12. When necessary, the district considers options to increase revenue.	✓		3-39

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has clearly stated goals and measurable objectives that can be achieved within budget for each major educational and operational program. These major programs are: • Educational Programs: Basic Education (K-3, 4-8, 9-12), Exceptional Student Education, Vocational/Technical Education, and English for Speakers of Other Languages. • Operational: Facilities Construction, Facilities Maintenance, Personnel, Asset and Risk Management, Financial Management, Purchasing, Transportation, Food Services, and Safety and Security. Goals and objectives must be present in both the educational and operational areas to meet this best practice. The district lacks these accountability mechanisms in the operational areas.		✓	4-4
2. The district uses appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks to evaluate its major educational and operational programs and uses these in management decision making.		✓	4-8
3. The district regularly assesses the performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs using performance measures and benchmark data and analyzes potential cost savings and/or cost avoidance of alternatives, such as outside contracting and privatization.		✓	4-9
4. The district formally evaluates the performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs and uses evaluation results to improve program performance and cost-efficiency.		✓	4-12
5. The district clearly reports on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational and operational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers.		✓	4-14

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY	YES	NO	PAGE
1. District administrators use both academic and nonacademic data to improve K-12 education programs.	✓		5-4
2. District administrators facilitate sharing effective instructional practices to improve student performance.	✓		5-12
3. The district provides effective and cost-efficient Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs.	✓		5-13
4. The district provides effective and cost-efficient instruction as part of its English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program.	✓		5-16
5. The district provides effective and cost-efficient secondary vocational and adult/technical education programs.		✓	5-18
6. The district's curricular framework is linked to Florida's accountability standards and to the Sunshine State Standards.	✓		5-23
7. The district has adopted a plan for the progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 that maximizes student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards.	✓		5-23
8. The district ensures that school improvement plans effectively translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives and that school advisory councils meet statutory membership requirements.		✓	5-24
9. The district's process for selecting instructional materials ensures that instructional materials meet the needs of teachers and students.	✓		5-24

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY	YES	NO	PAGE
10. Each student has current and appropriate instructional materials in core courses that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards and the district's pupil progression plan.	✓		5-25
11. The district's procedures for acquiring, maintaining, and disposing of instructional materials are cost-effective.		✓	5-25
12. The district has implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the overall performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its major educational programs. [2]		✓	5-27
13. The district regularly reviews its organizational structure and the staffing of the central office and schools to minimize administrative layers and processes.	✓		5-29
14. The district clearly reports on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers.	✓		5-32
15. The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction.	✓		5-34
16. The district provides necessary support services (guidance counseling, psychological, social work, and health) to meet the needs of its students in a cost-efficient manner.	✓		5-35

ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has solicited and used broad stakeholder input in developing an integrated learning system and in setting priorities for administrative and instructional technology decisions.	✓		6-7
2. The district has a comprehensive technology plan that provides direction for administrative and instructional technology decision making.	✓		6-8
3. The district provides formal and informal support to assist educators in incorporating technology into the curriculum.	✓		6-9
4. The district provides technical support for educational and administrative systems in the district.	✓		6-10
5. The district provides technical support for hardware, software, and infrastructure in a timely and cost-effective manner.	✓		6-11
6. The district has a professional development plan that reflects the district's vision of integrating technology to enhance and enrich the learning environment, as well as improve administrative support.	✓		6-12
7. The district provides professional development for the instructional technologies.	✓		6-14
8. The district bases technology acquisitions on instructional needs and makes technology acquisitions based on those needs. [3]	✓		6-16
9. The district bases technology acquisitions on the results of research, planning, and evaluations of previous technology decisions to ensure technology decisions are cost-effective.	✓		6-17

---

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

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

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		

ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY	YES	NO	PAGE
10. The district has established standards for acquiring new programs and digital content that promote the integration of technology into everyday curricular needs.	✓		6-18
11. The district has a stable and efficient infrastructure. [4]	✓		6-20
12. The district has established and communicated a policy stating appropriate uses of all types of technology resources, including computers, video equipment, software, and the Internet.	✓		6-20
13. The district supports compliance with the established policy on safe and legal use of technology resources.	✓		6-21
14. Segregation of Duties: The district segregates duties to reduce the risk that unauthorized transactions will be entered and not discovered quickly.	NA		6-22
15. User Controls: The district's user controls ensure authorization prior to processing transactions and ensure all output represents authorized and valid transactions.	✓		6-23
16. Application Controls: The district's applications are designed to provide users with reliable data.	✓		6-23
17. General Controls: The district has established general controls in the areas of access, systems development and maintenance, documentation, operations, and physical security to promote the proper functioning of the information systems department.	✓		6-24
18. The district's management information systems provide data needed by administrative and instructional personnel in a reliable and timely manner.	✓		6-24
19. The district has taken steps to minimize the number of databases that are independent of its centralized computer systems.	✓		6-25
20. Other Controls: The district has established appropriate controls related to electronic data exchange transactions, other transactions processed through electronic media, and image processing systems.	✓		6-25

PERSONNEL SYSTEMS AND BENEFITS	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has efficient and effective processes for recruiting and hiring qualified personnel.	✓		7-6
2. The district maintains a reasonably stable work force through competitive salary and benefit packages and through district-wide efforts to address and remedy factors that contribute to increased turnover.	✓		7-9
3. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program to achieve and maintain high levels of productivity and employee performance among non-instructional employees.	✓		7-11
4. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for instructional employees to attain and maintain high quality instruction and to achieve high levels of student performance.	✓		7-11

---

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

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		
PERSONNEL SYSTEMS AND BENEFITS	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
5. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for school-based administrators.	✓		7-12
6. The district's system for formally evaluating employees is designed to improve and reward excellent performance and productivity, and to identify and address performance that does not meet the district's expectations for the employee.		✓	7-13
7. The district ensures that employees who repeatedly fail to meet the district's performance expectations, or whose behavior or job performance is potentially harmful to students, are promptly removed from contact with students, and that the appropriate steps are taken to terminate those persons' employment.	✓		7-15
8. The district maintains clear and effective channels of communication with employees.	✓		7-16
9. The district has efficient and cost-effective policies and practices for providing substitute teachers and other substitute personnel.	✓		7-16
10. The district maintains personnel records in a highly efficient and accessible manner.	✓		7-17
11. The district uses cost-containment practices for its Workers' Compensation Program.	✓		7-18
12. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the human resource program.		✓	7-18
13. The district periodically reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the office of human resources to minimize administrative layers and processes.		✓	7-19
14. The district periodically evaluates its personnel practices and adjusts these practices as needed to reduce costs and/or improve efficiency and effectiveness.		✓	7-20
15. For classes of employees that are unionized, the district maintains an effective collective bargaining process.	✓		7-21

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		
USE OF LOTTERY PROCEEDS	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
1. The district has defined "enhancement" in a way that the public clearly understands.	✓		8-4
2. The district uses lottery money consistent with its definition of enhancement.	✓		8-4
3. The district allocates lottery funds to school advisory councils as required by law.	✓		8-5
4. The district accounts for the use of lottery money in an acceptable manner.	✓		8-5
5. The district annually evaluates and reports the extent to which lottery fund expenditures have enhanced student education.	✓		8-6

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		

USE OF STATE AND DISTRICT CONSTRUCTION FUNDS	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
1. The district approves use of construction funds only after determining that the project(s) are cost-efficient and in compliance with the lawfully designated purpose of the funds and the district's five-year facilities work plan.	✓		9-3
2. The district uses capital outlay and operational funds appropriately, lawfully, and in accordance with its adopted five-year facilities work plan.	✓		9-5
3. The district minimizes construction costs by using appropriate measures from the SMART (Soundly Made, Accountable, Reasonable and Thrifty) Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards. [5]	✓		9-5
4. When designing and constructing new educational facilities, the district incorporates factors to minimize the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility.	✓		9-7

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
1. The district has established a facilities planning committee that includes a broad base of school district personnel, parents, construction professionals, and other community stakeholders.		✓	10-7
2. The district has established authority and assigned responsibilities for facilities planning.	✓		10-9
3. The five-year facilities work plan provides budgetary plans and priorities based on the master plan and input from the facilities planning committee.	✓		10-10
4. The five-year facilities work plan is based on a thorough demographic study and enrollment projections.	✓		10-12
5. The five-year facilities work plan is based on an evaluation of the physical condition and the ability of facilities to meet educational needs.	✓		10-12
6. When developing the annual five-year facilities work plan the district evaluates alternatives to minimize the need for new construction.	✓		10-14
7. District planning prioritizes construction needs.	✓		10-27
8. The district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the current Laws of Florida.	✓		10-18
9. For all projects with dates of construction contracted after July 1, 2001, the district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the Florida Building Code.	✓		10-19
10. The school board ensures responsiveness to the community through open communication about the construction program and the five-year facilities work plan.	✓		10-19
11. The district develops descriptions and educational specifications for each project.		✓	10-20

---

[5] The web page is: http:smartschools.state.fl.us.

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		
FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
12. Educational specifications for new construction, remodeling, and renovations include a description of activity areas.	✓		10-22
13. The architectural design fulfills the building specification needs as determined by the district.	✓		10-23
14. New construction, remodeling, and renovations incorporate effective safety features.	✓		10-25
15. The district begins school site selection well in advance of future need based on expected growth patterns.	✓		10-25
16. The board considers the most economical and practical locations for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as need to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to development, and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties.	✓		10-27
17. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the construction program.	✓		10-28
18. The district has considered, and where possible implemented, the general requirements recommended in the SMART Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards.	✓		10-29
19. The district minimizes construction costs through the use of prototype school designs and frugal construction practices.	✓		10-30
20. The district secures appropriate professional services to assist in facility planning, design, and construction.	✓		10-31
21. The district can demonstrate that funds collected for school projects were raised appropriately.	✓		10-32
22. District planning provides realistic time frames for implementation that are coordinated with the opening of schools.	✓		10-33
23. For each project or group of projects, the architect and district facilities planner develop a conceptual site plan and building specifications.	✓		10-34
24. The district follows generally accepted and legal contracting practices to control costs.	✓		10-34
25. The district has assigned one person with the authority and responsibility to keep facilities construction projects within budget and on schedule.	✓		10-37
26. The board minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to minimize project costs.	✓		10-37
27. The architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project.	✓		10-38
28. The district requires appropriate inspection of all school construction projects.	✓		10-39
29. The district conducts a comprehensive orientation to the new facility prior to its use so that users better understand the building design and function.		✓	10-40
30. The district conducts comprehensive building evaluations at the end of the first year of operation and regularly during the next three to five years to collect information about building operation and performance.		✓	10-41

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
31. The district analyzes building evaluations to determine whether facilities are fully used, operating costs are minimized, and changes in the district's construction planning process are needed.		✓	10-42
32. The district analyzes maintenance and operations costs to identify improvements to the district's construction planning process.		✓	10-42

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
1. The district's maintenance and operations department mission, organizational structure, and operating procedures are established in writing.	✓		11-5
2. The district has established maintenance standards in its short- and long-term plans for providing appropriately and equitably maintained facilities within budget and in accordance with the district's five-year facilities work plan and annual budget.		✓	11-9
3. The district clearly identifies and communicates performance standards and expected outcomes to maintenance and operations staff.		✓	11-11
4. The district ensures that maintenance and custodial standards are regularly updated to implement new technology and procedures.		✓	11-12
5. The district obtains and uses customer feedback to identify and implement program improvements.		✓	11-13
6. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance and efficiency of the maintenance and operations program.		✓	11-15
7. The district accurately projects cost estimates of major maintenance projects.	✓		11-16
8. The administration has developed an annual budget with spending limits that comply with the lawful funding for each category of facilities maintenance and operations.	✓		11-18
9. The board maintains a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations.	✓		11-20
10. The maintenance and operations department regularly evaluates maintenance and operations activities to determine the most cost-effective method of providing needed services.		✓	11-20
11. The district minimizes equipment costs through purchasing practices and maintenance.	✓		11-24
12. The district uses proactive maintenance practices to reduce maintenance costs.		✓	11-26
13. The maintenance and operations department regularly reviews the organizational structure of the maintenance and operations program to minimize administrative layers and processes.		✓	11-28
14. The maintenance and operations department regularly reviews the staffing levels of the maintenance and operations program to maximize the efficient use of personnel.		✓	11-29
15. The maintenance and operations department ensures qualified staff by using appropriate hiring practices.	✓		11-31
16. The maintenance and operations department has a written job description for each position within the department.	✓		11-31

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE	YES	NO	PAGE
17. The district provides appropriate supervision of maintenance and operations staff.	✓		11-32
18. The district provides a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff to enhance worker job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.		✓	11-34
19. The district provides maintenance and operations department staff the tools and equipment required to accomplish its assigned tasks.	✓		11-36
20. A computerized control and tracking system is used to accurately track work orders and inventory.		✓	11-37
21. The maintenance and operations department has a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the district.		✓	11-38
22. District policies and procedures clearly address the health and safety conditions of facilities.	✓		11-40
23. The maintenance and operations department identifies and implements strategies to contain energy costs.	✓		11-42
24. The district has an energy management system in place, and the system is maintained at original specifications for maximum effectiveness.	✓		11-44
25. The school district complies with federal and state regulatory mandates regarding facility health, safety, and energy efficiency conditions.	✓		11-46
26. The district is aware of and prepared for the permitting and inspection requirements of the Florida Building Code.	✓		11-47

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The student transportation office plans, reviews, and establishes bus routes and stops to provide efficient student transportation services for all students who qualify for transportation.		✓	12-7
2. The district ensures that all regular school bus routes and activity trips operate in accord with established routines, and any unexpected contingencies affecting those operations are handled safely and promptly.	✓		12-11
3. The district effectively and efficiently recruits and retains the bus drivers and attendants it needs.	✓		12-13
4. The district trains, supervises, and assists bus drivers to enable them to meet bus driving standards and maintain acceptable student discipline on the bus.	✓		12-14
5. The district provides student transportation services for exceptional students in a coordinated fashion that minimizes hardships to students and accurately reports exceptional students transported to receive state funding.		✓	12-16
6. The district ensures that staff acts promptly and appropriately in response to any accidents that occur.	✓		12-17
7. The district ensures that appropriate student behavior is maintained on the bus at all times.	✓		12-18
8. The school district has a process to ensure that a sufficient school bus fleet is acquired economically and will be available to meet the district's future student transportation needs.	✓		12-19

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
9. The district provides timely routine servicing for buses and other district vehicles, as well as prompt response for breakdowns and other unforeseen contingencies.		✓	12-21
10. The district ensures that fuel purchases are cost-effective and that school buses and other vehicles are efficiently supplied with fuel.	✓		12-23
11. The district maintains facilities that are conveniently situated to provide sufficient and secure support for vehicle maintenance and other student transportation functions.	✓		12-24
12. The district maintains an effective staffing level in the vehicle maintenance area and provides support for vehicle maintenance staff to develop their skills.	✓		12-26
13. The district maintains an inventory of parts, supplies, and equipment needed to support student transportation functions that balances the concerns of immediate need and inventory costs.	✓		12-27
14. The district provides appropriate technological and computer support for student transportation functions and operations.	✓		12-28
15. The district has established an accountability system for student transportation, and it regularly tracks and makes public reports on its performance in comparison with established benchmarks.		✓	12-29
16. The district coordinates long-term planning and budgeting for student transportation within the context of district and community planning.		✓	12-32
17. The district monitors the fiscal condition of student transportation functions by regularly analyzing expenditures and reviewing them against the budget.	✓		12-34
18. The district provides regular, accurate, and timely counts to the Florida Department of Education of the number of students transported as part of the Florida Education Finance Program.	✓		12-35
19. The district has reviewed the prospect for privatizing student transportation functions, as a whole or in part.		✓	12-36
20. The district periodically reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the student transportation program to minimize administrative layers and processes.	✓		12-37

FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
1. The food service program is clearly defined with a mission statement, operating policies and procedures, and performance expectations.		✓	13-7
2. The district regularly reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the food service program to enhance the efficiency of program operation.	✓		13-8
3. The district uses a comprehensive food service training program to increase productivity, improve employee performance, and enhance the food service program.	✓		13-91
4. The district identifies barriers to student participation in the school meals program and implements strategies to eliminate the barriers.	✓		13-10

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		

FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS	YES	NO	PAGE
5. The district has established cost-efficiency benchmarks based on comparable private and public sector food service programs and other applicable industry standards.	✓		13-11
6. The district regularly evaluates the school food service program based on established benchmarks and implements improvements to increase revenue and reduce costs.	✓		13-12
7. The district regularly assesses the benefits of service and service delivery alternatives, such as contracting and privatization, and implements changes to improve efficiency and effectiveness.		✓	13-13
8. The program budget is based on department goals, revenues, and expenditure projections.		✓	13-15
9. The district's financial control process includes an ongoing review of the program's financial and management practices.	✓		13-17
10. The district accounts for and reports meals served by category.	✓		13-18
11. The district regularly evaluates purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase efficiency.	✓		13-18
12. The district has developed an effective inventory control system that is appropriate to the size of the school food service program.	✓		13-19
13. The district has a system for receiving, storing, and disposing of food, supplies, and equipment.	✓		13-19
14. The district has a plan for the repair and replacement of equipment that includes preventive maintenance practices.	✓		13-19
15. The district provides school meals designed to meet the nutritional needs of students.	✓		13-20
16. The district's food production and transportation system ensures the service of high quality food with minimal waste.	✓		13-20
17. The district follows safety and environmental health practices and regulations.	✓		13-21

COST CONTROL SYSTEMS	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has established an internal audit function with its primary mission to (1) provide assurance that the internal control processes in the organization are adequately designed and functioning effectively, and (2) where appropriate, offer recommendations and counsel to management that will improve performance.		✓	14-6
2. The district obtains an external audit in accordance with government auditing standards.	✓		14-8
3. The district provides for timely follow-up of findings identified in the external audit.	✓		14-8
4. The district obtains and reviews required financial information relating to school internal accounts, direct service organizations (DSOs), and charter schools.	✓		14-9
5. Segregation of Duties: The district segregates responsibilities for custody of assets from record keeping responsibilities for those assets.	✓		14-12
6. Authorization Controls: The district has established controls that	✓		14-12

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		
COST CONTROL SYSTEMS	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
provide for proper authorization of asset acquisitions and disposals.			
7. Project Accounting: The district has established records that accumulate project costs and other relevant data to facilitate reporting construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors.	✓		14-13
8. Asset Accountability: The district provides recorded accountability for capitalized assets.	✓		14-13
9. Asset Safeguards: Assets are safeguarded from unauthorized use, theft, and physical damage.	✓		14-13
10. Segregation of Duties over Inventory: The district segregates responsibilities for custody of inventories from record keeping responsibilities for those assets.	✓		14-15
11. Inventory Requisitioning Controls: The district has established and implemented controls that provide for proper inventory requisitioning.	✓		14-15
12. Inventory Accountability and Custody: The district has established controls that provide for inventory accountability and appropriate safeguards exist for inventory custody.	✓		14-15
13. Inventory Management: The district periodically evaluates the inventory function to determine its cost-effectiveness.	✓		14-16
14. General: The district has a process to set objectives for risk management activities, identify and evaluate risks, and design a comprehensive program to protect itself at a reasonable cost.	✓		14-16
15. Providing for Coverage Against Risk Exposure: The district has comprehensive policies and procedures relating to acquiring and reviewing coverage for risks of loss.	✓		14-17
16. Management Control Methods: District management communicates its commitment and support of strong internal controls.	✓		14-19
17. Financial Accounting System: The district records and reports financial transactions in accordance with prescribed standards.	✓		14-19
18. Financial Reporting Procedures: The district prepares and distributes its financial reports timely.	✓		14-20
19. Budget Practices: The district has a financial plan serving as an estimate of and control over operations and expenditures.	✓		14-20
20. Cash Management: The district has effective controls to provide recorded accountability for cash resources.	✓		14-21
21. Investment Practices: The district has an investment plan that includes investment objectives and performance criteria designed to maximize return consistent with the risks associated with each investment, and specifies the types of financial products approved for investment.	✓		14-22
22. Receivables: The district has established effective controls for recording, collecting, adjusting, and reporting receivables.	✓		14-22
23. Salary and Benefits Costs: The district has effective controls that provide accountability for the payment of salaries and benefits.	✓		14-22
24. Debt Financing: The district analyzes, evaluates, monitors, and reports debt-financing alternatives.	✓		14-25
25. Grant and Entitlement Monitoring: The district effectively monitors and reports grants activities.	✓		14-25

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?		

COST CONTROL SYSTEMS	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
26. Segregation of Duties: The district segregates purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving functions.	✓		14-27
27. Requisitioning: The district has established controls for authorizing purchase requisitions.	✓		14-27
28. Purchasing: The district has established authorization controls over purchasing.	✓		14-28
29. Receiving: The district has established controls to ensure that goods are received and meet quality standards.	✓		14-29
30. Disbursements: The district has established controls to ensure disbursements are properly authorized, documented, and recorded.	✓		14-30
31. Invoice Processing: The district has established controls for processing invoices to ensure that quantities, prices, and terms coincide with purchase orders and receiving reports.	✓		14-30

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	**YES**	**NO**	**PAGE**
1. The district has developed a meaningful community involvement mission statement and maintains ongoing community involvement activities in its strategic plan directed toward performing that mission.	✓		15-7
2. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Community Involvement Program.	✓		15-9
3. The district solicits and incorporates parent and community involvement and support.	✓		15-11
4. The district uses a variety of methods of communicating with parents.	✓		15-12
5. The district periodically reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the Community Involvement Program to minimize administrative layers and processes.	NA		15-14
6. The district has active Parent Teacher Associations /Parent Faculty Organizations (PTA/PFO) and other effective methods to involve and encourage parent leadership and participation.	✓		15-14
7. The district provides activities that encourage families to be involved in the schools.	✓		15-15
8. The district uses community resources to strengthen schools, families, and student learning and consistently offers school resources to strengthen communities.	✓		15-17
9. The district has developed school-business partnerships.	✓		15-18
10. District schools maintain active and effective programs to involve volunteers in the education process.	✓		15-19
11. District schools solicit economic support through school foundations.	✓		15-23

The Florida Legislature

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

Visit the *Florida Monitor*, OPPAGA's online service. See http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us. This site monitors the performance and accountability of Florida government by making OPPAGA's four primary products available online.

- OPPAGA publications and contracted reviews, such as policy analyses and performance reviews, assess the efficiency and effectiveness of state policies and programs and recommend improvements for Florida government.

- Performance-based program budgeting (PB²) reports and information offer a variety of tools. Program evaluation and justification reviews assess state programs operating under performance-based program budgeting. Also offered are performance measures information and our assessments of measures.

- Florida Government Accountability Report (FGAR) is an Internet encyclopedia of Florida state government. FGAR offers concise information about state programs, policy issues, and performance. Check out the ratings of the accountability systems of 13 state programs.

- Best Financial Management Practices Reviews of Florida school districts. In accordance with the *Sharpening the Pencil Act*, OPPAGA and the Auditor General jointly conduct reviews to determine if a school district is using best financial management practices to help school districts meet the challenge of educating their students in a cost-efficient manner.

Subscribe to OPPAGA's electronic newsletter, Florida Monitor Weekly, a free source for brief e-mail announcements of research reports, conferences, and other resources of interest for Florida's policy research and program evaluation community.

1 Introduction

The Florida Legislature OPPAGA designed the Best Financial Management Practices Reviews to help Florida School systems meet the goal to teach students successfully and efficiently. Under the State of Florida "Sharpening the Pencil Act," All Florida school systems will undergo review to examine how successfully they are using Best Financial Management Practices and to determine ways to operate in a more cost-efficient manner.

Overview

Best Financial Practices reviews are designed to assist school districts to meet the many challenges of educating Florida's students in an effective and cost efficient manner. During these reviews, the school district's management and operational activities are evaluated in comparison to "best practices" established by the state of Florida. These best practices were developed based on national best practices determined by looking at the management and operations of school districts across the country as well as published educational and operational research.

Given the depth and scope of these best practices and the high standard of performance set by the best practices, it is expected that the majority of school districts will not adhere fully to all best practice indicators during their first review. When the district is not meeting a best practice, an action plan is developed with the district which, when fully implemented, will result in the district meeting the practice with the ultimate goal of improving its effectiveness and cost-efficiency.

Background and Scope

The Santa Rosa County School District has adopted the following mission: The Santa Rosa County School District, a growing and diverse community of learners with strong values, promotes self-sufficient and productive learning through a comprehensive and innovative curriculum, visionary and collaborative leadership, and sound management.

In accordance with Florida law, SchoolMatch Consultants assessed the operations of the Santa Rosa County School District under the thirteen review areas illustrated in Exhibit 1-1.

Exhibit 1-1

Best Financial Management Practice Review Areas

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

Methodology———————————————————

In conducting this review, SchoolMatch Consultants used a variety of ways to gather information related to the Santa Rosa County School District's performance in relation to the Best Financial Management Practices indicators. SchoolMatch Consultants made several visits to the school district (see Exhibit 1-2). While on site, consultants conducted interviews with district and school personnel; held public forums; and visited schools, department offices and facilities.

SchoolMatch Consultants reviewed documents provided by the district including program documents, compliance reports, strategic plans, budgets and other financial data, programmatic data, performance data, audit reports, board policies, and self-assessment reports. In addition, SchoolMatch Consultants reviewed state and national documents and data, including web-based reports and databases, related to the performance of the district and peer districts.

SchoolMatch Consultants surveyed several groups of district stakeholders: administrators, teachers, support staff and parents in order to capture perceptions about the leadership, emphasis on learning, school climate, monitoring of student progress, and the quality of expectations in the school district.

Exhibit 1-2

Santa Rosa County Public School District
Best Financial Management Practices Review Site Visit Timeline

Activity	Date
First Site Visit: OPPAGA and SchoolMatch Consultants reviewed Santa Rosa County School District's self assessment, conducted initial interviews, completed observations, requested additional data, began to identify potential issues and cost savings, and held the first public forum.	October 14-18, 2001[1]
Second Site Visit: SchoolMatch Consultants reviewed preliminary observations with district officials, gathered feedback, made observations, determined issues requiring further investigation, conducted additional interviews, requested additional data, and held a second public forum.	December 3-7, 2001
Third Site Visit: OPPAGA and SchoolMatch Consultants gained feedback from district personnel and completed observations.	February 6-8, 2002
Present the final report to the Santa Rosa County School District and hold a community presentation of the findings.	July 2002

[1] One consultant visited the district in November due to scheduling conflicts to evaluate *Administrative and Instructional Technology* and *Performance Accountability*.

Interviews

SchoolMatch Consultants conducted hundreds of interviews on site to gain an understanding of Santa Rosa County School District's operations and procedures. The consultants interviewed district personnel representing all areas of operations and all levels of staff. Participants included school board members, the superintendent and chief administrators, building administrators, teachers, and instructional and non-instructional support staff. The consultants also spoke by telephone and exchanged emails with district staff, throughout the review process, to gather data, additional information and to provide feedback.

On-Site Visits and Observations

SchoolMatch Consultants conducted on-site visits and observations of all aspects of district operations related to the best practices indicators. Visits were made to schools, administrative offices, transportation

centers, and other facilities and offices as required. SchoolMatch Consultants interviewed numerous staff members and observed operations and instruction.

Public Forums

SchoolMatch Consultants held two public forums in two areas of the county to gain feedback from community members regarding district operations related to the Best Financial Practices Review. Citizens had the opportunity to ask questions, express concerns and discuss district operations and programs. To supplement the public forums, an email address and toll-free telephone number were provided for citizens where they could leave messages throughout the review period.

Peer Districts

SchoolMatch Consultants identified peer districts for the purpose of benchmarking district performance using districts facing similar challenges. Florida benchmark districts used for comparison in most best practice areas were Charlotte, Lake, Okaloosa, Osceola, and St. Johns Counties. For Personnel Systems and Benefits, Alachua County was added to the list. In Facilities Construction and Facilities Maintenance, peer districts were Escambia, Lake, Okaloosa, Putnam and Suwannee Counties. Peer Districts for Food Services were Bay, Lake, Leon, Putnam and Suwannee Counties. In Educational Service Delivery, peer districts selected were Alachua, Bay, Collier, Escambia, Lake, Leon, Okaloosa and Osceola Counties.

Data from peer districts was gathered by SchoolMatch Consultants from SchoolMatch databases, administrators and data management personnel in the peer districts, peer district websites, and the Florida Department of Education website.

Surveys

To gather input from a range of stakeholders in the district and community, SchoolMatch Consultants surveyed four groups: administrators, teachers, support staff and parents of children in the Santa Rosa County schools. Administrators distributed the surveys to stakeholders within the district. A total of 1127 surveys were returned to SchoolMatch. Respondents were asked to mark **strongly agree** (1), **agree** (2), **disagree** (3), or **strongly disagree** (4) in response to statements about leadership, emphasis on learning, school climate, monitoring student progress, and the quality of expectations in the district. The responses were averaged. An average score of 2.05 or less was determined to indicate agreement that a particular practice associated with effectiveness that was in place in the Santa Rosa County School District. Complete results appear in Appendix A.

2 Statistical Profile of Santa Rosa County School District

Santa Rosa County
★ Milton, Florida
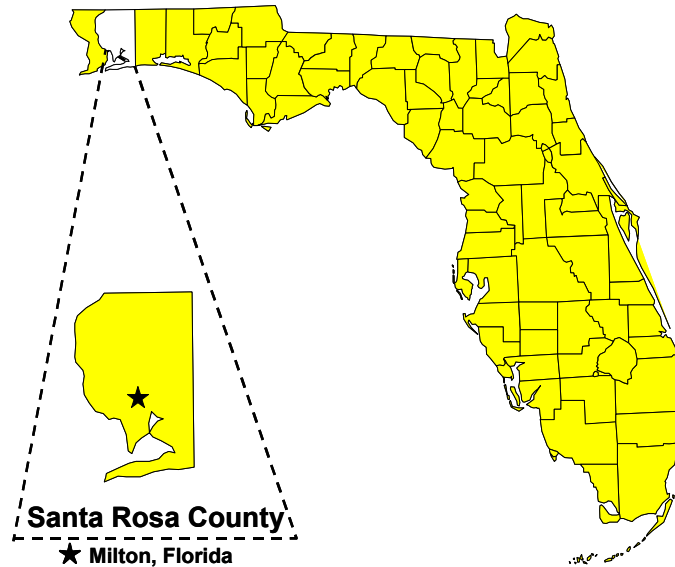
County Profile

Established in 1842, Santa Rosa County is located in the northwest corner of the Florida panhandle, bordered on the south by the Gulf of Mexico, and on the north by the state of Alabama. Surrounding counties include Escambia and Okaloosa. The land area of Santa Rosa County measures 1015.8 square miles with an additional 120 square miles of water.

Santa Rosa County's economic base is constructed of three basic geographical sections: agriculture and timber in the north; industry and military in the center; tourism in the south. Santa Rosa County School District, the federal government, Wal-Mart Stores and Santa Rosa County individually employ the greatest number of people. In 2000, the per capita income of Santa Rosa residents was an estimated $13,365, identical to the overall Florida per capita income. Per capita income for Santa Rosa has increased since the 1990 Census from $12,656, while the state of Florida's per capita income has decreased from $14,698 (Exhibit 2-1).

Santa Rosa County is home to four military bases that provide training, support, and Special Operations forces. NAS Pensacola is the home of the Navy's Blue Angels and the National Museum of Naval Aviation.

Exhibit 2-1

Per Capita Income Santa Rosa County and the State of Florida
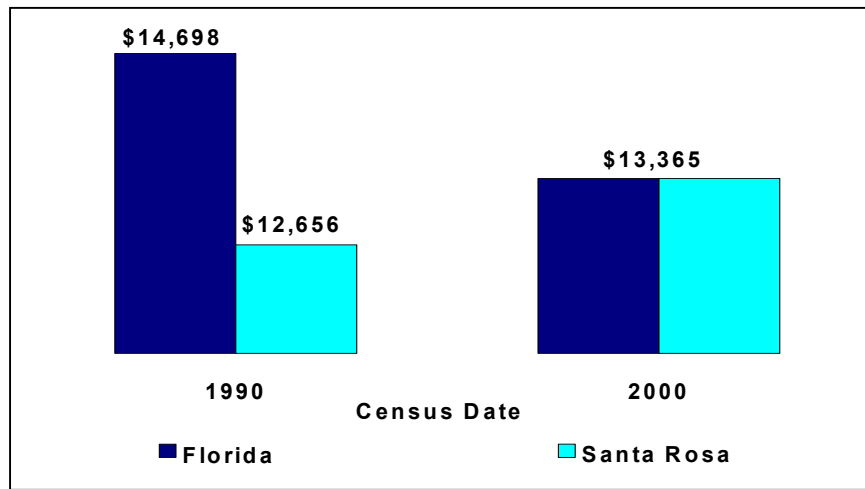
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts and Basic Facts (1990, 2000).

The city of Pensacola, located in adjacent Escambia County, is the largest metropolitan region in Santa Rosa County area. The city of Milton is the county seat. Other incorporated municipalities include Gulf Breeze and the Town of Jay. The Santa Rosa County School District offices are located in Milton. In 2000, Santa Rosa County's population was 117,743. The projected population of Santa Rosa County for 2010 is 165,000, and for 2020, the projected population is 260,000.

The highest percentage of the Santa Rosa-area residents (31.1%) is between 25 and 45 years old. The next largest age group (26.6%) contains residents under 18 years of age. The smallest group of residents (7.2%) is between the ages of 18 and 24. Ages in Santa Rosa are dispersed very similarly to those in the state. Each category of age falls in the same rank order as the average in Florida (Exhibit 2-2). The median age in Santa Rosa County is 36.8, while Florida's median age is 38.7 (Exhibit 2-3).

Exhibit 2-2

Average Age of Residents in Santa Rosa County and the State of Florida
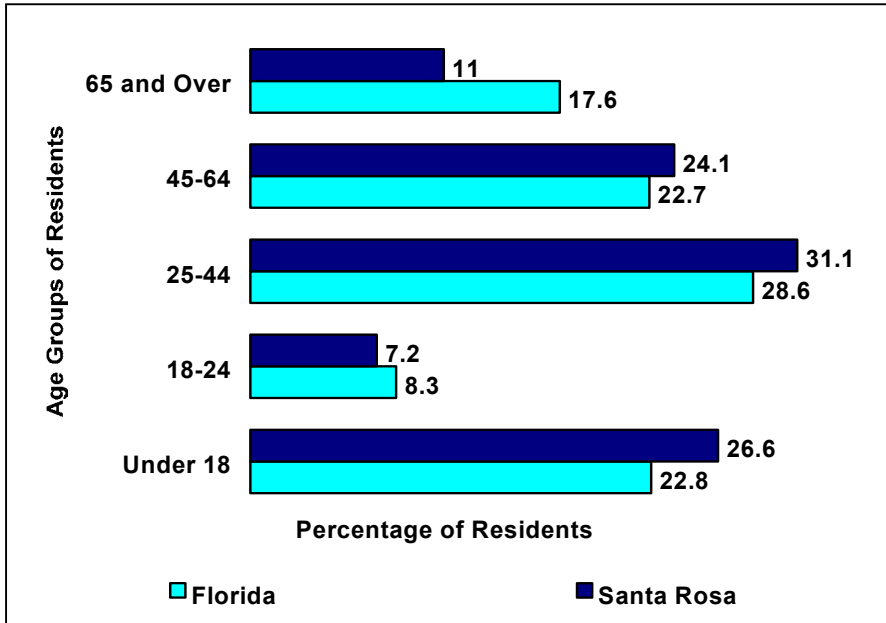
Source: American Fact Finder, Basic Facts 2000.

Exhibit 2-3

Median Age of Residents in Santa Rosa County and the State of Florida
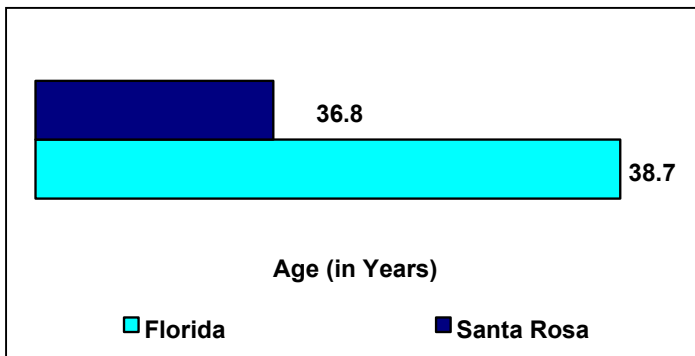
Source: American FactFinder, Basic Facts 2000.

School District Profile

In the following information, the Santa Rosa County School District will be profiled by using a comparison of five peer districts in Florida: Charlotte, Lake, Okaloosa, Osceola and St. Johns. These peer districts were selected based on similarities to the Santa Rosa County School District, such as student population characteristics and geographical size. Four main areas of information will be provided:

- District Information

- Student Characteristics
- Student Performance
- Staff Characteristics

District Information

Santa Rosa County School District has 38 schools, which includes 6 high schools, 7 middle schools, 16 elementary schools, a technical center, a community school and an adult school. They have recently opened Woodlawn Middle School in the Midway area, taking on the overflow of students from Gulf Breeze and Navarre Middle Schools. In 2000, the Florida Department of Education reported the Santa Rosa County School District had a student membership of 22,633. Exhibit 2-4 provides a comparison of student membership in the Santa Rosa County School District with its five peer districts.

Exhibit 2-4

Student Membership, Santa Rosa County School District and Peer Districts, 2001
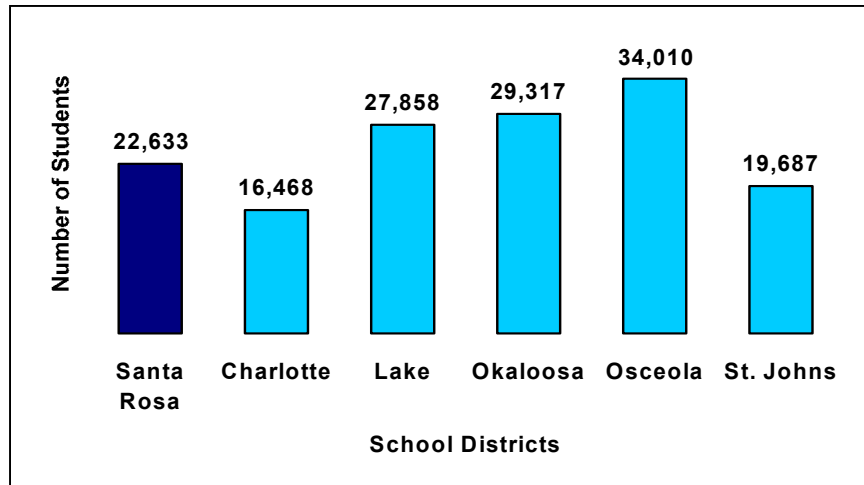
Source: http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir2001/district_report.cfm Florida Dept. of Education.

Over the past five years, student membership in Santa Rosa County School District has increased from 20,417 in 1996-97 to 22,633 in 2000-01. The only decrease in enrollment was in 1999-00 when the numbers decreased by 269. (Exhibit 2-5)

Exhibit 2-5

Five-Year Student Membership History in Santa Rosa County School District
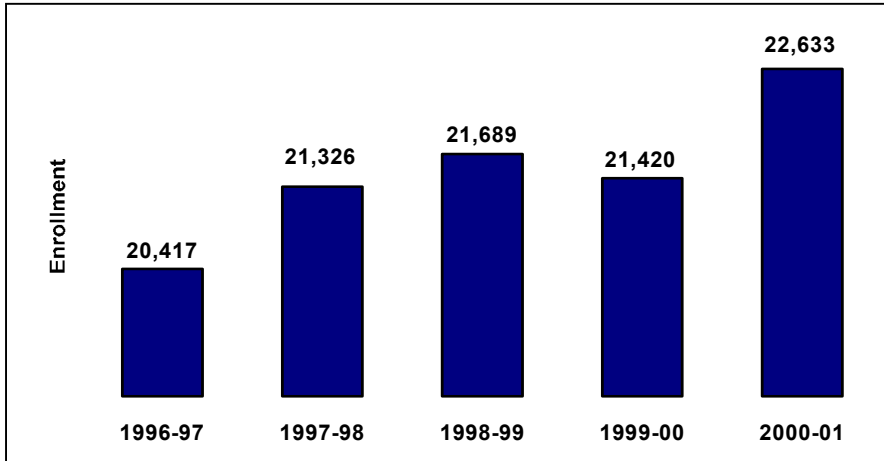
Source: http://info.doe.state.fo.us/fsir2001/district_report.cfm, Florida Dept. of Education.

Santa Rosa County School District receives revenue from federal, state and local sources. In 2002, Santa Rosa receives 73.07 percent of its revenue from state sources and 25.40 percent of its revenue from local sources. The district receives .22 of one percent of its revenue from federal sources (Exhibit 2-6). Total revenue for Santa Rosa County School District equals $114,451,682 for the 2001-02 school year.

At the time of the Florida Legislature Best Financial Management Practices assessment, the state of Florida was contemplating a reduction in aid to Santa Rosa County School District of $1.3 million out of a $90 million operating budget, for a reduction of 2.46 percent.

Exhibit 2-6

State Revenues Account for Majority of Santa Rosa School District's Budget in 2002
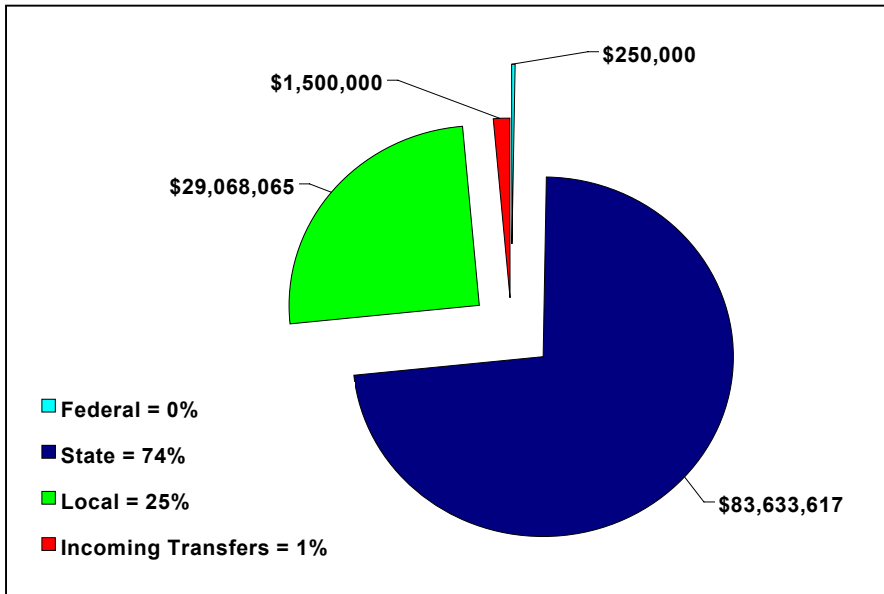
Source: Santa Rosa County School Board, Budget Presentation, 2001-2002.

The Florida Education Finance System (FEFP) is a program that calculates and distributes funds that are to be allocated to school districts. This program is the primary mechanism for funding public schools. The FEFP is calculated annually. It also provides the level of ad valorem taxes (property taxes), which may be levied by each school district in the state. "Categoricals" are funds that are specified by the Legislature and included in FEFP that are for selected district services.

Exhibit 2-7 shows how Santa Rosa's budget is allocated throughout the district. Over half of the budget is allocated for instructional purposes. Grants in excess of $2 million have been won and used to enhance and expand the curriculum. The least amount is allocated for Community Service and Transfers.

Exhibit 2-7

Over Half of Santa Rosa County School District's Budget is Allocated for Instruction
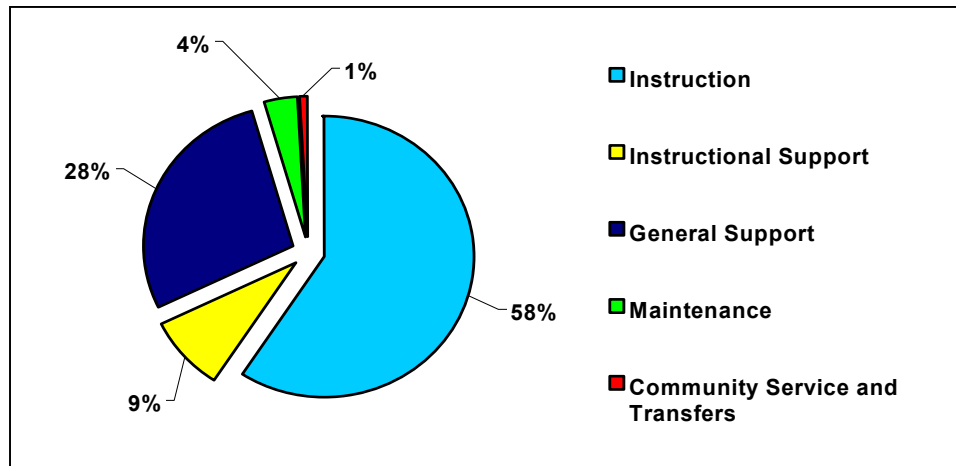
Source: Santa Rosa County School Board, Budget Presentation, 2001-02.

As well as distributing funds throughout the district, schools also have "per-pupil" expenditures. How much a school spends "per-pupil" will determine the number of new opportunities a student has to experience high-level education.

Exhibit 2-8 indicates how much Santa Rosa spends per pupil and compares that expenditure to the five peer districts. Santa Rosa spends more, on average, per pupil than the peer districts and is second in spending on "at-risk" children.

Exhibit 2-8

On Average, Santa Rosa Spends More Per-Pupil Than Most Peer Districts

	Santa Rosa	Charlotte	Lake	Osceola	Okaloosa	St. Johns
■ Exceptional ($)	$7,236	$7,501	$6,063	$7,765	$6,203	$7,902
□ Regular ($)	$4,363	$4,172	$4,023	$4,097	$4,567	$4,622
□ At-Risk ($)	$7,858	$8,157	$4,830	$4,095	$5,231	$6,007
■ Vocational ($)	$5,784	$4,008	$4,687	$4,464	$4,468	$4,837
■ Average Per-Pupil	$6,310	$5,960	$4,901	$5,105	$5,117	$5,842

■ Exceptional ($) □ Regular ($) □ At-Risk ($) ■ Vocational ($) ■ Average Per-Pupil
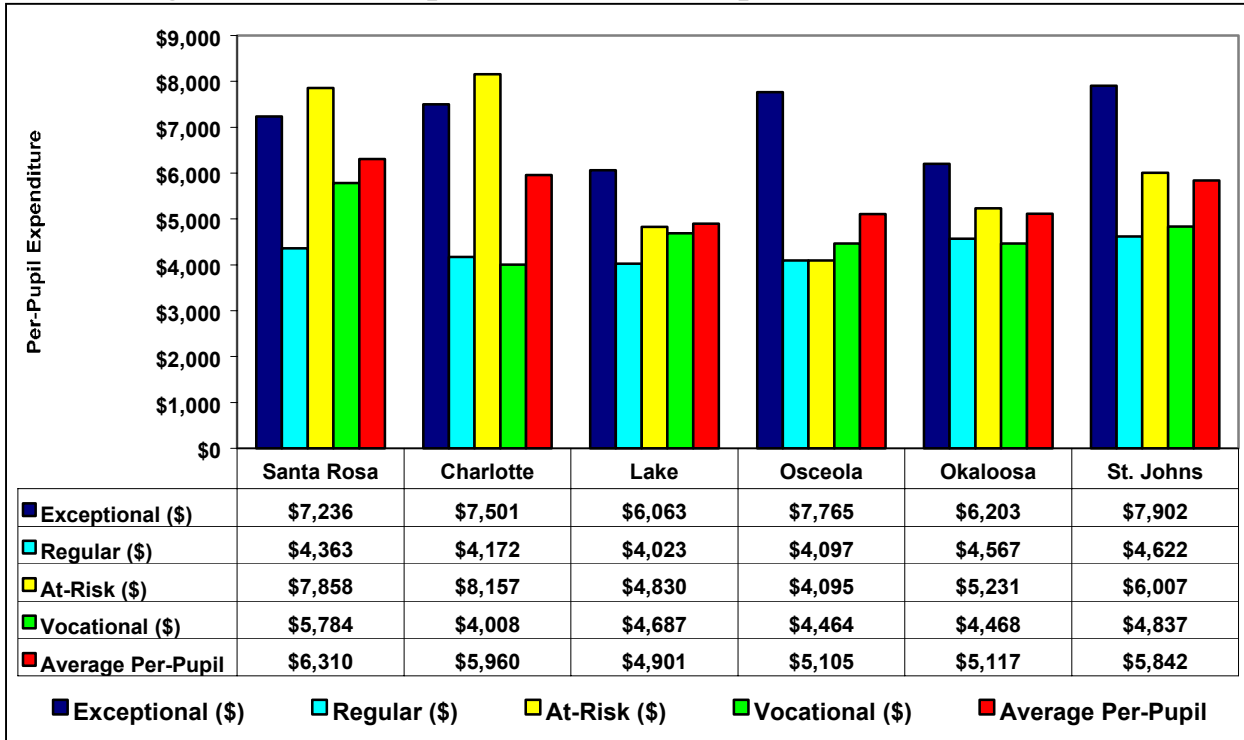
Source: http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir2001/district_report.cfm, Florida Dept. of Education.

Student Characteristics

This section provides an overview of the student population of Santa Rosa County School District and includes information about the five peer districts. The demographics and size of the student population help the district to see the make-up of the student body and to understand how to act upon the challenges and successes that the students present.

Exhibit 2-9 outlines the growth of Santa Rosa and its peer districts in student membership from 1996-97 to 2000-01.

Exhibit 2-9

Student Membership Changes Consistently Among Peer Districts

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Lake	25,150	26,085	26,774	27,776	29,280
Charlotte	15,690	15,923	16,320	16,087	16,468
Santa Rosa	20,417	21,326	21,689	21,420	22,633
Osceola	26,786	28,122	29,312	31,399	34,557
Okaloosa	29,648	29,546	29,484	29,415	29,317
St. Johns	16,355	17,200	18,087	18,287	19,687
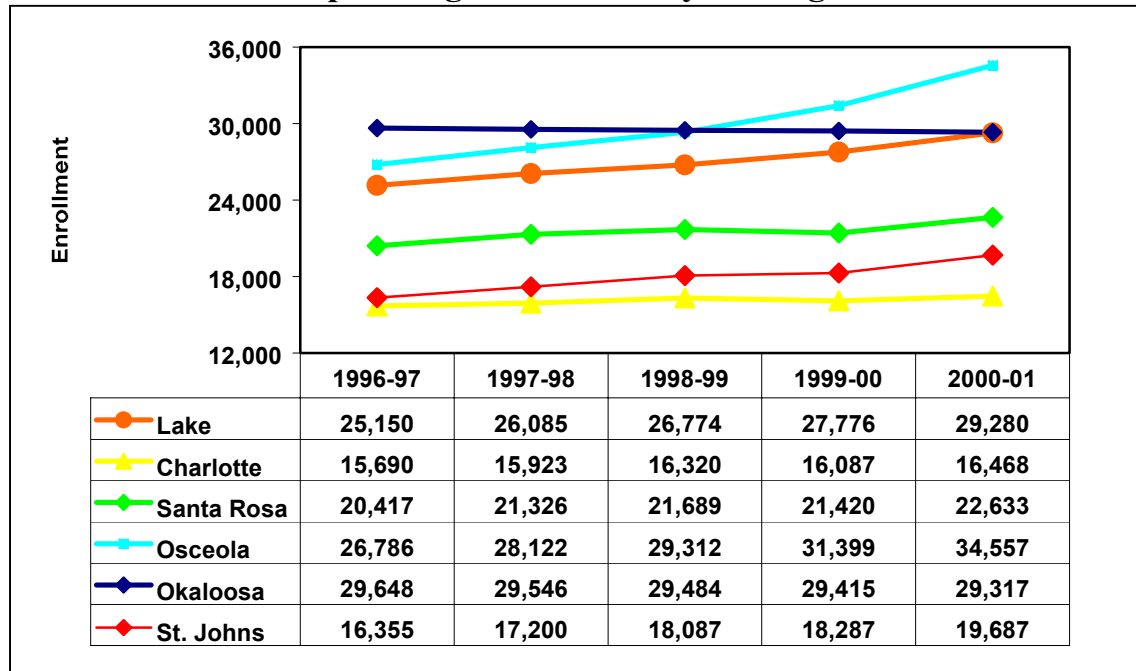
Source: http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir2001/district_report.cfm, Florida Dept. of Education.

The following data provides information on the racial/ethnic composition of Santa Rosa County School District and its peer districts. Ninety percent of Santa Rosa's students are white, non-Hispanic. This number is an average of 16 percentage points above those of Santa Rosa's peer districts and is 37 percent higher than the state average of 53 percent. The Florida Department of Education reports that Santa Rosa's Hispanic population of students equals two percent. This percentage is an average of 9 percent lower than that of the five peer districts and 17 percent lower than the state (Exhibit 2-10).

Exhibit 2-10

Santa Rosa County School District Students are Predominately White, Non-Hispanic
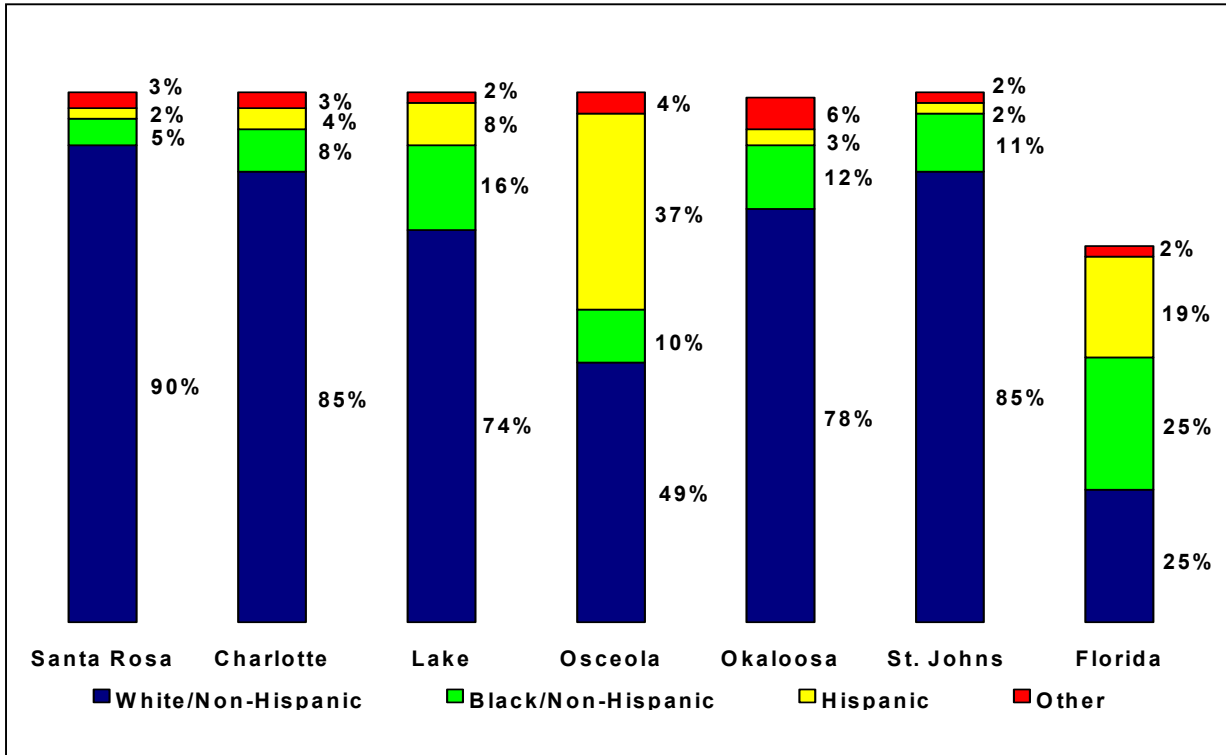
The State of Florida holds each school in the state accountable for achieving certain standards. A school's accountability is one very important way of determining the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of education that a student receives. In order to determine the progress of each school, evaluation must be done and a letter grade assigned.

Exhibit 2-11 depicts the percentage of each letter grade assigned to Santa Rosa County Schools and to schools in each of its five peer districts. Fifty percent of Santa Rosa County Schools received an 'A.' That percentage is the highest among the peer districts.

Exhibit 2-11

Compared to Peers, Santa Rosa Achieves Highest Percentage of Grade 'A' Schools
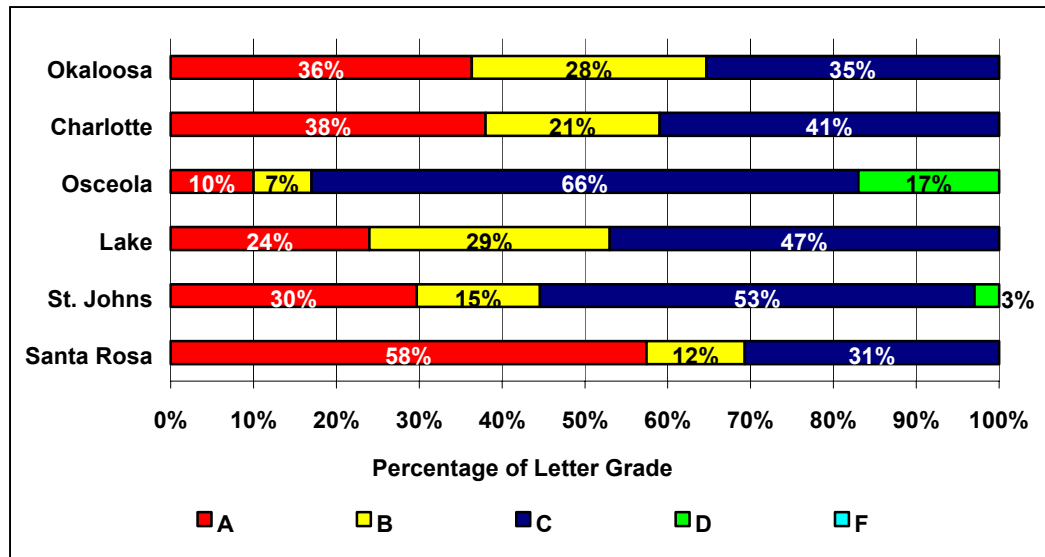
Source: Florida Dept. of Education, http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir2001/district_report.cfm.

Approximately 31 percent of Santa Rosa County School District's students receive free or reduced-price lunches. In comparison to the five peer districts and to the state of Florida, 31 percent is low. Osceola County Schools has the highest percentage of free and reduced-price lunches among the peer districts with 45 percent. The state of Florida reports 44 percent of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches. St. Johns school district reports the lowest percentage of free or reduced-price lunches (Exhibit 2-12).

Exhibit 2-12

Santa Rosa County School District has a Relatively Low Percentage of Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

School District	Student Enrollment	Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
Santa Rosa	**22,633**	**7,070**	**31%**
Charlotte	16,468	7,246	44%
Lake	29,280	11,419	39%
Osceola	34,557	15,550	45%
Okaloosa	29,317	9,675	33%
St. Johns	19,687	4,724	24%
Florida	2,430,745	1,060,918	44%

Source: Santa Rosa School District Data, Florida Department of Education, http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/flmove/santaros.htm 2000-2001.

At .2 of one percent, Santa Rosa County Schools have a very low number of students with limited English proficiency. The district has the fewest among the peer districts, and has a much lower percentage than the state of Florida's 8 percent (Exhibit 2-13).

Exhibit 2-13

Santa Rosa County School District Has Very Few Students with Limited English Proficiency

School District	Student Enrollment	Number of Students With Limited English Proficiency	Percentage of Students With Limited English Proficiency
Santa Rosa	**22,633**	**45**	**.2%**
Charlotte	16,468	132	.8%
Lake	29,280	878	3%
Osceola	34,557	5,184	15%
Okaloosa	29,317	117	.4%
St. Johns	19,687	98	.5%
Florida	2,430,745	188,802	8%

Source: Santa Rosa School District Data, Florida Department of Education, http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/flmove/santaros.htm.

Student Performance

A student's performance in school depends upon the quality of education he or she is receiving. Reaching and maintaining a cost-effective, high-standard education for each student is a mission set forth by every school district. A district must be able to set standards and enable all students, including those with special needs, to achieve his or her potential. Indicators of how well the district is reaching a student can be found in test scores, graduation rates and dropout rates. The following section will compare these indicators for Santa Rosa County School District and its peer districts.

Test Scores

One state indicator of performance is the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), which measures student performance on selected benchmarks in reading, mathematics and writing that are defined by the Sunshine State Standards. The information on the examination articulates what the student is expected, by the state of Florida, to know or to be able to do. The standards were developed in seven content areas and were adopted by the State Board of Education in May 1996. All public schools are expected to teach students the content found in the Sunshine State Standards. Each student's proficiency in reading for grades four, eight and ten and in mathematics for grades five, eight and ten is measured by the FCAT and scored on a range from 100 to 500 and grouped into five achievement levels: Level 1 (lowest) to Level 5 (highest).

Students in Santa Rosa County School District, grades four, eight and ten, are also given a writing assessment in which they are given 45 minutes to read their assigned topic, make a plan for what to write, and then write their responses. Scores for the writing examination range from 1.0 (lowest) to 6.0 (highest).

In 2000-01, throughout grade five and eight, a higher percentage of Santa Rosa County School district students scored at level 3 in math, while in grade ten, a higher percentage scored at level 4. On the reading examination, grades four, eight and ten all had a higher percentage of students score at level three. For the writing assessment, grades four, eight and ten each had more than 90 percent of their students scoring at level three or greater. Overall, Santa Rosa's FCAT scores are higher than the five peer districts' scores except for three examples when Charlotte scored higher, and Santa Rosa's scores are higher than the average in the state of Florida. In fact, the district ranked number one in the state in

fourth, fifth and eighth grade reading and math in 2000-01. They were number two in the state for writing, and the school system ranked number seven overall statewide (Exhibit 2-14).

Exhibit 2-14

Across Grade Levels, Santa Rosa County School District Students Demonstrative High Achievement on Florida's Statewide Assessment Tests

	Reading Level (Average)						Writing Level (% of students with Level 3 or higher)		
1999-2000	**4th**	**8th**	**10th**	**5th**	**8th**	**10th**	**4th**	**8th**	**10th**
Santa Rosa	**2.9**	**2.6**	**2.2**	**2.7**	**3.1**	**2.9**	**85%**	**96%**	**93%**
Charlotte	2.8	2.5	2.1	2.7	3.1	3	94%	99%	96%
Lake	2.6	2.3	2	2.6	2.6	2.6	81%	96%	89%
Osceola	2.2	2	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.5	75%	91%	90%
Okaloosa	2.3	2	2	2.6	3	2.3	74%	95%	89%
St. Johns	2.5	1.9	1.9	2.3	2.2	2.3	76%	90%	78%
Florida	**2.5**	**2.2**	**2.1**	**2.5**	**2.6**	**2.6**	**86%**	**95%**	**92%**
2000-2001	**4th**	**8th**	**10th**	**5th**	**8th**	**10th**	**4th**	**8th**	**10th**
Santa Rosa	**3.3**	**2.9**	**3**	**2.5**	**3.3**	**3.6**	**93%**	**98%**	**95%**
Charlotte	2.7	2.6	2.4	2.7	3.1	3	95%	94%	98%
Lake	2.7	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.8	93%	93%	90%
Osceola	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.4	2.7	76%	92%	91%
Okaloosa	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.7	3	2.9	88%	98%	95%
St. Johns	2.9	2.6	2.3	2.8	2.8	2.7	85%	97%	92%
Florida	**2.5**	**2.3**	**2.3**	**2.5**	**2.7**	**2.8**	**90%**	**94%**	**93%**

Source: Florida Dept. of Education, http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir2001/district_report.

In 2000-01, every school district in Florida administered nationally norm-referenced tests to students. A norm-referenced test is designed to compare individual students to students nationwide with similar characteristics, e.g. students of the same age and grade level. The students are tested in reading and mathematics and are scored with a National Percentile Rank (NPR) ranging from 1 to 99. An NPR of 50 indicates that an individual student scored better than 50 percent of students in the national comparison group.

Shown on Exhibits 2-15 and 2-16 are the results of the 2000-01 norm-referenced tests among Santa Rosa and the five peer districts. Santa Rosa County Schools have the highest score on every grade level except grade five in mathematics and have the highest score in every grade level in reading. They are consistently above the 70th percentile. In fact, grades four, six, seven, eight and nine ranked first in both the reading and mathematics NRT, and grade three ranked first on the mathematics NRT.

Exhibit 2-15

Santa Rosa County School District Students
Outscore Peer District Students on Norm-Referenced Math Tests
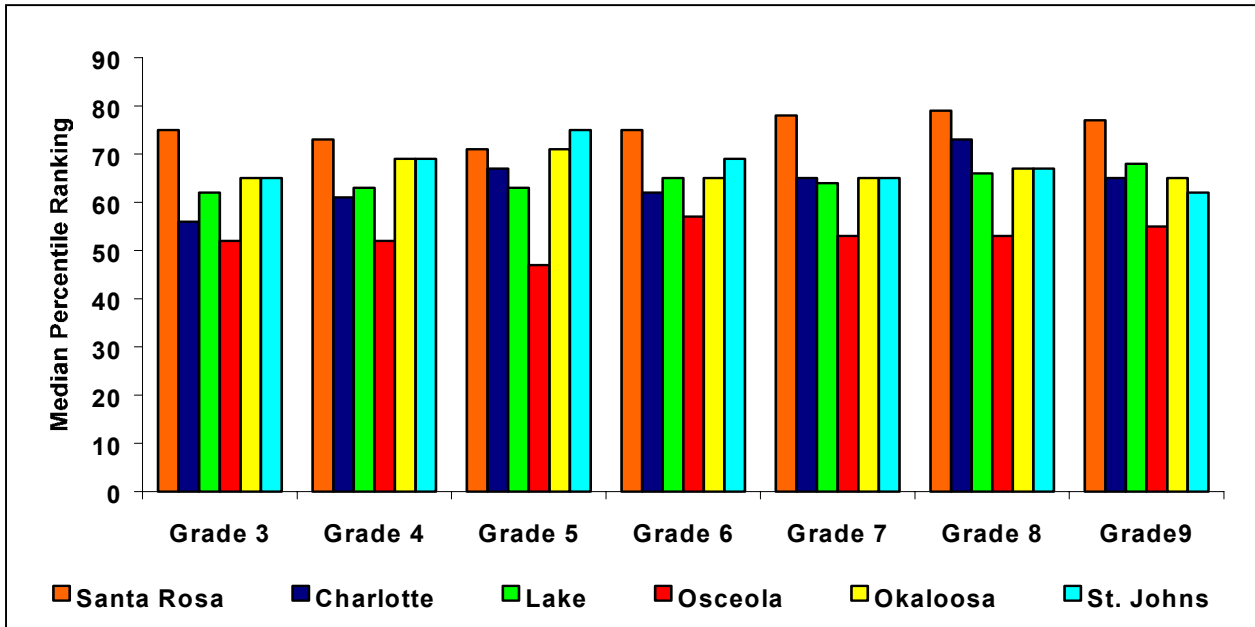
Source: Florida Dept. of Education, http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir2001/district_report.cfm.

Exhibit 2-16

Santa Rosa County School District Students Outscore Peer District Students on Norm-Referenced Reading Tests
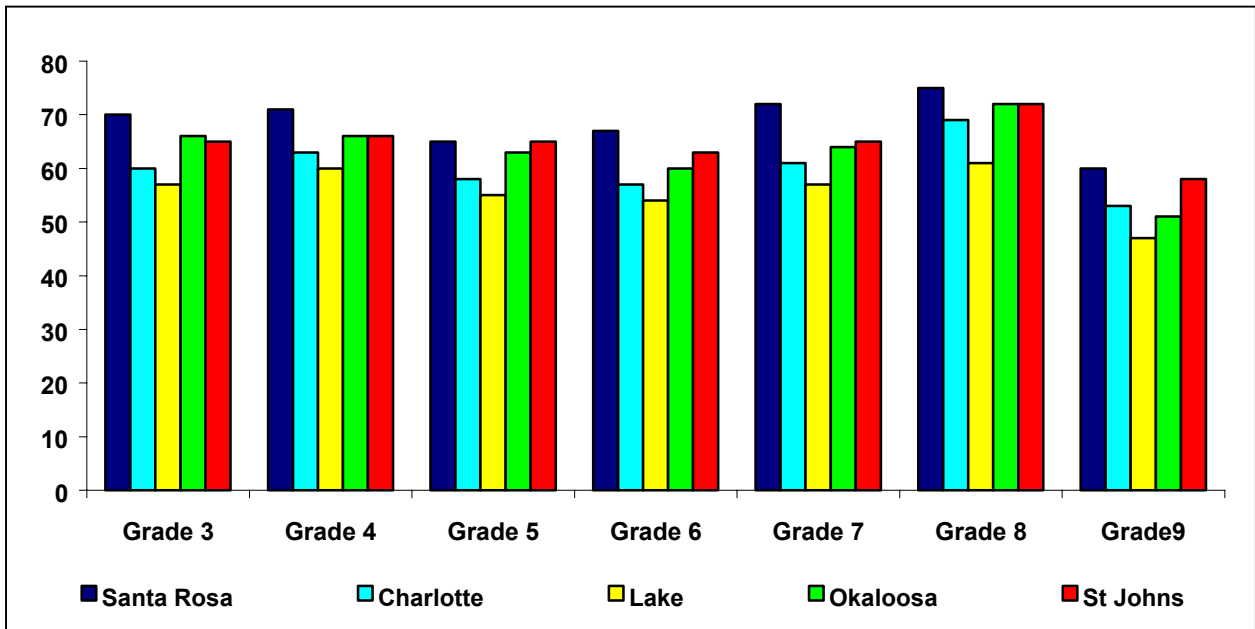
Source: Florida Dept. of Education, *http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir2001/district_report.cfm*.

Dropout and Graduation Rates

Santa Rosa County School District has the lowest dropout rate and the highest graduation rate among the peer districts. In a comparison across the past three years, the dropout rate in Santa Rosa has increased by two-tenths of one percent after decreasing by one-tenth in 1999. The graduation rate has risen in the past year after a decrease the year before. Exhibits 2-17 and 2-18 depict the graduation and dropout trends respectively among the five peer districts and compare them to Santa Rosa.

Exhibit 2-17

Santa Rosa County School District Has Similar Graduation Rates as Peer Districts
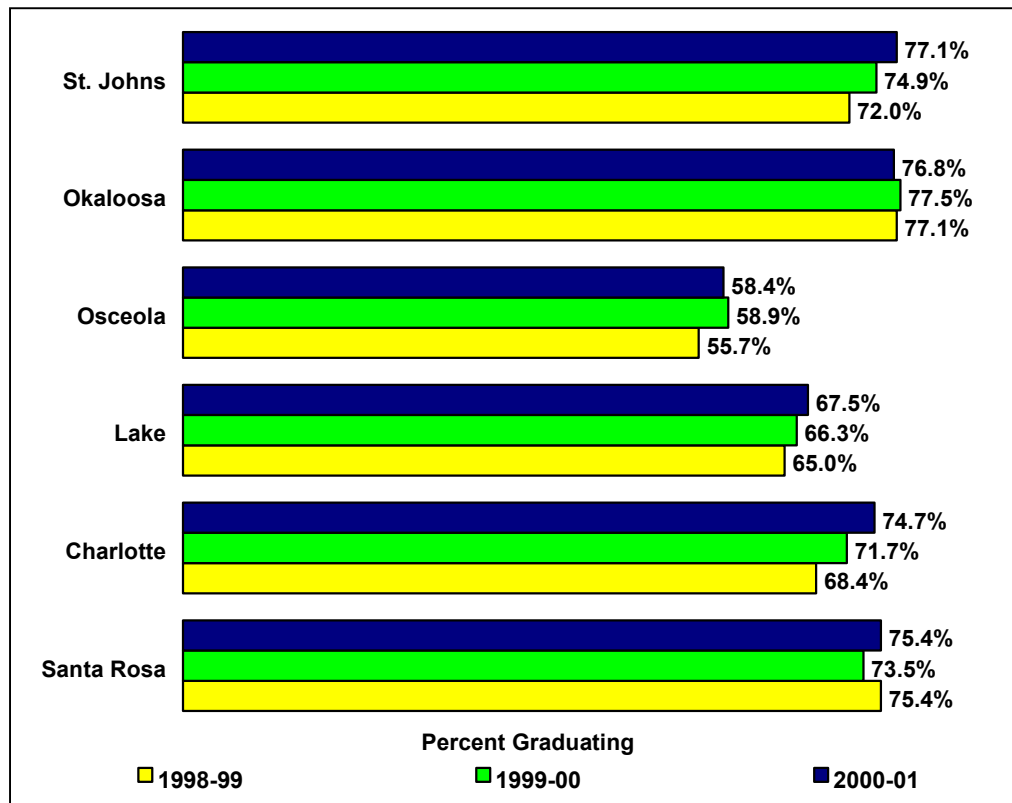
Source: Florida Dept. of Education, http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir2001/district_report.cfm

Exhibit 2-18

**Santa Rosa County School District Has the
Lowest Dropout Rate of its Peer Districts**
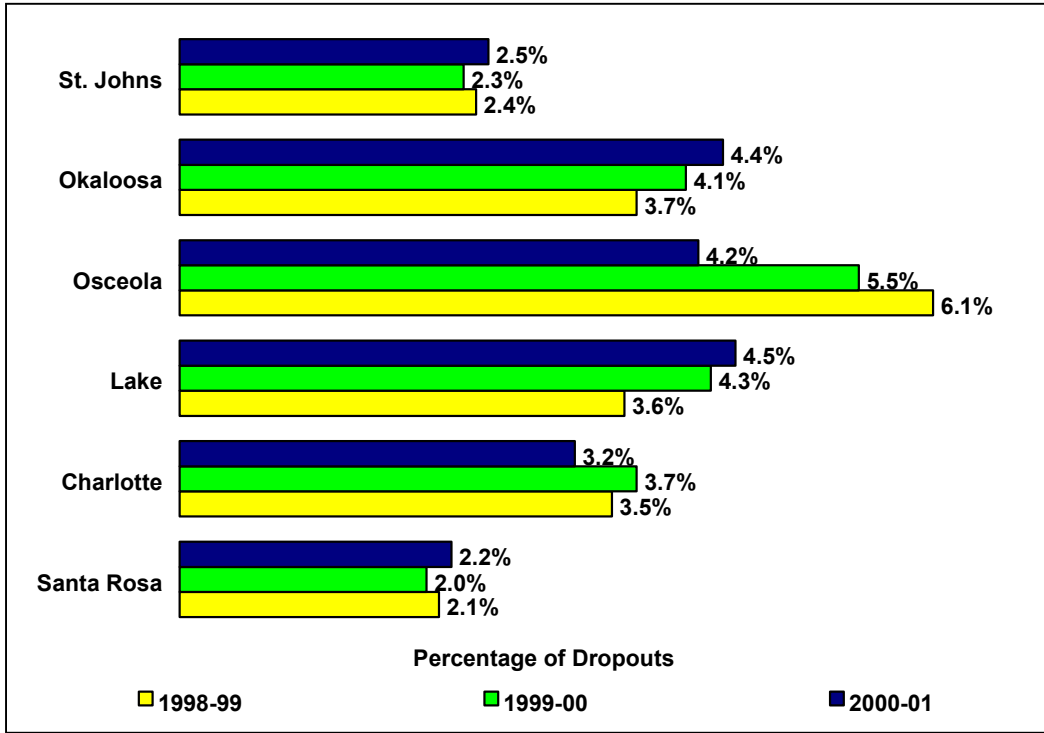
Source: Florida Dept. of Education, http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir2001/distrcit_report.cfm.

In addition to the traditional means of graduation, Santa Rosa County Schools use Dual Enrollment and Early Admissions as possible paths for high school students. Dual Enrollment is a possibility that offers the student college credit while he or she still attends high school. Early Admissions is very similar, except that the high school student has finished his or her high school courses and begins college courses at an earlier age. He or she will still graduate with his or her class (Exhibit 2-19).

Exhibit 2-19

Santa Rosa County Schools Offer Options to Some High School Students
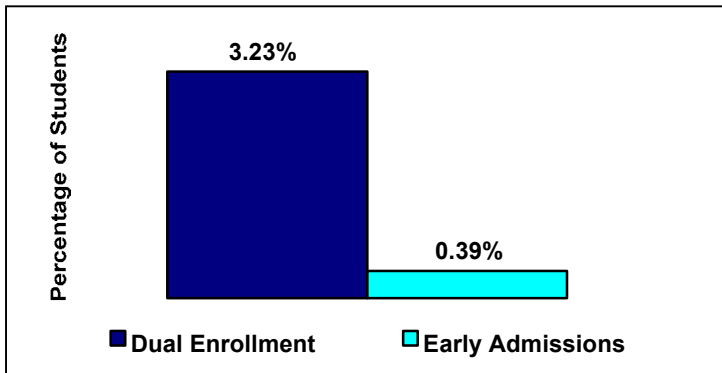
Source: Santa Rosa County School Board, 2001.

Staff Characteristics

In this section of the statistical overview, the characteristics of the personnel employed by the Santa Rosa County School District will be illustrated by comparing them to the five peer districts. Exhibit 2-20 compares the percentage of full-time staff in three categories: Administrators, Instruction and Support.

Exhibit 2-20

**Santa Rosa County School District Allocates a
Greater Proportion of Staff to Instruction Than Peers**
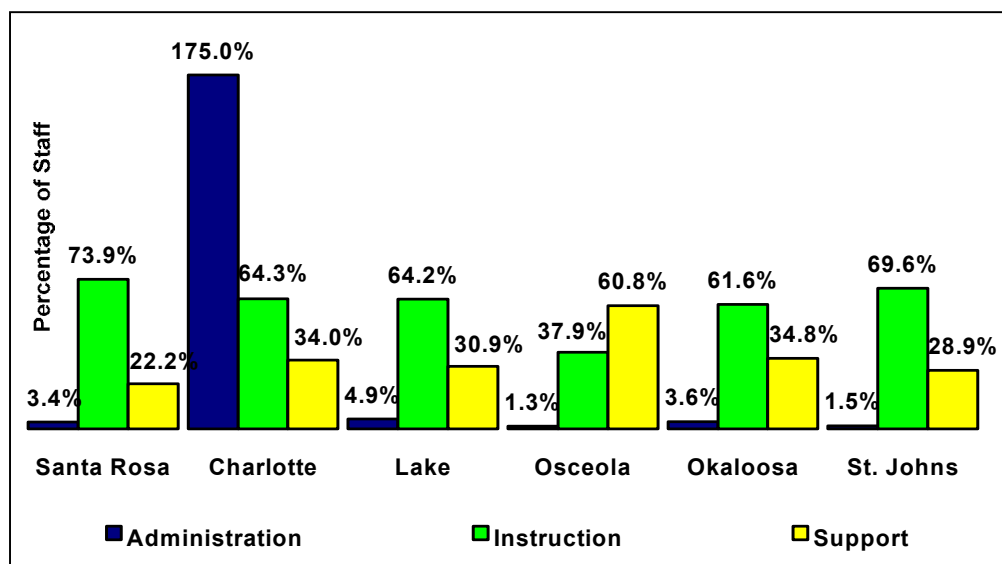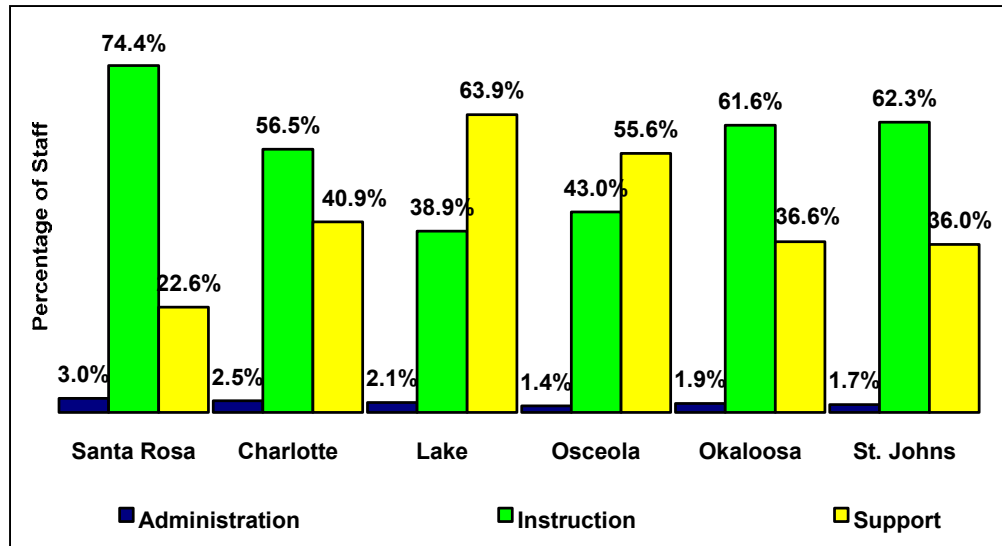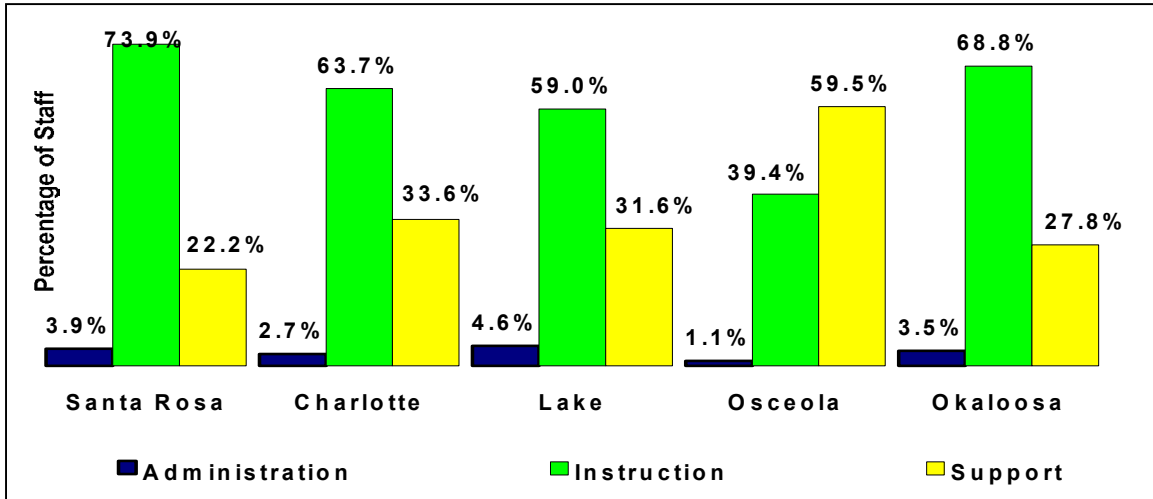
Source: Florida Dept. of Education, http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir2001/district_report.cfm.

Exhibit 2-21 provides information regarding the race and gender of full-time staff at Santa Rosa and its peer districts. Santa Rosa has a majority of white, non-Hispanic staff, and the district also has the lowest percentage of black, non-Hispanic and Hispanic staff. This limited diversity of staff is consistent with the diversity of its student characteristics.

Exhibit 2-21

Santa Rosa School District Staff is Less Diverse Than Its Peers

Source: Santa Rosa School District Data, Florida Dept. of Education, http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/flmove/santaros.htm.
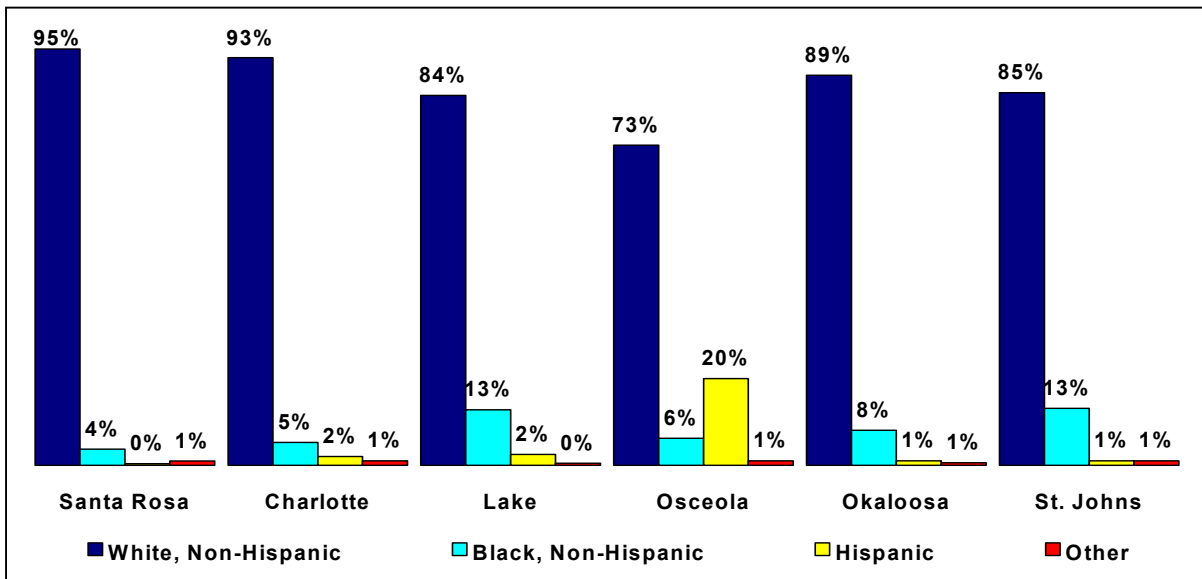
Exhibit 2-22 depicts the educational attainment of Santa Rosa's teaching staff and is compared to the five peer districts.

Exhibit 2-22

The Educational Attainment of Instructors with Advanced Degrees is Consistent with Most Peer Districts
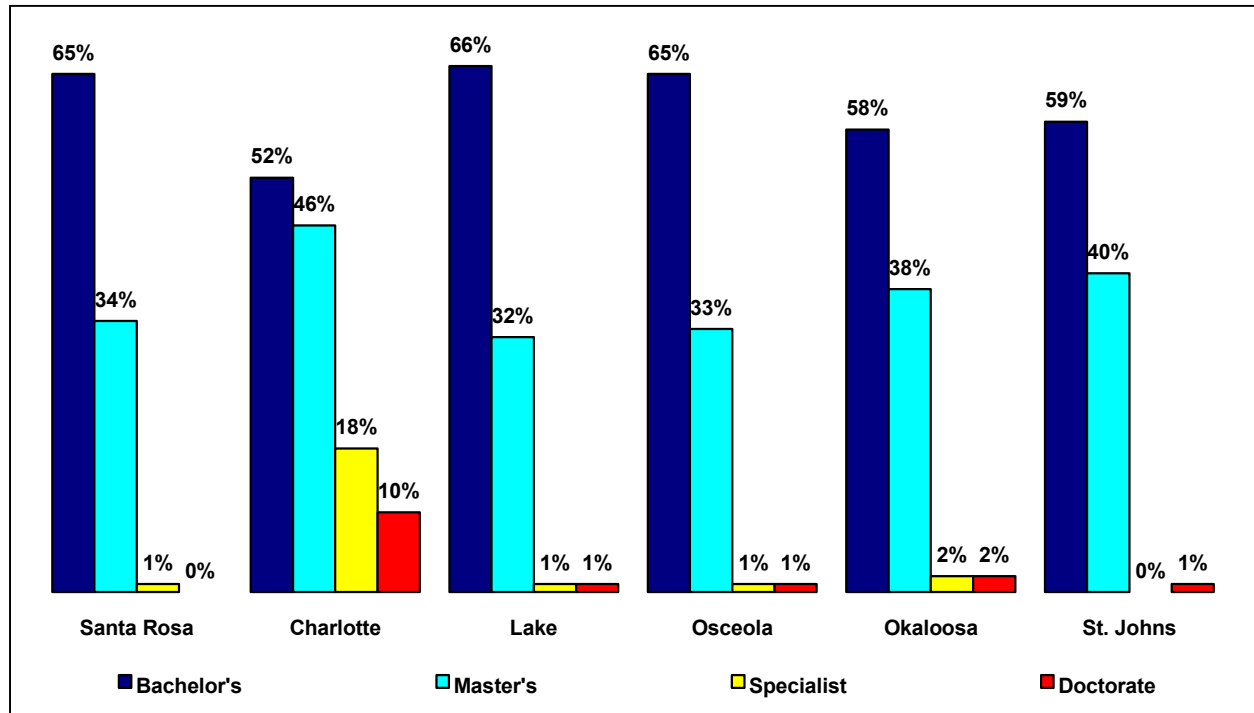
Source: Santa Rosa School District Data, Florida Dept. of Education, http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/flmove/santaros.htm.

3 Management Structures

The Santa Rosa County School District has developed and maintained effective and practical management structures, which need only minor adjustments in the areas of personnel, annual evaluations, adding training opportunities for school board members, expanding opportunities for citizen involvement, and some attention to the development of effective communication pathways.

Conclusion

The Santa Rosa County School District conducts its operations in an efficient and responsible manner. There is a strong, positive working relationship between the school board and the superintendent, as evidenced in the following discussion and by the overall school district performance. In addition, the Santa Rosa County School District has developed written procedures and practices in most areas managed responsibly in an effective school district.

Developing strong, education-based leadership for the Santa Rosa County School District is an integral part of the district's culture and continues to garner positive results for students, parents, and taxpayers. The single most compelling demonstration of effective leadership and the district's clear focus on student achievement lies in the fact that Santa Rosa students continue to perform among the top school districts in the state (see Exhibits 3-1 and 3-2). The reader may also wish to review school district indicators and other peer district comparisons presented in Chapter 5, Educational Service Delivery and Chapter 4, Performance Accountability.

The SchoolMatch consultant team reviewed all sources of revenue captured by Santa Rosa County School District, examined the budget process, and considered the district's priorities in the allocation of resources to accomplish its primary goal of improving student achievement. Although a formal procedure for evaluating progress toward meeting goals and objectives has yet to be established, the one-year-old strategic planning process is exemplary, as evidenced in the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006, cited liberally in the following chapter.

During the course of this review, SchoolMatch consultants identified a number of district accomplishments in management structures, some of which are included in Exhibit 3-3 below.

Exhibit 3-1

Santa Rosa Has More Schools Rated "A" than Any Peer District in 2000-01

District	Grade "A:	Grade "B"	Grade "C"	Grade "D"	Grade "F"
Santa Rosa	**15**	**3**	**8**	**0**	**0**
Charlotte	7	5	5	0	0
Lake	8	10	16	0	0
Okaloosa	13	16	9	0	0
Osceola	3	2	19	5	0
St. Johns	7	1	11	1	0

Source: Florida Senate Appropriations Committee Report: A Statistical Review of Education in Florida, 2001-2002.

Exhibit 3-2

Santa Rosa Has Highest Overall School Grades in State of Florida, 2001

District	'A' Schools	'B' Schools	'C' Schools	'D' Schools	'F' Schools	State Rank
Santa Rosa	**15**	**3**	**8**	**0**	**0**	**1**
Charlotte	7	5	5	0	0	6
Lake	8	10	16	0	0	15
Okaloosa	13	16	9	0	0	7
Osceola	3	2	19	5	0	39
St. Johns	7	1	11	1	0	24

Source: Florida Senate Appropriations Committee Report: A Statistical Review of Education in Florida, 2001-2002.

Exhibit 3-3

Santa Rosa Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Management Structures in the Last Three Years

- Developed an effective strategic planning process, resulting in the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006, as the primary management tool for all stakeholders in the school district.

- Held the number of administrators constant during the last three years while the student population increased by 9.4%. The district also reduced the total number of central district administrators over the past 22 years, while student enrollment nearly doubled.

- Reduced authority at the central administrative level in favor of greater authority at the school building and operational unit levels, including authority to manage resources, conduct effective communication and public relations' functions, and to engage stakeholders in the success of the building or operational unit program.

- Legal cost-containment places Santa Rosa far below comparable expenditures when compared with any other peer district.

- Effectiveness in the areas of leadership, planning, and monitoring student progress, as well as commitment to high expectations within a positive school climate result in positive perceptions by various stakeholders.

- An exemplary annual employee evaluation process for every employee (a) linking goals to job descriptions to evaluation criteria and (b) providing data to measure school district progress in achieving goals and objectives of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006.

- Maintaining fiscal integrity over the past five years in management of the fund balance.

- A process to accurately project enrollment over the past five years to within 0.9%-1.1% of actual enrollments.

- More than doubling categorical grant revenue from $13.2 million in the 1991-92 fiscal year to $27.6 million in the 2001-02 fiscal year.

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

Overview of Chapter Findings

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Responsible Management of District

1. The district's school board and superintendent have established clearly delineated responsibilities and the policies and practices to effectively manage the district. However, procedures are needed to

---

[1] SchoolMatch consultants' working papers, Santa Rosa County school personnel interviews, October 15-19, 2001.

annually review school board policy, ensure board member training meets standards, and to ensure the an annual evaluation of board performance (page 3-8).

2. The school board has established reasonable and understandable rules for conducting business. The Santa Rosa County School Board does not, however, exhaust every opportunity to bring regular school board meetings to citizens throughout the district (page 3-12).

3. The board and superintendent need to improve efforts to keep the "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County" up to date and accessible to all patrons and citizens. In addition, policies need to be consistent with research on effective schools, and should be separate from administrative practices and procedures (page 3-14).

4. The district employs contracted legal services at annual costs far below any peer district, but there is no policy on when the board, superintendent, and staff should access legal counsel, nor is there board policy setting criteria for hiring additional legal counsel (page 3-20).

Effective and Responsible Operation

5. The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority. However, one unit has too large a span of control, while one is too small (page 3-23).

6. The district continually reviews the need for administrative positions. The district has one of the lowest rations of administrators to students across its peers, while the ratio of administrators to staff is comparable to peer districts (page 3-26).

7. Effective oversight of resources exists in the district (page 3-29).

8. Site-based management in the school district is effective in terms of the amount of authority granted to school principals (Pages 3-32).

Allocation of Resources

9. The district's multi-year Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 is exemplary (page 3-33).

10. The district has been able to accurately project its enrollments (page 3-36).

11. The district links its financial plans and budgets to the priority goals and objectives of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006. District resources are allocated towards achieving those goals and objectives (page 3-37).

12. While Santa Rosa County School District maximizes existing resources and encourages all staffs to cultivate new resources, the district does not have written procedures to regularly obtain information about new funding sources (page 3-39).

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Only one of the recommendations for improving the management structures in the Santa Rosa County School District has a potential five-year fiscal impact (see Exhibit 3-4).

Exhibit 3-4

One Management Structures Recommendation Has Fiscal Impact

Recommendation	Five-Year Fiscal Impact
• The school board of Santa Rosa County School District should review and update its "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations."	• To assist in updating the administrative policies and procedures, temporary clerical and/or technical staff to manage the production of documents for superintendent and board review and codification and filing of documents once board approval is accomplished is likely. An annual investment of $30,000 is a one-time cost. So five-year recurring amount remains at $30,000.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Background

The Santa Rosa County School District has a long history of managing with minimum central administration and maximum focus on management and accountability at the building and operational unit levels. The Santa Rosa Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 provides the basis for site-based management, allocation of resources, focus on excellence in the classroom, and student improvement. This chapter presents evidence to show that management structures are well organized to support students and the ultimate goal of improving student achievement in the Santa Rosa County School District.

Santa Rosa County has more than 120,000 residents and is located in the Florida Panhandle. [2] The county, which is one of the most rapidly growing in a fast-growing state, stretches from the Alabama border to the Gulf of Mexico, with Escambia County on the west and Okaloosa County on the east. The economic base of the county includes agriculture and timber in the north, industry and military bases in the center, and tourism in the south.

Santa Rosa County School District has a total of 31 school buildings serving more than 23,000 students including 6 high schools, 7 middle schools, 16 elementary schools, 1 technical center, 1 community school, and 1 adult school. While school buildings are located strategically throughout the county to serve its population clusters in the north, central, and south areas of the school district. The school district's administrative, operational, and service buildings are located in the Milton area, which is central to district operations and to all school building facilities.

Santa Rosa County School District employs approximately 1,400 instructional personnel, 83 administrative personnel, and approximately 800 support staff. The ratio of students to administrators in Santa Rosa is low when compared with peer districts (see Exhibit 3-14).

Santa Rosa County School District is one of 44 school districts in Florida that has an elected superintendent. Since the 1950s, school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholder groups in Santa Rosa have become actively involved in assuring that the superintendent leading their efforts, either by temporary appointment or by election, is an experienced school administrator with a wealth of background in education and a strong commitment to the superintendent and administration as servants of the school system. Evidence indicates the current superintendent was highly successful as an administrator in elementary and secondary schools where test scores and state awards validated improved student achievement, throughout 23 years of service prior to election as superintendent.

---

[2] School District of Santa Rosa County (maps).

Moreover, when a vacancy in the superintendency occurs, or is likely to occur, educators in the district become politically active in support of a trained and experienced educator to lead the district. When the superintendency changes hands, there does not tend to be wholesale change in the other administrative positions in the district. The result is a stable administrative staff where continuity, professionalism, and high expectations endure. As confirmed in dozens of interviews with members of every stakeholder group in Santa Rosa County, this culture is built on respect, and demands that Santa Rosa educators focus on the needs of the student and taxpayer. In the context of the state of Florida where there are currently 23 appointed superintendents and 44 elected superintendents, this district stands out as a model for making the elected superintendent structure work to advantage.

The district's table of organization (see Exhibit 3-5) accurately depicts the working organization and provides evidence of historically low administrative staffing levels. Administrators have been added at the site-based management level over the past 20 years, and the total number of central administrators has been reduced. The span of control of the superintendent in Santa Rosa, however, is among the smallest among peer districts (see Exhibit 3-11).

Site-based managers are empowered through the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 to provide effective and responsible direction at their bases of operation. Site-based managers work directly with data processing staff to monitor and accurately project student enrollment in a timely fashion. For the 2000-01 school year, per pupil expenditures for exceptional, regular and at-risk students compare favorably with peer districts (see Exhibit 3-17).

In the matter of allocation of resources, the district's first priority continues to be quality classroom instruction. Efficiencies in hiring practices and programs aimed at retaining teachers have resulted in cost savings to Santa Rosa County School District. The superintendent and assistant superintendent for finance regularly present updated information to the school board on the financial status of the school district. Santa Rosa's total operating budget for the 1998-99 school year provided $5,271 per student, including fund balance, and $4,633 per student, excluding fund balance (see Exhibit 3-19).

The annual budget is built to support the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006. Santa Rosa County School District seeks out grants, originating primarily from the site-based level in the absence of a central district grants coordinator, and business partnerships to garner support, material and volunteer assistance, and additional revenue for the district, and the district optimizes all available sources of revenue to maintain good fiscal health.

Exhibit 3-5

Santa Rosa Has Relatively Small Administrative Staff, 2001-02

School Board

Superintendent of Schools

Contracted Legal Services

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Assistant Superintendent for Finance

Assistant Superintendent for Administration

- Director of Inservice & Instructional Technology
  - Director of Beacon Service
    - Teachers on Special Assignment
      - *** Technology Trainer
      - *** Instructional Technologist
    - IT V Specialist & IT V Assistant
    - Network Analyst Inservice Media Reservations
    - Web Administrator
- Director of App Tech. Adult & Community Education
  - Director of Community Schools
- Director of Pre-Kindergarten Programs
  - Coordinator of Early Head Start
    - Program Facilitators (TSA)
    - FDLRS
    - School Psychologists
    - Human Resource Specialist
    - Child Find Specialist
- Director of ESE Student Services & Title VI
  - Coordinator of ESE Student's Program Development & Services
    - System Analyst
  - Coordinator of Integrated Services
    - ISDB System Analyst
    - Staffing Specialist
    - Teacher on Special Assignment
      - **** Guidance
  - Coordinator of SEDNET
    - School Social Workers
- Director of Special Projects
- Coordinator of Health & P.E.
  - Teacher on Special Assignment
    - **** Safe & Drug Free Schools
- Director of Elementary Schools & Title I
  - Coordinator of Mathematics & Science
    - Teacher on Special Assignment
      - **** Flight Adventure Deck
    - Teacher on Special Assignment
      - **** Reading Recovery
- Director of Middle Schools
- Director of High Schools
  - Coordinator of Reading Language Arts & ESOL
    - Teachers on Special Assignment
      - **** ESOL
    - Teachers on Special Assignment
      - * Art
      - * Music
      - *** Social Studies & Director of Educational Foundation

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources:
- Certification Specialist
- Personnel Assistant I
- Personnel Assistant II
- SEMS Operator

Assistant Superintendent for Finance:
- Data Processing Manager
- Risk Manager
- Senior Accountant
- Accountant III Disbursements

Assistant Superintendent for Administration:
- Supervisor of Building Maintenance
- Director of School Food Service
- Director of Transportation
- Purchasing Manager

* Full-Time Supplemented Position
** Part-Time Teaching Position
*** Full-Time Non-Teaching Position
**** Full-Time Teaching Position

- Contracted (red)
- Civil Cervice (yellow)
- Administrative (dark blue)
- Instructional (cyan)

Source: SchoolMatch consultants' representation of the table of organization, Santa Rosa County School District.

Methodology

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed the Santa Rosa County District's own assessment of their management structures using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Florida Commissioner of Education as a commencement point for this analysis. The superintendent advised SchoolMatch that the only other external studies conducted in the school district over the past five years have been the annual financial audit conducted by Florida's Office of the Auditor General.

The consulting team then employed several methodologies to gather additional information, confirm information, formulate finding statements, offer recommendations for practices to be implemented over the next two years or sooner, and design action plans to accomplish the recommendations.

During each of three separate visits to Santa Rosa County School District, SchoolMatch consultants worked to complete an assessment of whether Santa Rosa followed Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators and conducted on-site interviews with such school district personnel as district level managers, each of the elected school board members, the elected superintendent, building level managers, bargaining unit representatives, classroom teachers, and support staff to gather information on the district's management structures, activities, policies and procedures. [3]

SchoolMatch consultants administered a survey of the perceptions of stakeholder groups including administrators, teachers, support staff and parents in Santa Rosa County School District in October and November 2001. The purpose of the survey was to capture perceptions about the district's leadership, emphasis on learning, school climate, monitoring of results, and quality of expectations in the school district. The survey was designed by SchoolMatch consultants, approved by the OPPAGA project coordinator, and distributed through the cooperation of the district superintendent's office. In an open process, building principals and division administrators made copies of the surveys for distribution to the aforementioned groups. A total of 1,127 surveys were returned to the SchoolMatch consultant offices and tabulated. The survey questions asked respondents to strongly agree (1), agree (2), disagree (3), or strongly disagree (4) with the statements in the survey. Based upon an average of the survey responses, the consultants determined that a score of 2.05 or less indicated that the respondents agreed with the statement that the district was effective in that area. Summary results of this survey appear in Appendix A.

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed approved school board minutes, the school board policy manual, strategic planning documents, budget documents, and individual building improvement plans to understand the levels of organization and accountability already present in Santa Rosa County School District. When further detail was needed, SchoolMatch engaged in second-tier and third-tier interviews and requested support documentation. The final step was to obtain a broader perspective by comparing Santa Rosa with its peer districts in Florida: Charlotte, Lake, Osceola, Okaloosa, and St. Johns.

---

[3] SchoolMatch Consultants' working papers, Santa Rosa County School District personnel interviews, October 15-19, 2001.

Responsible Management of District

1 **The district's school board and superintendent have established clearly delineated responsibilities and the policies and practices to effectively manage the district. However, procedures are needed to annually review school board policy, ensure board member training meets standards, and to ensure the an annual evaluation of board performance.**

The roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent have been clearly delineated, and board members and the superintendent generally have procedures to ensure that they have an effective working relationship. However, procedures need to be established to review board policy annually, to set standards for regular school board member training, and for the board's annual evaluation of its own performance.

Roles and Responsibilities Are Clearly Defined

It is clear from interviews [4] with the superintendent, the assistant superintendents, directors, and the employee association president as well as review of minutes of meetings of the school board, [5] and survey results [6] that the school board and administration in Santa Rosa County School District have an excellent working relationship with clearly delineated roles. The adopted board policy clearly establishes this relationship in Part I, "The District School Board", and Part II, "The Superintendent Administrative Policies Rules and Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County."

It was reported in multiple personnel interviews that the school board exercises policy direction and oversight authority over the administration without micromanaging. Board minutes indicate only one split vote on a personnel matter within the last 24-month period. This limited degree of disagreement with the superintendent's recommendations in the vital human resource area is strong evidence the Santa Rosa County School Board is not micromanaging the district's administrative functions.

School Board Could Benefit from Additional Training

Longevity of the Santa Rosa board is depicted in Exhibit 3-6. Santa Rosa conducts board member orientation when a new member is elected. Since board members have such unusually long tenures of service, the issue of orientation training for new board members has not been germane. However, while certain members of the board have participated in parts of Florida School Board Association's "Master Board Program," the board as a whole has not qualified for this designation. It would appear that more formal training for school board members would be appropriate even given their long average tenure, since there is no formal training in Florida's highly structured Sunshine Law and complex school finance procedures. While some efforts have been made to improve school district policy availability and currency, there is at this time little involvement of the school board itself in the process.

---

[4] Santa Rosa County School District, board approved meeting minutes, selected pages showing tabled items: 9/14/00, 10/12/00, 10/26/00, 11/21/00, 3/15/01, and 10/25/01.

[5] Santa Rosa County School District's board minutes from regular board meetings on 8/9/01, 8/28/01, and 9/13/01.

[6] See Appendix A.

Shared governance established in adopted board policy provides the unified authority to support the strategic plan. [7] In Santa Rosa County School District, as in 43 other Florida districts, both superintendent and school board members stand for election every four years. A remarkable lack of turnover and subsequent stability in the office of the superintendent in the district is complimented by an equally remarkable lack of turnover and subsequent stability in the tenure of school board members (see Exhibit 3-6).

Exhibit 3-6

School Board Members' Longevity Contributes to Stability in Leadership and Continuity of Programs

District	1	2	3	4	5
Current Position	Chair	Member	Vice Chair	Member	Member
Year Elected	1978	1992	1982	1992	1986
Schools Served	Bagdad EL Hobbs MS King MS Rhodes EL E. Milton EL Jackson PK Milton HS	Berryhill EL Central HS Chumuckla EL Jay EL Jay HS Munson EL Locklin Technical Center	Holley-Navarre INT Holley-Navarre MS Holley-Navarre EL Navarre HS West Navarre EL Woodlawn Beach EL	Avalon MS Dixon INT Dixon PRI Sims MS Pea Ridge EL Pace HS	Gulf Breeze EL Gulf Breeze MS Gulf Breeze HS Oriole Beach EL

Source: School board member biographical sketches 2001-02, available at http://www.santarosa.k12.fl.us.

The school board has effective working relationships

The relationship between the school board and superintendent is professional and productive. Lines are clear between the policy making function of the school board and the authority granted to the superintendent to administer the school district. The culture that Santa Rosa has developed over the years creates an atmosphere in which building administrators and teachers believe that the central office staff and school board members are in place to serve their needs and those of the district's students.

Formal procedures regarding contacting board members, the superintendent, and district staff are unnecessary since there is a free flow of communication and information. As in any other school district, controversial issues do occasionally arise. The district responds by gathering information, confirming the information, informing every other stakeholder group, and addressing the issue with candor and with empirical evidence.

In touring school buildings, the SchoolMatch consultants were impressed with the familiarity of the superintendent and central office administrators with classroom teachers and support staff. In Santa Rosa, not only do administrators know the teachers, secretaries, custodians, food service workers, and others by name, but all staff appear comfortable with district leadership walking through the buildings and observing operations. The effectiveness of Santa Rosa leadership was confirmed in the results of an autumn 2001 stakeholder survey (see Exhibit 3-7). While the district staff 's apparent satisfaction with board member's management of district operations, the board has no formal process for evaluating its own performance except when members stand for election at the polls.

---

[7] Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County," April 1997.

Exhibit 3-7

Survey Indicates Confidence in District's Effectiveness

Survey Statement	Average Response*
The new administrative team possesses the knowledge and skills needed to properly manage the resources of the district.	1.504
The new administrative team is doing a good job of communicating the district's current financial condition.	1.642
The district is currently spending its money wisely.	1.741
District officials should put a new referendum for additional funds on the ballot.	1.805
Today's school district officials can be trusted to make prudent decisions about effectively deploying the school system's financial resources.	1.649
The new administration has been open with the community about financial priorities.	1.699

*Scores below 2.050 indicate effectiveness has been achieved in the perception of stakeholders.

Source: SchoolMatch Survey of Perceptions, Leadership Correlate, October-November 2001.

The documents "Registration to Address the Board" and "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations, Part I, Section 1.04" provide the public with a formal and reasonable structure for access to effective and efficient board meetings. For each major item on the agenda the administrative staff of the district prepares clearly written executive summaries that relate the item to both the district budget and its goals and objectives.

Board members do not direct district staff but respond to constituent inquiries through procedures developed and documented in "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations 1.02." The Superintendent informs the school board through informational packets routinely sent to the members prior to each meeting.

While the District Has a Mission Statement and Strategic Plan, Formal Follow-Up Evaluation Components Are Needed

To further communicate the school district's aspirations and plans, the school board has adopted both a mission statement and a strategic plan. Through the process of strategic planning and budget development, the school board clearly defines the district's goals, objectives and future plans each year, with stakeholders generally satisfied with this effort (Exhibit 3-8). However, the formal strategic planning process is still relatively new, and procedures are not yet in place to evaluate progress toward meeting the goals enumerated in the adopted strategic plan. Further, district should have a mission statement relative to the board and administration's role in community involvement, but, as mentioned in Chapter 15, Community Involvement, a commitment to a community involvement plan in the form of an adopted school board policy has not occurred.

Exhibit 3-8

Santa Rosa County Survey of Perceptions Regarding School District Planning

Survey Statement	Average Response*
The school district has developed a plan to meet future educational needs of students.	1.717
There is clear planning and organization in the school district.	1.738
The Santa Rosa County Public School District should strive to be among the best school systems in the State of Florida.	1.118

*Scores below 2.050 indicate effectiveness has been achieved in the perception of stakeholders.

Source: SchoolMatch Survey of Perceptions, Oct-Nov 2001 (see Appendix A).

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the board develop a formal process for evaluating its performance (see Action Plan 3-1).*

- *We recommend formalized training for school board members during work sessions focusing on Florida Sunshine Law and Florida school finance (see Action Plan 3-2).*

- *We recommend serious discussion on the part of the school board for participation in the Florida "Master School Board" program (see Action Plan 3-3).*

Action Plan 3-1

Develop a Formal Process for Evaluating School Board Performance	
Strategy	In order to ensure the public trust and to improve the quality of service rendered by the school board, a formal process for evaluating School Board performance needs to be established.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine the timeline for annual evaluation.
	Step 2: Develop school board goals for each school fiscal year
	Step 3: Determine who will conduct the evaluation.
	Step 4: Develop a plan to disseminate the results of the annual evaluation.
Who is Responsible	School board members
Time Frame	December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Action Plan 3-2

Arrange Training for School Board Members	
Strategy	In order to optimize the knowledge base of school board members and, in turn, optimize their service to Santa Rosa County School District, establish a regular annualized school board training calendar.
Action Needed	Step 1: Assess the areas in which school board members need training, in addition to regular training in Florida Sunshine Law and school finance.
	Step 2: Consult with the Florida School Boards Association and other professional agencies to determine where effective training can be procured.
	Step 3: Develop the school board training calendar and update as training opportunities are added.
	Step 4: Notify all stakeholders of the adopted plan.
Who is Responsible	School board leadership
Time Frame	December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Action Plan 3-3

Consider Membership in the Master School Board Program	
Strategy	In order to make available the greatest possible resources to support school board members in their goal to render quality service to the Santa Rosa County School District, explore membership in the Master School Board program.
Action Needed	Step 1: Invite a representative of the Master School Board program to present features and benefits of membership in the Master School Board program.
	Step 2: Decide to become members or not to become members.
	Step 3: Notify all stakeholders of the board's decision.
Who is Responsible	School board members
Time Frame	December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

2 The School Board has established reasonable and understandable rules for conducting business. The Santa Rosa County School Board does not, however, exhaust every opportunity to bring regular school board meetings to citizens through the district.

The superintendent supplies school board members with decision-level documentation on each issue to come for board consideration, in advance of decision deadlines, for every one of the twice-monthly regular school board meetings and for necessary school board work sessions. Interviews with each of the five elected school board members, a review of minutes of numerous board meetings, [8] a review of audio-tapes of several board meetings, [9] review of the "Administrative Policies, Rules & Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County, [10]" review of materials sent to board members prior to school board meetings, [11] review of public notices of meetings, and interviews with the elected superintendent, central office administrators, support staff, building administrators, and bargaining unit leadership led to the conclusion that the board and superintendent have adopted and implemented procedures to ensure that board meetings are effective and efficient and that written, well-documented information is provided to the board well in advance of a required decision. In addition to these regular activities, standards and procedures exist to:

Bring matters for board consideration in a timely manner.

Schedule board-meeting dates and establish the regular location of board meetings at the annual November board organizational meeting.

The district annually prepares a master calendar at the beginning of each school year. This calendar, which includes major events, contract expirations and legal requirements, is used to determine a sub-set of board meeting agenda items throughout the year to ensure that board actions are completed in a timely manner.

---

[8] Santa Rosa County School Board minutes from regular school board meetings on 8/9/01, 8/28/01, and 9/13/01.

[9] Santa Rosa County School Board audio tape recordings from regular school board meetings on 8/9/01, 8/28/01, and 9/13/01.

[10] "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County," April 1997.

[11] Board information packet sent from superintendent to school board members in preparation for the regular board of education meeting on 9/27/01.

While board members receive no regular training in Florida Sunshine Law, board members stated in interviews that they are provided with regularly updated revisions of the statutes.

Minutes of school board meetings and interviews with all five board members assured the consultants that the board bases its decisions on complete information and resolves potentially contentious issues through personal communication, which is a hallmark of Santa Rosa County School District communications.

School board members indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the information that they receive from the superintendent as well as the timeliness of the information. [12] In preparation for board meetings, items on important issues such as finances, [13] curriculum modifications, and facility planning are well documented and described by the responsible administrator and superintendent. [14]

Interviews with board members and the superintendent indicate that, in those cases where constituents wish further explanation and discussion on agenda items, those items are pulled from the consent agenda for individual deliberation. The school board, as evidenced by interviews and minutes, will occasionally delay decision-making by tabling items until board members are comfortable that the administration has provided them with adequate and accurate information. Examples of items that have been tabled for additional study are documented in school board minutes as follows:

- October 12, 2000 - Tabled track paving for additional study
- September 14, 2000 - Tabled garbage removal contract
- October 26, 2000 - Tabled consulting services to update and maintain School Board policies
- October 26, 2000 - Tabled fire alarm certification and repair
- November 21, 2000 - Tabled construction bid project at Pace High School
- March 15, 2001 - Tabled attendance boundary and description changes
- October 25, 2001 - Tabled construction bids

Board is accessible, but centralized meetings limit full participation

The Santa Rosa County School Board has implemented a procedure to enable patrons, citizens, and others to address the school board at any regular school board meeting. A sign-up form is readily available through the school district, with instructions for how to participate. Further, the requirements for calendar adoption are clearly in place. [15]

In interviews with board members and the superintendent, the site team learned that the process for establishing the time and location of regular school board meetings is based on a determination of the optimum time to serve stakeholders. All board meetings, which occur on the second and fourth Thursday of every month, are held in the school-district headquarters in Milton, which is the government center of Santa Rosa County. However, this is only one of three population centers in the county. Attendance at board meetings is low. The school board might consider holding board meetings in the other two populous areas of Santa Rosa County: the Pace area in the north and west of Milton; and the south area below Milton and near the coast.

---

[12] Board information packet from superintendent to school board members in preparation for regular board meeting on 9/27/01.

[13] District Budget, Fiscal Year July 1, 2992 - June 30, 2002.

[14] Sample documentation: Budget Approval Process for Head Start Expansion Projects.

[15] Board calendar posted on www.santarosa.k12.fl.us website.

Recommendations ——————————————————————

- *We recommend that school board meetings be held at least once each year in other strategic, geographic, and populous areas of the Santa Rosa County School District (see Action Plan 3-4).*

Action Plan 3-4

Hold School Board Meetings at Least Once Each Year in Other Strategic, Geographic, and Populous Areas of the Santa Rosa County	
Strategy	In order to gain exposure to greater numbers of stakeholders and make school board members accessible to the greatest number of stakeholders, hold school board meetings in alternate locations around the county.
Action Needed	Step 1: Define key geographical locations throughout the district.
	Step 2: Locate alternate school board meeting sites.
	Step 3: Publish a schedule of school board meetings and locations.
Who is Responsible	School board members and the superintendent
Time Frame	December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

3 **The board and superintendent need to improve efforts to keep the "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County" up-to-date and accessible to all patrons and citizens. In addition, policies need to be consistent with research on effective schools, and should be separate from administrative practices and procedures.**

Interviews with each of the five elected school board members, a review of minutes of numerous board meetings, a review of audio-tapes of several board meetings, reviews and analysis of the "Administrative Policies, Rules & Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County," review of materials sent to board members prior to school board meetings, review of public notices of meetings, and interviews with the elected superintendent of schools, central office administrators, support staff, building administrators and bargaining unit leadership led to the conclusion that the board and superintendent have not established written policies and procedures to ensure these administrative policies are routinely updated to ensure they are relevant and complete, in keeping with the best practice recommendations. While its last thorough review and updating occurred in April 1997, the school board and superintendent recently began reviewing and updating the board policy manual. The district's contracted attorney attends all board meetings, receiving relevant information including any proposed policy changes, in advance of the meeting, allowing the opportunity for legal review and feedback prior to the adoption of any new or revised policies.

Further, these interviews and review of documents indicate a need to establish a formal committee to regularly review board policy, developing recommendations to the board and superintendent to adopt new and revised policies. This will ensure that the district's policies are kept current with federal, state, and local laws.

A SchoolMatch review of the "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County" revealed that board policy was co-mingled with administrative regulations and procedures, which need to be separated. In addition, although the policy manual is distributed in hard copy, it is not available on the Internet, limiting its availability to all district staff and community residents.

SchoolMatch consultants did not find evidence of an administrative regulations and procedures document maintained and updated by the superintendent, other than the superintendent's annual action plan based on the strategic improvement plan, annual board-adopted goals and objectives, and the approved appropriations. In order to ensure a better understanding of governing authority expectations, policy and regulations, it is important that the Santa Rosa County School Board have a well-defined and highly accessible policy document. In an effort to assist in this massive endeavor, the consultants have included in the recommendation section suggested board policy language from effective schools throughout the country.

Recommendations

- *The School Board of Santa Rosa County should appoint a task force consisting of at least one board member, at least one teacher representative, at least one support staff representative, at least one parent representative and at least one administrator to work with the superintendent or designee, in conjunction with legal counsel, in drafting revisions to the administrative policy, rules and regulations. The school board should direct the task force to take special efforts in separating policy from regulation and administrative procedures (see Action Plan 3-5).*

As a full and complete review of existing board policy continues, SchoolMatch consultants recommend the addition of policies in the areas listed below. Suggested board policy language is included.

— *Homework*

Homework, as long as it is properly designed, carefully planned and geared to the development of the individual student, meets a real need and has a definite place in the educational program. Homework is not used for disciplinary purposes. The extent and type of homework given is decided by the classroom teacher within the framework of specific instructional plans.

Homework is assigned to help the student become more self-reliant, learn to work independently, improve the skills that have been developed and complete certain projects such as the reading of worthwhile books and the preparation of research papers. Home study assignments also afford a way for parents to acquaint themselves with the school program and their own children's educational progress.

— *Staff Development*

All staff will receive appropriate staff development for all new programs introduced in the district. In addition, staff will be involved in decision-making to determine the areas of the school program in which they desire or need additional training.

— *Personnel Evaluation*

A determination of the efficiency and effectiveness of the professional and support staffs is a critical factor in the overall operation of the district. An ongoing evaluation program is implemented to provide a record of service, to provide objective evidence for employment and personnel decisions, and to promote the improvement of instruction as part of the goals of the district. Procedures used in the evaluation process are subject to board approval or in accordance with the negotiated agreement. Complete and appropriate evaluation records are maintained.

— *School-Site Management*

It is the policy of the school board that the superintendent of schools to establish school-based decision making in the district and that school site management operate within the limits of budget controls, board policies, professional ethics and the requirements of law. Decentralization shall be accompanied with school unit accountability measures. The superintendent shall provide a yearly report on the degree to which school-based decision-making is contributing to enhanced school results and management efficiency.

— *Periodic Reporting of Student Performance Data*

It is the policy of the board that teachers provide a rigorous program of instruction and evaluation, including homework, and that all school personnel shall maintain high expectations for all students. Pupil performance data shall be a high priority for all schools. It is the board's policy to periodically report pupil performance data to parents (guardians) and to the community.

— *School Rules and Regulations*

The board reviews regulations developed by the administration to implement policy. The board revises or nullifies such regulations only when they are inconsistent with policies developed by the board or when they are not in the best interest of the district. The board approves regulations using the same procedures established for the adoption of policies. Before issuance, district-wide regulations are properly titled and coded as appropriate to subject and in conformance with the codification system selected by the board. Those officially approved by the board are so marked; all others appearing in the manual are considered approved, provided they are in accordance with the accompanying board policy.

— *Public Involvement in School Affairs*

Community participation in the schools is essential to promote and maintain the quality of education for all students. In addition to electing fellow citizens to represent them on the school board, all citizens may express ideas, concerns and judgments about the schools to the administration, to the staff, and to any appointed advisory bodies to the board. Ideas should be expressed to the responsible individual in an appropriate fashion. The board and staff give consideration to the advice they receive from individuals and community groups. Final authority for all decisions rests with the board.

— *Parent Participation in School Governance*

The board recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family, and believes that parent participation in the schools is of primary importance. The board agrees that to effectively educate all students, school personnel and parents must work together as knowledgeable partners. It is the board's policy that each school will provide structures for parents and community members to be involved in specific school-level shared decision-making activities. These activities are not restricted to, but may include, the following:

    a.   Participation of an active Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO)

    b.   Parent participation in School Advisory Councils (SAC)

    c.   Elected parent representatives

    d.   Representation on school committees dealing with subjects such as curriculum, discipline, homework or other issues of mutual concern to parents and school personnel

— *Superintendent/Principal Leadership*

It is the policy of the district that the superintendent and principal shall have the responsibility and authority to select, supervise, and evaluate all staff members who report to them.

— *High Expectations of Staff and Students*

The board encourages students and staff to set high expectations for themselves. The board further encourages students and staff to celebrate their achievements, once accomplished.

— *Curriculum and Content Equity*

It is the policy of the district to provide equal opportunity to students and staff in selecting courses and assuring that the curriculum and content be free of racial and gender bias.

— *Monitoring of Student Performance*

The board has established high student achievement as an important student priority. Student performance shall be monitored using systematic procedures to measure student achievement. Such procedures document achievement in specific areas, establish need for instructional improvement and develop priorities for the allocation of resources. Reports on student performance shall be presented to the board and to parents on a regular basis.

— *Public Reporting of Student Performance*

The superintendent shall make available to the public, on a regular basis, the results of student assessment at the school level and the district level.

— *Recognition of Outstanding Performance: Students and Staff*

The board recognizes that from time to time staff and students set themselves apart by outstanding performance and/or achievement. The board directs the superintendent to call attention with appropriate recognition, including financial incentives, to those accomplishments on an ongoing basis.

— *Community Partnerships*

It is the policy of the district to establish community partnerships which support the educational efforts of the school district. Such partnerships shall be approved by the principals of the schools in which they are established and shall be presented to the school board for information purposes.

— *School Climate*

The board recognizes the importance of school climate for engaging students in quality work and in establishing a climate conducive to optimal student learning. School climate includes such elements as student respect for the physical plant, strong parent and community involvement, and positive staff and student morale. The board directs the

superintendent to address school climate and measure school climate in the respective buildings on a periodic basis.

— *School Volunteers*

The board believes one of the greatest resources available may be found in the citizens of the community who have special knowledge and talents to contribute to the district. The use of citizens as volunteers within the school program enhances the educational process not only for students but also for the community as well. Volunteers may provide additional support in the classroom, promote community-school cooperation in facilitating the learning process and provide for individuals who have expertise in various areas to be used as resource persons.Recruitment and selection of volunteers is done at the local building level. Interested individuals should contact the building principals or his/her designee. The interest and abilities of the volunteers are to be considered when making assignments. All volunteers shall be registered with the district office and at the appropriate building. Standard procedures for record keeping include hours contributed by various volunteers, types of services or donations made and an application kept on file at the local school for any volunteer who works directly with students, especially in tutorial relationships. Volunteers who work directly with students may be required to have a criminal record check.

— *Data-based Decision Making*

The board has established high student achievement as an important student priority. Student achievement data shall be used to establish district goals as well as school-by-school achievement objectives. Achievement data shall also be used for planning and allocation of resources. Annual and long-range plans shall be developed on the basis of databases which will include school, local, state and federal data.

— *Access to Computers and Other Technology for All Students*

The board directs the superintendent to develop a technology plan that includes provision of appropriate computer laboratories, allocations for classroom technology, transportation to and from computer lab facilities, a resource of "check-out" computer and software for use by students off-site, particularly by students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch, and adequate technical support and training for staff.

— *Gifts and Donations*

The school board recognizes that individuals and organizations may wish to contribute goods and services to the Santa Rosa County School District. The superintendent will bring information about all potential gifts and donations to the board. The school board has the authority to accept such gifts and donations as may be made to the Santa Rosa County School District or to any school in the district. The school board reserves the right to refuse to accept any gift which does not contribute toward the achievement of the goals of this district or the ownership of which would tend to adversely affect the district.

Any gift or donation accepted by the school board shall become the property of the district, may not be returned without the approval of the school board, and is subject to the same controls and regulations as are all other properties of the district. All gifts and donations shall be recorded in the appropriate inventory listing and property records. The school board and superintendent will gratefully acknowledge all approved gifts and donations. The school board shall be responsible for the maintenance of any gift or donation it accepts, unless otherwise stipulated. The school board will make every effort to honor the intent of the donor in its use of the gift or donation but reserves the right to utilize any gift or donation it accepts in the best interest of the educational program of the

district. In no case shall acceptance of a gift or donation be considered to be an endorsement by the school board of a commercial product or business enterprise.

SchoolMatch consultants also recommend strengthening language for policies in the areas listed below. Suggested board policy language is included.

— *Instructional Objectives*

It is the policy of the district to establish long-range instructional objectives which shall be annualized. There will be three to five year appropriate annual targets.

— *Separation of Policy Making and Administration*

The board believes that the legislation of policies is the most important function of a school board and that the execution of the policies should be the function of the superintendent and staff. Board policies should be broad statements of general direction and accountability with authority delegated to the superintendent for implementation.

Therefore, the superintendent shall have the authority for the execution of board policies, the operation of the internal system designed to serve the school program, and for keeping the board informed about school operations.

- *The school board for the Santa Rosa County School District should adopt a policy for annual review and update of its board policy manual (see Action Plan 3-6).*

- *The board for the Santa Rosa County School District, should make the revised Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations available to patrons, citizens, and others through an easy-to-use read-only application on the school district website. The policy document will then be accessible, responsive to revision and updating, and highly cost-effective (see Action Plan 3-7).*

Action Plan 3-5

Complete Review and Updating of the School Board Policy Manual		
Strategy	The school board of Santa Rosa County School District should review and update its "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations."	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Describe the scope of the project to include categories of policy to be addressed, compliance with Florida statutes, and complete separation of board policy from administrative rules, regulations and procedures.
	Step 2:	Establish a timeline with milestone dates to ensure timely completion of the project.
	Step 3:	Assess the clerical and technical assistance available in the district to manage the "paper trail."
Who is Responsible	School board, superintendent	
Time Frame	August 2003	
Fiscal Impact	To assist in updating the administrative policies and procedures, temporary clerical and/or technical staff to manage the production of documents for superintendent and board review and codification and filing of documents once board approval is accomplished is likely. An annual investment of $30,000 is a one-time cost. So five-year recurring amount remains at $30,000.	

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Action Plan 3-6

Adopt a School Policy to Keep the School Board Policy Manual Current	
Strategy	The school board of Santa Rosa County School District should adopt a policy for regular review and updating of the board policy manual.
Action Needed	Step 1: Present a draft policy for board review, discussion, and consideration for adoption.
	Step 2: Modify the policy, as needed.
	Step 3: Adopt the policy.
Who is Responsible	School board, superintendent
Time Frame	December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be accomplished with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Action Plan 3-7

Widely Distribute School Board Policy Manual	
Strategy	Once the review is completed, the resulting school board policy manual document needs to be made accessible to patrons, citizens, and others through an easy-to-use read-only application on the school district website.
Action Needed	Step 1: Assign the responsibility for placing a read-only copy of the school board policy manual on the school district website.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent.
Time Frame	To commence as the board policy review and updating project commences and culminating in August 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

4   The district employs contracted legal services at annual costs far below any peer district, but there is no policy on board, superintendent, and staff access to legal counsel, nor is there any board policy that establishes criteria for hiring additional legal counsel.

Santa Rosa County School District engages legal counsel to minimize risk to the school district, provide advice about Florida and federal law, and to provide information on which the school board and superintendent make decisions. While the district's legal counsel costs continue to be well below those in any of its peer districts (see Exhibit 3-9), management of accessibility to legal counsel by board members and administrators could serve to further reduce costs in this area. It is notable that the district engages legal counsel to serve as chief contract negotiator and still controls legal expenses effectively (see Exhibit 3-10).

The Santa Rosa County School District contracts with a local attorney for legal advice. [16] The attorney attends each board meeting [17] and receives the same information packet as school board members, seven

---

[16] Sample legal briefs, *Johnson Green Milled & Gibson PA*, Land Purchase and Property Transfer Matters, May 1998-Present.

[17] Santa Rosa County School Board approved minutes and audio tapes of sample board meetings 8/9/01, 8/28/01, and 9/13/01, showing attendance of legal counsel and a portion of board meetings set aside for "ITEMS FROM THE BOARD ATTORNEY".

days prior to each meeting or sooner. In interviews with the consultants, board members described an open relationship, in which each board member feels free to contact legal counsel as needed. [18] In addition, when specialized legal services are needed, the school board contracts with legal counsel from Duval County, Florida.

School board members and the superintendent expressed their satisfaction with current contracted legal services. The budget reflects expenditures in this area far below those incurred by the peer group of school districts (see Exhibit 3-9), even with out-sourced contract negotiation services (Exhibit 3-10). In order to ensure cost and access control in the area of legal services, policy should be adopted committing the board to an annual evaluation of contracted legal services, including an assessment of the quality of the provided legal services and the per episode evaluation of any additional legal services and lawsuits.

Exhibit 3-9

Legal Costs in Santa Rosa County School District are Well Below Annual Costs Among Peer School Districts, 1998-99 through 2000-01

District	Amount Paid 1998-99	Amount Paid 1999-00	Amount Paid 2000-01
Santa Rosa	$57,828	$66,155	$40,666
Charlotte	$159,960	$114,046	$148,576
Lake	$97,641	$160,348	$137,019
Okaloosa	$116,057	$119,085	$163,361
Osceola	$722,915	$670,230	$827,304
St. Johns	$336,738	$228,057	$165,380

Source: Florida Association Telephone Interview, 2001.

Exhibit 3-10

Among Peer Districts, Only Santa Rosa and Charlotte Counties Engage the Services of a Contracted Consultant to Serve as Chief Contract Negotiator

District	Chief Negotiator Function Performed by
Santa Rosa	Contracted consultant
Charlotte	Contracted consultant
Lake	Assistant superintendent for school administration and human resource services
Okaloosa	Chief human resources officer
Osceola	Associate superintendent for school services
St. Johns	Executive director of facilities and operations

Source: Florida Association Telephone Interview, 2001.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the school board, upon the recommendation of the superintendent, develop a formal procedure for board and staff consultation with school district designated legal counsel. We also recommend, for the purpose of further reducing fees, that a procedure be adopted to require board members to contact the school board chair and administrators to contact the superintendent prior to contacting legal counsel (see Action Plan 3-8).*

---

[18] Budget detail, FY2001 approved appropriations, expenses for school board legal counsel.

- *We recommend that the school board, upon the recommendation of the superintendent, develop a formal procedure to annually review the quality and scope of legal services provided to the Santa Rosa County School District (see Action Plan 3-9).*

- *We recommend that the school board develop a specific policy governing the circumstances under which outside legal counsel should be retained and how the process is governed and implemented (see Action Plan 3-10).*

Action Plan 3-8

Develop a Formal Procedure for Consultation with Designated School District Legal Counsel	
Strategy	In order to more closely monitor and control costs of legal counsel, develop a formal procedure for consultation with designated school district legal counsel.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop a formal procedure to present to the School Board for consideration.
Who is Responsible	School board, superintendent
Time Frame	December 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Action Plan 3-9

Develop a Formal Procedure to Annually Review the Quality and Scope of Legal Services Provided to the Santa Rosa County School District	
Strategy	In order to more closely monitor and control costs of legal counsel, develop a formal procedure to annually review the quality and scope of legal services provided to the school district.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop a formal procedure to present to the school board for consideration.
Who is Responsible	School board, superintendent
Time Frame	December 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Action Plan 3-10

Develop a Policy Governing the Circumstances Under Which Outside Legal Counsel Should Be Retained	
Strategy	In order to standardize decisions about retention of outside counsel, the school board should develop a specific policy regarding circumstances under which outside counsel is retained and how the process is governed and implemented.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop a policy to present to the school board for consideration.
Who is Responsible	School board, superintendent
Time Frame	December 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Effective and Responsible Operation

5 **The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority. However, one unit has too large a span of control, while one is too small.**

Review indicates that the district has organization charts that clearly and accurately reflect its structure (see Exhibit 3-5). SchoolMatch consultants reviewed specific job descriptions, interviewed central and site-based administrators, and discussed with and observed the span of control of central and site-based administrators, and determined that job descriptions match function and assignment in the district. In addition, job descriptions provide the benchmarks for employee evaluations. [19] Annual performance goals for each employee are also taken from job descriptions. Every employee knows the goals and objectives for his or her position and the timeline in which those goals and objectives will be measured.

In addition, in a "Summary of Teacher, Staff, Administrator, and Student Ratios from 1978-79 through 2001-02," [20] (see best practice 6, Exhibit 3-14) the school district has done a good job, maintaining very low administrative staffing levels by eliminating administrative overlap (see Exhibit 3-5). The administrative emphasis is found at the site-level, consistent with the district's site-based management approach.

The span of control for key administrative staff should be realigned.

While the span of control for the superintendent, is well within comparable ranges for peer districts (see Exhibit 3-11), other adjustments in the management structure are needed. The span of control of the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction is too broad, while the span of control of the assistant superintendent for human resources is too narrow.

Exhibit 3-11

**Span of Control of Santa Rosa Superintendent"
Among Smallest in Peer Districts**

District	Number of Positions Directly Reporting to the Superintendent	Position Types Positions Directly Reporting to the Superintendent
Santa Rosa	5	4 assistant superintendents 1 secretary
Charlotte	4	3 executive directors 1 director
Lake	46	3 assistant superintendents 42 school principals 1 director
Okaloosa	6	3 assistant superintendents 2 chief officers 1 director

---

[19] Annual performance appraisal packet.

[20] Santa Rosa County School District board summary of teacher, staff, administrator, and student ratios, 10/16/01.

District	Number of Positions Directly Reporting to the Superintendent	Position Types Positions Directly Reporting to the Superintendent
Osceola	34	1 deputy superintendent 2 assistant superintendents 1 coordinator 30 school principals
St. Johns	8	1 assistant superintendent 3 executive directors 2 directors 1 coordinator 1 clerk

Source: Florida Association Telephone Interview, 2001.

The assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction oversees the activities of 7 directors, 2 curriculum specialists, and 32 building principals. Basic responsibilities include curriculum/instruction/assessment issues, school improvement planning, school advisory councils, school and community issues and concerns. Areas managed also include Pre-K, elementary, middle, and high school, and alternative academic curriculum and instruction; liaison work regarding school board policy and strategic planning; ESE student services; applied technology and adult education; and in-service and instructional technology.

Alternatively, the span of control of the assistant superintendent for human resources includes eight non-certificated employees within the Department of Human Resources. Areas managed include development and implementation of the staffing plan for administrators, instructional staff, and non-instructional staff; certification of administrators and teachers including development of an "out-of-field" certification report three times per year; recruitment, employment, and orientation of substitute teachers; fingerprinting of all new employees and invoicing contractors. The assistant superintendent for human resources also handles: management and implementation of the human resource development plan for administrators, potential administrative candidates, and new principals; management of employee appraisal procedures including training, tracking, and filing; implementation and processing of retirement protocols; leave approval for all employees; recruitment, selection, recommendation, orientation, and appraisal of all new employees; coordinating employee legal issues including professional practice reporting and grievances; by-monthly in-service sessions for assistant principals; development and implementation of student worker procedures; maintenance and implementation of civil service board regulations; maintenance of electronic job records; publishing the employee directory; oversight of all employee contracts; maintenance of historical records on earnings and experience for each employee; verifying and submitting teacher bonus data to payroll office; maintenance of sick leave bank for teachers and administrators; maintenance of personnel files; and summer school staffing.

While both the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and the assistant superintendent for human resources have major responsibilities for the smooth operation of the school district, the former has a wide span of control over district administrators while the latter has no direct span of control over administrators. The former is clearly a major line administrator in the district while the latter is a staff administrator.

The consulting team reached the conclusion that in order to improve communications and staff supervision, the span of control for the assistant superintendent for human resources should be expanded and that of the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction should be slightly reduced.

District activities are designed to ensure organizational and operational efficiency.

Every year at the conclusion of the employee evaluation process, information is gathered, summarized, correlated with data gathered in the annual school climate survey, and presented to the board as a written

resource on staffing levels, duties, and spans of control. The data is an established part of the decision-level materials provided to the board in the annual budgeting process. [21]

According to the survey data, respondents believe that the district has effectively managed available resources, and school officials have made budget cuts to try to limit expenditures (see Exhibit 3-12). These data, combined with a review of the budget and staffing levels, led the consultants to conclude that the Santa Rosa County School District does not have excess administrators and that the district attempts to maintain an efficient and effective organization.

Exhibit 3-12

Santa Rosa County Survey of Perceptions Regarding Organizational Effectiveness

Survey Statement	Average Response*
The district has efficiently managed the resources available to it.	1.782
School officials have made budget cuts to try to limit expenditures.	1.865

*Scores below 2.050 indicate effectiveness has been achieved in the perception of stakeholders.
Source: SchoolMatch Survey of Perceptions, Organizational Effectiveness, Oct-Nov 2001 (see Appendix A).

Recommendations ─────────────

- *SchoolMatch consultants recommend modification in the organization so that the director of in-service and technology and the director of risk management report to the assistant superintendent for human resources rather than to the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, thus reducing the extraordinarily large span of the latter and bringing into alignment the smaller span of the former (see Action Plan 3-11).*

Action Plan 3-11

Modify the Administrative Organization to Achieve Balance in Span of Control		
Strategy	Reorganize spans of control of assistant superintendents.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Modify the organization so that the director of in-service director f risk management report to the assistant superintendent for human resources rather that to the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, thus reducing the extraordinarily large span of the latter and bring in into alignment the small span of the former.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent, school board	
Time Frame	December 2002	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

---

[21] District budget, Fiscal Year 2001-02.

6

The district continually reviews the need for administrative positions. The district has one of the lowest ratios of administrators to students across peer districts, while the ratio of administrators to staff is comparable to peer districts.

The district has been prudent about assigning administrators to central office positions. An analysis of the data indicates that when there were 12,458 students in 1978-79, there were 24 district administrators. With 23,828 students in the 2001-02 school year, there are only 21 district administrators. For example, the position of food service director was eliminated once the school district administration was comfortable that the transition to out-sourced food service delivery was complete. The Santa Rosa transportation supervisory staff has been reduced as the contracted provider, Laidlaw, has successfully completed tasks formerly accomplished within the school district. The district continues to involve all administrators and some teachers-on-assignment in the public relations function, in favor of hiring a full-time community relations/public relations professional.

Exhibit 3-13 shows the district's historical data comparing student, teacher, staff, and administrator numbers for a 25-year period. Originally prepared by Santa Rosa County School District assistant superintendent for personnel and the districts' management information analyst, this data is updated annually using end-of-year data. While the data is very comprehensive and the current process works to control costs and maximize effectiveness, the district has not established benchmarks for the future.

Exhibit 3-13

Santa Rosa County School District Summary of Teacher, Staff, Administrator and Student Ratios 1978-79 through 2001-02

Year	Teachers	Support Staff	School Admin	District Admin	Total Students	Students/ Teacher	Teachers/ Admin	Staff/Admin
1978-79	747	563	40	24	12,458	16.7	11.7	20.5
1979-80	760	563	39	21	12,167	16	12.7	22.1
1980-81	771	545	38	23	12,045	15.6	12.6	1.6
1981-82	776	527	38	21	11,858	15.3	13.2	22.1
1982-83	762	523	38	21	12,046	15.8	12.9	21.8
1983-84	754	511	38	20	12,053	16	13	21.8
1984-85	810	514	36	20	12,572	15.5	14.5	23.6
1985-86	818	519	37	19	13,003	15.9	14.6	23.9
1986-87	849	533	39	21	13,430	15.8	14.2	23
1987-88	899	572	41	22	13,718	15.3	14.3	23.3
1988-89	933	583	45	21	14,257	15.3	14.1	23
1989-90	989	636	44	21	14,642	14.8	15.2	25
1990-91	1024	670	48	22	15,459	15.1	14.6	24.2
1991-92	1054	676	47	22	16,250	15.4	15.3	25.1
1992-93	1120	680	47	21	17,166	15.3	16.5	26.5
1993-94	1164	712	53	18	18,964	16.3	16.4	26.4
1994-95	1210	737	52	19	19,658	16.2	17	27.4
1995-96	1234	774	52	18	20,326	16.5	17.6	28.7
1996-97	1293	825	53	18	21,525	16.6	18.2	29.8
1997-98	1347	850	55	19	21,971	16.3	18.2	29.7

Year	Teachers	Support Staff	School Admin	District Admin	Total Students	Students/ Teacher	Teachers/ Admin	Staff/Admin
1998-99	1373	812	56	21	22,378	16.3	17.8	28.4
1999-00	1372	784	60	20	22,807	16.6	17.2	27
2000-01	1464	785	63	20	23,157	15.8	17.6	27.1
2001-02	1462	775	63	21	23,828	16.3	17.4	26.6

Source: Santa Rosa County School District Offices of Personnel and Management Information, 2001.

A peer district comparison of the ratio of students to administrators indicates that the district's administrative resources are limited. Thus, except for one peer district, Santa Rosa County School District has fewer administrative positions compared to the number of students (see Exhibit 3-14). At the same time, the number of administrators, compared to all staff, is comparable to peer districts (see Exhibit 3-15).

Exhibit 3-14

Santa Rosa County School District Employs Fewer Administrative Staff Compared to the Number of Students Than All But One of its Five Peer Districts

	Santa Rosa	Lake	Charlotte	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns
Total Administrative Staff	**83**	**110**	**71**	**118**	**109**	**145**
District Level	21	17	29	43	38	85
School Level	62	93	42	75	71	60
Student Enrollment	**22,633**	**29,260**	**17,169**	**30,335**	**34,567**	**20,070**
Total Students/Total Administrators	**273:1**	**266:1**	**242:1**	**257:1**	**317:1**	**138:1**
Total Students/ Total District Administrators	1078:1	1721:1	592:1	705:1	910:1	236:1
Total Students/Total School Administrators	365:1	315:1	409:1	404:1	487:1	335:1

Source: Florida Department of Education. Profiles of Florida School Districts 2000-01, November 2001. (Numbers rounded to the nearest whole number).

To ensure continuing limits on the administrative staff, the district formally review of every administrative position through an annually adopted staffing plan. [22] In addition, the district ensures that new administrators are properly trained and understand administrative expectations through use of a succession-planning program for administrative recruitment known as the "Preparing New Principals Program (PNPP). [23]" Finally, a well-documented administrative performance appraisal system is in place to assure quality in both building and central administration performance. [24] The low ratios in Exhibits 3-13 and 3-14 illustrate the district's ongoing attentiveness to minimizing the total number of administrative staff.

---

[22] Staffing plan, Santa Rosa County School Board, 2001-02.

[23] Preparing New Principals Program.

[24] Santa Rosa County School Board comprehensive assessment, (sample) principal, adult school.

Exhibit 3-15

Administrators as a Percentage of Total District Staff, A Comparison of Santa Rosa with Peer School Districts, 2000-01

District	Santa Rosa	Charlotte	Lake	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns
District Administrators	.9%	1.4%	0.5%	1.2%	1.0%	3.6%
School Administrators	2.7%	2.0%	2.8%	2.2%	1.8%	2.6%
All Administrators	3.7%	3.3%	3.3%	3.4%	2.8%	6.2%

Source: Florida Department of Education Profiles of Florida School districts 2000-01, November 2001.

Survey responses (see Exhibit 3-16) confirm the following perceptions from interviews:

- that instructional programs are given high priority in the allocation of resources;
- the district needs additional funding in order to provide and perpetuate a quality educational program;
- the district has efficiently managed the resources it has available; and
- administrators have made budget cuts in an attempt to limit expenditures.

Exhibit 3-16

Santa Rosa County Survey of Perceptions Regarding Emphasis on Learning and Fiscal Efficiency

Survey Statement	Average Response*
Instructional programs are given the highest priority in the allocation of resources.	1.900
The district needs additional funding in order to provide and perpetuate a quality educational program.	1.546
The district has efficiently managed the resources available to it.	1.782
School officials have made budget cuts to try to limit expenditures.	1.865

**Scores below 2.050 indicate effectiveness has been achieved in the perception of stakeholders.

Source: SchoolMatch Survey of Perceptions, Oct-Nov 2001 (see Appendix A).

Recommendations

- *We recommend that Santa Rosa County School District include peer district comparisons and benchmarks as a part of its regular staffing review in addition to the current application for support of budgetary recommendations (see Action Plan 3-12).*

Action Plan 3-12

Include Peer District Comparisons and Benchmarks as Part of Regular Staffing Review	
Strategy	Enhance the regular staffing review process with peer district comparison data and benchmarks from other highly effective school districts.
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify peer districts.
	Step 2: Identify appropriate benchmarks.
	Step 3: Include both in the written procedures guiding the annual staffing review process.

Who is Responsible	Superintendent of schools, school board
Time Frame	December 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

7 Effective oversight of resources exists in the district.

The process for adopting the annual budget is thorough and effective and includes elaborate presentations by the assistant superintendent for finance and other senior staff as required. Since over 80% of the school district's budget is spent for human resources and fringe benefits, the district focuses on eliminating unnecessary spending in the hiring and assignment process while engaged in staffing. [25] The budget for the July 1, 2001-June 30, 2002 fiscal year was initially considered on July 19, 2001 and approved by the school board on September 13, 2001, after several additional reviews and modifications. Review of board meeting minutes indicates that the assistant superintendent for finance periodically reports the budget status to the school board. Further, a review of the minutes of the Santa Rosa County School Board from June 2001 through September 2001 reveals a series of thorough discussions between the superintendent and the school board regarding the district's financial situation. Items discussed include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unweighted and Weighted Full Time Enrollment History
- Changes in State Funding for the Santa Rosa County School District
- Tax Millage History and the Effective Use of Local Property Taxes
- Program Cost Factors by Grade Level and Subject Area
- Basic Student Aid Allocation History
- Operating Budget: Percent Revenue from the State (reduced from 76% to less than 73% over the last decade), and from Local Sources (increased from 23% to over 26% over the last decade)
- Cost of Living History
- Changes in the Budget Available
- Changes in the State Categorical Programs
- Funding Increases by Source
- Budgeted Revenue - Federal, State and Local
- Salary Considerations
- Employee Benefit Considerations
- Changes in Personnel Counts
- Lottery Funds
- Sales Tax Considerations Expenditures by Major Functions Across Categories, including:
  - Instruction, Instructional Support,
  - General Support, Community Service, Transfer of Funds, Salary, Employee Benefits, Purchased Services, Energy Services, Materials and Supplies, Capital Outlay-Equipment, Other Expenses.

Even though board members receive no regular training in school district finance and budgeting procedures, the district receives the smallest revenue per student among peer districts (Exhibit 3-19),

---

[25] District budget FY01-02.

while securing the largest per student reserve fund balance among peer districts (Exhibit 3-19) and maintaining high academic performance as indicated in the previously cited in the previously mentioned Senate Appropriations Statistical Review (Exhibit 3-2). Per pupil expenditures in Santa Rosa are clearly within expenditure ranges for peer districts (Exhibit 3-17).

Exhibit 3-17

Per Pupil Expenditures for Exceptional, Regular at At-Risk Students are Comparable to Peer Districts, 2000-01

District	Exceptional Cost/Student	Regular Cost/Student	At-Risk Cost/Student	Vocational Cost/Student	Operating Costs/Student
Santa Rosa	$7,236	$4,363	$7,858	$5,784	$5,003
Charlotte	$7,501	$4,172	$8,157	$4,008	$4,924
Lake	$6,063	$4,023	$4,830	$4,687	$4,473
Okaloosa	$6,203	$4,567	$5,231	$4,468	$4,878
Osceola	$7,765	$4,097	$4,095	$4,464	$4,688
St. Johns	$7,902	$4,622	$6,007	$4,837	$5,213

Source: Florida Department of Education, School Indicators Reports 2000-01, all data accurate as of October 17, 2001.

Respondents to the survey expressed a great deal of respect for the fiscal responsibility demonstrated by the management in the Santa Rosa County School District. Questions related to this topic, as indicated in Exhibit 3-18, all scored above the effectiveness level of 2.05.

Exhibit 3-18

Santa Rosa County Survey of Perceptions Regarding Fiscal Responsibility

Survey Statement	Average Response*
The new administrative team possesses the knowledge and skills needed to properly manage the resources of the district.	1.504
The district is currently spending its money wisely.	1.741
Today's school district officials can be trusted to make prudent decisions about effectively deploying the school system's financial resources.	1.649
The new administration has been open with the community about financial priorities.	1.699
Instructional programs are given the highest priority in the allocation of resources.	1.900
The district needs additional funding in order to provide and perpetuate a quality educational program.	1.546
The district has efficiently managed the resources available to it.	1.782
School officials have made budget cuts to try to limit expenditures.	1.865
Improved funding is necessary in order to improve student performance.	1.563
If Santa Rosa County Public Schools need more money, I would personally be willing to pay higher taxes.	1.742

*Scores below 2.05 indicate effectiveness has been achieved in the perception of stakeholders.

Source: SchoolMatch Survey of Perceptions, Oct-Nov 2001 (see Appendix A).

Process for needed budget reductions is not codified in board policy.

When budget reductions occur, such as those incurred in the 2001-02 school year, the superintendent takes to the school board any shortfalls the district may experience due to funding cutbacks. The superintendent then has numerous meetings with a wide range of constituents including the school board,

certificated staff, non-certificated staff, representatives of the public, and students to receive input regarding the best way to prioritize and implement cutbacks. From these meetings, the superintendent and staff develop written proposals that are publicly presented to the school board for approval. [26] Currently, the process for addressing shortfalls in revenue is not codified in board policy.

The district has a large reserve fund balance.

At the end of the 2000-01 fiscal year, the reserved portion of the operating fund balance was $6,979,890 and the unreserved portion was $6,383,031, for a total of $13,362,921. The total operating budget for Santa Rosa County Schools in 2000-01 was $117,148.496. Historically, the district's fund balance has been well above the 3-5% standard established by the Florida Department of Education. For the 1998-99 fiscal year, dividing the total of all reserved funds by the total operating budget shows that Santa Rosa County School District's reserve was 12.14% (Exhibit 3-19).

In 2002, the school board approved using a portion of the fund balance for operations, based on the continuing need to move forward goals and objectives of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006. Florida Sunshine Law requires a commitment to spend reserved funds as a specific and separate action by the school board. A review of the scope of topics considered at the beginning of best practice 7 of this chapter, including such items as changes in state funding levels, per student allocations, and the need to plan for emergency occurrences, reveals the conservative and responsible approach to approving appropriations in the board's annual budget review. Exhibit 3-20 shows the five-year history of reserved and unreserved fund balances in Santa Rosa County School District as evidence of the district's continued fiscal responsibility.

Exhibit 3-19

Santa Rosa General Fund Revenues, In Funds Per Students, Comparable to Peer Districts, 1998-99

District/ Reserve Funds as Percentage of Total Operating Budget	Federal Revenue	State Revenue	Local Revenue	Fund Balance	Total Operating Budget	Number Students	$/student with Fund Balance	$/student with out Fund Balance
Santa Rosa (12.1%)	$250,000	$76,530,780	$26,193,543	$14,174,173	$117,148,496	22,226	$5,271	$4,633
Charlotte (5.4%)	$685,702	$36,509,690	$46,174,316	$4,751,488	$88,121,196	16,753	$5,260	$4,976
Lake (4.1%)	$70,000	$91,928,979	$48,039,176	$6,026,421	$146,064,576	28,544	$5,117	$4,906
Okaloosa (9.4%)	$3,384,019	$97,821,038	$47,199,968	$15,477,685	$163,882,709	30,248	$5,418	$4,906
Osceola (7.0%)	$200,000	$100,853,438	$51,463,660	$11,412,266	$163,929,364	31,877	$5,143	$4,785
St. Johns (none)	$104,713	$51,571,453	$48,329,828	$0	$100,005,997	19,046	$5,251	$5,251

Source: Florida Department of Education, Office of Funding and Financial Reporting, 2001.

Exhibit 3-20

A Five-Year History of Reserved and Unreserved Fund Balances in Santa Rosa County

Fiscal Year	Unreserved	Reserved	Fund Total
1999-00	$9,100,948.89	$8,349,768.53	$17,450,717.42

---

[26] Approved school board minutes, December-January 2001-02, on file, superintendent's office.

1998-99	$8,531,283.82	$5,642,889.63	$14,174,143.45
1997-98	$6,937,913.68	$5,310,837.19	$12,257,750.87
1996-97	$4,825,582.98	$4,975,390.80	$9,800,953.78
1995-96	$3,485,788.54	$4,389.742.98	$7,875,531.52

Source: Santa Rosa County Approved Appropriations FY96, FY97, FY98, FY99, FY00.

Recommendations

- *It is recommended that the process currently in place for addressing shortfalls in revenue be codified into a board policy (See Action Plan 3-13).*

Action Plan 3-13

Develop a Formal Process for Addressing Shortfalls in Revenue	
Strategy	In order to standardize the process for the identification, review of options to address, and implementation of a plan of action in the matter of shortfalls in revenue, the district should develop written procedures.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop written procedures to describe the process in current practice in Santa Rosa County School District for identification, review of options to address, and implementation of action plans to correct shortfalls in school district revenue.
Who is Responsible	School Board, Superintendent, Central district staff
Time Frame	December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

8 Site-based management in the school district is effective in terms of the amount of authority granted to school principals.

The job descriptions in the "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County" manual, which also lists the responsibilities associated with each position, clearly demonstrates the authority of school principals to manage their schools while adhering to district-wide policies and procedures. Further, employee job descriptions match annual evaluation protocols, which, in turn, match employee goal checklists. [27] Goal 6 (Teachers and Staff) of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 specifies one-year and five-year objectives to be implemented at each school site. [28] Included are new responsibilities for the site-based managers, as well as requisites for training for the principals to help maximize the potential outcomes.

The previously mentioned survey of perceptions (Appendix A) administered by SchoolMatch for this review, combined with interviews and on-site observations, led to the conclusion that Santa Rosa County School District has clearly delineated the authority and responsibilities of building administrators and their staff, and that site administrators have reasonable authority over site-based budgetary decisions.

---

[27] Annual (Administrative) Performance Appraisal Packet.

[28] SRC Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-06.

The principals that participated in SchoolMatch interviews and surveys indicated that they have sufficient authority over school operations. Their responses also revealed that, at the same time, the district has maintained controls, such as the thorough annual administrator evaluation, to maintain adherence to district policy. This process gives the school board and superintendent a valuable tool in assessing the results of the authority granted to site administrators.

Principals are evaluated either by the director of elementary schools and Title I, the director of middle schools or the director of high schools under the supervision of the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and the superintendent of schools. Regular principal evaluations include a review of expenditures related to the adopted school district budget, progress toward achieving site goals and objectives, (which are based on the broad goals of the strategic improvement plan), and site procedures aligned with school district policy and procedures.

As the school district develops and implements formal procedures to evaluate the strategic improvement plan and progress toward achieving its goals and objectives, the established institutions of school-based decision making and the authority of principals to implement and be held accountable for results in achieving strategic plan goals and objectives becomes even more important.

Recommendations

- *There were no recommendations for this best practice.*

Allocation of Resources

9 The district's multi-year Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 is exemplary.

The district has a well-defined strategic improvement plan, adopted by the school board on August 28, 2001, for the 2001-2006 school years. The plan enables the district to assess its current operations, determine its future direction, and to create an effective process of actions to achieve strategic goals. The board-adopted strategic plan guides program development and includes short-term and long-term goals, annual objectives, and strategic directions. While reports of the results of strategic plan implementation are widely available at the site-based school level, they are not easily obtained for the Santa Rosa County School District as a whole.

Knowledge of details of the strategic improvement plan among district-wide stakeholders, however, is limited due to limited distribution of the document.

Mission Statement

As a result of the Florida Legislature's review of Best Financial Management Practices in Santa Rosa County and SchoolMatch's recommendation to incorporate a statement of commitment to community

---

[29] SRC Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006.

involvement in the district's Mission Statement, the Santa Rosa school board adopted the following district mission statement in February 2002:

> *The Santa Rosa School District, a growing and diverse community of learners with strong values, promotes self-sufficient and productive learning through a comprehensive and innovative curriculum, visionary and collaborative leadership, and sound management.*

Parallel to the 2001 Mission Statement was a board-adopted Statement of Common Vision Elements, which are:

> *Maximize the learning potential of all students by providing equal access to instruction and ensuring students' readiness to learn at all levels.*

> *Provide a safe, nurturing, and technology-rich learning environment in order to enhance student achievement.*

> *Prepare students for success in a global society.*

Ten clearly delineated goals were established in the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 with timelines and measurable objectives. These goals have been established in response to needs identified in the district's annual school climate survey process. Although these 10 goals are not prioritized within the strategic planning document, prioritization occurs in the annual budgeting process. The district's 10 goals are:

> *Goal 1: Readiness to Start School.*

> *Goal 2: Graduation Rate and Readiness for Post-Secondary Education and Employment.*

> *Goal 3: Student Performance.*

> *Goal 4: Learning Environment.*

> *Goal 5: School Safety and Environment.*

> *Goal 6: Teachers and Staff.*

> *Goal 7: Adult Literacy.*

> *Goal 8: Family and Community Involvement.*

> *Goal 9: Fiscal and Resource Responsibility.*

> *Goal 10: Comprehensive Operational Planning and Program Accountability.*

Under each goal are clearly delineated objectives and action plans to meet these objectives. All items in the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 are reflected in the board-approved district budget and/or the staffing plan. [30] The objectives of the strategic improvement plan are measurable. The district has set annual standards for each objective and at least five years into the future. The board has not yet developed a process to annually assess the progress the district has made towards achieving its objectives.

Accompanying the district mission statement are four action statements:

Action Statements:

1. Maximize the learning potential of all students by providing equal access to

---

[30] District Budget, Santa Rosa County School Board, Fiscal Year July 1, 2001 - June 30, 2002.

2. instruction, ensuring students' readiness to learn at all levels, and facilitating community participation in and support of education.

3. Provide a safe, nurturing, and technology-rich learning environment in order to enhance student achievement and promote literacy.

4. Prepare students for success in a global society.

5. Provide opportunities to promote continued professional growth and development.

Respondents to the survey believed that the school district has high expectations, has clear planning and organization, plans to meet future educational needs of students, places a high priority on the allocation of resources, and has directed the appropriate proportion of resources to the classroom (see Exhibit 3-21).

Exhibit 3-21

Survey Respondents Express Confidence
in Management of Santa Rosa School District

Survey Statement	Average Response*
The Santa Rosa Public School District should strive to be among the best school systems in the state of Florida.	1.118
There is clear planning and organization in the school district.	1.738
The school district has developed a plan to meet the future educational needs of students.	1.717
Instructional programs are given the highest priority in the allocation of resources.	1.900
The district has directed the appropriate proportion of resources to the classroom.	1.939

*Scores below 2.050 indicate effectiveness has been achieved in the perception of stakeholders.

Source: SchoolMatch Survey of Perceptions, Oct-Nov 2001 (see Appendix A).

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district continue to refine and implement the excellent strategic improvement planning process already in place (see Action Plan 3-14).*

- *We recommend that the board develop a formal process for evaluating the strategic plan (see Action Plan 3-15).*

- *We recommend that the board prioritize goals of the strategic improvement plan (see Action Plan 3-16).*

Action Plan 3-14

Continue to Improve the Strategic Planning Process		
Strategy		The elected superintendent of schools should continue to refine, update, and implement the excellent strategic improvement planning process already in place.
Action Needed	Step 1:	Management of the strategic improvement plan should continue to be a major part of the goals of the superintendent.
	Step 2:	The adopted strategic improvement plan includes procedures for measuring progress toward achieving goals, gathering feedback from constituent groups, assessing district needs, and then modifying and improving goals and objectives.
	Step 3:	Each step in the plan needs to occur on a regular basis.
Who is Responsible		Superintendent of schools
Time Frame		Continuous
Fiscal Impact		This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Action Plan 3-15

Develop a Formal Process for Evaluating the Strategic Plan		
Strategy		In order to determine progress toward achieving one- and five-year goals and objectives of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006, the school board and superintendent will develop a formal process of evaluation.
Action Needed	Step 1:	Develop a timeline for annual review of progress.
	Step 2:	Develop a process of evaluation.
	Step 3:	Define roles of all key personnel in the process.
	Step 4:	Develop a reporting mechanism to apprise stakeholders in the district of findings.
Who is Responsible		school board, superintendent
Time Frame		December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact		This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Action Plan 3-16

Prioritize Goals of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006		
Strategy		In order to further advance the process of budget review, allocation, and adoption, prioritize the 10 goals of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006.
Action Needed	Step 1:	Develop a prioritized list of goals and objectives.
	Step 2:	Develop a projected timeline to completion.
	Step 3:	Review the list periodically for modification.
Who is Responsible		school board, superintendent
Time Frame		December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact		This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

10The district has been able to accurately project its enrollments.

Each year, the school district's data processing manager works with principals, directors, assistant superintendents, and the superintendent to project enrollment using generally accepted cohort survival techniques. Demographic changes in the region are taken into account and, consequently, enrollment projections have been accurate in the district.

Enrollment projection documents show that enrollment projections over the past three years have been within 0.9% - 1.1% of actual student enrollment. Considering the large number of complex variables involved, the site visit team believes that the district staff has done an exemplary job in projecting enrollments with current tools and procedures

As a result of interviews with the superintendent and cabinet, we learned that the primary methodology utilized by the school district to project enrollment includes these six steps:

1. School district officials trace each grade level individually to identify trends.
2. Census data is used to determine the birth rate in order to project kindergarten populations.
3. Historical data is used to move each grade level forward for the next academic year.
4. Economic indicators are considered, such as housing developments, plant closings, and immigration.
5. State enrollment projections are used to make comparisons.
6. District officials make projections for each school; then, grade level directors work with each school principal to discuss data and to reach consensus on the enrollment projection.

While these efforts have clearly been effective in helping the district to anticipate student enrollment, the district lacks written guidelines that reflect the processes and efforts used. By adding written guidelines, the district would ensure that these effective processes are followed, even when presented with staff changes or other pressures that could interfere with these efforts.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop written guidelines to reflect their process for student enrollment projections (see Action Plan 3-17).*

Action Plan 3-17

Develop Written Guidelines for the Process of Projecting Student Enrollment	
Strategy	In order to standardize the procedure of projection of future student enrollment, develop written procedures for the process of projecting student enrollment consistent with current practices in place in Santa Rosa County School District.
Action Needed	Step 1: Create standardized written procedures to describe the current process in place in Santa Rosa County for projecting student enrollment.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent, central staff
Time Frame	December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

11 The district links its financial plans and budgets to the priority goals and objectives of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006. District resources are allocated towards achieving those goals and objectives.

Funding the annual goals and objectives of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 has become an integral part of the budget planning and financial management of the school district. There is evidence in the current adopted school district budget of allocation of resources to fund Goals 1-8 in the strategic plan. [31] Goal 9 (Fiscal and Resource Responsibility) speaks to the short-term and long-term vision of the Santa Rosa County School Board in planning for continued good fiscal health.

In the perceptions of district stakeholders, the district plans well for expenditures to improve student achievement (Exhibit 3-22). Exhibit 3-23 further confirms a clear understanding on the part of district stakeholders that resources drive results. There is a positive perception (survey statements 9 and 14) that Santa Rosa budgets appropriately for classroom instruction, including teacher preparation and additional training. In their negative responses to survey statements 10, 17, 18, 19, and 24, Santa Rosa stakeholders give proxy indicators of the positive level of education and information shared by the school district. Consistently, Santa Rosa stakeholders tell us that they know that quality education costs money.

Exhibit 3-22

Santa Rosa County Survey of Perceptions, Stakeholders Confirm Positive Fiscal Planning and Appropriate Use of Resources

Survey Statement	Average Response*
There is clear planning and organization in the school district.	1.738
The district is currently spending its money wisely.	1.741
The school district has developed a plan to meet the future educational needs of students.	1.717
Instructional programs are given the highest priority in the allocation of resources.	1.900
The district has adequate resources to provide a quality educational program.	1.939

*Scores below 2.050 indicate effectiveness has been achieved in the perception of stakeholders.

Source: SchoolMatch Survey of Perceptions, Oct-Nov 2001 (see Appendix A).

Exhibit 3-23

Santa Rosa County Survey of Perceptions, Stakeholders Confirm Understanding that Resources Drive Student Improvement

Survey Statement	Average Response*
The district has directed the appropriate proportion of resources to the classroom.	1.939
The school system financially supports activities that help teachers improve their skills.	1.841
Larger class sizes at all grade levels exist because of the need to reduce expenditures.	2.272
School employees are adequately paid.	2.875
School district spending in the area of vocational and career education is appropriate.	2.171
Program funding priorities recognize the needs of non-college bound students.	2.209
Fringe benefits such as health insurance and retirement contributions of school district employees are at an appropriate level.	2.213

*Scores below 2.050 indicate effectiveness has been achieved in the perception of stakeholders.

Source: SchoolMatch Survey of Perceptions, Oct-Nov 2001 (see Appendix A).

---

[31] District budget, Fiscal Year July 1, 2002-June 30, 2002

At the conclusion of the annual principal review, performance across the district is assessed and adjustments to the budget are recommended to address lagging performance. This assessment of needs is also linked back to modification and improvement of the goals and objectives addressed in the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006. An excellent example of the detail involved in assessment of student needs, planning to address those needs, linkage directly to the goals of the strategic improvement plan, and allocation of resources in the annual budgeting process to achieve those goals can be found in documentation of expansion of the Pre-K Head Start Program. [32]

Recommendations

- *There were no recommendations for this section.*

12 While Santa Rosa County School District maximizes existing resources and encourages all staffs to cultivate new resources, the district does not have written procedures to regularly obtain information about new funding sources.

The Santa Rosa County School District has made several efforts over the years to maximize existing financial resources and to identify additional sources of revenue. For example, the school board requested a one-half percent sales tax to help fund capital needs in the school district, and voters approved the tax.

The assistant superintendent for finance keeps records for and reports to the superintendent and school board on district-wide success in securing entrepreneurial funding for the school district. Although Santa Rosa County School District does not have a dedicated grants administrator, individual administrators and teachers on assignment are assigned the responsibility to seek project grants. For the fiscal year through December 5, 2001, $8,018,615 had been projected and budgeted in federal funding through state projects and grants and $6,566,995 had already been collected. Likewise, $2,069,250 had been projected and budgeted in direct federal grants while $927,487 had been collected to date. Similarly $1,661,790, including school recognition grants, had been projected, budgeted and collected from other state revenue sources. [33] A professional development center exists through which teachers on special assignment can pursue grants for the district. Over the last decade grant categorical funding increased more than two fold from $13,235,786 in Fiscal Year 1991-92 to $27,576,639 in the 2001-02 fiscal year. [34]

In-kind resources are provided through business partnerships, and this is further described in the Community Involvement Section of this report.

The district's efforts to obtain grant funding could be strengthened if the district had written procedures for regularly obtaining information about new funding opportunities. These procedures, if well distributed, could help a greater percentage of district staff to understand the steps needed to obtain these funds and the opportunities that are available.

---

[32] The Santa Rosa Head Start packet: Fund application packet, Santa Rosa application for federal assistance, organization information system, Early Head Start 2001 Community Assessment, Santa Rosa County priority list for Early Head Start enrollments.

[33] Santa Rosa County School District revenue ledger scan, 12/5/01, Projects & Grants: federal direct; federal through the state; general fund - other state revenue.

[34] Analysis of grant/categorical funding, FY92 through FY02, 2/7/02.

Recommendations

- *We recommend developing written procedures for obtaining information about new funding sources on a regular basis (see Action Plan 3-18).*

Action Plan 3-18

Develop Written Procedures for Obtaining on a Regular Basis Information on New Funding Sources	
Strategy	In order to optimize efforts to develop new sources of revenue for the school district, gather and widely distribute information on a regular basis about potential new sources of revenue.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop a list of potential new funding sources.
	Step 2: Write for information about how to capture new funds.
	Step 3: Continue to search for new funding sources.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent
Time Frame	December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

4 Performance Accountability System

The Santa Rosa County School District has a district strategic plan supported by individual school improvement plans. The strategic plan is a new document and not yet received an annual update regarding progress toward the established goals. Each area identified in the strategic plan contains a five-year goal with associated annual objectives designed to move the district toward accomplishment of the goal. Operational areas primarily function under vendor contracts and do not enjoy a systematic degree of evaluation and accountability, typically focusing on accounting aspects of the service but not on accountability for the service per se. With additional focus on the annual updating of existing plans and extending this planning to the operational areas, programs will become even more effective in assisting the district in recognizing exemplary performance areas and targeting areas for improvement.

Conclusion

The Santa Rosa County School District (the district) has several accountability procedures in place for its various educational programs. The strategic plan forms the basis for planning and accountability within the district. All program areas, especially areas associated with instructional and academic performance, are tied to the goals and objectives of this plan.

However, the Santa Rosa County School District's strategic plan was only adopted in August of 2001. Thus, the plan has not been in place long enough to see an annual report of progress toward the goals that were established. While there is intent to execute the plan and to report on progress, the annual review aspects are not yet formalized. Until such time as this aspect of the cycle is accomplished accountability is not complete.

In areas associated with the operations of the district such as transportation and food services, each program area has developed varying degrees of accountability systems. Since many of the functions in these areas are provided through contracts with outside vendors, the contracts contain performance criteria that are continuously monitored and reported quarterly to the Santa Rosa School Board. Generally speaking the operational areas do not have specific measurable goals and objectives in place. While the areas are accountable to their specific sections of the district strategic plan, true performance accountability is minimal at best. The individual chapters throughout the report reflect this lack of specific accountability and make specific recommendations for improvement in this area. Associating these yet to be developed goals and objectives with the district's strategic plan would provide a central document containing all aspects of accountability.

Exhibit 4-1

**The District Has a Notable Accomplishment
in Performance Accountability Systems in the Last Three Years**

- The district has developed a strategic plan outlining goals and objectives in major instructional and operational areas.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Overview of Chapter Findings

The SchoolMatch consultants reviewed the district's performance accountability system using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and associated indicators. The consulting team reviewed district planning procedures and program documents, recent audits by outside entities, and contracts, as well as speaking directly with school and central office staff.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Accountability of Programs

1. The district adopted a five-year strategic improvement plan with measurable long- and short-term goals and objectives. Individual school plans support the district plan. While accountability measures are contained within state and federally required plans for specific educational program areas such as exceptional student education, the district has not developed measurable objectives and performance measures for operational areas (page 4-4).

2. The district incorporates specific short- and long-term objectives in its strategic plan and specific program planning documents. Operational areas are primarily implemented through vendor contracts, which do not contain outcome or cost-effectiveness measures (page 4-8).

3. The district does not have a *systematic* process to review the cost /benefit of the various instructional programs and vendor contracts (page 4-9).

4. The district does not have formal structures to evaluate the performance and costs of major educational program areas or operational programs to improve program performance and cost-efficiency (page 4-12).

5. The district has several mechanisms to report educational performance, using school improvement plans and school advisory councils to communicate academic achievement to the public. The district's operational areas have not established methods to provide information to the public. The district provides the public with various venues to seek information, lodge complaints and makes its wishes known (page 4-14).

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

- *There are no recommendations with a fiscal impact.*

Background

The Santa Rosa County School District board adopted a comprehensive strategic plan in August 2001. [1] The plan contains measurable long- and short-term goals for its major program areas. Each section of the strategic plan is organized around five-year goals with annual measurable objectives designed to lead to accomplishment of the goal in five years. The plan was developed with considerable community and staff input. Each program area manages day-to-day operations to support accomplishing the goals and objectives set forth in the plan.

Academic achievement and provision of services to students are the foundation of the strategic plan. The strategic plan is "managed" through the office of the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction with the various other assistant superintendents contributing to the management function.

Planning and accountability functions have been in place in the Santa Rosa County School District for many areas through program specific planning and accountability documents. For example, the technology area has been operating with a technology plan for many years. The degree to which these documents contain measurable objectives varies. Vocational education plans have been very specific, outlining various goals and objectives; special education and ESOL plans have specific goals related to program implementation and service to students. These plans are developed with community and stakeholder input and presented annually to the district's school board. While these plans have specific measurable objectives, they are often process oriented rather than outcomes oriented.

Service areas such as food service, transportation and maintenance have been governed by contracts with outside vendors. These contracts provide a degree of management and accountability found in the private sector and afford the district considerable control with the vendor. However, there is presently no cost/benefit analysis nor peer comparison used related to contract development. As noted in the recommendations in the specific chapters related to the operational areas, there is a clear need for the district to implement a planned program of accountability related to the service areas provided through outside contracts.

The district maintains the required federal and state planning documents in the areas of vocational education, instructional and administrative technology, programs for students with special needs and programs for English language learners. These documents contain goals and specific objectives for these program areas. Federal requirements in these areas related to planning are specific and require the district to file plans with the state in order to ensure the flow of federal dollars to the district. [2]

---

[1] Santa Rosa County School Board approved minutes, August 28, 2001.
[2] District Technology Plan, District Vocational Education Plan, District Special Education Plan, District LEP Plan.

Accountability of Programs

1 **The district adopted a five year strategic improvement plan with measurable long- and short-term goals and objectives. Individual school improvement plans support the district plan. While accountability measures are contained within state and federally required plans for specific educational program areas such as exceptional student education, the district has not developed measurable objectives and performance measures for operational areas**

The Santa Rosa County School District adopted a formal strategic plan in August of 2001. [3,4]. The plan contains specific, measurable goals and objectives for the major program areas involved in providing educational services to the students of the district. Each school has a school improvement plan developed through a community process and delineating specific measurable goals and objectives that support the district's overall strategic plan. The strategic plan is new for Santa Rosa and had yet to be in place a year, thus no reporting of status on any aspect of the plan has been made.

The 2001-2002 Santa Rosa School District strategic plan encompasses three school board initiatives:

I. Improving Student Achievement: Santa Rosa students are expected to achieve at the highest levels of performance in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. The board is dedicated to supporting the development and implementation of challenging curricula at all grade levels and to providing effective intervention to ensure that all students read with fluency and comprehension, write effectively, solve mathematical problems, and apply critical thinking skills to real world tasks.

II. Closing the Gap: Because most Santa Rosa students score higher than their counterparts across the state, the board will focus on increasing the achievement levels of those students in the middle and low achievement ranges in order to ensure equity in instruction for all.

III. Enhancing the Learning Environment: The board will ensure that all students have a safe, nurturing, and technology-rich environment in order to enhance student achievement and promote literacy.

The board supports these initiatives through ten goals that are in turn, supported by specific, measurable objectives found in the strategic plan. Those ten goals are:

1. Readiness to Start School: Communities and schools collaborate to ensure the success of all children in schools.

2. Graduation Rate and Readiness for Post-Secondary Education and Employment: Students who graduate are prepared to enter the workforce and/or post-secondary institutions of learning.

3. Student Performance: All stakeholders collaborate to ensure that student achievement is at the center of our focus and all students are provided with opportunities to perform at their highest potential.

4. Learning Environment: Schools and communities establish a nurturing and challenging environment for learning.

5. School Safety and Environment: Schools and communities provide an environment that promotes health, safety, and responsibility.

---

[3] Santa Rosa County School District Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006.
[4] Santa Rosa County School District approved board minutes, 8/28/01.

6. <u>Teachers and Staff</u>: Schools and communities promote professionalism and high expectations among teachers and staff with opportunities for professional growth.

7. <u>Adult Literacy</u>: Schools and communities promote literacy and good citizenship among adults and provide knowledge and skills necessary for a global economy.

8. <u>Family and Community Involvement</u>: Schools and communities are partners in achieving a quality educational system for all students.

9. <u>Fiscal and Resource Responsibility</u>: School district promotes efficient and effective use of resources to enhance educational opportunity.

10. <u>Comprehensive Operational Planning and Program Accountability</u>: School district implements systemic planning and accountability processes to enhance educational opportunity.

The Santa Rosa strategic plan takes each of the ten goals adopted by the school board and delineates objectives and strategies designed to accomplish the goal. Each objective has a five-year plan stated in measurable terms and an annual objective related to it. For example, under Goal 1: Readiness to Start School, the plan contains the following:

> <u>Objective 1.1 Kindergarten Readiness</u>
>
> *Five-year Plan*: The percentage of students who meet the criteria for readiness to start kindergarten will increase 10%.
>
> *Annual Objective*: Establish baseline data by utilizing the required Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.
>
> Various strategies are listed to support the annual objectives.

Goal 3: Student performance is a key goal in the plan and supports the first initiative of the board of "Improving Student Performance". Objectives under this goal include:

> <u>Objective 3.1 School Accountability</u>
>
> *Five-Year Plan:* All district schools will maintain a grade of "C" or above, based upon Florida's A+ Plan
>
> *Annual Objective*: Increase the number of district schools achieving grades of "A" and "B".
>
> *Strategies:*
>
> - Analyze data on student performance to increase achievement.
> - Provide professional development opportunities in reading, writing, math, and science.
> - Implement curriculum-mapping project to ensure mastery of all standards.
>
> <u>Objective 3.2 Student Achievement</u>
>
> *Five-Year Plan:* The percentage of students achieving at a Level 3 or above on the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test) in math, reading, and writing will increase by 15%.
>
> *Annual Objective:* Decrease the number of students scoring at Level 1 and Level 2 on the FCAT math, reading, and writing by 3%.
>
> *Strategies:*
>
> - Provide intervention and intensive instruction for students scoring at Level 1 and Level 2 on FCAT reading, writing, and math.
> - Provide opportunities for professional development in best practices for instruction in reading, writing, and math.

- Implement "Reading in the Content Area" focus in secondary schools and "Best Practices in Literacy Instruction" in elementary schools.
- Provide support and materials to enhance literacy instruction at all grade levels.

Objective 3.3 Curricular Alignment

Five-Year Plan: Curriculum maps aligned with Sunshine State Standards and articulated within feeder patterns will have been published and implemented at all district schools.

Annual Objective: Schools will constantly revise and refine their curriculum maps as they reach consensus across grade levels and feeder patterns.

Strategies:

- Provide annual training of school-based leadership trams as additional schools joins the curriculum-mapping project.
- Support and facilitate revision and refinement of curriculum maps at individual schools
- Facilitate articulation of vertical alignment among feeder-pattern schools.
- Develop and provide software to enhance electronic versions of curriculum maps.

The district operates with approved vocational education and special education plans. These plans meet local, state and federal requirements as evidenced by the various levels of approval and the flow to the district of funds that are contingent upon the plans' approval. The plans contain measurable objectives and program plans and are reported to the school board and public on an annual basis. [5] As cited in Chapter 5- Educational Service Delivery, the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program is evaluated annually by the district ESE staff and school-based administrators. Data used in this evaluation include graduation rates, inclusion rates, FCAT participation rates and performance, and a "customer satisfaction" survey. Two key indicators have been targeted for 2001-02: the dropout rate among students with disabilities and the disporportionality of student membership identified as gifted.

As noted in the Educational Service Delivery Chapter 5 of the full report, the district's LEP (Language Enriched Pupils) Plan, Annual ESOL (English for Students of Other Languages) Report and Self Study, and Florida Department of Education ESOL waiver attest to adequate planning in this area. [6] These plans contain specific goals and objectives for each of the areas and are reported annually to the district board as well as the state. The district regularly assesses the status of this program despite the small number of students enrolled in it. This assessment has led to program improvements in the amount of time students are processed through the program and the implementation of on-line training to increase efficiency and convenience.

The vocational education program has in place the Vocational Curriculum Frameworks and Students Performance Standards as updated by the Department of Education. These frameworks address the parity expected between vocational students and non-vocational students with respect to academic performance. Using the academic performance measures in place within the district, primarily those associated with FCAT, the academic performance of vocational students is compared to that of non-vocational students with the specific expectation that the performance of vocational students will be on par with that of their peers. Strategies are developed toward this end.

The operational areas are primarily areas where services are provided on a contractual basis. This is the case for food service, transportation, various fiscal areas, and maintenance. These areas, and others, are specifically addressed in the district's Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006. [7] Their inclusion in the district's strategic improvement plan underscores their role in supporting the overall educational program.

---

[5] District vocational education plan and district special education plan.

[6] University of West Florida Evaluation of the ESE Dynamo/Liaison Pilot Program in Santa Rosa School District: Final Report, The Educational Research and Development Center, College of Professional Studies, The University of West Florida, Pensacola, Florida.

[7] Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006, Goals 1, 2, 6, and 10.

Strategic plan goals and objectives for these areas reference the more comprehensive plans in place for each area. For example, in the area of building maintenance, the district has a comprehensive building maintenance plan containing initiatives slated for implementation. The strategic plan references the completion of these scheduled initiatives under Objective 10.2 and requires an evaluation of the degree to which these initiatives have been completed with a report of this to the local board.

While these areas operate under contracts that are competitively bid and monitored by central office staff, best practice reports in the specific areas note several areas where improvements can be made. The various contracts contain program responsibilities and associated costs. However, there is not a coordinated, district-wide effort to establish goals and objectives for these areas. For example, Chapter 12, Transportation, indicates that there are measurable objectives for this area in the director's office but questions their dissemination to various stakeholders and the public. This report also indicates that such information should be in the provider's contract but is not currently include. Chapter 12, Transportation and Chapter 13, Food Service, both reflect the lack of accountability and cost effectiveness measures in these two areas. The contracts do not address cost effectiveness nor do they show evidence of benchmarking. Ancillary areas not operating with contracts, such as risk management and the various finance and infrastructure areas do not operate with specific, measurable objectives.

Recommendations ───────────────────────────

- *We recommend that the district establish a process to review the existing contracts and other support areas and establish specific goals and objectives for these various areas (see Action Plan 4-1).*

Action Plan 4-1

Increase Level of Accountability in the Performance Accountability System		
Strategy	Establish a team to study existing contracts and establish district specific goals and objectives for the various operational areas; develop planning documents in areas not under contract	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Establish an office of primary responsibility (OPR) for contract review and subsequent development of recommendations
	Step 2:	Appoint a team to review contracts and formulate recommendations as required.
	Step 3:	Present recommendations to the superintendent and school board for approval
	Step 4:	Amend contracts as necessary; develop planning documents where necessary
	Step 5:	Periodically report findings and suggestions for improvement.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, school board	
Time Frame	Establish OPR and team by December 2002 Report to superintendent by July1, 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources and could ultimately result in cost savings.	

Source: SchooMatch Consultant.

2 The district incorporates specific short- and long-term objectives in its strategic plan and specific program planning documents. Operational areas are primarily implemented through vendor contracts, which do not contain outcome or cost-effectiveness measures

The strategic plan for the Santa Rosa County School District incorporates measurable objectives for both the short and long term. These objectives are designed to move the district toward the accomplishment of the goals established within the plan. Individual departments within the district have more detailed plans that support the more global goals and objectives in the strategic plan. For example, Objective 2.2 Workforce Development under Goal 2, Graduation Rate and Readiness for Post-Secondary Education and Employment, has a five-year goal of increasing the participation in career and technical education activities by 10%. The annual goal is a 2% increase, which, if met, will lead to success on the five-year goal. The vocational education plan for this district, which outlines more specific objectives and strategies, looks at the degree to which students are placed in these programs and their level of success in them.

Educational areas such as vocational education, programs for exceptional students and English language learners are guided by program specific documents outlining goals and objectives. These plans are tied to specific areas of the strategic plan forming a vertical planning system in the district. There are significant state and federal planning requirements in all of these areas. Approvals of these plans from all levels attest to the adequacy of them in meeting these requirements. There is a clear emphasis upon not only providing services to students with varying and specific needs, but a focus upon their success in their programs. For example, both the plan for students with disabilities and for English language learners contains specific objectives designed to address the success of these students on the FCAT. While the district strategic plan focuses on the overall success of students on FCAT assessments, the specific program plans call for monitoring of their respective subpopulations on FCAT performance and delineate strategies for promoting a higher level of success.

While the aforementioned documents contain long and short-term goals and objectives, there is no evidence that cost effectiveness is considered in these areas or specific benchmarking is present. The strategic plan and the various program plans contain budget information but do not reflect peer comparisons. While the goals and objectives are specific and measurable, the lack of inclusion of cost comparisons and benchmarking is noticeable.

Vendors under contract provide the district's food, transportation and maintenance services. The chapters addressing the best practices for each of these operational areas indicate that the district needs to develop a more formal structure for assessing and comparing their services to those provided in peer school districts. The chapters addressing these operational areas discuss the district's failure to review the cost effectiveness of these services when compared to appropriate benchmarks. While the contracts in place reflect specific performance in terms of ridership and safety statistics in transportation and participation and food safety requirements in school food, they do no reflect a global attention to accountability. The specific criteria of linking program performance to program cost are not present.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop a formal mechanism for comparing the levels of service provided in the various operational contracts with that of peer districts or appropriate private industry, state or federal standards. This comparison should include a measure of cost effectiveness (see Action Plan 4-2).*

Action Plan 4-2

Develop a Formal Mechanism for Comparing with Peer Districts the Levels of Service Provided and the Cost Effectiveness of Various Operational Contracts	
Strategy	Appoint a multidisciplinary team to develop a plan to compare the levels of service in the various operational areas with those enjoyed in peer districts, private industry, state or federal agencies, as applicable.
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify an office of primary responsibility (OPR) for the project and appoint a team
	Step 2: Survey peer districts private industry, state or federal agencies, as applicable to gather information regarding service levels and costs
	Step 3: Review the information from the peer districts private industry, state or federal agencies, as applicable compared to the current levels of service and costs in Santa Rosa.
	Step 4: Develop recommendation as dictated by the data
	Step 5: Establish action steps to accomplish recommendations, including a review cycle to assess the degree to which recommendations have been accomplished
	Step 6: Present findings and plan to the superintendent and School Board for approval
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and/or designee
Time Frame	Plan presented to School Board by March 2003
Fiscal Impact	None for planning aspect; potential cost savings resulting from studies.

Source: SchooMatch Consultant.

3 The district does not have a *systematic* process to review the cost/benefit of the various instructional programs and vendor contracts.

The district has a strategic plan with measurable objectives. However, the plan has not been in place for a year. While board minutes indicate intent to review the plan annually this has not yet occurred. Discussions with staff members verify the intent to report to the board regarding the status of the plan on an annual basis; however, there is no evidence of a specific plan to do so. School improvement plans are annually presented to the school board and reflect the progress of the schools toward meeting the goals and objectives in their plans. [8] While the district has heretofore had goals and objectives, this most recent plan represents its first comprehensive effort in this area. Individual school improvement plans have been in place for many years as required by the state.

Schools within the district are required to develop school improvement plans that incorporate information from the various achievement tests and other information germane to the school's operation. These plans are developed in conjunction with school advisory committees and reflect a tight relationship to the

[8] SRC approved school board minutes 6/5/01, 6/28/01, and 5/12/01.

district's strategic plan. School improvement plans contain measurable goals and objectives and are disseminated widely. A review by the SchoolMatch consultant of a sample of the plans on the various school web sites, revealed a focus in academic achievement and support for staff development. [9] School improvement plans must be presented to the school board for approval on an annual basis. At that time the status of the school toward meeting the previous year's goals is also presented. [10] School improvement plans typically address the status of the school on student performance on the FCAT and other measures of student achievement. If specific areas presented problems on the FCAT, strategies are incorporated into the plan to provide students with extra support in meeting the state-prescribed performance goals.

Schools within the district incorporate various strategies designed to move students toward improved academic performance and increase levels of service within the building. Schools develop these strategies as they are developing their plans. The district does not have in place a systematic process for evaluating various instructional programs being implemented within the district. Therefore, inclusion of specific strategies is often based on recommendations from teachers, principals and other staff. It should be noted that there are schools where programs are being more closely monitored but this is the exception rather than the rule. Schools also use programs that receive district-wide support for implementation. An example of this is the curriculum-mapping project being implemented within the district.

The curriculum-mapping project incorporates the Sunshine State Standards into the daily plans of the school in a systematic and orderly fashion. The entire district is implementing the program. This implementation is found as an objective in the district strategic plan and in each school improvement plan. In visits to schools and in reviewing school web sites, the focus on the standards and the ready availability of the mapping information provides teachers, students, and parents access to instructional plans for Santa Rosa students. The district adopted curriculum mapping after reviewing its implementation in other localities. The emphasis placed on monitoring instruction on the state standards, inherent in curriculum mapping, is in concert with the student achievement goals of the Santa Rosa County School District.

 Operational services in the Santa Rosa County School District, such as food service, transportation and maintenance are delivered through vendor contracts. To varying degrees performance information was used to determine the need to move from district-provided services to contractually provided services. In the area of food service, the move to a vendor contract was made after several years of data indicating a need for a change in food service performance. As noted in the Food Service Chapter:

> *" ...the loss for food service kept spiraling due to maintenance of old equipment, need to increase participation, state audits by the Auditor General's Office and the Food and Nutrition Management Office revealed that accountability deficiencies required a need to enhance efficiency."*

Similarly, in the area of transportation, Santa Rosa moved to a vendor contract when data indicated the need to address pressing transportation issues. As noted in the Transportation chapter:

> *"The Santa Rosa County School District operated its own transportation system until 1998. The district had not purchased new buses on a regular schedule and was confronted with an aging bus fleet, prone to breakdowns and expensive repairs. In addition, the district was experiencing a high rate of worker's compensation claims from employees in the transportation department. As a result, the district decided to pursue a contract with a private vendor to manage the student*

---

[9] www.santarosa.k12.fl.us.
[10] Santa Rosa County School Board approved minutes 6/5/01, 6/28/01, and 5/12/01.

> *transportation department. The district pursued a fixed price contract arrangement that assured costs would not exceed the department's current expenditures.*

The districts occupational therapist services are provided under contracts with local providers. Administrative computing services are provided in conjunction with the Gateway Consortium. Agreements with local educational institutions provide opportunities for students to engage in dual enrollment with Pensacola Junior College and the University of West Florida. Similar agreements provide teachers with opportunities for staff development. Technology services and maintenance is often achieved through contracts such as that for school wiring and for sharing of resource teachers. All of these contracts were entered into because evidence indicated that providing the service in this manner would be cost effective and increase the level of service within the district. As noted in the best practices section on technology, the district does not have a process to evaluate the cost effectiveness of various technology-related instructional programs. The same is true of instructional programs that are not technology based. While interviews with curriculum staff indicate the review of the programs as to their relationship to the instructional program and to the Sunshine State Standards, there is no district-wide process in place to evaluate the "bang for the buck" related to program adoption. As noted in the technology section, individual school and program initiatives have resulted in data gathering related to some program areas, these are not part of a district-wide process.

The Santa Rosa School District has made extensive use of outside contracting as an option to providing services to students via directly employed staff. This has enabled the district to keep its staffing pattern low while still offering a full range of services. What is lacking in this scenario, whether it is in food service, transportation or occupational therapy is a consistent procedure to examine the cost effectiveness of the contractual arrangement and the use of benchmarking within that examination. As noted in the Management Structures, Exhibit 3-1, the district is recognized for frugal operations. This could be further substantiated with the incorporation of cost effectiveness and benchmarking examinations of all contracted services.

Recommendations ———————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district review existing contracts for services and incorporate appropriate cost effectives and benchmarking measures into each one. Further, the strategic plan should be revised to incorporate cost effectiveness and benchmarking objectives in each service area.*

Action Plan 4-3

Develop a Protocol to Evaluate the Impact of Non-Technology Instructional Resources on Student Achievement		
Strategy	Review each existing contract and develop cost effectiveness and benchmarking measures for each. Include the same in the district strategic plan.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Determine the areas where contracting is employed and designate a lead person from the district and from the vendor to each of the areas.
	Step 2:	Augment this committee as needed with additional school district personnel and/or community members
	Step 3:	Gather information regarding peer district, state federal or industry standards and benchmarks in the various areas.
	Step 4:	Develop objectives and associated strategies for incorporating cost effectives measures and benchmarking into each contractual area.

	Step 5: Revise the district strategic plan to incorporate these additional objectives.
	Step 6: Gather data required to establish the cost effectiveness of each area.
	Step 7: Report the cost effectiveness data as part of the annual report on the strategic plan. Make associated program/contract adjustments as dictated by the data.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and/or designee
Time Frame	Planning in the 2001-02 school year Implementation in the 2002-03 school year.
Fiscal Impact	Expected to be able to complete with existing resources

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

4 The district does not have formal structures to evaluate the performance and costs of major educational program areas or operational programs to improve program performance and cost-efficiency.

The Santa Rosa County School District strategic plan represents the foundation upon which accountability rests in the district. The strategic plan is a commendable document presenting measurable goals and objectives in the major educational areas. As the strategic plan is implemented it is the intent for the board to receive an annual update on the accomplishment of the plan's goals and objectives. As the plan was only adopted in August of 2001, the annual cycle of review has not yet happened. Until such time as an annual review can take place there is not way to document the plan's evaluation and subsequent use of update information. Interviews with staff indicate intent to do so.

A more formal level of accountability exists at the school level through the school improvement plan process. For many years the schools have been required to develop school improvement plans and submit them to the School Board for annual approval. Discussions with building staff, review of school web sites and board minutes indicate that this process is being followed. School improvement plans focus on academic areas and tie directly to the state requirements under the Sun shine State Standards as well as tie directly to the district's strategic plan.

As noted above in several sections, the district has in place planning documents for instructional areas, but needs to establish more formal evaluation mechanisms. [11] There is no mechanism in place to identify programs for evaluative study or any district-wide protocol for executing such a study. This is true for both instructional programs and for the operational service areas.

The district does not have in place formal procedures for assessing the cost-effectiveness of its operational programs outside those mechanisms contained in vendor contracts.

Implementing such a program of review would provide the district with information upon which to make decisions regarding continuation of program, elimination of those not proving cost-effective and become a source of input for strategic and specific program plan revisions.

---

[11] SRC BFMP Review, Chapter 4, Performance Accountability, Recommendations, Sections 1-3.

Recommendations ——————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district establish a systematic plan for program evaluation that uses performance data and risk assessments to target those areas most in need of formal evaluation. The district should then conduct or contract for evaluation of the targeted areas and use the results to improve performance or reduce costs. (see Action Plan 4-4).*

Action Plan 4-4

Develop a Plan to Disseminate Accountability Information	
Strategy	Develop performance data and risk assessment techniques to target areas in need of evaluation and conduct formal evaluations of the targeted areas.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop performance measures and risk assessment techniques to identify programs and strategies most in need of formal evaluation.
	Step 2: Establish a schedule of the evaluations to be conducted over the next fiscal year.
	Step 3: Contact schools of higher education for assistance in developing protocols for programs evaluation and explore the potential use of graduate student and/or faculty in the implementation of the evaluations.
	Step 4: Incorporate the results of existing evaluation studies into current evaluations.
	Step 5: Incorporate the evaluation process, including reporting results to the public, into the district strategic plan.
	Step 6: Present evaluation results to the Board and Superintendent for use in improving performance.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and/or designee
Time Frame	Planning in the 2001-2002 school year Implementation in the 2002-03 school year.
Fiscal Impact	Assuming that schools of higher education provide in-kind services, an be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

Effective and Responsible Operation

5

The district and state have several mechanisms to report educational performance using school improvement plans and school advisory councils to communicate academic achievement to the public. The district's operational areas have not established methods to provide information to the public. The district provides the public with various venues to seek information, lodge complaints and makes its wishes known.

The major assessment of academic achievement within the state of Florida is results on the FCAT tests and school grades. As evidenced in the Educational Services Chapter, Santa Rosa students and schools enjoy considerable success on these measures. Information regarding district and school scores and school "grades" issued by the Florida Department of Education is widely disseminated by the department itself. A major purpose of the entire program in Florida is to provide the public with a measure of accountability for public education that is consistent across the state and widely disseminated.

In addition to the dissemination efforts of the Florida Department of Education, the Santa Rosa County School District makes wide use of its web site and those of the individual schools to further disseminate this information. [12] School newsletters also announce school "grades" issued by the state and further provide academic status information. [13] School Public Accountability Reports (SPAR) are mailed to every parent in this district. SPAR repots the student's academic performance on Florida state tests as well as school "grades" issued by the Department of Education. These reports are designed to provide information on student academic performance; they do not in any way reflect cost efficiency. In addition they do not disaggregate student performance by special populations, such as exceptional students, students who are not proficient in English, or disadvantaged students.

Information contained in the various operational best practice sections does not reveal any consistent mechanisms for the provision of accountability information in these areas. While school lunches are advertised and bus routes known, there are no formal structures in place for public accountability in these and other contracts.

The district conducts the business of educating its students in an open manner. In addition to the methods of communication cited previously, the board provides open sessions during each meeting whereby the public many address concerns to the board in any area. This open forum allows the public to address both academic and operational areas. There is also a formal process for registering complaints in the Santa Rosa Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations, Chapter 2, Section 2.09.

---

[12] www.santarosa.k12.fl.us
[13] Samples of school/principal newsletters 2000-01, 2001-02.

Recommendations —————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district develop a plan to disseminate to the public disaggregated student academic performance information and operational area performance information related to contract performance, service levels and cost effectiveness (see Action Plan 4-5).*

Action Plan 4-5

Develop a Plan to Disseminate Accountability Information		
Strategy	Develop a dissemination plan for conveying disaggregated student academic performance data and data concerning the performance of operational programs to the public.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Determine cost-effective, meaningful avenues for dissemination; explore the use of existing mechanisms to reduce any associated costs.
	Step 2:	Incorporate the dissemination plans into the package presented to the Superintendent and Board.
	Step 3:	Adopt the disseminations that are most cost effective.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and/or designee	
Time Frame	Planning in the 2001-02 school year Implementation in the 2002-03 school year.	
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources	

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

5 Educational Service Delivery

The Santa Rosa County School District provides highly effective and efficient educational services and programs for its students. The district's strategic improvement plan focuses resources toward improving the performance of all students in a safe, nurturing, and technology-rich environment.

Conclusion

The Santa Rosa County School District provides outstanding educational services and programs through pragmatic, data-driven academic decisions. The district's students score among the highest in the state on state-mandated assessments. Santa Rosa students also score higher than the state and national average on the ACT and SAT. Other state and national comparisons of student achievement and outcome data demonstrate the effectiveness of the district's programs. During the course of this review, SchoolMatch consultants identified a number of notable district accomplishments in educational service delivery, some of which are mentioned below in Exhibit 5-1. However, the district could improve its performance in several areas, such as raising reading achievement in the upper grade levels, reducing rates of teacher absenteeism, strengthening Workforce Development programs, improving the management of textbook inventory, and developing objectives that are more specific, measurable, and outcome-based in the district's school improvement plans.

Exhibit 5-1

Santa Rosa County School District Has Made Notable Accomplishments

- Santa Rosa's students scored among the highest in the state on every assessment in 2000-01. Santa Rosa students ranked first on 19 of the 32 state-mandated assessments for math and reading.
- Santa Rosa's students scored higher than the state and national average on the ACT and SAT.
- Santa Rosa students earn a significant amount of scholarship awards. In 2000-01, Santa Rosa students earned a total of $9,373,628 in scholarships, including $4,600,626 earned by 507 students from the state of Florida for Bright Futures awards. In 2001-02, the total scholarship amount was $12,605,395, including $5,396,160 earned by 600 students for Bright Futures awards.
- Santa Rosa has higher rates of high school graduation and student attendance than the state average, and students score higher than the state average on post-secondary readiness tests.
- Santa Rosa school grades are exemplary. There were 8 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, and 2 high schools that earned "A" grades from the state in 2000-01. Santa Rosa has no D or F schools. In 2001-02, two more middle schools earned an 'A' grade, giving the district a total of 17 'A' schools.
- Santa Rosa has many volunteers who support the curriculum. During 2000-01, there were 5,918 volunteers actively involved in the district's 29 schools, and there were 7,318 volunteers during 2001-2002.
- Santa Rosa administrators are strong instructional leaders, as evidenced by the recognition they have received for their accomplishments.
- Grants in excess of $2 million have been awarded to the district and used to enhance curriculum.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Overview of Chapter Findings ─────────

The SchoolMatch team reviewed the district's educational service delivery using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education. The consulting team employed several methodologies to develop chapter conclusions and action plans, where applicable. For instance, consultants conducted on-site interviews with district-level managers, teachers, and support staff. They observed instruction in progress. Additionally, they reviewed extensive documentation that articulates the process and policies governing educational service delivery in the district. Two open public forums were held to provide an opportunity for staff, principals, teachers, parents, and others to provide input.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Effective and Cost-Efficient Programs

1. District administrators use both academic and nonacademic data to improve K-12 education programs. (Page 5-4)
2. District administrators facilitate sharing effective instructional practices to improve student performance. (Page 5-12)
3. The district provides effective and cost-efficient Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs. (Page 5-13)
4. The district provides effective and cost-efficient instruction as part of its English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. (Page 5-16)
5. While the district provides an array of secondary vocational and adult/technical education programs, the program outcomes do not compare favorably against peer district outcomes. (Page 5-18)
6. The district's curricular framework is linked to Florida's accountability standards and to the Sunshine State Standards. (Page 5-23)
7. The district has adopted a plan for the progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 that maximizes student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards. (Page 5-23)
8. While school advisory councils do meet statutory membership requirements, the district does not ensure that school improvement plans contain objectives that are specific, measurable, and outcome-based. (Page 5-24)

Cost Effective Instructional Materials

9. The district's process for selecting instructional materials ensures that instructional materials meet the needs of teachers and students. (Page 5-25)
10. Each student has current and appropriate instructional materials in core courses that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards and the district's pupil progression plan. (Page 5-26)
11. The district's procedures for acquiring, maintaining, and disposing of instructional materials could be more cost-effective. (Page 5-26)

Educational Program Effectiveness and Efficiency

12. The district's accountability mechanisms are generally effective, although the objectives in school improvement plans should be more specific, measurable, and outcome-based. (Page 5-27)
13. The district regularly reviews its organizational structure and the staffing of the central office and schools to minimize administrative layers and processes. (Page 5-30)
14. The district clearly reports on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers. (Page 5-33)

Library Media Services

15. The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction. (Page 5-34)

16. The district provides necessary support services (guidance counseling, psychological, social work, and health) to meet the needs of its students in a cost-efficient manner. (Page 5-35)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

There were no recommendations with fiscal impact for educational service delivery.

Background

The Santa Rosa County School District is one of the smaller school districts in the state. It has 16 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 6 senior high schools, 1 adult school, and 1 technical center. In 2000-01, the district currently employs 2,321 staff to serve a student population of 22,633 students. The student population has increased from 12,458 to 22,633 over the last 23 years. During that same time period, the number of school administrators has increased from 40 to 63, while the number of district administrators has been reduced from 24 to 21. Concurrently, the number of teachers has increased from 747 to 1,464.

When comparing the academic performance of the Santa Rosa County School District with the performance of other districts, it is important to consider the characteristics of the student population served by each district. One important measure – the percentage of the student population that is eligible for free and reduced price meals – can be used as a proxy for the economic status of the student population. As Exhibit 5-2 shows, Santa Rosa has a lower percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch than most of its peer districts.

In addition, the district's students and staff are demographically homogenous with 90% of students and 95% of staff of white non-Hispanic heritage. The racial and ethnic distribution of staff closely resembles that of students, as seen in Exhibit 5-3. As a result, the challenge of educating students who are of limited English proficiency is not as great for Santa Rosa as it is for other districts in the state.

Exhibit 5-2

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch is Lower in Santa Rosa than in Most Peer Districts in 2000-01

School District	Percentage of Students Eligible
Santa Rosa	**31.6%**
Escambia	55.6%
Osceola	46.7%
Bay	44.5%
Alachua	44.0%
Collier	43.7%
Lake	39.5%
Leon	29.9%
Okaloosa	27.5%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Exhibit 5-3

Racial/Ethnic Breakdown of Santa Rosa County School District Staff Closely Parallels that of Students

Racial/Ethnic Group	Percentage of Staff	Percentage of Students
White, Non-Hispanic	95.0%	90.0%
Black, Non-Hispanic	3.7%	5.4%
Hispanic	0.4%	1.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.6%	1.4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.4%	0.6%
Multiracial	NR	0.8%

Source: Florida Department of Education, Educational Information and Accountability Services.

Methodology

SchoolMatch consultants used a variety of methods to assess the district's performance according to the Best Financial Management Practices in educational service delivery, beginning with a review of the self-assessment instruments completed by the Santa Rosa staff. SchoolMatch consultants then interviewed local school board members, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, the directors for in-service training and instructional technology, the director of Exceptional Student Education (ESE)/ student services and Title VI, the directors of elementary, middle, and high schools, the curriculum coordinator for math and science, and the curriculum coordinator for reading, language arts, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Additionally, the consultants visited several school sites and collected data from principals, students, teachers, and other staff members. SchoolMatch evaluated the school district's compliance with relevant laws and regulations by examining existing policies and procedures.

Effective and Cost-Efficient Programs

1 District administrators use both academic and nonacademic data to improve K-12 education programs.

Santa Rosa County School District administrators utilize a variety of data sources to strategically improve the quality of public school programs. The district collects and analyzes both academic and nonacademic data in developing its strategic improvement plan, and the high levels of student performance reflect the effectiveness of their data-driven decisions.

The district has established both a written mission statement and a strategic improvement plan that articulate its purpose and direction. The mission statement affirms the district's commitment to ensuring high student performance by implementing challenging curricula and by providing effective intervention. The local school board approved a five-year Strategic Improvement Plan on August 28, 2001. It contains three major initiatives: improving student performance, closing the gap, and enhancing the learning environment.

- **Improving Student Performance.** Santa Rosa students are expected to achieve at the highest levels of performance in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. The board is dedicated to supporting the development and implementation of challenging curricula at all grade levels and to providing effective intervention to ensure that all students can read with fluency and comprehension, write effectively, solve mathematical problems, and apply critical thinking skills to real world tasks.

- **Closing the Gap.** Because most Santa Rosa students score higher than their counterparts across the state, the school board will focus on increasing the achievement levels of those students in the middle and low achievement ranges in order to ensure equity in instruction for all.

- **Enhancing the Learning Environment.** The board will ensure that all students have a safe, nurturing, and technology-rich learning environment in order to enhance student achievement and promote literacy.

The Santa Rosa administrative team analyzes test data in order to make knowledgeable educational decisions. Test data include results from the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), the Stanford 9 (a norm-referenced test), Reading Recovery studies, and the ACT and SAT examinations. [1] The grade level directors work with school site administrators to disaggregate the data into useful components. During one of the consultants' site visits, groups of administrators were learning to plot test data, first by hand and later using Microsoft Excel worksheets. The data analysis was to be shared with the teachers at each building with customized student profiles for each individual classroom teacher. Using the data, teachers can develop instructional strategies to maximize each student's learning.

An example of data analysis being used for program design is observable at the high school level. By examining FCAT scores in grades 5 through 8, the district identified students at four secondary schools who were reading significantly below grade level. Through research, the district administration identified a reading program called READ 180, which is highly structured program that is designed to address the learning needs of the adolescents who have difficulty with reading. Currently ending its first year of operation in the district, the READ 180 program has helped secondary school students in the lowest quartile of reading achievement to improve their FCAT scores. Of the 294 participants (each of whom scored at level 1 on the FCAT Reading assessment in October 2001), roughly 60% scored above level 1 in 2002 (see Exhibit 5-4). However, the effectiveness of the program does appear to vary by school, as evidenced by the average gain on the FCAT Reading assessment for each participating school.

Exhibit 5-4

Read 180 Program Helps Students to Improve FCAT Reading Score

School	Students Enrolled in READ 180	Average Gain on FCAT Reading in 2002	Percentage Scoring Above Level 1 in 2002	School Grade in 2001	School Grade in 2002
Milton High School	74	9 points	50%	C	B
Hobbs Middle School	76	18 points	80%	C	B
King Middle School	113	22 points	59%	C	A
Jay High School	31	16 points	42%	C	A

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

The school district has also tracked student academic assessment data for cohorts of students across multiple years. Prior to Florida's adoption of the FCAT, the district used CTB McGraw-Hill test data to plot student gains through the use of student profiles. The district also analyzes data in the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006, School Accountability Reports, Human Resources Management

---

[1] Reading Recovery is a very structured program designed to provide early intervention for students who have difficulty with initial efforts to learn to read.

Development (HRMD) Goal-Setting and Reviews, and Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) Reports as a part of the instructional decision-making process. [2]

The district also examines a variety of performance measures and benchmarks in the school improvement plans and the district strategic improvement plan, including measures such as Advanced Placement test scores, graduation rates and dropout rates, student attendance rates, and teacher absence rates.

Santa Rosa Students Perform Well

The Santa Rosa County School District has enjoyed a high degree of academic success as measured by the FCAT. Florida assigns letter grades to schools based on their students' performance on the FCAT. The Santa Rosa County School District has earned exemplary marks in the program. As illustrated in Exhibit 5-5, more than half of Santa Rosa schools received a grade of "A," giving Santa Rosa a higher success rate than any of its peer districts in 2000-01.

Exhibit 5-5

Santa Rosa Has a Higher Percentage of "A" Schools than Its Peer Districts in the 2000-01 School Year

District	"A" Schools	"B" Schools
Santa Rosa	58%	12%
Alachua	28%	23%
Bay	44%	15%
Collier	30%	6%
Escambia	12%	17%
Lake	24%	29%
Leon	47%	16%
Okaloosa	34%	42%
Osceola	10%	7%
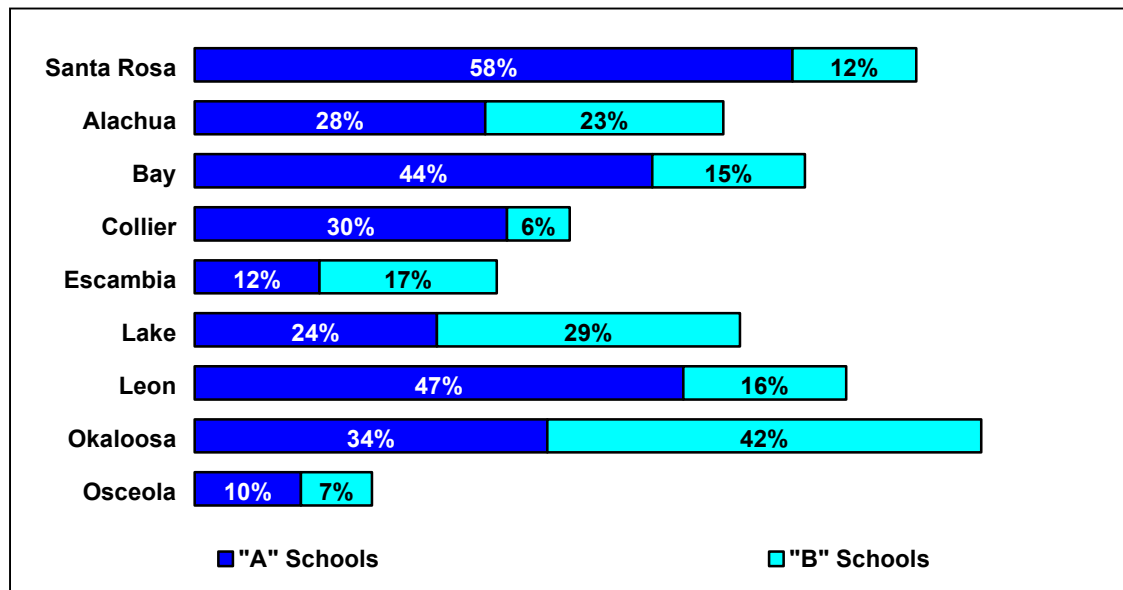
Source: Florida Department of Education.

Santa Rosa's mean scale FCAT scores for reading and math ranked in the top 10 in the state and exceeded all but one of its peer districts' scores (see Exhibit 5-6). On the FCAT writing test, Santa Rosa also ranks among the top districts in the state and among its peer districts (see Exhibit 5-7).

---

[2] The Computer Curriculum Corporation is now known as NCS Learn, a division of the Pearson Corporation.

Exhibit 5-6

District's 2000-01 FCAT Scores Are High Relative To Peer District Scores in Reading and Mathematics

District	Mean Scale Scores											
	Reading (State Ranking)						Mathematics (State Ranking)					
	Grade 4		Grade 8		Grade 10		Grade 5		Grade 8		Grade 10	
Santa Rosa	**323**	**1**	**322**	**1**	**320**	**6**	**330**	**5**	**333**	**1**	**331**	**10**
Alachua	302	29	307	17	322	3	314	36	318	16	331	10
Bay	310	14	309	16	314	15	313	37	312	23	323	23
Collier	298	41	299	31	314	15	318	27	313	21	333	5
Escambia	298	41	302	24	306	40	311	40	308	27	316	45
Lake	306	19	299	31	305	42	322	22	309	26	317	42
Leon	315	4	315	5	320	6	330	5	327	3	333	5
Okaloosa	314	8	313	7	318	9	324	17	324	6	328	16
Osceola	281	60	285	56	299	53	293	62	297	41	316	45
State Average	**298**		**295**		**307**		**314**		**308**		**321**	

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

Exhibit 5-7

District's 2000-2001 FCAT Writing Results are Generally Comparable with State and Peer District Scores

District	Combined Mean Score		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Santa Rosa	**3.6**	**4.0**	**3.9**
Alachua	3.5	3.8	4.1
Bay	3.3	3.6	3.8
Collier	3.3	3.7	3.8
Escambia	3.4	3.7	3.8
Lake	3.4	3.5	3.6
Leon	3.6	4.0	4.0
Okaloosa	3.5	4.0	3.9
Osceola	3.0	3.4	3.6
State Average	**3.4**	**3.7**	**3.8**

Source: Department of Education, FCAT score reports.

In 2001, Florida tested students in grades 3 through 10 for the first time. Prior to 2001, Florida restricted its FCAT testing to the three grade levels reported above. The state currently administers reading and mathematics assessments in two formats. The criterion-referenced assessment is based upon the Florida Sunshine State Standards (SSS), and the norm-referenced test (NRT) is based upon a nationally normed sample of student test results. In reviewing the grades 3 through 10 FCAT results for all school districts in the state, it is impressive to note that Santa Rosa test scores were among the highest in the state on the reading, mathematics, and writing assessments for each grade level tested (see Exhibit 5-8). Most notably, students in grades 7, 8, and 9 ranked highest in the state on all of the reading and mathematics tests.

Exhibit 5-8

Santa Rosa Students Rank First in State on More than Half of FCAT Tests

FCAT Assessment	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Reading SSS	4	1	3	1	1	1	1	4
Math SSS	6	2	3	2	1	1	1	6
Reading NRT	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	4
Math NRT	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	6

Source: Department of Education, FCAT Score Reports for 2000-01.

Santa Rosa Student Performance Compares Well with Similar School Districts Nationwide

The following discussion of performance measures in the Santa County Rosa School District places the school system in a national context. This discussion is intended to offer a larger perspective that provides valuable information about how well Santa Rosa fares in comparison with a sample of school districts across the nation that share similar demographic characteristics.

To accomplish this analysis, SchoolMatch consultants examined the degree to which the student populations in a school district meet established levels of effectiveness on a variety of measures (discussed below). Each school district population was examined against other school district populations nationwide with similar demographics, some of which are currently achieving educational effectiveness and which have firmly established the conditions of effectiveness. The SchoolMatch approach compared student populations rather than school systems in order to provide more fair, accurate, and comprehensive cohort comparisons.

SchoolMatch maintains databases on each of the nation's more than 15,800 operating public school systems and more than 14,000 accredited private schools. From the database of public school populations, SchoolMatch identified other student populations in the United States with similar demographic characteristics to the population in the Santa Rosa County School District. This large group of student populations from approximately 1,500 school systems is the Santa Rosa County School District cohort group. (Please keep in mind that not all students within a school system may be part of the cohort group. For example, only one or two of the high school populations from a given school system may be part of the Santa Rosa cohort group.)

In order to form the basis for comparison with these demographically similar populations, SchoolMatch calculated the average (mean) performance level for the cohort group in every category analyzed. This demographically matched set of populations (the cohort group) can be described in terms of the average (mean) score in each performance area. As a result, we may refer to the cohort group as the mean-matched group. Once the averages in each measurable category were calculated, the cohort group was then mean-matched. Once the mean for each category was determined, the effectiveness level (a level of performance that is one standard deviation above the mean) could be calculated.

School districts may use these effectiveness levels as a target for improving student performance relative to the performance of their peers nationwide. Effectiveness levels are based on performance of student populations, not any given set of school systems. They indicate the highest achievement among groups of students with similar demographic characteristics in each category, across the entire cohort group. These effectiveness levels are typically achieved by between 15% and 20% of the cohort population comparison group in any given category (see Exhibit 5-9). The exact percentage may vary, depending on the category and statistical factors within the cohort group. SchoolMatch consultants use the one standard deviation cutoff in each category because performance levels within the top15% to 20% of the cohort group represent rigorous standards. As performance improves across a school system population, effectiveness levels can be raised to higher levels to ensure continuous improvement toward achievable goals.

Overall, Santa Rosa students compare favorably with students from similar school districts nationwide. They perform well above the mean of students from the national comparison school districts. On the mathematics assessment, Santa Rosa students reach the effectiveness level in 6 of the 8 grade levels tested, while for reading, the scores exceed the effectiveness level for only one grade level.

Exhibit 5-9

District's 2000-01 FCAT Norm Referenced Test Results Compare Well to A Select Group of Similar School Districts Nationwide

Assessment		Median National Percentile Rank							
		Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Santa Rosa	Reading	70	71	65	67	72	75	60	58
	Mathematics	75	73	71	75	78	79	77	71
National Comparison	Mean Level	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57
	Effectiveness Level	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73

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

Norm-Referenced Tests Indicate Santa Rosa Students' Reading Performance Can Be Improved

Assuming that the district's student population has similar characteristics (e.g., poverty level, parent education level) at all grade levels, students should perform at equivalent levels on the achievement tests given in different grades. If instruction is highly effective, test scores might even be expected to be higher in the upper grade levels. This kind of increasing achievement at upper grade levels may be thought of as "value-added" achievement.

Norm-referenced test (NRT) data suggest that the school district needs to address the relative declines in reading test scores in the upper grades. Relative performance of Santa Rosa students on the FCAT NRT is consistent in both reading and mathematics across the grade levels; that is, when performance in reading rises or declines in a given grade, performance in mathematics also rises or declines in that grade. While some fluctuations in mathematics scores occur, dramatic shifts are not apparent, and scores in the later grades are higher than or the same as in the earliest grades, indicating that value-added achievement in mathematics does occur (as measured by this test). For the reading test, scores shift more widely from grade to grade, especially in the later grades, and performance in reading is lower in the later grades than in the earlier grades. Value-added achievement in reading (as measured by this test) does not occur.

Cognition is the process by which knowledge is acquired through the use and interpretation of environmental symbols. When groups of students achieve results that indicate aggregate performance at a particular level in one cognitive area, the group should be expected to achieve aggregate performance at that same level in other cognitive areas. In other words, groups of students can do just as well in one cognitive area as in any other cognitive area (e.g., reading and mathematics). However, equalization of expectations of cognition among groups should not be applied to individuals within those groups.

The FCAT NRT data indicate that attention to the discrepancy between math and reading scores bears immediate attention, particularly since reading ability appears to begin at higher levels in the earlier grades. This fact suggests that students already have the ability to read at higher levels and need greater instruction and encouragement over time. The generally steady performance in mathematics suggests, too, that the school system is capable of sustaining achievement. Greater attention may need to be given to the reading curriculum in order to sustain the relatively higher performance in the early grades and to boost achievement in all subjects, since high reading ability generally correlates with higher achievement in other subject areas.

In addition to standardized student achievement tests, how well a district is performing can be tracked with other academic and nonacademic indicators. Enrollment in Advanced Placement classes, average scores of college entrance exams, dropout rates, grade point averages, and student attendance are all measures that can provide insight into how well a district is doing. Exhibit 5-10 compares Santa Rosa County School District with similar school districts nationwide. The mean level is the average of the national comparison districts, and the effectiveness level is the results achieved by the top 15%-20% of the school systems in the comparison group.

Exhibit 5-10

Compared to Cohort of Comparable School Districts Nationwide, Santa Rosa Students Perform Well Academically

Indicator	Santa Rosa	National Comparison Districts	
		Mean Level	Effectiveness Level
Percent of juniors/seniors in Advanced Placement	13.7%	10.0%	12.0%
Mean Score on the American College Test (ACT)	19.6	20.2	22.2
Mean Score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)	1057	980	1016
Senior Class Grade Point Average	2.9	2.6	2.4
Student Attendance Rate	94%	93%	96%

Source: SchoolMatch analysis.

District Has Low Dropout Rate and Teacher Absenteeism Rate Compared with Other Florida School Districts

In Santa Rosa County, the one-year dropout rate was 2.2% in 2000-01, which is below the statewide average of 3.8% (see Exhibit 5-11). While this rate compares favorably with the state as a whole, the dropout rate could still be improved, as the district ranks 15th across the state. The district's five-year graduation rate of 77% is also well above the statewide average of 67%, also suggesting that the district effectively promotes student success. However, given that other districts have five-year graduation rates of up to 90%, there is still some room for improvement in Santa Rosa.

Research has shown that the most effective ways, overall, to reduce the number of students who drop out of school are to provide opportunities for students to succeed based on concrete, attainable goals and to promote participation in school activities. In addition, the primary bases for student success are the ability to read at or very near grade level and to receive effective instruction. Thus, efforts to improve student achievement in reading will have short-term and long-term benefits in overall student success and, all other things being equal, will have a positive effect on the dropout rate and the graduation rate.

In addition to those initiatives currently practiced in the Santa Rosa County Schools, the following specific strategies may be effective in increasing the numbers of students who complete a high school education in the Santa Rosa County School District:

- Alternative educational opportunities
- Economic incentives for high-risk students
- Mentoring programs with high-profile community leaders
- Mentoring programs linking high school students with younger students in the school system
- Work/study options
- Block scheduling
- Class acceleration scheduling
- Community partnerships aimed at dropout prevention

- Intensive counseling sessions for high-risk students
- Reclamation programs for students who have dropped out of school
- Intensive awareness programs aimed at families of high school students

Exhibit 5-11

**Santa Rosa Has Low Dropout Rate in 2000-01,
but Rate of Teacher Absenteeism Could Be Improved**

Indicator	Santa Rosa	State Average	Rank
One-Year Dropout Rate	2.2%	3.8%	15
Five-Year Graduation Rate	77%	67%	12
Teacher Absenteeism – Personal Absences	2.3	1.8	50
Teacher Absenteeism – All Absences	9.2	9.2	31

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data.

Generally speaking, the higher the teacher absence rate, the less effective a school system is, especially considering the effects of teacher absenteeism on continuity of instruction and on monitoring student achievement, the lack of positive attendance role modeling for students, and the cost of hiring substitute teachers. The rate of teacher absenteeism in Santa Rosa, as calculated by the Department of Education, is 2.3 for personal absences and 9.2 for all types of absences (see Exhibit 5-11). Although the rate for personal absences is slightly higher than the statewide average of 1.8, the overall rate is identical to the statewide average, which indicates that teacher absenteeism is not a critical problem in Santa Rosa. However, if the district wanted to improve teacher attendance, it could do so by publicizing absence rates, designing school district policy to recognize and reward teacher attendance, and implementing practices across the district adopted from buildings where teacher attendance is effective.

Recommendations

- *We **commend** the Santa Rosa County School District for its high levels of student performance on a variety of tests and measures, and we encourage the school district to maintain these excellent standards.*

- *To improve the educational effectiveness of the district, we recommend that the district focus on improving reading achievement in the upper grade levels and reducing the rate of teacher absenteeism.*

Action Plan 5-1

Improve Reading Achievement in the Upper Grade Levels	
Strategy	Analyze the reading curriculum in the upper grades and its delivery to identify areas to be strengthened.
Action Needed	Step 1: Assign the responsibility of review of the reading curriculum to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum or his designee.

	Step 2:	With the assistance of the appropriate grade level director and building principals, document and monitor the current delivery system for reading instruction at upper levels.
	Step 3:	Determine whether students assigned to specific teachers have better reading results than those assigned to other teachers.
	Step 4:	Through staff development, share effective instructional practices.
	Step 5:	Evaluate student progress and disaggregate data by the delivery methods used.
	Step 6:	Report findings to building principals for them to share with their staff.
	Step 7:	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum reviews results and recommends changes or improvements.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum	
Time Frame	Begin in September 2002, evaluate in June 2003.	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch consultant.

Action Plan 5-2

Reduce Rates of Teacher Absenteeism		
Strategy	Develop a targeted plan to reduce the number of days that teachers are absent from their classrooms.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Assign the responsibility to develop a teacher absentee reduction plan to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.
	Step 2:	Analyze current teacher absence data for each building.
	Step 3:	Publicize the absence rates of each building at district-wide principal meetings.
	Step 4:	Require each principal to meet with any teacher who is absent for more than five days (day-to-day absence, not long-term continuing absence) and develop, with the teacher, a plan to improve the teacher's absence. (The plan, signed by both teacher and principal, becomes a part of the teacher's personnel file.)
	Step 5:	Develop a reward/recognition program for perfect attendance.
	Step 6:	Summarize and report findings to the school board annually.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources	
Time Frame	Begin in August 2002.	
Fiscal Impact	The fiscal impact should be negligible. Money saved on substitute teachers can be used for the reward/recognition program.	

Source: SchoolMatch consultant.

2 District administrators facilitate sharing effective instructional practices to improve student performance.

The Santa Rosa County School District provides several opportunities for teachers to improve their professional skills and to share effective instructional practices. The district assesses staff training needs through an online survey. The self-identified training needs from the survey are then developed as part of the school district training program. Additionally, the District Technology Plan and each building's school improvement plan provide clearly identified objectives for which the district provides training, including objectives specifically directed toward improving student performance. Extensive

documentation identifies the training attended, in-service points earned, and instructor verification of competency attained for each in-service activity.

Systematic training is provided for staff through a wide offering of in-service training programs throughout the district. An induction program provides new teachers with opportunities to learn the skills necessary for success. There is a formal mentoring program that provides guidance and advice for new employees, and there is ongoing staff development that targets student needs. The district also has 12 trainers who systematically provide staff development opportunities using a "train-the-trainer" model to effectively deliver the service. Additionally, a Mentor/Cadre model is used to provide supplemental services. [3]

Numerous resources are available for targeted assistance, including Reading Recovery Training, Developing Literacy First staff development, and the Bay Educational Alternative Community Online Network (BEACON) Learning Center, where successful lesson plans can be accessed electronically. ESOL training is another example of staff development that is available on-line.

The Santa Rosa County School District informs teachers of opportunities and incentives to improve their educational practices to meet the needs of students through the use of the district's website, through meetings at the school sites, and through written notices. The SchoolMatch team observed a great number and variety of mechanisms including district and building newsletters, technical assistance newsletters, the school district's website, the BEACON Learning Center, literacy handbooks, CCC showcasing, and ESOL online training. Grade level directors at the elementary, middle, and high school levels provide leadership for the implementation of approved instructional practices. [4] The office of the director of In-service and Instructional Technology tracks the professional development of each staff member. [5]

Through interviews with teachers and building administrators, the consultants determined that the district makes professional development opportunities both convenient and worthwhile for staff. The school district provides incentives in the form of mini-grants, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grants, computers, instructional materials, national board certification training, and stipends paid for after school in-service training and conferences. The district also pays for substitute teachers to enable teachers to attend training activities during the school day. Teachers perceive the staff development activities to be relevant to their work and effective in helping them to better meet the needs of students.

3 The district provides effective and cost-efficient Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs.

In 2000-01, the Santa Rosa County Schools provided ESE services to approximately 4,500 students, including almost 900 students identified as gifted and talented. The percentage of identified exceptional students in Santa Rosa County is higher than that of its peer group and is also higher than the state average (see Exhibit 5-12). However, the ESE student-teacher ratio in Santa Rosa is comparable with the ratios in its peer districts (see Exhibit 5-13).

---

[3] See Mentors/Cadre Train the Trainers.

[4] Grade level director job description, Santa Rosa County School District.

[5] Santa Rosa County School District In-service Report.

Exhibit 5-12

The Percentage of Students in Exceptional Student Education is Higher in Santa Rosa than in Most Peer Districts for 2000-01

District	ESE Student Membership	Total Student Membership	ESE as Percent of Total
Santa Rosa	**4,540**	**22,633**	**25%**
Alachua	7,543	29,686	20%
Bay	5,226	25,741	18%
Collier	6,111	34,192	21%
Escambia	9,397	44,922	20%
Lake	5,848	29,260	27%
Leon	8,562	32,048	20%
Okaloosa	5,996	30,335	15%
Osceola	5,321	34,567	20%
State Average	**467,200**	**2,431,521**	**19%**

Source: 2000-01 Profiles of Florida School Districts.

Exhibit 5-13

Santa Rosa County's Ratio of Teachers to Students for ESE is Comparable with Peer Districts but Higher than State Average in 2000-01

District	ESE Teachers	ESE Students	Ratio
Santa Rosa	**187**	**4,540**	**1:24**
Alachua	322	7,543	1:23
Bay	308	5,226	1:17
Collier	294	6,111	1:21
Escambia	453	9,397	1:21
Lake	226	5,848	1:26
Leon	368	8,562	1:23
Okaloosa	212	5,996	1:28
Osceola	245	5,321	1:22
State Average	**22,158**	**467,200**	**1:21**

Source: 2000-01 Profiles of Florida School Districts and SchoolMatch calculations.

Santa Rosa County Schools have procedures in place to assure that the least restrictive environment is provided for each ESE student. There is a continuum of services available to accomplish that objective. The district's policies and procedures are in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Exhibit 5-14 shows the variety of placements for students with disabilities for Santa Rosa and peer districts. Santa Rosa has the second highest percentage of exceptional children placed in regular classrooms of its peer group in 1999-00 and the highest regular class placement in 2000-01.

Exhibit 5-14

Santa Rosa County's ESE Program Placed a Higher Percentage of Students in Public School Settings than Peer Districts in 2000-01

District	Public School	Public separate school	Public residen-tial	Hospital/ home-bound	Correct-ional facility	Private separate school	Private school	Private residen-tial
Santa Rosa	**100.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**
Alachua	93.7%	4.4%	0.0%	1.1%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Bay	92.9%	5.3%	0.0%	0.5%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Collier	97.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	0.9%	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%
Escambia	92.0%	5.1%	0.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.6%	0.5%	0.2%
Lake	98.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Leon	95.6%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Okaloosa	92.4%	2.8%	0.0%	1.3%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Osceola	97.4%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.8%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
State Total	**96.7%**	**1.7%**	**0.0%**	**0.5%**	**0.7%**	**0.2%**	**0.1%**	**0.0%**

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Santa Rosa Provides ESE Services Efficiently

The Santa Rosa County School District employs ESE liaisons who monitor the services provided and facilitate service delivery through the use of a software program called "Dynamo." [6] They become the special education experts on campus and are valuable resources to staff, students, and parents. In addition to reducing the paperwork required of each teacher, which enables the teacher to concentrate on providing quality services, the ESE liaisons also use technology to provide timely and meaningful involvement of parents in the process of developing the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The use of ESE liaisons and the Dynamo software was piloted in the Santa Rosa County School District during the 2000-01 school year. The University of West Florida's evaluation of the program has since affirmed its success. [7]

The use of ESE liaisons and the Dynamo software helped to ensure the timely re-evaluations of all identified students. As reported in the evaluation done by the University of West Florida, teachers reported that IEPs are now being processed in an efficient and effective manner. Both regular classroom teachers and special education teachers are now able to leave IEP meetings with paperwork in hand and are, therefore, able to begin putting their plans into practice immediately. General education teachers in particular are able to teach more effectively and plan more quickly for students because they have information immediately. On a survey that was part of the pilot program evaluation, over 90% of the parents agreed (31.6%) or strongly agreed (60.5%) that their child was evaluated and placed in ESE in a timely manner. An unexpected, but welcomed, benefit of the program was the retention of special education teachers who indicated that these added resources enabled them to concentrate their efforts on curriculum and instruction, thereby reducing burn-out.

Cost containment practices include using contracted services for physical therapists and occupational therapists. Contracting for the needed services in these staff shortage areas is less expensive than recruiting and employing the staff and thereby incurring the payroll expenses and cost of benefits. It also eliminates the need to continually recruit for those positions, which often have rapid turnover rates.

---

[6] Job description contained in ESE Liaisons material from December site visit.

[7] University of West Florida Evaluation of the ESE Dynamo/Liaison Pilot Program in Santa Rosa School District – Final Report, Evaluation Developed and Administered by Paul Frederick, M.Ed., Mary McLeod, Ed.S., The Educational Research and Development Center College of Professional Studies, The University of West Florida, Pensacola, Florida.

Medicaid Reimbursement

The federal government allows school districts that serve children with special needs to be reimbursed for a part of the cost of those services. School districts can either bill the federal government directly or contract the billing work through a consulting firm. Santa Rosa County School District personnel have reviewed the additional staff costs of becoming a direct billing agency and of using a consulting firm to provide those services. [8] The district has determined that requiring the service provider to file for Medicaid reimbursement is the most cost-effective method for Santa Rosa County School District to participate in this reimbursement program.

Program Assessment

Exceptional Student Education programs are evaluated annually by district ESE staff and school-based administrators. The district uses information such as graduation rates, inclusion rates, FCAT participation rates, and individual student progress to analyze and evaluate program effectiveness. The district ensures that students receive services in their zoned schools whenever possible and assesses "customer satisfaction" through parent surveys. The district will continue to use data profiles of key indicators and state averages that are provided by the Department of Education to develop needed action plans and/or to reallocate funds for program improvement.

As a part of the Department of Education's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Plan, two key indicators have been targeted by Santa Rosa for the 2001-02 school year: the dropout rate among students with disabilities, and the disproportionality of student membership identified as gifted. The district has a plan in place for data collection and analysis. [9] The plan for reducing the dropout rate for students with disabilities includes identifying which variables may be predictors of ESE students who dropout in order to focus preventative programs on the most potentially successful areas for intervention. Comparisons will be made with current and historical Santa Rosa data as well as to the statewide ESE population. The study of the students identified as gifted will use a tracking model that compares variables within the gifted ESE population with the general population within the district.

4 The district provides effective and cost-efficient instruction as part of its English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

In 2000-01, the Santa Rosa County School District served 99 students through the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. Of these students, 48 were enrolled in classes specifically designed for Language Enriched Pupils (LEP), while 51 were former LEP students who exited the program within the previous two years but continued to be monitored by the school district. In Santa Rosa, Language Enriched Pupils represent less than 1% of the total student population. As shown in Exhibit 5-15, the district's percentage of LEP students is the lowest among their peer districts.

Exhibit 5-15

Santa Rosa County Has the Lowest Percentage of Language Enriched Pupils (LEP) When Compared to Its Peers in 2000-01 [10]

District	LEP Students	Percentage of Total
Santa Rosa	99	0.4%

[8] Medicaid Billing Analysis, Summary of Review Actions 1998-2000.
[9] Special Programs and Procedures for Exceptional Students, 3/30/01.
[10] The count of Language Enriched Pupils include those who are enrolled in specially designed LEP classes, those not enrolled in special classes, those for whom the reading/writing test is pending, and those who exited within the last two years and are still being monitored.

District	LEP Students	Percentage of Total
Alachua	728	2.2%
Bay	304	1.1%
Collier	6,192	16.1%
Escambia	439	0.9%
Lake	1,097	3.3%
Leon	313	0.9%
Okaloosa	223	0.7%
Osceola	8,543	21.6%
State Average	290,024	11.0%

Source: Florida DOE, Bureau of Equity, Safety, and Student Support, Office of Multicultural Student Language Education.

The district's LEP Plan, Annual ESOL Report and Self-Study, and Florida Department of Education ESOL waiver indicate that the district's procedures (for identifying eligible students, placing them in and removing them from the program, and specifying standards) are in place and are being implemented effectively. All of the district's procedures for identification of eligible students are consistent with federal and state laws and the Multicultural Education Training and Advocacy (META) agreement. In addition, the district has a sufficient number of ESOL certified teachers to effectively serve the ESOL population, as illustrated in Exhibit 5-16.

Exhibit 5-16

Santa Rosa County Had a Reasonable Ratio of LEP Students to ESOL Certified Teachers When Compared to Its Peers (as of May 2001)

District	Number of teachers with ESOL Certification	Total Number of LEP Students	Ratio of ESOL Certified Teachers to LEP Students
Santa Rosa	**94**	**137**	**1:5**
Alachua	60	634	1:11
Charlotte	60	267	1:4
Lake	155	970	1:6
Okaloosa	No Response	No response	No response
Osceola	133	7, 208	1:54
St. Johns	30	128	1:4

Source: Florida Department of Education, Lake County BFMP Report, OPPAGA, 01-68.

Students enter and exit the ESOL program according to criteria set by the Florida Department of Education. The average length of time across the state that a student stays in the ESOL program is approximately 3 years. Some students who may have other conditions that slow their progress, such as developmental delays, may remain in the program much longer than others. For students without these other conditions, the average length of time spent in the ESOL program is closer to 2 years. Exhibit 5-17 provides the average length of time in ESOL for Santa Rosa and its peer districts as compared with the statewide average.

Exhibit 5-17

Average Time to Classification and Length of Time in ESOL Are Comparable with Peer Districts in 2000-01

School District	Average Number of Days to Classification	Average Number of Years in Program
Santa Rosa	**7.14**	**2.79**
Alachua	1.32	1.84
Bay	10.86	3.78
Collier	4.04	2.49
Escambia	23.00	2.15
Lake	11.82	3.06
Leon	12.00	2.17
Okaloosa	3.27	1.55
Osceola	21.10	2.12
State Average	**8.43**	**3.09**

Source: Florida DOE, Bureau of Equity, Safety, and Student Support, Office of Multicultural Student Language Education.

The district's ESOL curriculum includes standards for the mastery of listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. Teachers of ESOL and of English proficient students work collaboratively both within and across grade levels to ensure that students are meaningfully integrated into the regular curriculum in addition to receiving specialized instruction.

The district regularly assesses the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of its ESOL instruction. Two examples of improvements made on the basis of these assessments include carefully monitoring student progress to ensure that students are processed through the program in the most prompt and effective manner and providing the ESOL training on-line to maximize convenience and efficiency.

The Santa Rosa County School District uses technology and ingenuity to provide targeted instruction to the ESOL students within the district. The district is to be commended for expending the energy and attention needed to do so, especially since the number of students requiring these services represents less than 1% of the student population.

5 While the district provides an array of secondary vocational and adult/technical education programs, the program outcomes do not compare favorably against peer district outcomes.

The Santa Rosa County School District offers a variety of workforce development education programs, including postsecondary adult vocational certificate, apprenticeship, continuing workforce education, and adult general education programs. School districts generally provide workforce development education programs through a variety of settings such as high schools, adult education centers, and vocational-technical centers. These programs help individuals to attain skills that enable them to become or remain economically self-sufficient.

Santa Rosa schools offer a wide variety of adult vocational certificate programs. For example, during an on-site visit to the Milton Institute of Technology located at Milton High School, the consultants observed an outstanding technology program including extensive graphic arts and web design classes. There are currently 640 students (42% of the school's 1,524 students) enrolled in these classes. Another example is

the Locklin Vocational Technical Center, which offers a wide array of workforce development programs. Exhibit 5-18 lists the programs offered across the school district.

Exhibit 5-18

Santa Rosa School District Providers Offer a Wide Array of Programs

Provider	Program
Gulf Breeze Senior High	Web Internet/Intranet Services
	Diversified Career Technology
Jay High School	Agritechnology
	Automotive Services Technology
Locklin Vocational Technical Center	Accounting Operations
	Building Maintenance Technology
	Applied Welding Technology
	Carpentry
	Electrocardiograph Aide
Milton Institute of Technology	Graphic arts
(Milton High School)	Web design
Santa Rosa Adult Center	General Educational Development (GED)
	Adult Basic Education
	Florida High School Diploma

Source: Department of Education, Division of Workforce Development.

Santa Rosa's adult general education program offerings include Adult Basic Education, Adult High School Education, Adult High School Co-enrolled, and General Educational Development (GED). These programs provide adults with the literacy skills that are necessary for them to continue their education or to secure employment. In 1999-2000, Santa Rosa began offering Vocational Preparatory Instruction (VPI) programs. VPI programs are linked to a vocational certificate program and are designed to prepare students with the reading, writing, mathematics, and employability skills necessary for success in the occupation.

The District Seeks Input from Business and Industry to Plan Vocational Programs and Makes Adjustments as Needed

The Department of Education continually updates the Vocational Curriculum Frameworks and Student Performance Standards. Vocational teachers, administrators, and related business and industry members are all involved in this updating process to ensure that institutions are offering courses needed by business and industry. In Santa Rosa, the director of Applied Technology, Adult, and Community Education communicates any changes to the vocational teachers and then monitors these changes to ensure that programs meet local industry standards.

Vocational-technical program offerings reflect current job trends and industry demands, and the district revises these offerings as employers seek trained workers to fill positions. Local community organizations and educational providers, including county school district workforce development administrators, the ESCAROSA Regional Workforce Development Board, and the board's High Skills/High Wages Committee, coordinate to identify needed programs.

Santa Rosa Workforce Development Program Performance Funding Demonstrated Modest Gains in 2001-02

Since 1999-2000, 15% of each school district's workforce development education funds have been allocated through a performance-based funding formula. In order to receive performance funding, local

providers report completions and placements to the Department of Education three times per year. [11] Each institution accrues points when a student completes a number of courses, a program of study, or is placed in a job. The remaining 85% of an institution's allocation is based on the prior year total allocation. In 2001-02, Santa Rosa increased its Workforce Development Education allocation by $37,168 over the previous funding year due, in part, to increased performance points (see Exhibit 5-19). Improved performance could be attributable to the inclusion of Vocational Preparatory Instruction (VPI) programs in 1999-2000, since 2001-02 funding is based on Literacy Completion Points (LCP) earned in 1999-2000. The increase in LCPs is an important measurement of improved performance, indicating that more students are achieving completion of important competencies and skills.

Exhibit 5-19

Santa Rosa's Workforce Development Education Performance Funding is Average Among Peer Districts in 2001-02

School District	Vocational Performance Funding	Adult General Education Performance Funding	Gain/Loss Between 2000-01 and 2001-02	Percentage Change
Santa Rosa	**$180,588**	**$124,861**	**$37,168**	**2.0%**
Alachua	$0	$291,084	$87,875	6.4%
Bay	$296,637	$326,261	$110,288	3.2%
Osceola	$461,782	$271,767	$138,945	3.0%
Lake	$529,862	$203,581	$129,472	2.9%
Leon	$607,996	$315,856	$100,824	1.7%
Escambia	$542,277	$284,239	$62,816	1.2%
Collier	$500,183	$338,847	$29,325	0.4%
Okaloosa	$235,585	$24,125	($128,293)	-4.7%

Source: 2001-2002 Workforce Development Education Fund, Final WDEF Allocation, April 28, 2001.

Santa Rosa Completers Had the Lowest Earnings of the Peer Districts

The most recent study, conducted in 1999-00 by the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP), indicates that Santa Rosa postsecondary vocational education program completers earned the lowest quarterly salaries among their peer districts (see Exhibit 5-20). The study also revealed that 56% of Santa Rosa completers were employed and 39% were continuing their education. However, the available data does not enable the reader to determine how many of the 39% who are continuing their educations are also among the 56% who are employed. Analysis of similar data for secondary vocational education completers reveals that while a high percentage of completers (63%) found employment, this same group had the lowest earnings of the peer districts (see Exhibit 5-21).

---

[11] There are two types of completion points: Occupational Completion Points (OCPs) are "stop-out" points in a vocational program, developed to identify benchmarks of student accomplishment. Adult general education students earn Literacy Completion Points (LCPs) when they pass standardized tests or demonstrate mastery of certain skills.

Exhibit 5-20

Santa Rosa Postsecondary Vocational Education Program Completers Earned the Lowest Quarterly Salaries of the Peer Counties in 1999-00 [12]

District	Percentage Employed	Percentage Continuing Education	Average Quarter Earnings
Santa Rosa	**56%**	**39%**	**$5,086**
Lake	77%	38%	$6,521
Collier	74%	25%	$6,427
Osceola	71%	60%	$6,258
Leon	63%	27%	$5,931
Escambia	63%	42%	$5,643
Okaloosa	53%	35%	$5,419
Bay	59%	32%	$5,356
Alachua	NA	NA	NA

Source: Florida Department of Education, Florida Training and Placement Information Program [FETPIP], *FETPIP District Postsecondary Reports, 1999-00.*

Exhibit 5-21

Santa Rosa Secondary Vocational Education Program Completers Earned the Second Lowest Quarterly Salaries of the Peer Counties in 1999-00

District	Percentage Employed	Percentage Continuing Education	Average Quarter Earnings
Santa Rosa	**63%**	**48%**	**$3,634**
Alachua	57%	61%	$4,240
Collier	53%	54%	$4,228
Lake	61%	50%	$3,942
Osceola	57%	49%	$3,906
Bay	66%	56%	$3,894
Leon	54%	60%	$3,806
Escambia	58%	58%	$3,806
Okaloosa	61%	56%	$3,470

Source: Florida Department of Education, Florida Training and Placement Information Program [FETPIP], *FETPIP District Postsecondary Reports, 1999-00.*

The county has several characteristics that contribute to the low wages earned by completers of Santa Rosa's secondary and postsecondary vocational programs. The county has a very small industrial base, which provides few job opportunities in manufacturing occupations that typically pay high wages. The county has no large urban areas, nor the infrastructure to attract large industries to the county. Further, the county has a large service sector, which supports the tourist industry in the southern end of the county and the Naval Air Station at Whiting Field. The majority of the county's industry is devoted to agriculture.

Santa Rosa County has a number of initiatives in place to address the low wages earned by their workforce program completers. The Applied Technology, Adult, and Community Education staff work with local organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the ESCAROSA Regional Workforce

---

[12] "Percent Employed" is the percentage of all completers found employed, regardless of their participation in continuing education or their military status. "Percent Continuing Education" is the percentage of all completers found continuing their education. There was no outcome data available for Alachua County.

Development Board, to develop strategies to attract high-paying jobs to the region. The county actively participates in the local High Skills/High Wages committee meetings, responds to requests for Quick Response Training, and coordinates activities with Pensacola Junior College to provide School-to-Work and Tech Prep initiatives. However, there are some additional strategies that the district could employ to improve its Workforce Development program, which are discussed in the following recommendation.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district strengthen efforts to identify programs in demand by local businesses and industry. Santa Rosa school district administrators and vocational-technical administrators should continue coordination efforts with the ESCAROSA Regional Workforce Development Board and the Board's High Skills/High Wages Committee to identify and develop programs of benefit to local business and industry. Emphasis should be placed on programs that provide completers with marketable skills and maximize the state's performance-based funding to Santa Rosa.*

Action Plan 5-3

Collaborate with the Regional Workforce Development Board to provide educational programs that will attract businesses to the area and will provide improved wages for program completers	
Strategy	Strengthen coordination between the Santa Rosa County School District, ESCAROSA Regional Workforce Development Board, the Board's High Skills/High Wages Committee, and local secondary and postsecondary educational providers. • Provide training sites and equipment to businesses for training purposes and structure class times to suit those needed by students and businesses. • Work jointly to increase enrollment by marketing vocational, technical, and community education programs to the public, targeting high school students and business/industry in the region.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Office of Applied Technology, Adult and Community Education will select personnel to develop the above strategies for improving program offerings and for increasing program enrollment. Step 2: The Director of the Office of Applied Technology, Adult and Community Education will prepare a school board agenda item for approval of each strategy. Step 3: The Office of Applied Technology, Adult and Community Education will supervise and ensure implementation of the strategies by coordinating with local businesses and by increasing awareness among potential students. Step 4: The Office of Applied Technology, Adult and Community Education will monitor the strategies for their effectiveness.
Who is Responsible	Director of the Office of Applied Technology, Adult and Community Education
Time Frame	Begin September 2002 and implement September 2003.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: OPPAGA analyst.

6 The district's curricular framework is linked to Florida's accountability standards and to the Sunshine State Standards.

The Santa Rosa County School District has closely aligned its curriculum to Florida's accountability standards and to the Sunshine State Standards. Examination of the district's curriculum guides, teacher lesson plans, and the Instructional Validity Study reveals close alignment with the state standards. Curriculum guides show strands, benchmarks, and specific teaching strategies. There are no apparent gaps between the district's curriculum and Florida's accountability standards and the Sunshine State Standards.

The district is training all teachers in curriculum mapping as a strategy to ensure alignment and vertical articulation of the curriculum. Curriculum mapping provides a comprehensive and systematic roadmap or design to plot the sequencing of the curriculum. It also serves as a strategy for periodic reviews and updates of the curriculum guides. Additional assistance in instructional design is available to teachers on the Bay Educational Alternative Community Online Network (BEACON). Well-designed and validated lesson plans are available on BEACON for teacher use.

7 The district has adopted a plan for the progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 that maximizes student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards.

The school district systematically documents the progress of students from kindergarten through grade 12 and articulates this information clearly to parents. [13] The district's pupil progression plan incorporates the Sunshine State Standards and provides for the evaluation of each student's performance against the standards. It is consistent with Florida law and includes a prohibition against social promotion.

The district also incorporates various targeted programs such as tutoring, summer programs, Reading Recovery, Title I, and intensive language arts and math courses. Strategies especially designed to reach students with specific learning challenges, such as non-reading high school students, are provided through programs such as READ 180 and READ XL. These are highly structured, targeted programs designed to address the learning needs of the adolescent who is having difficulty reading. In accordance with the district's pupil progression plan, the district evaluates students' learning needs using all available assessment data as well as teacher observation and testing. Very specific learning objectives are addressed through tutoring and summer programs. Programs such as Reading Recovery provide early intervention for primary students who have been identified as having a substantial reading deficiency. Title I funds are used to provide services to identified students who require intensive reading instruction.

The district regularly reports student progress to parents and families through a variety of vehicles including the School Public Accountability Report (SPAR) and the more detailed School Advisory Council Report. The SPAR report is published annually. It contains information such as the enrollment of the school, attendance rates for staff and students, a description of any environmental issues, a summary of the school climate survey results, student discipline records, test data, and dropout information. It is distributed to parents and is available to the public on the school district's website. For those who desire more detailed information, the School Advisory Council Report is also available. It

---

[13] Early Intervention in Literacy, Reading Recovery Program, Pamphlet and Gulf Breeze High School Improvement Parent Report, November 5, 2001, FCAT results for parents, Santa Rosa County School District.

provides more of the background data and information that is summarized in the shorter SPAR report. Additionally, parents and families receive pupil progression plans, report cards, midterm reports, FCAT Summaries, and Stanford 9 reports at various points throughout the year.

As provided in the pupil progression plan, accelerated graduation and dual enrollment opportunities at postsecondary institutions are communicated to students and parents through school curriculum guides, Discovery ACT/SAT preparation software, College Night schedules, and orientation meetings. (See best practice #5 above for data on the utilization of postsecondary options.) Other sources for parent knowledge and awareness of opportunities include parent newsletters, school site newsletters, and websites of the district and of the individual schools.

8   While school advisory councils do meet statutory membership requirements, the district does not ensure that school improvement plans contain objectives that are specific, measurable, and outcome-based.

Santa Rosa schools have board-approved school improvement plans in place at each school site. School advisory councils (SACs) at each site have the representative membership required by law as verified through school advisory council rosters and interviews. Three trainers assist the SACs in organizational and training needs. The school improvement plans are based on analyses of student outcomes, school surveys, and needs assessments. The district uses a school improvement plan template and format to help make school improvement plans more standardized across schools.[14]

The school improvement plans are well integrated into the school operations. During site-based interviews, administrators and teachers frequently referred to the school improvement plans when asked why a particular program or initiative was in place. Based on the consultants' observations, Santa Rosa's use of school improvement plans is much more dynamic than in most school districts.

School improvement plans at the Santa Rosa elementary, middle, and high schools contained a variety of objectives, such as implementation of new academic plans, renovation of instructional spaces, and increasing parent and community member volunteer hours. However, many of these objectives were process-oriented rather than focusing on student outcomes, and others were not specific enough to be measurable.

Recommendations —————————————————

- *We recommend that the district and schools further develop measurable objectives emphasizing student outcomes for those strategic goals that only have measurable objectives focused on the processes by which student outcomes might be achieved.*

---

[14] Santa Rosa County School District school improvement plans.

Action Plan 5-4

Further develop specific, measurable objectives that address student outcomes in the district strategic improvement plan and the individual school improvement plans	
Strategy	Review the objectives listed in the district strategic improvement plan and the individual school improvement plans to ensure that objectives are specific and measurable and that they incorporate student outcome data wherever appropriate.
Action Needed	Step 1: Assign the responsibility for the review and revision of objectives to a senior member of the administrative staff that reports to the Superintendent. Delegation by this person to others is desirable; however, responsibility for completion should remain at the higher level.
	Step 2: Analyze the goals and objectives as stated in the district strategic improvement plan and the school improvement plans to determine which objectives could be measured using student outcome data.
	Step 3: Consult with the appropriate persons to revise the remaining district strategic improvement plan objectives and goals, making them more specific, measurable and outcome-based.
	Step 4: Provide feedback and technical assistance, as needed, to individual schools to ensure that the individual school improvement plans include objectives that are specific, measurable, and outcome-based.
	Step 5: Periodically review progress on objectives in the district strategic improvement plan and ensure that school districts are adequately measuring progress on their school improvement plans.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent
Time Frame	April 30, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Source: OPPAGA analysts.

Cost-Effective Instructional Materials

9 The district's process for selecting instructional materials ensures that instructional materials meet the needs of teachers and students.

As confirmed through interviews with teachers and administrators, principals and teachers meet with district-level administrators to select instructional materials that address the needs of teachers and students. The school advisory councils then review the instructional materials after selection by the administrators and teachers. The district regularly reviews instructional materials to determine which ones have been effective and which have not met the needs of teachers and students. Additionally, new materials are sought to meet the constantly changing needs of teachers and students. Budgeting for the growth and maintenance of instructional materials is built into the District Purchasing Plan.

10 Each student has current and appropriate instructional materials in core courses that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards and the district's pupil progression plan.

State-adopted textbooks are used in all courses where available. State-adopted textbooks are not available for a limited number of courses such as some Advanced Placement courses. In those instances, other appropriate current instructional materials are used. Other instructional materials satisfy the requirements of the district's pupil progression plan and the Sunshine State Standards as verified through instructional material inventories that are conducted annually at each school site and reported to the district office. Teachers and principals provide district-level administrators with systematic feedback through grade level and subject area meetings. Parents are informed regarding the role of instructional materials in implementing curricular objectives through open houses, course syllabi, curriculum guides, and handbooks.

11 The district's procedures for acquiring, maintaining, and disposing of instructional materials could be more cost-effective.

Instructional materials are acquired in accordance with the Florida textbook adoption schedule. The annual purchase plan is submitted by April 1. Inventories of instructional materials are maintained in each building. The school board has policies that govern the disposal and sale of surplus books as well as assessments for lost, damaged, or unreturned books.

The district relies, to a great extent, on state textbook adoptions as a means of cost containment for textbooks that meet Florida standards. The Santa Rosa school district administrators advised the consultants that instructional materials are disposed of according to s. 233.57, *Florida Statutes* and according to Santa Rosa Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations, Chapter 10, Section 10.18. [15] Textbooks in adoption are rarely, if ever, sold. Those out of adoption are donated. School Board Policy 10.15 governs the disposal of instructional materials that are no longer useful.

In accordance with School Board Policy 10.18, the district's purchasing warehouse sells surplus books. School Board Policy 10.17 states that each school site assesses the costs of lost, damaged, or unreturned instructional materials when the annual inventory is completed. The district has specific policies in place regarding the amounts to be assessed, and recovered monies are collected by each school and then sent to the Assistant Superintendent for Finance. As of June 2001, the school district had recovered $5,189 for lost, damaged, and unreturned textbooks for the 2000-01 school year.

The school district is currently in the process of streamlining the record keeping procedures across schools to facilitate the recovery of costs associated with lost and damaged textbooks. These records will be kept in a standardized, electronic format at each school, and this information will be collected and analyzed by the school district. In addition, the school district is currently reviewing the dollar amounts that should be assessed for lost and damaged textbooks as well as the procedure for returning these funds to the school district. While we recognize the progress that the district is making in accounting for lost and damaged textbooks, the district should strengthen its efforts to recover a greater percentage of the costs associated with lost and damaged textbooks.

---

[15] "New instructional materials that are unused and in current adoption may be purchased by the public from the board textbook depository of the publisher. If used textbooks are available, they maybe purchased from the textbook depository at discounted rates." Source: Administrative Policies Rules and Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County, 10.18.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district implement its new record keeping and reporting system, using a standardized Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that was developed by the district, and then evaluate its effectiveness at the end of the year to determine whether or not a more sophisticated inventory system is required.*

Action Plan 5-5

Implement and evaluate a new, more standardized system for managing textbook inventory and for recovering the costs of lost or damaged textbooks		
Strategy	Facilitate standardized record keeping and accounting practices at each of the district's schools and ensure that schools are recovering an increasing percentage of the costs associated with lost and damaged textbooks.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Provide each school with inventory tracking software, training, and technical support.
	Step 2:	Contact schools throughout the year to ensure that record keeping procedures are being followed accurately.
	Step 3:	Collect and analyze data at the end of each of the first two semesters and evaluate each school in terms of the accuracy of the records as well as their success in recovering costs.
	Step 4:	Provide feedback and technical assistance, as needed, to individual schools.
	Step 5:	At the end of the school year, evaluate the effectiveness of the new record keeping system and determine whether or not a most sophisticated textbook inventory system is required.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent	
Time Frame	Implement new system in August 2002 and evaluate in June 2003. If necessary, develop and implement a new textbook inventory system in August 2004.	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources, unless the district determines that it needs to acquire a new textbook inventory system.	

Source: OPPAGA analysts.

Educational Program Effectiveness and Efficiency

12 The district's accountability mechanisms are generally effective, although the objectives in school improvement plans should be more specific, measurable, and outcome-based.

The district has implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the overall effectiveness of its major educational programs. Accountability mechanisms are in place and operating effectively. Goals and

measurable objectives are present in the district strategic improvement plan, [16] the school improvement plans of the various school sites, [17] and in the ESE/Student Services Evaluation and Monitoring Design.

The district strategic improvement plan contains specific, outcome-based objectives for improving student performance. For example, the district has an annual objective to increase the number of district schools achieving grades of "A" and "B" from the Department of Education. The strategic improvement plan identifies three strategies that are being implemented toward this objective: analyzing data on student performance to increase achievement; providing professional development opportunities in reading, writing, math, and science; and implementing curriculum mapping to ensure mastery of all standards. The district also states in its five-year plan that the number of students achieving at level 3 or above on the FCAT in math, reading, and writing will increase by 15%. The district plans to accomplish this objective by providing intervention and intensive instruction for low-performing students, by providing opportunities for professional development in instructional practices, and by providing support and materials to enhance literacy instruction at all grade levels.

At the school level, the school improvement plans contain appropriate and measurable objectives that are linked to the district's eight major goals in its strategic improvement plan. However, the quality of objectives and the specificity of goals vary somewhat within and among the various school improvement plans. Exhibit 5-22 contains some examples from school improvement plans of objectives for each of the eight district goals that should be more specific, measurable, and outcome-based. The school district can facilitate the development of more effective school improvement plans by providing regular training for school advisory council (SAC) members and by providing constructive feedback on each of the school improvement plans.

---

[16] Santa Rosa County School District, Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006.
[17] Correspondence to parents from Santa Rosa elementary, middle and high buildings details the goals and objectives of each school.

Exhibit 5-22

School Improvement Plans Contain Objectives That Should Be More Specific, Measurable, and Outcome-Based

District Goals	Examples of Objectives in School Improvement Plans
Readiness to Start School	The school will evaluate 100% of all kindergarten and first grade students using an early childhood assessment process that involves developing individual student profiles, conducting an initial assessment within the first three weeks, and screening children with a school readiness assessment instrument.
Graduation Rate and Readiness for Postsecondary Education and Employment	The school will increase and promote dual enrollment, vocational education, and use of technology in preparation for employment and post secondary education by developing a new technology center, expanding course offerings, providing after-school time and integrated projects, and increasing participation and enrollment in programs.
Student Performance	All seniors will participate in a minimum of two individual conferences with a counselor, at the beginning of each semester, for information concerning graduation status and post-secondary plans, and parents of students with failing grades or low test scores will be notified in writing a minimum of two times per year.
Learning Environment	All of the faculty and staff members will provide a learning environment conducive to teaching and learning by implementing appropriate goal-related activities, such as teaching core values and skills through curricula, developing and implementing an advisor/advisee program, providing each student with an organizer/ planner, and administering annual climate surveys.
School Safety and Environment	The school will develop an early warning and timely response plan related to school violence by conducting in-service training for teachers, establishing guidelines and procedures for interventions, developing a prevention and response plan, completing the camera safety system, and funding private crossing guards.
Teachers and Staff	All faculty and staff will participate in a formal program of professional development activities, such as training on the Sunshine State Standards, hardware and software training, opportunities to attend professional conferences, in-service training in academic subjects, and recognition of high-performing professional teachers and staff.
Adult Literacy	The school will inform parents of available literacy resources, educational opportunities, and community resources, and will continue to provide reading-related motivational activities and to participate in the Vision Partnership with Santa Rosa and Escambia counties.
Parent Involvement	During the 2001-2002 school year, the faculty and staff will seek to maintain or increase parental involvement and contact with the school, as evidenced by a minimum of 3,000 parental contact hours, and the school will ensure that SAC membership is representative, that the homepage is updated and useful, and that teachers communicate with parents through newsletters, phone calls, email, letters, notes, conferences, progress reports, and positive referrals.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of school improvement plans found on the Santa Rosa County School District website.

While the district's accountability system is generally effective, the district can improve by ensuring that goals and measurable objectives emphasize student outcomes, not only the processes by which such outcomes might be achieved. For example, the district strategic improvement plan contains an objective to increase participation in career and technical education activities by 10%. However, in addition to this objective, the plan also needs to contain outcome-based objectives, such as increasing occupational and literacy completion points to increase workforce development performance funding that is received by the

district. The district should also provide constructive feedback and technical assistance to individual schools in order to make the school improvement plan objectives more specific, measurable, and outcome-based.

Recommendations ───────────────────

- *We recommend that the district and schools further develop measurable objectives emphasizing student outcomes for those strategic goals that only have measurable objectives focused on the processes by which student outcomes might be achieved. See Action Plan 5-5.*

13The district regularly reviews its organizational structure and the staffing of the central office and schools to minimize administrative layers and processes.

The school district reviews its staffing plan at least annually in accordance with a plan that has been operating in the district since January 1990. The plan is based on state requirements, staff demands, and student needs. The school district reviews this plan annually and makes adjustments as needed, for reasons such as budgetary constraints, curriculum needs, or legislative mandates. In 1998-99, the plan was revised from an unweighted full-time equivalent (FTE) to a weighted FTE allocation for instructional personnel. The staffing plan is driven by the formula plus any special funding and special cases. For example, a small rural school may not be able to function based on the formula staffing without additional staff. A school cannot exceed the staffing allocation without the approval of the district superintendent.

The district's administrative staffing at the district level is lean. The number of students per administrator is comparable with peer district figures (see Exhibit 5-23). The consultants' review of the Santa Rosa County School Board Summary of Teacher, Staff, Administrator and Student Ratios documents for the years 1978-79 through 2000-01 indicates that the number of district administrators has decreased from 24 to 21 during that time (see Exhibit 5-24). Increases in staffing have occurred at the point of service delivery and support the goal of increased student performance.

Exhibit 5-23

Number of Students per Administrator is Comparable with Peer Districts

District	Total Administrators	Student Enrollment	Students per Administrator
Santa Rosa	**83**	**22,633**	**273**
Alachua	141	28,544	202
Bay	115	28,125	218
Collier	162	33,871	209
Escambia	166	43,575	263
Lake	110	28,890	263
Leon	148	31,191	211
Okaloosa	118	29,895	253
Osceola	109	34,189	314

Source: Florida Department of Education, Full-time Staff by Activity Assignment, Part 1, Survey 2 data, October 9-13, 1999, as of January 11, 2001. Student enrollment data taken from Profiles of Florida School Districts, 2000-01.

Exhibit 5-24

Number of District Administrators in Santa Rosa Has Decreased While Student Population Has Increased

Year	Teachers	Support Staff	School Admin	District Admin	Total Students	Students/ Teacher	Teachers/ Admin	Staff/ Admin
1978-79	747	563	40	24	12,458	16.7	11.7	20.5
1979-80	760	563	39	21	12,167	16	12.7	22.1
1980-81	771	545	38	23	12,045	15.6	12.6	1.6
1981-82	776	527	38	21	11,858	15.3	13.2	22.1
1982-83	762	523	38	21	12,046	15.8	12.9	21.8
1983-84	754	511	38	20	12,053	16	13	21.8
1984-85	810	514	36	20	12,572	15.5	14.5	23.6
1985-86	818	519	37	19	13,003	15.9	14.6	23.9
1986-87	849	533	39	21	13,430	15.8	14.2	23
1987-88	899	572	41	22	13,718	15.3	14.3	23.3
1988-89	933	583	45	21	14,257	15.3	14.1	23
1989-90	989	636	44	21	14,642	14.8	15.2	25
1990-91	1024	670	48	22	15,459	15.1	14.6	24.2
1991-92	1054	676	47	22	16,250	15.4	15.3	25.1
1992-93	1120	680	47	21	17,166	15.3	16.5	26.5
1993-94	1164	712	53	18	18,964	16.3	16.4	26.4
1994-95	1210	737	52	19	19,658	16.2	17	27.4
1995-96	1234	774	52	18	20,326	16.5	17.6	28.7
1996-97	1293	825	53	18	21,525	16.6	18.2	29.8
1997-98	1347	850	55	19	21,971	16.3	18.2	29.7
1998-99	1373	812	56	21	22,378	16.3	17.8	28.4
1999-00	1372	784	60	20	22,807	16.6	17.2	27
2000-01	1464	785	63	20	23,157	15.8	17.6	27.1
2001-02	1462	775	63	21	23,828	16.3	17.4	26.6

Source: Santa Rosa County School District Offices of Personnel and Management Information, 2001.

Exhibit 5-25

Administrators Comprise a Small Percentage of Total District Staff (2000-01)

District	District Administrators	School Administrators
Santa Rosa	**0.9%**	**2.7%**
Alachua	1.6%	1.9%
Bay	0.8%	2.8%
Collier	1.8%	2.1%
Escambia	2.0%	3.7%
Lake	0.5%	2.8%
Leon	1.0%	2.5%
Okaloosa	1.2%	2.2%
Osceola	1.0%	1.8%
State Average	1.0%	2.5%

Source: Profiles of School Districts, 2000-01.

The organizational structure of the district is functional. Through strong dedication and commitment, the administrators make it work. However, as recommended in Chapter 7 of this report (see Exhibit 7-2, page 7-4), SchoolMatch consultants recommend that the Risk Manager and Director of In-service and Instructional Technology be reassigned to report to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources in order to balance span of control and to cluster related responsibilities within the same area.

Exhibit 5-26

Santa Rosa County School District Has an Appropriate Number of Curriculum and Instruction Staff
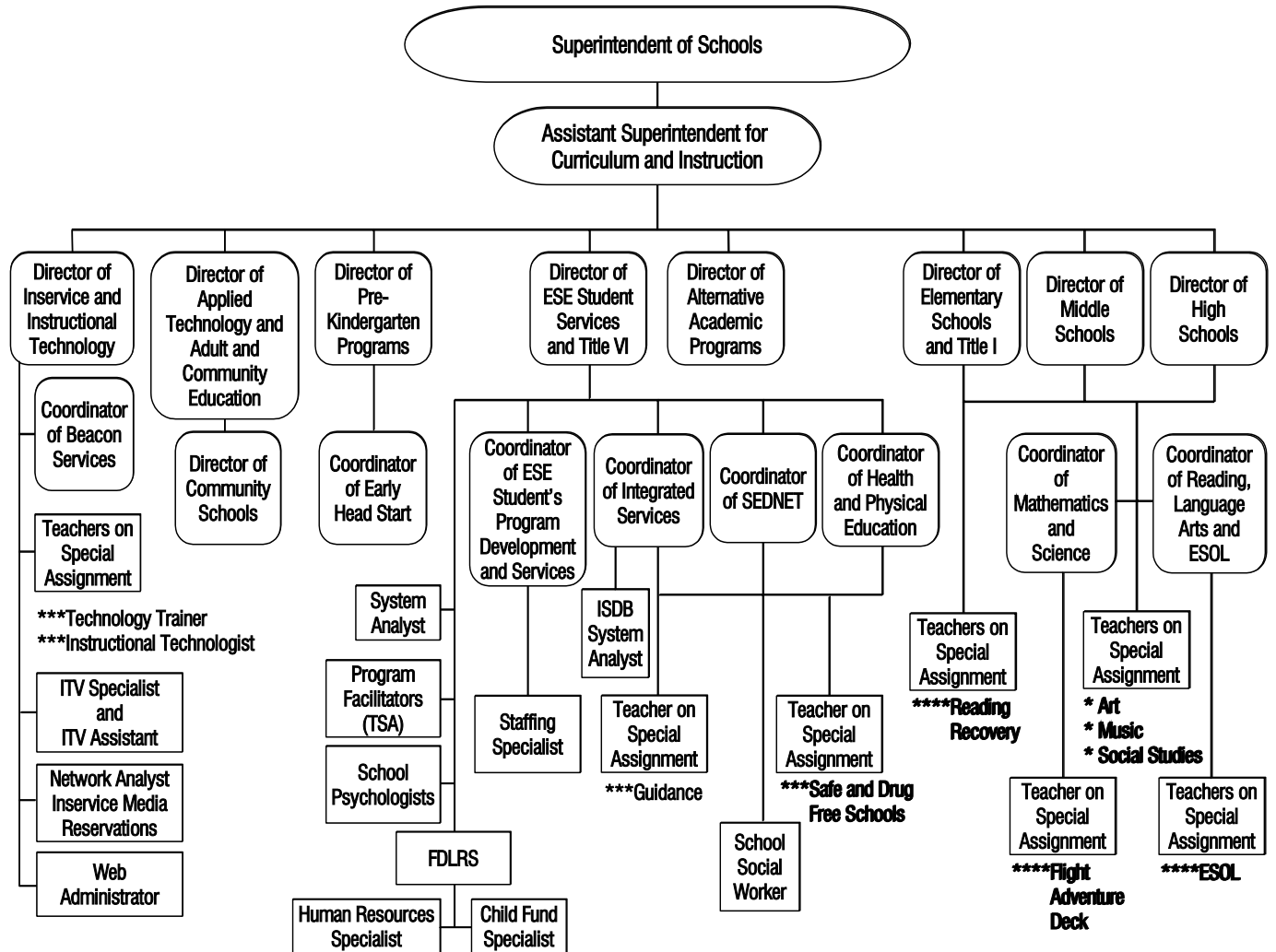
Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

14 The district clearly reports on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers.

The district uses a variety of mechanisms to clearly communicate with parents and others. Clear, understandable School Public Accountability Reports (SPAR) are distributed to each student's family in a timely manner and are posted on the district website. The SPAR reports include data such as the enrollment of the school, assessment information, attendance data, dropout information, and any pertinent environmental issues. A more detailed account of the report is available through each school advisory council.

In order to receive feedback from parents and other taxpayers, the school board provides Open Forum sessions during each regular school board meeting. Parents and other citizens raise issues and questions during the Open Forum times. [18] However, parents and other citizens do not take advantage of the Open Forum on a frequent basis. The consultants determined that this was because their questions or issues were usually addressed at a lower, more personal level by a phone call or conference. Administrators, both school-level and district-level, board members, and staff all concurred that when an issue arises in the district, the concerned parent or citizen is much more likely to contact them by telephone and that the issue is usually resolved at that level.

The district reports on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major programs through a variety of newsletters. The Exceptional Student Education and Student Services department distributes a quarterly newsletter entitled "Technical Assistant" that is also posted on their website. The Instructional Technology department sends out a quarterly newsletter entitled "Professional Development Center News" that is also posted on their website. All school sites and district offices have "reader boards" in front of their facilities that are used extensively for announcements and for information purposes.

Most elementary schools send home a school newsletter. The distribution frequency among elementary schools varies from a monthly newsletter to a quarterly publication. The middle and high school principals send home a quarterly newsletter. Many schools also post these newsletters on their websites.

There are numerous opportunities for parents and other interested citizens to obtain information and interact face-to-face with school personnel. The district reports that parent attendance varies from 30% to 80% at school Parent Teacher Association (PTA) / Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. This variation can be explained by a variety of reasons. Frequently, schools incorporate student performances as a part of their meetings, which often guarantees a higher rate of parent attendance. Most schools have quarterly PTA/PTO meetings. In addition, parents can attend and participate in a variety of school functions, such as school plays, chorus and band concerts, sporting events, recognition banquets, career fairs, history and science fairs, and special reading programs. The district makes a concerted effort to communicate effectively with parents.

Other vehicles for input include school improvement teams, which openly discuss strategies for improving the school; school climate surveys, which allow parents to provide written comments or ask questions; and written or oral inquires to any school administrator or board member. As indicated above, the consultants determined through interviews of staff, parents, and other taxpayers that the administration and board members of the district are unusually open and available for communication and problem solving with everyone in the school district. The superintendent is accessible throughout the

---

[18] Approved School Board Minutes 8/10/00, 11/21/00, 12/14/00, 2/22/01, 5/24/01, 7/19/01 – Summaries of Citizen Comments and Feedback in the Regular Public Forum Portion of School Board meetings.

district on a daily basis. Residents find the superintendent to be friendly and approachable and do not hesitate to discuss any concern with him. All concerns appear to be addressed in a timely fashion.

There is also a formal process for registering complaints that is described in the Santa Rosa Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations, Chapter 2, Section 2.09. The formal process requires that a person or group file a written request with the superintendent to be placed on the school board agenda. The superintendent then responds to the request and furnishes a copy to each board member. Board members also receive the results of the superintendent's investigation into the issue as well as recommendations regarding the request. At the board meeting, the topic is allotted a maximum of thirty minutes, with time for both the proponent(s) and opponent(s) to speak, as well as an opportunity for board members and the superintendent to ask questions.

Library, Media, and Support Services

15The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction.

The Santa Rosa County School District library and media centers offer appropriate support to the educational program. The library and media centers are staffed with caring, competent educators who are actively involved in the instructional programs within the buildings. Each media center also houses an instructional television studio, which students use to broadcast school news to their classmates each morning. Even at the elementary school level, students handle all aspects of the programs under the watchful eye of the librarian or media specialist.

By reviewing the library holdings of a sample of schools throughout the school district, the consultants found that the elementary schools had between 14 and 24 books per student. Variations tended to reflect the growth of the student population; in other words, where student growth had been most rapid, the number of volumes per student appeared to be lowest. In the middle schools that were selected, the libraries housed approximately 16 to 18 volumes per student. The high schools that were sampled had collections ranging from 8 to 12 volumes per student. In all cases, the collections appeared to be continually purged to eliminate out-of-date material.

The usage of the library and media centers in Santa Rosa County School District is extensive. The instructional television centers, which are a part of the library or media center, are used at least weekly, and in some places daily, for student-operated news broadcasts. Computers are available for student research under the supervision of library staff. Library circulation data is maintained at each school site using their Library/Follett Management System. Data can be retrieved to provide daily, weekly, and monthly circulation information. A review of circulation data from the current school year shows that students at the elementary level check out between seven and eleven volumes per student per month. That number drops to approximately two to four volumes per student per month at the middle school level and even lower at the high school level. In the consultants' experience, it is not unusual to find that middle and high school students may take advantage of their greater independent mobility to use public libraries instead of the school library. The older students also tend to conduct Internet research more regularly and often purchase books rather than borrow books from the school library.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has established standards that require each secondary school library to contain at least ten books per student or a minimum of 2,000 volumes, whichever is greater. The same organization requires that each elementary school library contain at least

10 books per student or a minimum of 1,500 books, whichever is greater. Not all of Santa Rosa's schools were able to meet these standards, especially those schools that have recently experienced rapid growth in the student population. In addition to providing maintenance funds for libraries and media centers, the school board has established a formula-based media growth fund to enhance the media collection according to the SACS standards. To offer the maximum possible support of school instructional needs, the library media centers remain open for a limited number of hours before and after the school day. Students are able to utilize those resources for research and study during those times.

16 The district provides necessary support services (guidance counseling, psychological, social work, and health) to meet the needs of its students in a cost-efficient manner.

Santa Rosa schools provide a wide range of support services to students through a creative combination of sources. A combination of school board employees and contracted services provide a comprehensive program of support services to students. Five social workers (3 school board employees and 2 contracted employees) address student needs related to attendance and truancy. The district provides a full mental health component for general education students as well as for students with disabilities. Annual evaluation of the program is performed in accordance with the Santa Rosa Student Services Evaluation and Monitoring Design. [19]

Guidance services are offered in each school. The ratio of guidance counselors to students is comparable with the ratios in peer districts, as seen in Exhibit 5-27. Guidance services are evaluated annually through a review of the student development plans for each school site. The district also conducts an annual survey of student needs. As a result of its outstanding level of service, the school district has received the National Award for an Outstanding Program from the American School Guidance Association. The district has also been able to reduce the frequency of behavioral problems at the majority of school sites.

Exhibit 5-27

**Ratio of Guidance Counselors to Students of the District
Compares Favorably Against Peers and State
for the 2000-01 School Year**

District	Ratio
Santa Rosa	1:445
Alachua	1:404
Bay	1:354
Collier	1:271
Escambia	1:462
Lake	1:361
Leon	1:415
Okaloosa	1:451
Osceola	1:462
State Average	1:438

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts 2000-01. Full-time Staff by Activity Assignment. Bureau of Educational Accountability Services, Florida Department of Education.

---

[19] Source: Santa Rosa Student Services Evaluation and Monitoring Design, sent to consultants after October site visit.

The Santa Rosa County School District provides psychological services through eight school psychologists. One is assigned 100% to pre-kindergarten programs. Another is assigned part-time to Section 504 services. The other six psychologists serve the remainder of the district and are assigned regionally. Psychologists serve on the school-based integrated services teams and administer a full range of evaluations based upon referral and reevaluation requests. They also provide classroom evaluations as warranted, consult with teachers and parents, attend Exceptional Student Education staffing meetings, provide in-service workshops, and perform other duties as needed. Additionally, the psychologists serve on the district's crisis intervention teams and first response teams. Psychological evaluations are performed in a timely manner in the district. There is currently a minimal backlog of evaluations needing to be performed. The district addresses this issue by hiring psychologists for a limited number of hours over the summer. Students are assessed and placed in compliance with state and federal laws.

Four full-time employees in the district perform social work duties. Three of the four are school district employees, and the fourth social worker is contracted through the Children's Home Society. All four employees' duties are similar in nature, with the majority of their efforts directed toward increasing school attendance. They also provide basic social services to families upon referrals from the school sites, and they make home visits as part of their regular duties.

The Santa Rosa County School District provides health services almost exclusively through the School Health Technician program, which has been developed and implemented in the district to address the impact that poor health has on student performance in the classroom. The program is a collaborative, community effort involving students, parents, schools, the school district, the Department of Health, and Pediatric Services of America, Inc. (a private, for-profit agency). Funding was provided for program development through the Bell South Foundation Linking Health with Education Reform Program. The responsibilities of the school health technicians include assisting with medication, completing screenings, making parent contacts, and administering minor first aid, among other duties. They provide caring, competent, non-nursing support at individual school buildings.

The program evaluation of health services for the 2000-01 school year indicates that 100% of the objectives were achieved. [20] One of the most instructionally relevant results was that 91.97% of the students who reported to the School Health Technician's office for services were able to return to classroom for completion of a school day instruction. An additional benefit of the program is that a new career path (Certified Nursing Assistants) for students is in place. Locklin Technical Center has modified its curriculum to include a school-based health component. The program provides a rich source of applicants for the School Health Technicians program and provides employment for Santa Rosa high school graduates. It is successful educationally, socially, and as workforce development initiative, in addition to being an effective and cost-efficient way of providing services to students.

---

[20] Program evaluation, Bell South Foundation Linking Health with Education Reform Program.

6 Administrative and Instructional Technology

The Santa Rosa County School District has an extensive program of instructional technology that serves both the students of Santa Rosa County and the staff. The administrative computing program provides the district with essential administrative computing services and provides services to support the instructional program. With a few modest adjustments the program can be maximized and cost benefits accrued.

Conclusion

The Santa Rosa County School District provides a plethora of technology options for students in developmental and remedial instruction. Staff members may avail themselves of numerous options for training in the area of technology. The district technology plan is developed in concert with, and in support of, the district strategic plan. A broad base of school and community constituents participate in the development of the technology plan and provide input to guide technology-related decisions.

The Santa Rosa County School District participates in the Gateway Consortium to allow cost effective provision of administrative computing services to the central office and its schools. In addition to the traditional administrative computing programs, such as finance, attendance and scheduling services, a concerted effort is made to provide program support for instructional decision-making.

The management of the technology resources is accomplished according to accepted guidelines and procedures. The district has acceptable use policies (AUPs) in place at all levels. Through the management structure associated with the Gateway Consortium, central district information services and computer technology support are providing resources to schools and staff.

Administrative computing services through the consortium provide the district with student class scheduling, student records maintenance, and the ability to update and utilize the student level records and district reports required by the Florida Department of Education. Florida maintains an extensive database on students that contains not only their demographic information but also test scores, attendance and other descriptors. This database allows Santa Rosa staff to disaggregate student information from test scores accompanied by student demographic factors.

During the course of this review, the SchoolMatch Consultant identified a number of district accomplishments in the administrative and instructional technology, some of which are included in Exhibit 6-1 below.

Exhibit 6-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Administrative and Instructional Technology in the Last Three Years

- The district has won approximately $3.4 million in competitive technology and professional development grants.
- The district has designated over $5.3 million dollars in awarded Infrastructure Thrift Funds to instructional technology.

- The Milton Institute of Technology was opened, providing high school students access to high-level technology training.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District Technology Plan 2000-2001 reviewed by SchoolMatch Consultant.

Overview of Chapter Findings

The SchoolMatch Consultant reviewed the district's administrative and instructional technology systems using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and associated indicators. Several methodologies were used to develop chapter conclusions and action plans. District and school level documents were reviewed and on-site interviews with district and school staff were conducted. The district technology plan, the district strategic plan, and the data processing policies and procedures manual were the primary documents used in this review. Interviews with various staff members focused on verifying the implementation of the programs and procedures outlined in these documents and soliciting information regarding the district's instructional and administrative computing program implementation.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

School Board Technology Plan

1. The district has in place a comprehensive technology plan (Page 6-7).
2. The district's technology plan outlines specific goals and objectives in administrative and instructional technology (Page 6-8).

"Just-in-time" Support

3. The district has in place a plan and assigned responsibilities for the provision of support in incorporating technology into the curriculum (Page 6-9).
4. The district assigned specific duties to central office and school staff for maintaining technology resources (Page 6-10).
5. The district has developed uniform hardware and infrastructure specifications and employs these to reduce costs and increase effectiveness (Page 6-11).

Professional Development

6. While the district has a considerable investment in the staff and programs of the Professional Development Center, the district does not have in place a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of specific staff development activities in terms of improved student achievement (Page 6-12).
7. The district devotes considerable technology resources to professional development training (Page 6-14).

Appropriate technology for Performance

8. Although the district employs a wide variety of needs assessment instruments to determine needs, and bases acquisition on a specific plan reflective of those needs, the district does not have a formal plan in place to assess the impact of technology resources, especially software acquisitions, upon student achievement (Page 6-16).
9. The district uses standard specifications for most of their hardware acquisitions. These specifications ensure interoperability and invoke a degree of cost savings in acquisition and maintenance (Page 6-17).

10. The District Technology Plan for Santa Rosa governs the acquisition of programs and content in accordance with established needs (Page 6-18).

11. The district has established procedures and policies for infrastructure development and maintenance (Page 6-20).

Appropriate Use of Technology

12. Acceptable use policies have been developed and adopted for computers, video equipment, software and the Internet (Page 6-20).

13. The district has the required acceptable use policies in place and provides filtering software to all sites (Page 6-21).

Management Information Systems

14. The district policies and practices indicate a segregation of duties to protect transactions (Page 6-22).

15. The district data processing system employs a system of screen access restrictions to ensure authorized access and restrict output (Page 6-23).

16. The district uses the standard reports available to participants of the Gateway Consortium. The data feeding these reports are reviewed for accuracy and reliability (Page 6-23).

17. Policies and procedures and visual inspection verify that the general controls are in place. The district is in general compliance with the requirements of the state auditor's office regarding administrative and student data systems (Page 6-24).

18. The district meets the state requirements for data submission and accuracy. Reports are routinely provided to assist in individual department planning and objectives (Page 6-24).

19. The district has taken steps to minimize the number of databases that are independent of its centralized computer systems (Page 6-25).

20. Through participation in the Gateway Consortium the district adheres to the established data exchange protocols. Local policies and procedures are also in place (Page 6-25).

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Recommendations contained in this chapter can be accomplished with existing resources.

Background

The Santa Rosa County School District has employed resources in instructional and administrative computing for many years. The district has maintained a Technology Plan for at least nine years. These services are managed by two different offices; reporting to two different assistant superintendents. The director of in-service and instructional technology manages instructional computing services and reports to the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. The data processing manager manages the administrative computing services and reports to the assistant superintendent for finance.

Instructional computing services encompass the provision of instructional technology to schools and students as well as providing staff at the district and school levels with training in the use of technology to assist students in using it. This two-pronged mission translates into computers in the classroom for student and teacher use in pursuit of improving instruction and student achievement. Students at all levels

interact with computers and a variety of software packages and programs. These programs focus on, but are not limited to, reading, mathematics, science and computer-related areas such as graphics and design.

Extensive staff development in the use of the programs as instructional tools is provided through the Professional Development Center (PDC) that is managed by the director of in-service and instructional technology. Two sites are operated within the district where computer resources are made available for staff development. PDC staff solicits input through various needs assessments in order to design classes, demonstrations and other activities.

The majority of the instructional services provided at the elementary and middle school levels focus on the basic content areas of reading and mathematics. Programs are selected to support the students' acquisition of the Florida Sunshine State Standards. The Sunshine State Standards outline the student academic standards, or requirements, for all Florida students. Florida schools are "graded" on the extent to which students are meeting these requirements. Student tests based on these standards form the basis for determining the school's grade. Requirements exist for student graduation that are directly tied to these standards.

While the emphasis is clearly on the core academic areas in Santa Rosa County School District, there are also considerable technology resources devoted to providing students, especially at the secondary level, with opportunities to acquire skills that are technology related. Classes are provided for students in graphics and design, vocational instruction areas provide classes in business-related applications and a specialized school, the Milton Institute of Technology, provides students with an opportunity to pursue advanced technology training.

Students attending the Milton Institute of Technology are able to access high-level animation and production programs through their courses of study. Many of these programs are the same as those utilized by nearby employers in the entertainment industry. Through their coursework and on-site opportunities, these students are acquiring skills that are directly transferable to local industry. Administrative computing is also a two-pronged approach: provision of the typical business applications such as those related to budgeting, finance and payroll, personnel, purchasing and communications; and, services designed to support the instructional program. Santa Rosa County School District's participation in Gateway Consortium allows the district to share computer resources with other smaller districts and provide a cost-effective system of administrative computing for its schools and staff.

The state of Florida maintains a statewide student database consisting of extensive records on students in Florida's schools. These records are the basis for the computing services provided through the Gateway Consortium. The computer services provided through the consortium are focused on the accurate and timely gathering of the information required by the state to maintain these records. This information is periodically sent to the Florida Department of Education for use in various program activities. In addition to basic student demographic information, dropout, attendance and program participation information is maintained on each student. The student records are, in turn, used by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) in the funding formula that disburses funding to Florida's school districts. Once student academic test results are "attached" to these records, academic ratings and performance information is produced for Santa Rosa's students, schools and the district as a whole.

The Santa Rosa County School District maintains several large contracts to provide services within the district. Areas such as transportation, food service, maintenance and such are contracted out. The areas of transportation and food service require that these contracted providers use specific student information in the performance of their contracted duties. Transportation services utilize a computerized bus routing system that depends upon accurate student addresses in order to operate. By that same token, the food service provider utilizes the district's determination of student eligibility for free or reduced lunches in order to properly execute its contract.

The provision of staff development activities presents a challenge to Santa Rosa as it does to any school district. It is difficult to find time within the school day for teachers and other staff members to participate in sustained staff development activities. While the district operates a significant program providing these services, it is faced with finding the time in which these services can be best tapped by its target audiences. Santa Rosa program leaders are constantly trying to balance the removal of the teacher from the classroom for training with the need for that teacher to be in direct contact with students in order to maintain an optimal instructional setting. At present, the program offers a wide array of training options for teachers and other staff members. These take the form of during- and after-school classes as well as Saturday and summer ones. Teachers on special contracts provide the training. In addition, as with the Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) program, the teacher actually works in the school with those teachers delivering the program, providing instruction on the proper use of the technology.

Access to the Internet is widely available to Santa Rosa staff and students. Acceptable use policies are in place to provide the foundation for acceptable use of this resource by both students and staff. Federal requirements in the area of technology have been met, allowing the district to receive E-rate funding. Numerous federal and state privacy requirements apply to any system maintaining student information. Provision is made through policy and procedures to ensure that requirements such as those contained in the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) are being met.

The district and its schools make wide and effective use of the Internet by posting and maintaining relevant documents for public access.

The challenge of providing state-of-the-art computing capacity, be it instructional or administrative, continues to be an issue for this district. Hardware, software and infrastructure provision is a continual process. Maintaining the investment in technology requires staff to keep it running and to maintain computers and systems. Santa Rosa employs staff to maintain computers and to install and maintain software. Contracts are in place for retrofitting schools so that each will achieve parity in infrastructure.

Exhibit 6-2

Organizational Chart: Data Processing, Gateway, Finance Analysis (including Technology and Network Support, Operations)
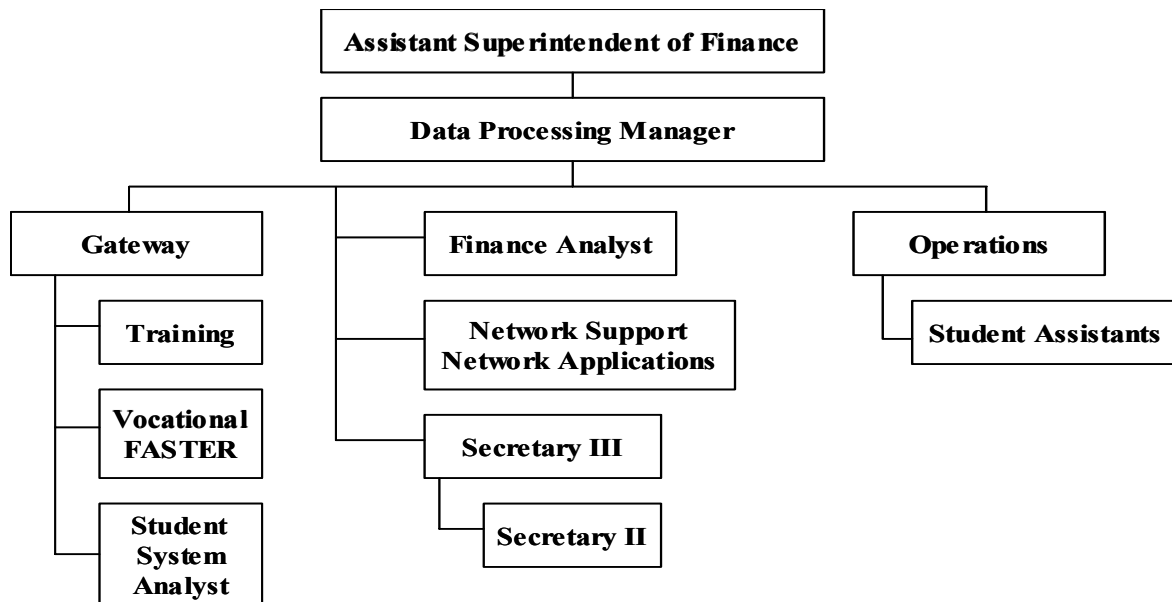
Source: Santa Rosa County School District 2001-2002 Organizational Chart.

Exhibit 6-3

Organizational Chart: Technical Support

```
                    ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │ Network Support Network Applications   │
                    └──────────────────────────────────────┘
        ┌─────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │ Technical Support    │────────│ Technical Support    │
        └─────────────────────┘        └─────────────────────┘
        ┌─────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │ Computer Hardware    │        │ NT Administration    │
        │ Contact              │        │ AS400 Back-Up        │
        │ Technical Support    │        │ Router Configuration/│
        └─────────────────────┘        │ Administration       │
        ┌─────────────────────┐        │ Traffic Monitoring   │
        │ Hardware/Software    │        └─────────────────────┘
        │ Test/Evaluation      │               ┌─────────────────────┐
        └─────────────────────┘               │ Technical Support    │
                                              └─────────────────────┘
                                              ┌─────────────────────┐
                                              │ NT Administration    │
                                              │ E-mail Administration│
                                              │ Data Processing      │
                                              │ Printers/            │
                                              │ Virus Protections    │
                                              └─────────────────────┘
```

Technical Support	Technical Support	Technical Support	Technical Support	Technical Support	Technical Support
ESE/BAC	Holley Navarre Inter.	S.S. Dixon Inter.	Central High	Gulf Breeze Elem.	Berryhill Elem.
Bagdad Elementary	Holley Navarre Middle	Avalon Middle	Jay Elem.	Gulf Breeze High	Chumuckla Elem.
Canal St. Administration	Holley Navarre Primary	Pace High	Jay High	Gulf Breeze Middle	Community School
East Milton	Navarre High	Pea Ridge Elem.	King Middle	Oriole Beach Elem.	Hobbs Middle
TR Jackson	West Navarre	Sims Middle	Munson Elem.	Woodlawn Beach Middle	Locklin Tech Santa Rosa Adult
Rhodes Elementary		S.S. Dixon Inter.	Stewart St. Admin.	Laptops	Milton High
		S.S. Dixon Primary			DJJ3 DJJ6

Source: Santa Rosa County School District 2001-2002 Organizational Chart.

Methodology

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed the Santa Rosa County District's own assessment of their management structures using the Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators adopted by the Florida Commissioner of Education as a commencement point for this analysis. Studies conducted in Santa Rosa County School District by groups or organizations outside the school district over the past five years could have an impact on the results of this review. The superintendent advised the consultant that the only studies conducted in the school district over the past five years have been the annual

financial audit conducted by the Office of the Auditor General. This study is cited in this report where applicable.

The consulting team then employed several methodologies to gather additional information, confirm information, formulate finding statements, offer recommendations for practices to be implemented over the next two years or sooner, and design action plans to accomplish the recommendations.

During each of three separate visits to Santa Rosa County School District (October 2001, December 2001, and February 2002) SchoolMatch consultants worked to complete an assessment of whether Santa Rosa followed Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators and conducted on-site interviews with such school district personnel as district level managers, each of the elected school board members, the elected superintendent, building level managers, bargaining unit representatives, classroom teachers, and support staff, gathering information on the district's management structures, activities, policies and procedures. [1]

A survey of the perceptions of stakeholder groups in Santa Rosa County School District was conducted in October and November 2001 in order to capture perceptions about the leadership, emphasis on learning, climate, monitoring results, and the quality of expectations in the school district. Summary results of this survey appear in Appendix A. Specific survey results will be presented and discussed under the indicators and Best Practices they reference.

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed approved school board minutes, the school board policy manual, strategic planning documents, budget documents, and individual building improvement plans to begin to understand the levels of organization and accountability already present in Santa Rosa County School District. When further understanding was necessary, SchoolMatch engaged in second-tier and third-tier interviews and requests for support documentation.

The final step in placing outcomes in Santa Rosa County School District in perspective was research to compare Santa Rosa County School District with Florida peer districts: Charlotte, Lake, Osceola, Okaloosa, and St. Johns. Comparative data, charts, and tables appear through this chapter.

School Board Technology Plan

1   **The district has in place a comprehensive technology plan.**

Santa Rosa has in place a technology plan that was developed through the use of a district technology committee. [2] This committee is composed of various community, higher education, business and school-related members (Exhibit 6-4). Meeting minutes bear out the participation of these members in the decision-making process. [3] The plan itself is constructed to support the goals and objectives of the district's Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-06. The technology plan outlines specific goals and objectives in this arena with associated timelines, funding and assigned areas of responsibility. Various broad-based needs assessments were used to develop the specific needs to be addressed by the plan. [4] In addition, individual school improvement plans are reviewed to determine the degree to which additional technology resources are needed to help the schools achieve their stated objectives. Meeting minutes, budget documents and interviews with district and school staff corroborate the degree to which the district

---

[1] SchoolMatch Consultants' working papers, Santa Rosa County school personnel interviews, October 15-19, 2001.
[2] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000.
[3] Meeting minutes, district technology committee meetings.
[4] STAR survey results.

technology plan addresses the needs of the district and corroborate its relationship to the overall district strategic plan. [5, 6] The Santa Rosa technology plan is presented to the school board for approval on an annual basis, with the most recent annual plan presented to the school board in December of 2001. Prior to that, it was before the board on November 21, 2001. At that time, the superintendent and board members provided the staff with comments and feedback. The board unanimously approved the plan at this meeting.

By including a section on budget allocations within the district technology plan, the committee can see the degree to which resources are allocated and expended. This provides important information to the committee as it plans future technology initiatives.

The broad composition of the district technology committee enables the plan to reflect the needs of the district as viewed from various perspectives. Since Santa Rosa has had a technology plan for many years, it reflects the gradual implementation of various programs and is developed based on a history of what things have worked and what things have not.

Exhibit 6-4

Members of the 2000-01 District Technology Committee

Position Title	Affiliation
Assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction	Santa Rosa County School Board
Director, in-service and instructional technology	Santa Rosa County School Board
Data processing manager	Santa Rosa County School Board
Elementary principal at Holley-Navarre Intermediate School	Santa Rosa County School Board
Middle school principal at Sims Middle Schools	Santa Rosa County School Board
High school assistant principal at Milton High School	Santa Rosa County School Board
Professor, instructional technology	University of West Florida
Parent and business partner	Bayside Development Company
ESE and student services analyst	Santa Rosa County School Board
Assistant superintendent for finance	Santa Rosa County School Board
Computer support supervisor	Santa Rosa County School Board
Teacher representative from Gulf Breeze High School	Santa Rosa County School Board
Teacher Representative from Milton High School	Santa Rosa County School Board
Teacher Representative from East Milton Elementary School	Santa Rosa County School Board
Teacher on special assignment, instructional technology trainer	Santa Rosa County School Board
Teacher Representative from Holly-Navarre Middle School	Santa Rosa County School Board
Business partner	Technical Software Service

Source: Santa Rosa County School District 2001-2002 Organizational Chart, Employee Directory.

2 The district's technology plan outlines specific goals and objectives in administrative and instructional technology.

The district's technology plan has been in existence for many years. [7] In 1995 the plan was restructured to reflect the changing nature of the community and the plan was again restructured in 1998 to incorporate planning requirements issued by the state. The plan contains specific goals and objectives for the various areas of service provision and delivery. The format of the plan presents short-term and long-

---

[5] District Budget, Fiscal Year July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2002.

[6] Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.

[7] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000.

term goals and associated budget requirements. [8] The technology plan met with state and federal approval thus funding sources such as e-rate flow to the district and form an integral part of their funding stream. There is a direct relationship between the technology plan and the Santa Rosa strategic plan. Many of the strategic plan objectives deal with provision of programs or services that are directly impacted by technology. For example, Objective 6.2 Professional Development, outlines the objectives related to staff training and specifically references the Professional Development Center and its resources in satisfying this objective. In turn, the technology plan contains specifics related to the programs that would be used in meeting these objectives.

Meeting minutes and interviews indicate that the technology plan is updated annually (last in November of 2000). [9,10] Budget documents, the technology plan, and interviews also support the assertion that there is an equipment replacement cycle and that the acquisition of new equipment is the product of deliberate and broad-based discussion prior to purchase.

Review of the minutes of meetings of the technology committee reflect progress reports on the degree to which the plan is being met and discussion of new information that might bear on the ability of the plan to be executed. The technology committee has recently decided to update the district technology plan on a monthly basis and report the status of the plan to all stakeholders. [11]

"Just-in-Time" Support

3   The district has in place a plan and assigned responsibilities for the provision of support for incorporating technology into the curriculum.

The district technology plan outlines specific programs designed to support the classroom use of technology in support of the instructional program and specifically in support of the Sunshine State Standards. [12] Teachers on special assignment provide support to the classroom in implementing specific instructional programs and with general technology integration. Site visits and interviews with central office and school staff indicate that services are provided and that staff members find these services important and essential to their success in the classroom. Each school has a person assigned the role of technology coordination. In some schools, this is a person with this as their sole responsibility, while in other schools this is in addition to other assigned responsibilities. [13]

Interviews with building level administrators and staff members support the provision of services from the district level and the tailoring of technology purchases and programs to instructional activities. Training on the use of FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test) scores, Taglet, and CCC were a few of the programs specifically mentioned. Formal workshop evaluations are used and responses reviewed for areas of concern.

The Professional Development Center staff is assigned the responsibility of coordinating computer purchases. This is accomplished in coordination with the various instructional departments and schools. Goal five (5) of the district technology plan outlines these responsibilities. Goal Five reads:

[8] District Budget, Fiscal Year July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2002.
[9] Meeting minutes, district technology committee meetings.
[10] Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.
[11] Santa Rosa County School District technology committee meeting minutes, January 29, 2002.
[12] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000.
[13] Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.

> The technology acquisition plan should include, but not be limited to: district plans to acquire software and technology based on educational materials that are usable by students with the widest range of abilities to deliver technology based instructional programs in support of the Sunshine State Standards.

Goal six (6) of the strategic plan references the staff training aspects of this area.

4 The district assigned specific duties to central office and school staff for maintaining technology resources.

The district technology plan, budget documents, job descriptions and interviews with school and central office staff indicate that specific personnel are assigned the responsibility for technical support of both the educational and administrative systems. [14]

The data processing department employs personnel assigned maintenance responsibilities. [15] These staff members provide day-to-day maintenance support to each school on an as needed basis.

The data processing department utilizes a work order procedure for tracking maintenance requests. A work order county report is printed each week. This shows the number of work orders currently active and those that have been completed. An additional report is printed showing the total time each technician has logged on each work order. This report may be further reviewed to indicate systems that are taking extensive repair time. Analysis of this information is used to determine upgrade or replacement needs.

A review of the maintenance reports for the current fiscal year and the previous one indicate that out of the over 6,000 computers within the district the downtime is 0.5-0.6% downtime for repairs. [16]

The district uses a standard platform and uniform workstation specifications thereby reducing the variety of problems associated with maintenance and trouble-shooting. The data processing manager and staff also provide leadership and direct service to central office colleagues as well as school-based staff.

Participation in the Gateway Consortium provides uniformity in the availability of administrative resources and also provides stability in the programs available. [17] This allows school level administrators and counselors access to student specific information and affords them the ability to construct inquiries about groups of students and prepare reports using Santa Rosa student information.

Centralized purchasing contracts and standardization of equipment minimizes the need for coordination regarding specific hardware components. The standardized workstations allow easy maintenance and make coordination of programs and training easy.

The technology plan governs the progression of purchasing in conjunction with applicable sections of the strategic plan, thus becoming the control point for coordinating purchases within the district.

As noted in other areas of this report the district employs "Teachers on Special Assignment for Instructional Technology Trainer". [18] These staff members are hired at teacher salaries, working a ten-

---

[14] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000; "District adopted budget"; Job descriptions for maintenance technicians.
[15] Data processing Policies and Procedures Manual.
[16] Santa Rosa data processing department downtime reports, FY01, FY02.
[17] Additional information from interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.
[18] Santa Rosa Instructional Personnel Job Description, Teacher on Special Assignment for Instructional Technology Trainer.

month schedule "to design, develop and deliver training for instructional technologies." The essential functions noted in this position include:

- Develops and provides in-service programs, including "Training the Trainer" models, for instructional and non-instructional personnel, as needs are identified
- Operates and sets up microcomputers
- Installs software, hardware and upgrades as per design or program requirements
- Maintains an environment conducive to learning
- Troubleshoots hardware, software and network problems (WFW, Windows 95, DOS and Macintosh platforms) for training center equipment
- Visits work sites to provide consultation about technology issues.
- Assists with distance learning technologies and district level Internet issues
- Assists director in evaluations to determine effectiveness of the Professional Development Center
- Assists director with third party training contracts, as needed
- Performs related duties as required
- Participates in activities for continued professional growth

5 The district has developed uniform hardware and infrastructure specifications and employs these to reduce costs and increase effectiveness.

Santa Rosa uses a standard, single computing platform requirement through the district. This was a product of considerable discussion over time within the district. This allows the support function to be more specialized and reduces the variety of problems encountered. The district is also implementing a school-by-school wiring upgrade via an outside contract. This will provide uniform standards for wiring and accurate schematics for use by district personnel when trouble-shooting problems in the schools. Technicians with vans stocked with repair and maintenance materials are employed to provide direct technical, maintenance and trouble-shooting to schools and the central office. This provides rapid assistance when trouble arises and reduces dependence on outside, costly contracts.

Since Santa Rosa participates in the Gateway Consortium for the provision of administrative computing resources, technical support is available to address any issues with these standard programs. Interviews with central office and school staff did not note problems with technical support. [19]

As noted previously Santa Rosa tracks computer repair and downtime. Reports for the previous fiscal years and year-to-date reports show minimal downtime experienced for repair. The standardization of platforms and the use of the consortium infrastructure appear to contribute to the minimal problems in this area.

The district uses the Gateway Consortium as its administrative computing resource, thus providing cost-effective capacity to the district and schools.

Santa Rosa participated in the Gateway Consortium for its administrative computing needs. The consortium provides Santa Rosa with the capacity to meet the requirements of the Florida Department of

---

[19] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000; "District adopted budget"; Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.

Education related to administrative computing. Santa Rosa is the district of record for the consortium. As such, the district serves as the lead division for consortium activities. This includes all the necessary student data requirements as well as supplying the necessary information for the myriad of reports required by the Department of Education. The consortium approach allows some of the maintenance and development costs to be spread across member districts. Members of the consortium include the following counties: Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Holmes, Jefferson, Liberty, Madison, Nassau, Suwannee, Taylor, Wakulla, and Walton as well as FAU, FSU, and FAMU, The consortium solution also requires common approaches, compromises and good communication. The systems are maintained to provide for all of the state required data elements.

Recent legislative action has removed the universities from state agency status in Florida. This will potentially impact the status of the Gateway Consortium as well as any other such entities. The document "Impact of Removing Universities from State Agency Status" indicates on page nine (9) "The Regional Data Centers are recognized as being cost efficient." Should the result of the recent legislation be the dissolution of the regional data centers such as the Gateway Consortium, there would be an immediate and adverse impact on the ability of the Santa Rosa County School District to meet the reporting requirements of the Florida Department of Education as well as the needs of its own staff. Since Santa Rosa has begun to use state test data to inform instructional decision-making this impact would filter down to the classroom and student level adversely impacting student achievement.   Santa Rosa staff members are aware of this potential problem area and are monitoring the situation closely. Their recognition of the potential problem and appreciation of the value of the Gateway Consortium to their district is commendable.

Review of the "Current Rate Schedule, The Northwest Regional Data Center" found on the Florida DOE website compared to the rates for the Northeast Regional Data Center, also on the web site, shows that the consortium to which Santa Rosa belongs operates under a favorable rate structure. [20] There would also be a high cost factor involved in gearing up a complete administrative computing operation to replace the services provided via the consortium. [21] Currently districts are charged a per pupil charge for participation, with Santa Rosa assessed $86,209.14 for FY 2002.

Professional Development

6 **While the district has a considerable investment in the staff and programs of the Professional Development Center, the district does not have in place a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of specific staff development activities in terms of improved student achievement.**

The Santa Rosa County School District operates a Professional Development Center (PDC) that provides staff development to district employees. The programs provided are driven by extensive needs assessments and review of the individual school improvement plans. Budget documents, STAR reports, training schedules, evaluations of classes and programs provided, the technology plan and interviews with school and central office staff all indicate that the programs provided are directly related to the established

---

[20] Northwest Regional Data Center, Current Rate Schedule, www.nwrdc.fsu.edu/custupp/docrates.html;
Northeast Regional Data Center, Current Rate Schedule, www.nwrdc.fsu.edu/custupp/docrates.html;
Accounting and Policies of the NWRDC, www.nwrdc.fsu.edu/custupp/docpanda.html;
Northeast Regional Data Center Charging Algorithm, www.nwrdc.fsu.edu/custupp/docweb.nsf.html.
[21]"Impact of Removing Universities from State Agency Status," CEPRI Staff - Glenn Mayne, Page 9.

needs and in support of the goals and objectives of the district strategic plan. Teachers on Special Assignment provide direct contact support to teachers and address specific programs widely in use within the district.

As noted earlier, the challenge continues to find time within the school day to wisely provide staff development service to teachers. [22]

While the district has invested considerable resources in the staff development program, there is no consistent review of the benefits of this investment in terms of student achievement. As noted in other sections of this overall report, there is no evaluation in place to determine if the investment in these programs is reaping benefits in the classroom. Anecdotally, teachers and administrators report that those trained in the programs are having success with students, but there is no concrete evidence currently available to support this notion.

Recommendations

- • *We recommend that the district continue to review options for providing in-service opportunities to classroom teachers and other staff members and to implement a program designed to determine the benefits of these programs in terms of student achievement (see Action Plan 6-1).*

Action Plan 6-1

Continue to Review Options for Providing In-Service Training and Implement a Program Designed to Determine the Benefits of Training on Student Achievement		
Strategy	Continue to explore in a formal manner, additional ways in which professional development opportunities may be provided. And establish a program for measuring the success of these programs in terms of student achievement.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Annually solicit feedback from participants in existing activities regarding timing and means of delivering staff development
	Step 2:	Explore more use of the TV production facility for providing training
	Step 3:	Incorporate as necessary, recommendations into the District Technology Plan
	Step 4:	Establish an evaluation protocol for these activities that assesses the degree to which these programs are translated into improvements in student achievement. This may be done in conjunction with higher education partners.
	Step 5:	Report annually, the results of the degree to which programs translate into improved student achievement.
	Step 6:	Incorporate results of evaluations into the continuance or elimination of programs.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent or designee	
Time Frame	Annually with the 2001-02 school year	
Fiscal Impact	Can be accomplished with existing resources	

---

[22] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000; "District adopted budget"; STAR reports; PDC training schedules and calendars; individual class evaluations; interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant

7 The district devotes considerable technology resources to professional development training.

The best substantiation of the technology used in instruction is a visit to the classrooms of Santa Rosa. The classrooms are rich in technology that is actively used by students at all grade levels. The Strategic Plan pinpoints specific areas for the infusion of technology in support of the Sunshine State Standards. Goal one (1) of the District Technology Plan specifically targets this area. Review of the budget documents indicates that dollars flowing to Santa Rosa from state and federal sources are heavily invested in instructional uses. Programs such as CCC, Taglet and others integrate assessment results with solid instructional practices. [23]

The Professional Development Center (PDC) keeps a monthly count of those persons visiting the facility for training, as shown below in Exhibit 6-5. [24] On average, 300 staff members participate in programs at this facility each month, every month, all year round, with the highest monthly averages coming in the summer. However, in certain peak months the figure rises to over 600 visitors.

Exhibit 6-5

Professional Development Center Averages 310 Visitors Per Month

	Fiscal Year						
Month	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2002**	**2002**	**Monthly Average**
July		315	300	260	390	260	305
August		270	260	275	632	250	337.4
September		310	350	400	505	450	403
October	0	375	365	467	635	465	461.4
November	30	300	365	310	240	205	241.7
December	75	150	160	280	255		184
January	282	200	235	565	255		307.4
February	390	480	200	330	345		349
March	345	420	225	370	260		324
April	240	325	135	130	135		193
May	330	150	150	175	235		208
June	275	250	450	535	600		422

Source: Santa Rosa County Professional Development Center, Verified Counts since October 1996.

In the spring of 2002, afternoons on Tuesday and Thursday have been dubbed "Technical Tuesday and Thursday". An extensive program of offerings in technical areas is offered for Santa Rosa staff. [25] Principals and assistant principals have a "Special Administrator Training Schedule" offering classes in basic productivity tools. [26]

A review of the previous training programs and associated budgets indicates that the Professional Development Center (PDC) has consistently provided an array of programs for district staff. [27] At their conclusion, participants all evaluate PDC's training activities. The PDC staff reviews these evaluations and incorporates the feedback into subsequent plans. There are no established criteria for determining

---

[23] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000; Santa Rosa County School District's strategic plan, "District adopted budget"; Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.
[24] Professional Development Center monthly visitor count, FY97 to present.
[25] Professional Development Center schedule, Technical Tuesdays and Thursday, Spring 2002.
[26] E-mail, administrative training schedule, Fall 2001.
[27] Santa Rosa Professional Development Center calendars.

success of the programs per se. The evaluation forms are more qualitative in nature rather than quantitative. The information from these evaluations is designed to direct futures actions rather than declaring a program a success or failure. Evaluation returned with considerable criticism could result in programs not being repeated.

The district is involving various resources in the provision of professional development activities in the area of technology.

Santa Rosa collaborates with Bay County in BEACON Learning Center. This center utilized Technology Innovation Challenge Grant funds to provide:

- Lesson plans correlated to the Sunshine State Standards
- Web site evaluations
- Software evaluations
- Student web plans
- Unit plans

Through this collaboration Santa Rosa teachers may avail themselves of additional professional development resources and training in the area of technology. [28]

Through a contractual arrangement with the University of West Florida College of Professional Studies, Santa Rosa collaborates with the university to provide various technology-related training options for teachers. [29] Additionally the Santa Rosa School District has a contract with the Bay County School District for "collaboration on the creation of curriculum and staff development resources and opportunities for the BEACON Learning Center through the development of a regional BEACON Coordinator position". This position serves the teachers of Santa Rosa by coordinating the BEACON activities and increasing the availability of options for training. [30]

Santa Rosa continues to investigate other avenues for providing staff development opportunities. During the December site visit the director was temporarily unavailable due to a meeting with university personnel in pursuit of further collaborative efforts.

Appropriate Technology for Performance

8 **Although the district employs a wide variety of needs assessment instruments to determine needs and bases acquisition on a specific plan reflective of those needs, the district does not have a formal plan in place to assess the impact of technology resources, especially software acquisitions, upon student achievement.**

District technology acquisitions are made in accordance with those established in the district technology plan. [31] The district technology plan is developed to support the district strategic plan. District

---

[28] Director of in-service & instructional technology, 3-6-01.

[29] Agreement for services between Santa Rosa County School District and the University of West Florida, Purchase Order dated 3/26/01.

[30] Letter of Agreement between Bay District Schools and the Santa Rosa County School District, signed 5/16/01.

[31] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000.

technology plan minutes, agendas, needs assessment survey and school improvement plans all indicate a concerted effort to assess need. [32] Planned acquisitions located in the budget, technology plan and borne out by interviews. [33]

Central office staff and that of the Professional Development Center review technology programs for their alignment to the Sunshine State Standards. Software programs are reviewed for this alignment and recommended based on the degree to which they address these standards.

During site visits in schools and in interviews with central office staff, it was evident that there is a widely held belief that technology is significantly impacting student achievement in the Santa Ross County School District. There are schools that are making efforts to more formally document this linkage and evaluate the impact of specific technology upon student achievement. Chumuckla Elementary School has specifically tracked student performance and use of the CCC technology in the school. Title I teachers in several schools routinely track the technology and other programs used by students and their progress in specific academic areas. The director of in-service and instructional technology has reviewed the FCAT scores and ratings for all schools and noted that schools with the higher grade rating issued from the state are using either CCC software or the Classworks Gold Program. [34]

These efforts are commendable and reflect a level of interest in establishing cause and effect relationships between classroom technology and student achievement. However, these efforts are the product of individual or school initiative and not the product of a concerted plan on the part of the district to systematically evaluate the instructional technology deployed.

Students are surrounded with technology from kindergarten through graduation. Special programs focus on the use of specific software to address academic improvement and classes employ technology as to tool toward acquisition of other learning.

The Milton Institute of Technology (MIT), housed at Milton High School, provides students a stellar opportunity to gain specialized skills in using technology designed to lead to job acquisition. MIT provides students with six levels of web design, six levels of commercial computer graphics, four levels of TV production, journalism, and yearbook. Any student who has successfully completed the basic computer course is eligible to take classes at MIT. Many students co-op with outside individuals and businesses on everything from web site design, to business cards, letterhead design, promotional CD ROM production, completion of custom business logo design as well as commercials that appear on local TV stations.

Recommendations ───────────────────

- *We recommend that the district establish a strategy to evaluate the effectiveness of specific technology programs and resources upon student achievement. See Action Plan 6-2.*

Action Plan 6-2

Develop a strategy to evaluate the effectiveness of technology on student achievement

Strategy	Convene a committee to develop a protocol for evaluating the impact of technology resources upon student achievement.

---

[32] Technology committee meeting agendas, minutes; needs assessment surveys; "District adopted budget".
[33] Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.
[34] See Chapter 4, Performance Accountability Systems.

Action Needed	Step 1:	Identify committee members, to include members of the higher education community if such partnerships can be established.
	Step 2:	Review any existing evaluation protocols for applicability or generalizability, such as those used in Title I, special services, or vocational education.
	Step 3:	Delineate a limited number of technology resources for study using the established protocols
	Step 4:	Establish a calendar of events for evaluation activities
	Step 5:	Conduct evaluation activities and review results
	Step 6:	Adjust evaluation protocols based on first year implementation information.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent or designee	
Time Frame	Planning in the 2001-02 school year	
	Implementation in the 2002-03 school year	
Fiscal Impact	Can be accomplished with existing resources	

9 The district uses standard specifications for most of their hardware acquisitions. These specifications ensure interoperability and invoke a degree of cost savings in acquisition and maintenance.

Santa Rosa County School District, through research and committee discussion, developed specifications for a standard desktop configuration. These workstations provide the district with uniformity and cost-effective acquisition. The long-term contracts are written as one-year contracts with a specified number of renewals. This enables the district to discontinue a contract and go out for bid if market conditions indicate the potential for a cost savings. The district technology plan indicates a continued review of hardware acquisition. [35]

Information cited previously regarding minimal downtime attests to the viability of using standardized workstations. Addendum 4 of the district's technology plan outlines these standard configurations. [36]

The district provides staff with vendor lists showing instructional software that is compatible with the district's infrastructure and has been reviewed for applicability to the instructional program.

Addendum 7a of the district technology plan lists instructional software that has been reviewed and is compatible with the district's infrastructure. [37] Additionally the addendum allows teachers to further provide comments regarding the software they have used to inform subsequent listings. Programs adopted for use in the district are reviewed for their correlation to the Sunshine State Standards. During site visits to schools the SchoolMatch consultant viewed software in wide use in schools that provided diagnostic and prescriptive information specifically geared to fomenting success on the Sunshine State Standards. Program such as CCC and Lightspan are examples of this.

The district's technology compares favorably with that of its peer Florida districts.

In the matter of computers as an adjunct to instruction, Santa Rosa compares very favorably with peer districts. Eighty-five percent of the district's instructional computers are leading-edge technology. See Exhibit 6-6 for all comparisons. Santa Rosa has, by far, the smallest percentage of older and obsolete

---

[35] Santa Rosa County School District, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000; "District adopted budget"; Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.
[36] Santa Rosa technology plan, Addendum 4.
[37] Santa Rosa County School District, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Addendum 7a, Revised November 1, 2000.

computer technology of all peer districts, and has eliminated all other non-interactive technology at district workstations.

Exhibit 6-6

Distribution of Computers within Peer Districts

Instructional Computers	Santa Rosa	Charlotte	Lake	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns
Power Mac	2%	9%	10%	7%	22%	21%
IMac, G3, G4	1%	14%	3%	10%	19%	27%
Pentium	29%	11%	19%	28%	6%	3%
Pentium II/III	53%	33%	45%	32%	20%	13%
Older-Obsolete	14%	26%	23%	20%	28%	31%
Other Workstations	0%	4%	1%	4%	5%	5%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

The district technology plan requires each site maintain the software licenses for that specific site. The technology contacts for each site are responsible for this in the schools. These are inventoried at the beginning of each school year.

10 The district technology plan for Santa Rosa governs the acquisition of programs and content in accordance with established needs.

The district technology plan establishes the purchasing priorities for new programs and digital content. These purchases are made in accordance with the priorities in the district strategic plan and in concert with the needs established through needs assessment survey and review of student academic performance data. [38] Results of board-approved hardware purchases are shown in Exhibit 6-7 expressed as students per computer. Results of board-approved software purchases are shown in Exhibit 6-8 expressed as the percentage of students using various popular instructional software programs.

Exhibit 6-7

Students per Computer, Santa Rosa County School Buildings, 2000-01

School Name	Students per Computer[1]	School Name	Students per Computer[1]
Elementaries		**Middle Schools**	
Bagdad	2.32	Avalon	3.85
Berryhill	2.87	Gulf Breeze	3.36
Chumuckla	2.70	Holley-Navarre	3.84
East Milton	2.43	King	2.38
Gulf Breeze	3.27	Hobbs	2.56
Holley-Navarre PR	2.68	Sims	3.28
Jay	2.84	Woodlawn Beach	3.23
Munson	2.12	**Middle School Average**	3.15
Oriole Beach	3.46		
Pea Ridge	3.62	High Schools	
SS Dixon PR	4.03	Gulf Breeze	3.42

---

[38] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000; Santa Rosa County School District's strategic plan; needs assessment and STAR Surveys; "District adopted budget"; Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.

School Name	Students per Computer[1]	School Name	Students per Computer[1]
Rhodes	2.58	Milton	3.30
West Navarre	4.08	Navarre	9.65
Holley-Navarre INT	3.53	Pace	4.00
SS Dixon INT	4.12	Central	2.49
Elementary Average	3.11	Jay	2.39
		High School Average	3.80
District Average	**3.30**		

PR=primary, INT=intermediate

*Student/computer ratios are calculated using NO OBSOLETE equipment numbers.

Source: Florida Department of Education, Santa Rosa County superintendent's office.

Exhibit 6-8

Percentage of Schools Using Popular Instructional Software

Educational Software Used	Santa Rosa	Charlotte	Lake	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns
Accelerated Reader	53%	50%	68%	67%	73%	53%
STAR Reading	39%	15%	57%	59%	63%	39%
Accelerated Math	8%	15%	9%	22%	20%	8%
STAR Math	16%	4%	14%	26%	30%	16%
Computer Curriculum Corporation	63%	0%	2%	7%	50%	63%
Jostens Educational System	11%	19%	5%	24%	15%	11%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Through the coordination of the district technology plan with the district strategic plan and individual school improvement plans, Santa Rosa has a tight control on hardware and software acquisition. The monitoring of the technology plan provides a source of control that is well established within the district.

11 The district has established procedures and policies for infrastructure development and maintenance.

District offices and schools must adhere to the policies and procedures governing the acquisition of hardware and software outlined in the technology plan and the data processing policies and procedures manual. Participation in the Gateway Consortium ensures uniformity of programs and infrastructure in the administrative computing arena. Interviews with central office staff indicate that the system is stable. School staff interviewed reported no problems in this area. Downtime appears to be minimal in the district. Policies and procedures are contained in web available documents and provide staff with a ready resource concerning configurations, procedures and processes. [39]

---

[39] Santa Rosa District Technology Plan, All Addenda.

Appropriate Use of Technology

12Acceptable use policies have been developed and adopted for computers, video equipment, software and the Internet.

Acceptable use policies have been developed in each of the above areas. These policies can be found in print in every school building administrative office, distributed by teachers integrating technology in classroom instruction, and on district and school web sites. Exhibit 6-9 recreates the table of contents of the district's approved technology plan and provides evidence of the following information:

For a website presentation of policies and guidelines related to use of the Internet, go to www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/pdc/docs/dtp/add10a.pdf.

For a website presentation of policies and guidelines related to use of computers, video equipment, handheld technology, and computer software, go to www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/pdc/it/dtptoc.htm.

Parent signatures are required for students to gain access to technology resources. Teachers must sign that they will abide by the acceptable use policies also. [40]

From a review of the table of contents, Exhibit 6-9, it is clear that the district understands and adheres to appropriate technology use guidelines, copyright laws, and standards of etiquette. In addition to updating the district technology plan at regular intervals, the school board reviews and approves the technology program for the district and has adopted policies to both comply with statutes and to address matters of acceptable standards of use and access.

Exhibit 6-9

Santa Rosa District Technology Plan, Table of Contents

- Santa Rosa District 2000-2001 Technology Plan
- Addendum 1 - Benchmarks for Teacher Preparation Programs
- Addendum 2 - Accomplished Practices - Technology
- Addendum 3 - Structured Television Cabling System
- Addendum 4 - Computer Equipment Standards
- Addendum 5 - Structured Telecommunications Cabling System
- Addendum 6 - Administrative Software Standards
- Addendum 7 - Instructional Software and Technological Resources
- Addendum 8 - Security
- Addendum 9 - Grant Seeking- A Process, Not An Event
- Addendum 10 - Related School Board Policies
  - 10a. Internet Acceptable Use Policy and Guidelines
  - 10b1. Internet Access Agreement and Internet Usage Forms for Schools
  - 10b2. Internet Usage Forms for District-level Staff
  - 10c. Educational Media Services & Educational Media Materials

---

[40] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000, plus addenda; District web site; School web sites; Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.

- 10d1. Copyright - School Board Policy
- 10d2. Web Publishing Guidelines and Copyright Issues
- 10e. Parent-Guardian Permission Form For Publishing Student Name, Picture, and-or Creative Effort On The World Wide Web
- 10f. Copy Permission From Creator Form
- Addendum 11 - Technology Inservice Components

Source: Santa Rosa County District Schools.

13 The district has the required acceptable use policies in place and provides filtering software to all sites.

As noted above the district has developed and disseminated required acceptable use policies regarding technology resources. Appropriate copying and copyright requirements are posted in central office and school sites. Interviews with school and district personnel indicate monitoring of use and cite a recent case where misuse was detected and pursued resulting in a termination. [41]

Santa Rosa employs different software systems one for filtering and several levels of virus protection. The filter system is N2H2 and it is located on a central server. All Internet traffic is forced through this filter and all schools are required to use this system.

The virus protection is located at three levels. One is located on the district-wide e-mail server and screens all incoming e-mail for any viruses. If a virus is found, the e-mail is sent to a special work station for further investigation by the e-mail administrator. Santa Rosa has also purchased virus software for all servers. The data processing staff has installed this on all the servers that the central office control and the Professional Development Center coordinated the installation on all of the instructional servers. Virus protection licenses for all workstations have been purchased. Data processing installed this software on all administrative workstations and the school technology contacts are responsible for installing it on all school instructional workstations. The central office reports that, based on recent discussions of this subject with the school technology contacts, the virus protection has been installed on all of their computers. Additionally, central office repair technicians look for this software as they repair systems in the field. The repair technicians concur that the virus protection software has been installed.

For a website presentation of policies and guidelines related to use of the Internet, go to www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/pdc/docs/dtp/add10a.pdf.

For a website presentation of policies and guidelines related to use of computers, video equipment, handheld technology, and computer software, go to www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/pdc/it/dtptoc.htm.

See Exhibit 6-9 for detailed description of all addenda included in the District Technology Plan.

---

[41] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000 plus addenda; Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.

Management Information Systems

14 The district policies and practices indicate a segregation of duties to protect transactions.

A review of the Data Processing Policies and Procedures Manual indicates a clear segregation of duties in its policies and is so noted in the organizational chart. Interviews with data processing staff indicate adherence to these policies. [42] Further, a review of Exhibit 6-3, Data Processing Organizational Chart, will graphically describe protections built into the organizational structure.

The finance office operates separately from other divisions of the administrative structure. In order for programming changes to be executed, there is a requirement for a written request that must be signed by the appropriate personnel. Since Santa Rosa operates within the Gateway Consortium for administrative computing activities, changes to programs are governed further by the change request procedures of the consortium. Santa Rosa is using Total Educational Resource Management System (TERMS) as the software governing the administrative applications (finance, personnel, in-service, property control). The Santa Rosa's Data Processing Policies and Procedures Manual requires a written request via e-mail for software changes. "Requests must be from a person in the affected department who has responsibility for the data of that department." Specific procedures are outlined for testing and subsequent implementation. [43]

The Santa Rosa County School District employment application requires detailed information about the applicant. Applications are received in the Personnel Office where basic data on each applicant are entered into the district computer system where principals can access candidate data on a read-only basis. However, if principals want to review the complete information on file, they must either physically come to the district office to do so, or request that the personnel office fax the information to the building. Although the department has considered installing a system for scanning the complete application into the database to provide site administrators access to those data, it has not been implemented due to the cost of equipment. The goal to obtain a scanning system should be revisited as funds become available. Results of fingerprint testing are maintained in separate personnel databases.

It should be noted that the Santa Rosa organizational chart is not in compliance with the OPPAGA Best Practice requiring that the data processing department not report to an office for which they are processing data. The consultant found no evidence of problems related to the current structure. In a small school division such as Santa Rosa the current system makes sense when the alternative would require considerable reorganization and associated cost.

15 The district data processing system employs a system of screen access restrictions to ensure authorized access and restrict output.

The data processing policies and procedures manual and interviews with data processing staff indicate that control to various applications and data fields is restricted through controlled access to screens

---

[42] "Data processing policies and procedures manual; interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.
[43] Data processing policies and procedures manual, p. 22.

displaying the information for review and update as well as restricting the output available. Transactions and report generation are reviewed for potential violations. [44]

Employees in Santa Rosa are issued accounts and passwords that determine the level of access for programs and applications. These passwords are the keys to data and program access and protection. For example, a high school assistant principal responsible for discipline would be granted access to discipline codes whereas another assistant principal without that job duty would not.

When employees are terminated, the data processing secretary receives the personnel action form and school board minutes to verify termination. When an employee is terminated, the accounts assigned to that person are terminated and authorizations eliminated.

Each major subsystem has its own separate security subsystem. For example, the student system has a set of ID's for each user that allows attachment of certain powers. Only selected staff may update the privileges outlined in these tables.

16 The district uses the standard reports available to participants of the Gateway Consortium. The data feeding these reports are reviewed for accuracy and reliability.

Through participation in the Gateway Consortium the district avails itself to standards reports. Information supporting these reports is input primarily by the school staff. Online edits and verification and error reports are produced routinely to protect data integrity. Additional state edits are performed on that information to be supplied to the state. A recent Auditor General FTE Audit supports the procedures employed. [45]

The Santa Rosa data processing department assigns specific staff members to applications in both primary and secondary roles. In addition a specific person is assigned from the Gateway Consortium to the applications that are used from that system. This means as many as three people may be assigned to an application. [46] The department further assigns staff to review the requested programming and the responsibilities for output review.

The Florida Department of Education maintains control over the applications that feed to the statewide student database. Audits are conducted annually to determine the level of compliance to the data requirements they set forth. The Auditor General report cited previously is such an audit. Findings sited in this report were addressed in writing by the district.

17 Policies and procedures and visual inspection verify that the general controls are in place. The district is in general compliance with the requirements of the state auditor's office regarding administrative and student data systems.

The SchoolMatch consultant reviewed the physical access to the computing center. Policies, procedures and interviews support the establishment of general controls. These are also employed through the

---

[44] "Data processing policies and procedures manual; Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.

[45] Data processing policies and procedures manual; recent Auditor General's FTE Audit; "Interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.

[46] Santa Rosa data processing policies and procedures manual, pp 5-10.

Gateway Consortium policies. [47] Operators have written instructions for all programs they are required to execute. Gateway related programs are all documented and systems personnel executing programs for maintenance and update purposes do so as part of their job duties.

The district recently underwent an audit by the Auditor General's office of its full time equivalent procedures. The Santa Rosa School District responded in writing on January 21, 2001 to the finding of this report.

Santa Rosa has a written disaster recovery plan and via its participation in the Gateway Consortium, participates in their disaster recovery plan also. These plans cite weekly back-ups and off-site storage of data. Individual files for e-mail are backed-up as are other applications that are specific to Santa Rosa. System files are backed up weekly and a weekday backup is made of e-mail files. Monthly tapes are also generated and an annual retention policy is in place.

18 The district meets the state requirements for data submission and accuracy. Reports are routinely provided to assist in individual department planning and objectives.

Through the Gateway Consortium, Santa Rosa has at its fingertips a plethora of information regarding students and their academic achievement. The district strategic plan and district technology plan both outline uses of data for the purposes of decision-making in virtually every department but particularly in instruction. Interviews in schools and various district offices reflect the provision of this information and its use in their individual decision-making arenas. School improvement plans indicate a heavy dependence upon such data for planning and student programs. [48]

There are times when reports need to be developed. When such occasions arise, the requests are taken to the Gateway Committee charged with approving such. The Gateway agreement lists priorities, in order, as follows for approving the development of new reports: [49]

- Reports necessary to comply with DOE database and reporting requirements
- Programs to implement, maintain, and update consortium level online and batch software for use within the Gateway system
- Program to implement, maintain, and update district/institution level online and batch software
- Other

The recent FTE audit by the auditor general contained some findings in this area. The district has responded to this report in writing and addressed all areas.

Santa Rosa employs screen checks to ensure that data entered into the various systems are within the tolerances set for the various data elements. This ensures that data entry is accurate. Subsequent reviews of data accuracy implemented by the state itself provide a further level of review. The abovementioned FTE audit reflects a high level of accuracy in the Santa Rosa data.

The Professional Development Center calendars noted earlier in this report provide staff members with training in the utilization of this data in typical productivity tools, such as word processing and spreadsheets. This proves building administrators with tools to use the data available in decision-making.

---

[47] Data processing policies and procedures manual; interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.

[48] Santa Rosa County District Schools, District Technology Plan 2000-2001, Revised November 1, 2000, plus addenda; district strategic plan; individual school improvement plans; district web site; school web sites; interviews with district and school staff conducted by SchoolMatch consultant.

[49] Gateways Student System Consortium Resolution and Contract for Participation, 7/25/00, Section II, Services to Districts.

While the SchoolMatch staff was recently in Santa Rosa, staff members were taking classes in utilizing spreadsheets to review FCAT information. The calendars of classes support a variety of classes being available and visits in schools noted these programs and associated data in use at the building level.

Visits to schools indicate the there is widespread use of FCAT data and a growing level of expertise in using this information for program improvement and student remediation.

19 The district has taken steps to minimize the number of databases that are independent of its centralized computer systems.

The Data processing policies and procedures clearly indicate the need for data to be harvested from the central files of the district. [50] The wealth of information available and the stability of the system support the users in availing themselves of the central files. The food service and transportation contracts do have stand-alone databases but the source data for this is from the district's central files. The contractors may not enter student information. This ensures uniformity and appropriate control over student related information.

The district also has a board policy related to data collection forms that would precede development of databases extant from the central office. Board Policy 2.31, Reports and Forms Management System, addresses this issue. [51] The existence of extant databases is very difficult to determine with a high degree of certainty. However, the existence of policy and the degree to which data is monitored by the data processing staff reflects due diligence in this area. The data processing director reports that schools meet with him or his staff in regard to these issues and does not see a problem in this area.

20 Through participation in the Gateway Consortium the district adheres to the established data exchange protocols. Local policies and procedures are also in place.

Santa Rosa uses the Gateway Consortium resources for administrative computing thereby availing themselves of their established protocols and procedures. Local edits as well as those conducted by the state ensure that data exchange transactions meet specified requirements. The local data processing policies and procedures manual note appropriate procedures. [52] Student data is subject to audit by the Auditor General's office. The recent FTE audit revealed few findings in this area all of which were addressed in a response from the district to the Auditor General's office.

---

[50] Data processing policies and procedures manual.
[51] "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County, Florida, 4/17/97.

7 Personnel Systems and Benefits

The Santa Rosa County School District has developed and maintained an effective, well-executed system of personnel processes and benefit functions. Some minor modifications and adjustments will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the program

Conclusion

The Santa Rosa County School District recruits and hires qualified personnel, retains an extremely high percentage of its staff, and has sophisticated programs of staff development in place to enhance staff training. Performance evaluations are conducted using all components required by Florida law and provides all procedural safeguards to employees. [1] A more formalized internal review of the human resources staffing structure will need to be performed as a first priority of the newly appointed assistant superintendent of human resources. Several operational recommendations are given to "fine-tune" the human resources processes and procedures within the district. None of the recommendations represent major changes to the processes in place.

During the course of this review, SchoolMatch Consultants identified a number of district accomplishments and recommended several enhancements in the personnel systems and benefits, some of which are included in Exhibit 7-1.

Exhibit 7-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Personnel Systems and Benefits in the Last Three Years

- The district is consistently able to recruit and hire qualified staff members in a period of national teacher shortage.
- The district uses a comprehensive plan of staff development to increase the efficacy of its teachers.
- The district formally evaluates employees to monitor and improve performance.
- Labor relations with the unionized employee groups are positive and productive.

Overview of Chapter Findings

SchoolMatch Consultants reviewed the district's personnel systems and benefits using the Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators adopted by the Commissioner of Education. We employed several methodologies to develop chapter conclusions and action plans. For instance, we conducted on-site interviews with district level managers and staff and gathered information on the personnel system and benefit activities. We requested and reviewed selected documents and held a public forum to provide an opportunity for the community and the school staff to provide input on all areas including the district's personnel system and benefit activities policies and procedures. All of these data sources are considered in these findings.

---

[1] Florida Department of Education, Division of Support Services, "FTE General Instructions, 2001-02," Education Information and Accountability Services and Office of Funding and Financial Reporting Sections.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Personnel Processes

1. The district has efficient and effective processes for recruiting and hiring qualified personnel. (Page 7-6)

2. The district maintains a reasonably stable work force through competitive salary and benefit packages and through district-wide efforts to address and remedy factors that contribute to increased turnover. (Page 7-9)

3. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program to achieve and maintain high levels of productivity and employee performance among non-instructional employees. (Page 7-11)

4. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for instructional employees to attain and maintain high quality instruction and to achieve high levels of student performance. (Page 7-11)

5. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for school-based administrators. (Page 7-12)

6. The district's system for formally evaluating employees is not designed to reward excellent performance and productivity; however, the system is designed to identify and address performance that does not meet the district's expectations for the employee. (Page 7-13)

7. The district ensures that employees who repeatedly fail to meet the district's performance expectations, or whose behavior or job performance is potentially harmful to students, are promptly removed from contact with students, and that the appropriate steps are taken to terminate the person's employment. (Page 7-15)

Managing Human Resources

8. The district maintains clear and effective channels of communication with employees. (Page 7-16)

9. The district has efficient and cost-effective policies and practices for providing substitute teachers and other substitute personnel. (Page 7-16)

10. The district maintains personnel records in a highly efficient and accessible manner but the system could be improved by making personnel records available on-line to site administrators. (Page 7-17)

11. The district uses cost-containment practices for its Workers' Compensation Program. ((Page 7-18)

12. The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the human resource program. (Page 7-18)

13. The district does not periodically review the organizational structure and staffing levels of the Human Resources Department to minimize administrative layers and processes. (Page 7-19)

14. The district has not periodically evaluated its personnel practices but the Human Resources Department is responsive to the needs of sites and is fairly effective in providing services. (Page 7-20).

15. For classes of employees that are unionized, the district maintains an effective collective bargaining process. (Page 7-21).

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

The recommendations in the personnel systems and benefits section could potentially improve the district's efficiency but are neutral in terms of their fiscal impact.

Background

The Santa Rosa County School District employs a total staff of 2,321 to serve a total student population of 23,828. The student population has increased from 12,458 to 23,828 in the last 23 years. During that same time period the number of school administrators increased from 40 to 63 while the district administrators declined from 24 to 21. Concurrently, the teaching staff increased from 747 to 1464. The district has shown foresight in providing resources that impact instruction most directly and containing costs while doing so.

Exhibit 7-2 provides a schematic overview of the organizational structure of the Santa Rosa County School District as it currently exists. It demonstrates in a graphic manner the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction's large span of responsibility.

Exhibit 7-2

Santa Rosa Has Relatively Small Administrative Staff, 2001-02
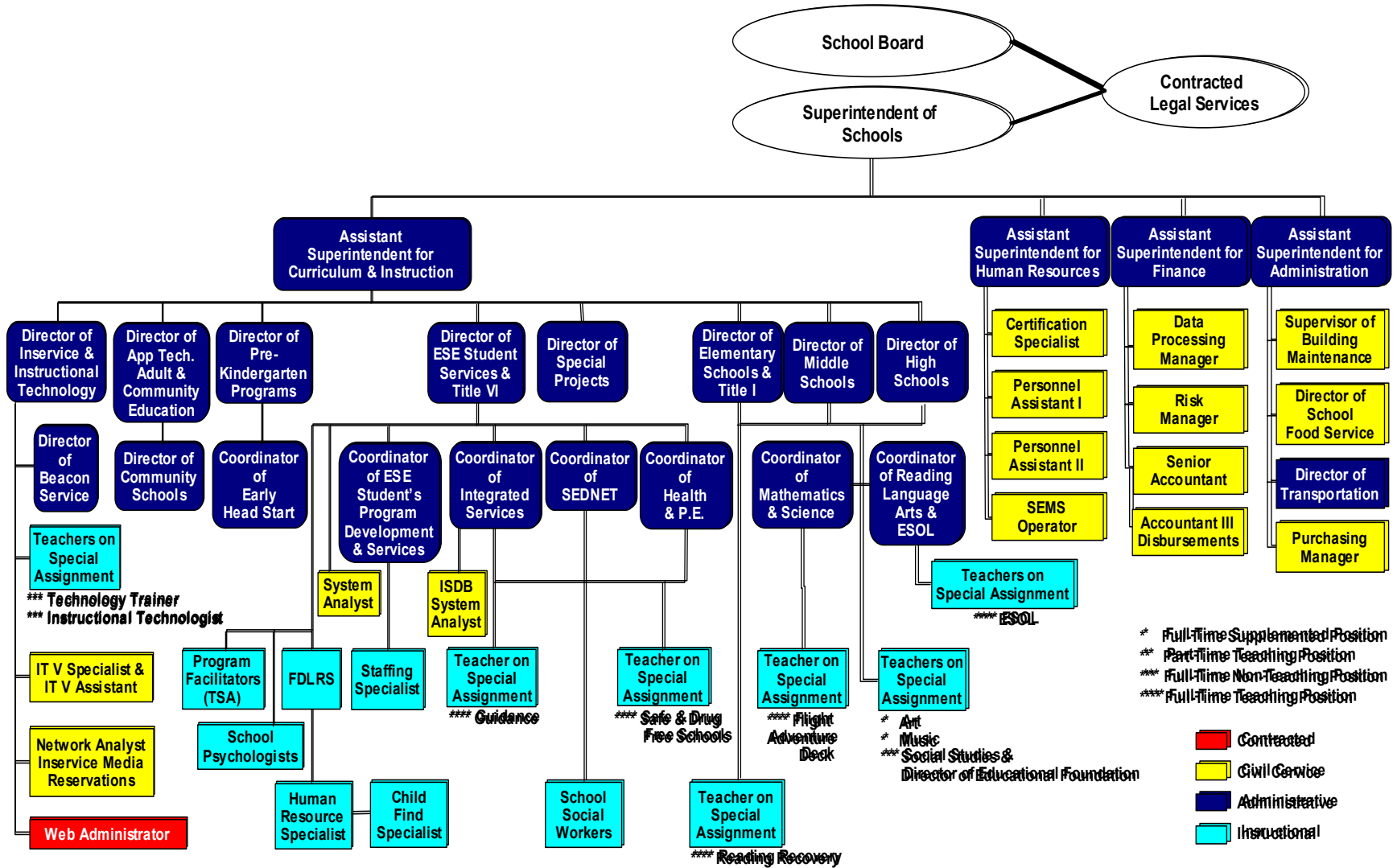
Source: SchoolMatch consultants' representation of the table of organization, Santa Rosa County School District.

The Santa Rosa County School District provides personnel systems and benefits within the Human Resources Department in collaboration and cooperation with the director of In-Service and Instructional Technology and the risk manager. The consolidation of these ancillary services under the umbrella of the assistant superintendent of Human Resources would streamline the coordination of these related functions. The risk manager deals with employee safety and welfare issues that are directly related to the human resources areas of responsibilities. The lines of communication between those two offices must be direct and clear. The director of In-Service and Instructional Technolo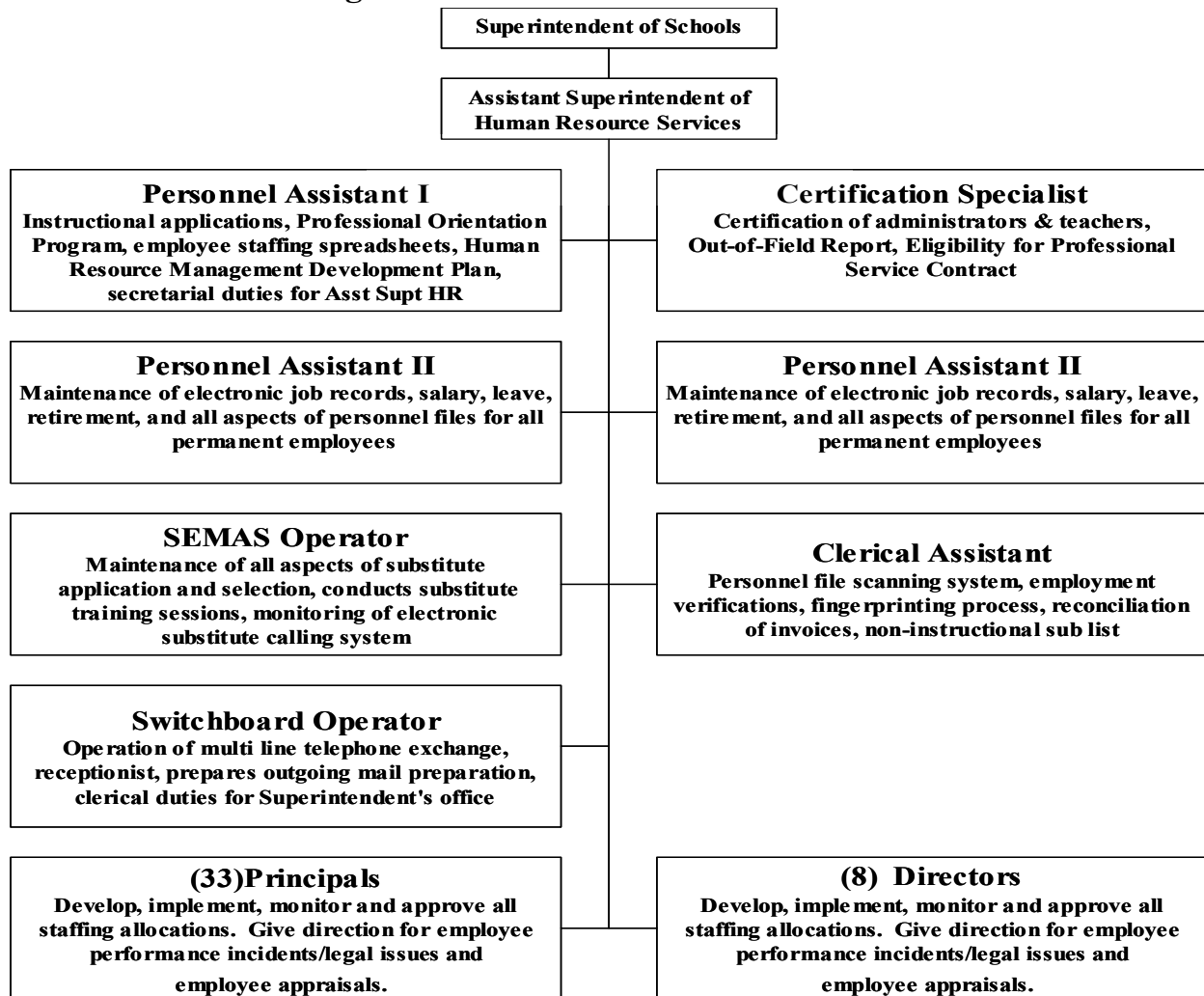gy addresses the professional growth of staff members. Professional growth records and documentation are crucial to issues of certification that are the responsibility of the Human Resources Department. Making the Risk Management Office and the In-Service and Instructional Technology Office report to human resources would enhance the lines of communication and efficiency.

Exhibit 7-3 shows the current structure of the Human Resources Department. We noted that clerical and other para-professional staff report to the assistant superintendent of Human Resources. Reassigning the Risk Management Office and the In-Service and Instructional Technology Office to report to the assistant superintendent of Human Resources would be a small move toward balancing the central administrative areas of responsibility in a logical manner.

Exhibit 7-3

Human Resources Organizational Chart

Superintendent of Schools

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resource Services

Personnel Assistant I Instructional applications, Professional Orientation Program, employee staffing spreadsheets, Human Resource Management Development Plan, secretarial duties for Asst Supt HR	**Certification Specialist** Certification of administrators & teachers, Out-of-Field Report, Eligibility for Professional Service Contract
Personnel Assistant II Maintenance of electronic job records, salary, leave, retirement, and all aspects of personnel files for all permanent employees	**Personnel Assistant II** Maintenance of electronic job records, salary, leave, retirement, and all aspects of personnel files for all permanent employees
SEMAS Operator Maintenance of all aspects of substitute application and selection, conducts substitute training sessions, monitoring of electronic substitute calling system	**Clerical Assistant** Personnel file scanning system, employment verifications, fingerprinting process, reconciliation of invoices, non-instructional sub list
Switchboard Operator Operation of multi line telephone exchange, receptionist, prepares outgoing mail preparation, clerical duties for Superintendent's office	
(33)Principals Develop, implement, monitor and approve all staffing allocations. Give direction for employee performance incidents/legal issues and employee appraisals.	**(8) Directors** Develop, implement, monitor and approve all staffing allocations. Give direction for employee performance incidents/legal issues and employee appraisals.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

During the 2000-01 school year the Santa Rosa County School District had 1,487 teachers on staff. One hundred ninety-five were hired during the 2000-01 school year. Some of those teachers were hired to fill positions vacated at the end of the previous year by retirements, resignations, or deaths. Additional teachers were hired to fill newly created positions and to fill positions of teachers who were on leave of absence for varying lengths of time. In some instances, more than one of the 195 teachers was employed to fill the same position in a serial manner throughout the year. In all instances, the administration was able to employ certified, qualified teachers to fill vacant positions.

Personnel Processes

1 The district has efficient and effective processes for recruiting and hiring qualified personnel.

Mission statement and strategic plan

The district has established a written mission statement that incorporates the use of business partners, volunteers, parents, community leaders, and foundations. The mission statement reads:

> "The Santa Rosa School District, a growing and diverse community of learners with strong values, promotes self-sufficient and productive learning through a comprehensive and innovative curriculum, visionary and collaborative leadership, and sound management."

The district has a strategic plan that covers the 2001-06 school years. The plan provides for the district to assess its operations, determines the direction in which it wishes to go, and creates an effective plan of action to achieve strategic goals. The strategic plan guides program development and includes short- and long-term goals, annual objectives, and strategic directions. Business partners and volunteers are an important part of many of the strategies addressed within the strategic plan.

The district has been successful in recruiting and hiring a qualified workforce during a period of teacher shortage throughout the country. [2]

Application procedure

The Santa Rosa County School District application requires detailed information about the applicant. [3] Applications are received in the Human Resources Department where basic data on each applicant are entered into the district computer system. Principals can access candidate data on a read-only basis. However, if principals want to review the complete information on file, they must either physically go to the district office, or request the office fax the information to them. Although the office has considered installing a system for scanning the complete application into the database to provide site administrators access to the data, it has not been implemented due to the cost of equipment. The goal to obtain a scanning system should be revisited as funds become available.

---

[2] Santa Rosa County School Board teacher and substitute application packets.

[3] Santa Rosa County School Board teacher and substitute teacher application packets.

Prospective applicants may phone for an application to be mailed to them or personally stop by the district offices to obtain one. If applicants request more detailed information than is available on the posting, they are invited to contact the site where the opening exists. [4]

To reduce paperwork and increase the ease by which applicants can apply for positions, the district should place its employment applications on its Internet site. Provisions should be made for applicants to download the application, complete and submit it on the Internet. Principals and supervisors would then be able to access the applicant data electronically. Background data such as references and transcripts would continue to be collected and maintained in the Human Resources Department.

An appropriate non-discrimination policy has been adopted by the Board of Education and is posted in all buildings. [5]

Background checks are conducted for each candidate who is offered employment and verification is maintained in the Human Resources Department.

Job descriptions

The district maintains clear, concise job descriptions that accurately reflect the duties and qualifications required for each class of position. [6]

Recruitment

Santa Rosa County School District receives sufficient numbers of applications from qualified applicants to fill most vacancies that occur. When the supply of applicants does not satisfy the need, the web site, TeachInFlorida.com is used.

The district discontinued sending representatives to on-campus interviews and job fairs as a cost-saving measure. If the current abundance of applicants dries up, the practice may need to be resumed.

Job Postings

The district's job vacancy announcements are available in the Human Resources Department and on the telephone job-line. The postings are very brief and show only the school site, certification required, and posting date. Postings include a non-discrimination clause as a footer. The frequency of postings is determined by the occurrence of openings; however, as an informational service, the district also posts a notice periodically to indicate when there are no openings. [7]

Demographic make-up of staff and students

The district annually reviews the demographic make-up of the staff hired in order to compare the staff population to that of the student body. Exhibit 7-4 shows the comparative breakdown.

---

[4] Santa Rosa County School Board teacher and substitute teacher application packets.

[5] Policies 2.29, 2,291, and 2,292.

[6] See the Human Resource Management Development Plan, Appendices C and D and example of " Coordinator of Early Head Start"

[7] Santa Rosa County School District, November 20, 2001, "no openings" posting

Exhibit 7-4

Racial/Ethnic Breakdown of Santa Rosa County School District Staff and Students

Racial/Ethnic Group	Full-Time Staff		Students, PK-12	
	Number	Percentage of Total	Number	Percentage of Total
White, Non-Hispanic	2,183	95.1	20,780	89.4
Black, Non-Hispanic	83	3.6	1,281	5.5
Hispanic	9	0.4	431	1.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	12	0.5	325	1.4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	8	0.4	136	0.6
Multiracial	Not reported	Not reported	275	1.2
Total	2,295	100.0	23,228	100.00

Source: Florida Department of Education, Education Information and Accountability Services.

The breakdown shows that the percentage of minority student and staff are both quite small. The very limited number of available minority applicants makes it difficult for Santa Rosa, and school districts across the nation, to substantially increase the percentage of minority staff.

Personnel Records

The Human Resources Department maintains transcripts, employment eligibility, certification information, and verification of reference checks for each applicant, and after hire, for each employee. Databases are maintained to monitor any certified teachers who are assigned out of field and of those awaiting verification of certification for the areas to which they are assigned. [8]

The district has been effective and efficient in recruiting and hiring a qualified work force during a period of teacher shortage throughout the country. The current system works well for maintaining employee information that is needed by management for control purposes.

Teachers assigned out-of-field

Santa Rosa County School District has less than 4% of its teachers teaching out-of-field. An "out-of-field" teacher is a teacher who is certified but does not hold certification for the teaching field to which he or she is assigned. Florida law permits a teacher to be assigned out-of-field under certain circumstances. The out-of-field teacher must earn six semester hours of college credit in the area to which the teacher is assigned in order to be permitted to renew the out-of-field eligibility. Additionally, the Board of Education must approve the teacher's assignment and the parents of students the teacher will be teaching must be notified that the teacher will be teaching out-of-field.

During the 2000-01 school year, many of the teachers assigned out-of-field at the elementary level were assigned to either gifted education or adaptive physical education. At the middle school level, most of the out-of-field teachers were assigned out of their area of certification for only 1 or 2 periods a day. Similarly, at the high school level, most of the out-of-field assignments were for only a part of the day. At the middle and high school levels, the master schedule and student needs may necessitate that a teacher be assigned out-of-field for a portion of the day. It would not be feasible to employ a teacher to teach only a class or two in a field when there is someone already on staff who may have time available and a certificate in a related field who can be assigned to teach that class.

---

[8] Santa Rosa County School District out-of-field list.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the Santa Rosa County School District make its employment applications available on its Internet site.*

Action Plan 7-1

Put Employment Applications on the WEB	
Strategy	Change the Santa Rosa County School District Internet page to include employment applications.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review the requirements for including applications on the Internet.
	Step 2: Change the Internet page to include the applications.
Who is Responsible	Santa Rosa County School District Internet WEB manager
Time Frame	Fall 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources.

2 The district maintains a reasonably stable work force through competitive salary and benefit packages and through district-wide efforts to address and remedy factors that contribute to increased turnover.

The Santa Rosa County School District maintains a remarkably stable work force. A large number of staff members graduated from the Santa Rosa school system. Board members, central office and building administrators, and teachers said that the staff demonstrated an incredible amount of loyalty and commitment to the district.

Staff Turnover

Staff turnover appeared to be high at first glance but after analyzing the numbers, turnover was reasonable. A comparison of staff turnover rates using the Florida Department of Education Teacher Exit Interview Information, 2000-01 shows that 144 teachers or 11.3% of the teaching staff, separated from teaching in the district. That exceeds the state average of 5.2% for the same period. However, reduction in force (45), retirements (24), family and personal (22), and relocations (27) were responsible for 118 of the 144 teachers that were separated or 81.9 percent of the total. The district could not be expected to control these separations. Of the 26 other separations, reasons given for leaving included: end of temporary assignment (7), stress on the job (3), end of probationary period (6), and other non-specified reasons (10). During the year, Santa Rosa experienced the highest number of separations from reduction-in-force of any district in the state. The highest reduction-in-force number of any other single district during the year was five.

Salary Comparisons

As shown in Exhibit 7-5, the average salaries for the Santa Rosa County School District teachers are slightly higher than three of its six peer districts. At the bachelors and masters degree level, Santa Rosa salaries were higher than four of the six peer districts.. However Santa Rosa salaries are lower than the state average at all levels. The cost of living in Santa Rosa County, the favorable work conditions in the schools, and the positive work environment all contribute to satisfaction on the part of the staff.

Exhibit 7-5

Comparison of average teacher salaries in
Santa Rosa County School District to peer districts

District	Bachelors	Masters	Specialist	Doctorate	All Degrees
Santa Rosa	**$33,741**	**$40,445**	**$43,564**	**$43,419**	**$36,225**
Alachua	31,045	35,424	37,088	42,329	33,970
Charlotte	32,844	40,968	43,925	46,763	36,994
Lake	32,925	39,024	44,130	42,870	35,047
Okaloosa	37,143	44,096	46,731	55,628	40,315
Osceola	32,423	39,249	40,405	43,813	34,939
St. Johns	34,279	39,966	-	42,310	36,591
State Average	**$36, 363**	**$43,061**	**$50,450**	**$49,422**	**$39, 275**

Source: Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services, Florida Department of Education, Profiles of Florida School Districts, 2001-02.

Health benefits

Benefits are analyzed by the Risk Management Office using Florida School Board Insurance Trust data, comparative data from ten other counties, and other sources. [9] A comparison of the cost of the district's share of single coverage health benefits shows that Santa Rosa pays slightly less than the average of its peer districts. Santa Rosa also requires employees to contribute to the plan, which appears to be somewhat unusual in Florida. The total effect is that the Santa Rosa Board of Education provides its employees health care benefits in a cost efficient manner.

Exhibit 7-6 provides a comparison of health insurance plans offered in Santa Rosa County and peer districts based on the total cost, the Board of Education's share of single coverage cost, and the employee's share of the cost. Most of the peer districts do not require employees to pay any of the cost of single coverage health benefits. One other district, in addition to Santa Rosa, does so.

Exhibit 7-6

Comparison of Health Insurance Plan
Offered in Santa Rosa County and Peer Districts

District Plan	Total Annual Cost	Single Coverage Board Share	Employee Share
Santa Rosa	**$2,965**	**$2,785**	**$180**
Alachua	$1,793	$1,793	$0
Charlotte	$3,600	$3,600	$0
Lake	$3,512	$3,512	$0
Okaloosa	$2,656	$2,656	$0
Osceola	$3,096	$3,096	$0
St. Johns	$3,235	$2,617	$618

Source: Lake County Best Financial Management Practices Review, OPPAGA Report 01-68.

A district insurance committee meets quarterly to provide information that is then disseminated to the staff in each building. The committee also addresses any employee questions or concerns that might arise. Additionally the risk manager provides counseling and assistance to employees who have concerns using the health care system.

---

[9] Survey Report Personnel Visual B1.

Recommendations

- *None*

3   The district provides a comprehensive staff development program to achieve and maintain high levels of productivity and employee performance among non-instructional employees.

The Santa Rosa County School District conducts orientation programs at the beginning of each school year and monthly thereafter to provide non-instructional employees with needed staff development. [10] The current system is effective even though the district does not have a mentor program available to help new staff learn the system. While a mentoring program possibly could help improve the system, the added benefits from establishing a mentor program is uncertain in this case.

A needs survey, that asks respondents to assess his or her mastery of 30 skills on a 5-point scale, is used for planning and delivering training in technology. [11] Examples of the skills include basic computer operation: "I can set up my computer and peripheral devices, load software, and print. I can use most of the operating system tools like the clock, notepad, find command, and recycling bin. I can format a data disk." Another example is the use of search tools: "I can conduct an efficient search of internet resources to locate subject-specific information using directories like Yahoo or search engines like Excite or Infoseek. I can use advanced search commands to specify and limit the number of hits I get."

To further enhance the development of non-instructional staff, the district could establish a mentoring program for non-instructional employees. We believe a mentoring program could help but we are not making a recommendation in this case because the current system is effective as it is.

Recommendations

- *None*

4   The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for instructional employees to attain and maintain high quality instruction and to achieve high levels of student performance.

The district has an exemplary staff development program.

The Santa Rosa County School District has an exemplary staff development program that provides a continuum of programs and services to instructional staff throughout their professional careers. An induction program provides new teachers with opportunities to learn the skills necessary for success.

---

[10] Compilation of in-service documentation.
[11] Compilation of in-service documentation.

There is a formal mentoring program that provides guidance and advice for new employees, and there is ongoing staff development that targets student needs. [12]

The district assesses staff training needs through an online survey. The self-identified training needs resulting from the survey are then developed as part of the district training offerings. Additionally, the District Technology Plan and each building's School Improvement Plan provide clearly identified objectives for which the district provides training, including objectives specifically directed toward improving student performance. Extensive documentation identifies the training attended, in-service points earned, and instructor verification of competency attained for each in-service activity.

The district has 12 trainers who systematically provide staff development opportunities to staff. They use a "train-the-trainer" model to effectively deliver services, and a mentor/cadre model is used to provide additional services. [13]

Although no formal board policy currently exists encouraging teachers to pursue certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, the policy review currently in progress will address that issue. The Human Resources Department sends information regarding national board certification to staff, the teacher's union gives assistance, and presentations are made at a school board meeting to those who achieve that certification.

The district's Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-06 contains a goal to increase the percentage of national board certified teachers within the district. The strategies to be employed in reaching that goal include working with the Santa Rosa Professional Educators Association to provide workshops for program applicants and developing a recognition program for those receiving National Board Certification.

Recommendations

- *None*

5 The district provides a comprehensive staff development program for school-based administrators.

The Santa Rosa County School District provides a continuum of staff development for school-based administrators. Leadership training for administrators is provided through the Human Resource Management Development Plan that was formally adopted by the Board of Education on December 9, 1999. [14]

Candidates with potential for employment as administrators are identified, in part, by a survey that is distributed to all staff each August. Those interested in becoming administrators, or in finding out more about that possibility, are invited to attend a series of training sessions through the Potential Candidate Training Program. New administrator mentoring occurs in the new principal program, through support teams and assistant principal meetings.

On-going staff development for school-based administrators occurs in a variety of ways. Principals meet once per month with central office personnel. Large portions of these meetings are devoted to professional growth activities related to student achievement. Assistant principals meet every two

---

[12] Professional orientation program.

[13] See Mentors/Cadre Train the Trainers.

[14] Title Page, Table of Contents, Santa Rosa County School District Board Minutes.

months. Their meetings are also largely focused on professional growth topics. During one of our visits to the district, a series of workshops were being held called "Digging in the Data." The administrators were learning to disaggregate test data and develop targeted instruction to improve students' performance.

Recommendations

- *None*

6 The district's system for formally evaluating employees is not designed to reward excellent performance and productivity; however, the system is designed to identify and address performance that does not meet the district's expectations for the employee.

The district's Teacher Assessment System has been approved by the Florida Department of Education as a satisfactory, comprehensive plan. [15] It provides performance criteria and timelines. It also requires all teachers to complete a Professional Development Plan related to student performance. Currently, the district does not have provisions for peer, parent, and subordinate input to the evaluation system. And the district does not analyze evaluations to determine what employee performance issues need to be addressed by management and through training. The district could improve its teacher assessment system and overall employee performance by making the recommended change to the evaluation system and analyzing evaluations for performance issues.

The Teacher Assessment System's procedures provides due process as follows:

- Notice to the educator that deficiencies exist that may lead to disciplinary action if not corrected.
- Explanation of the deficiencies that the administrator or supervisor responsible for evaluation has identified. It is thorough and detailed in written form, and includes suggestions for improvement.
- Assistance must be provided to the educator by those responsible for evaluation and supervision of the educator. A practical plan for remediation for each deficiency noted must be developed, with input from the educator when possible.
- Time must be provided for correction of all deficiencies noted. The time allotted must be reasonable and commensurate with the volume of deficiencies listed so that the educator is provided a sincere opportunity to improve sufficiently to meet expectations of those responsible for evaluation.

Training and guidance are provided to evaluators in regular principal and assistant principal meetings to ensure that they evaluate personnel properly. Human Resources Department staff verifies that all performance evaluations have been completed and centrally maintains all records.

Employees with identified performance problems are provided notice, assistance and counseling through the Professional Improvement Plan and in records of counseling. Follow up of performance issues that may need to be addressed through training is done at the site and becomes part of the site-based School Improvement Plan. Records of employee performance problems, those placed on probationary status, and of disciplinary actions taken are on file in the Human Resources Department.

---

[15] Santa Rosa County School District teacher assessment system.

In accordance with Florida law, the Santa Rosa County School District had established policies regarding drug testing of employees and the provision of employee assistance to those employees impaired by alcohol or drug abuse. [16]   The occurrence of such incidents is extremely low in the district. According to the current administration, there are never more than one or two incidents per year. Those that have occurred have, after investigation, been determined to be either baseless or of a minor nature.

Although parent input regarding teacher performance is sought via a climate survey, a full 360-degree evaluation process is not in place. A 360-degree evaluation requires gathering data from a variety of sources. To accomplish this, the administrator is required to identify stakeholders who are affected by the administrator's work. Those stakeholders are grouped with similar stakeholders and then are surveyed to provide feedback regarding the administrator's work, strengths, and weaknesses and to solicit suggestions that would improve the administrator's effectiveness. This feedback is used as one part of the evaluation process. The following recommendation provides an action plan for including 360-degree feedback in the evaluation system.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district:*
  - *Establish a 360-degree evaluation process that includes input from peer, subordinates, and parents (where appropriate) to the evaluation process.*
  - *Annually analyze employee evaluations to determine performance issues that need to be addressed.*

Action Plan 7-2

Implement 360-degree Evaluation		
Strategy	Provide additional relevant input into employee evaluations.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Identify the "customers" for each category of employee.
	Step 2:	Survey the customers regarding the important performance criteria of the employee group.
	Step 3:	Develop a survey or questionnaire to assess the desired performance criteria.
	Step 4:	Administer the questionnaire to the customers.
	Step 5:	Compile questionnaire results and provide feedback to employee.
	Step 6:	Develop a training plan to address the identified needs.
Who is Responsible	Director of Staff Development	
Time Frame	Fall 2002	
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources	

Action Plan 7-3

Annual Analysis of Employee Evaluations		
Strategy	Annually analyze employee evaluations to determine performance issues that need to be addressed.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Annually review the employee evaluations for areas of performance problems.
	Step 2:	Categorize the types of issues.

---

[16] Santa Rosa County School Board "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations of the School Board" Part I, 2.45 and Ch. 8, 8.09

	Step 3: Include those issues that occur frequently in the staff development plan for the following year.
Who is Responsible	Director of Staff Development
Time Frame	Fall 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources

7 The district ensures that employees who repeatedly fail to meet the district's performance expectations, or whose behavior or job performance is potentially harmful to students, are promptly removed from contact with students, and that the appropriate steps are taken to terminate the person's employment.

The district monitors the performance of its employees and makes student performance and welfare the primary focus of its decisions.

Training and guidance are given to managers systematically through principal meetings, assistant principal meetings, administrative conferences, and interaction management training. [17] Employee performance is monitored regularly through the evaluation system by the building principal, and less than satisfactory performance is addressed immediately. The assistant superintendent of Human Resources is responsible for monitoring staff evaluation through work with the principals and supervisors.

The process and timeline for monitoring the ongoing performance of marginal or poorly performing employees is provided in the Professional Improvement Plan and Record of Counseling. [18] In cases where performance is not brought up to standard, the school board attorney advises on the appropriate procedures to be followed to separate unsatisfactory employees from service.

If the district receives an allegation of behavior by a district employee that is potentially harmful to students, an investigation is done immediately. The assistant superintendent of Human Resources is responsible for the investigation. While the investigation is under way, the individual is removed from the classroom. There are district policies that address behavior issues and the district has a toll-free number to report allegations anonymously. [19] If an allegation is reported to a building principal, the principal immediately informs the appropriate grade level director and the assistant superintendent of Human Resources. If the district office receives the call, the principal is immediately notified and the investigation proceeds.

Recommendations

- *None*

---

[17] Santa Rosa training documents.

[18] See compilation of in-service documentation.

[19] Administrative Policies 3.07 and 3.392, Rules and Regulations of the School Board of Santa Rosa County, April 1997.

Managing Human Resources

8 **The district maintains clear and effective channels of communication with employees.**

The district provides direction and assistance to its employees through a variety of means including handbooks, collective bargaining agreements, and other written materials. [20] Additionally the district web site http://www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/ contains current, accurate information for employees and other constituents. Board of Education policies will be added to the site in the near future. The web site is maintained by a web manager who reports to the director of technology and in-service.

Face-to-face communications between district and building-level administrators occur through regularly scheduled visits as well as informal and as-needed site visits by district- level officials. The superintendent and assistant superintendents make numerous site visits, both formal and informal. At a minimum, the directors visit each site, for which they are responsible, four times per year; however, a review of their calendars suggests that the actual number of visits to each site exceeds 20 per year.

Feedback from employees is systematically sought in a number of areas including their needs for staff development and satisfaction with their work climate. Additionally, the risk manager surveys the staff on health care satisfaction, the enrollment process, and any related matters they care to address.

In addition to surveys, the district solicits and uses input from employees' task forces and work groups, such as the insurance committee that addresses issues of health coverage information and satisfaction, curriculum committees, and site safety committees. Committees for ongoing concerns such as curriculum and health care are generally standing committees with systematic rotation of members and equitable distribution of membership throughout the district. To address one-time, specific concerns, task forces may be established with specific goals and limited duration.

Recommendations

- *None*

9 **The district has efficient and cost-effective policies and practices for providing substitute teachers and other substitute personnel.**

To efficiently and cost-effectively provide substitute teachers as needed to replace absent teachers, the district uses the Substitute Employee Management System that is a vendor product used in many school systems in the United States. It is an automated system that contacts substitute teachers using automated calling to match the database of available substitutes. Both central office administrators and building administrators are satisfied with the system and believe it allows them to focus their time and attention on instruction.

---

[20] Santa Rosa Professional Teachers' Master Contract, September 2000 and Santa Rosa Southern Council of Industrial Workers, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, AFL-CIO, Master Contract, August 16, 2000.

In accordance with Board of Education policy, fully certified teachers cover teacher absences that extend beyond 45 days. Intermittent absences are treated as normal day-to-day absences and do not trigger the 45 day rule.

Recommendations

- *None*

10The district maintains personnel records in a highly efficient and accessible manner but the system could be improved by making personnel records available on-line to site administrators.

All personnel records are maintained in compliance with Florida state laws. Background check reports and medical records that are exempt are maintained separate from personnel records that are subject to public records requests. Personnel files are computerized and properly organized for easy access at the district level and are regularly scanned for archiving. However, only limited application data is available online to site administrators. Providing computerized access to applicant files by site administrators would eliminate, or greatly reduce, the need to fax information to the sites or have the administrator make a personal visit to review application files. The applicant files should be made available on a read-only basis.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district make personnel records available on-line to site administrators as appropriate.*

Action Plan 7-4

Provide Computerized Access to Personnel Files for Site Administrators		
Strategy	Allow site administrators access to selected personnel files on a read-only basis.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Revise the access to selected computerized files.
	Step 2:	Train the site administrators on access and security procedures.
	Step 3:	Determine, on an annual basis, which files each site administrator should be able to access and code those files appropriately.
	Step 4:	Monitor who is accessing the files for security purposes.
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Director of Technology	
Time Frame	Spring 2003 hiring season	
Fiscal Impact	Limited savings could be achieved in reduced paper costs and secretarial time in copying files.	

11 The district uses cost-containment practices for its Workers' Compensation Program.

The district monitors its workers' compensation claims both at the site and district level. Monthly reports are given to the Board of Education that delineates the type of injury and the determination of disability. [21] Additionally, each site prepares a frequency report each month with an annual summary at the end of the year. Samples of accident investigation reports are also provided. [22] The safety plan and accident reports are reviewed by the site safety committee that meets at least quarterly. Investigations are conducted at the time of the incident. Investigators recommend safety measures that could feasibly be taken to reduce the likelihood of additional accidents.

The district employs an independent contractor to perform regular fire, safety, and sanitation inspections including testing for contaminants such as asbestos and radon. Additionally, safety committees at each site address safety issues.

Recommendations

- *None*

12 The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the human resource program.

A system is needed to assure that the Human Resources Department is meeting district goals. The district's strategic plan provides direction for the Human Resources Department; however, specific strategies are not in place to assure its ongoing and objective internal accountability. [23] To assure that district goals and objectives are consistently met, the district needs to establish performance and cost-efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks for evaluating the human resources program and conduct an annual performance evaluation of the Human Resources Department.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district conduct an annual performance evaluation of the Human Resources Department using performance and cost efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks.*

---

[21] Santa Rosa County School District monthly workers' compensation reports.

[22] Santa Rosa County School District accident reports.

[23] Santa Rosa County School District's Strategic Improvement Plan.

Action Plan 7-5

Conduct an Annual Performance Evaluation of the Human Resources Department		
Strategy	Annually conduct an evaluation that measures the extent to which the district's goals for the department are met	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Identify major district goals for the department and establish performance and cost efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks.
	Step 2:	Identify the appropriate benchmarks for the department using other successful districts as well as businesses
	Step 3:	Solicit feedback from department customers including district administrators, applicants, and students
	Step 4:	Review the cost of the Human Resources Department relative to other Florida school districts
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources	
Time Frame	Perform this review annually.	
Fiscal Impact	Estimated cost is $3,000 per year for clerical and other temporary help; however, the cost may be offset if the process identifies cost savings measures.	

13 The district does not periodically review the organizational structure and staffing levels of the Human Resources Department to minimize administrative layers and processes.

The Human Resources Department has made several changes in its organizational structure but it does not periodically conduct a formal review of the department to minimize administrative layers and processes. To provide necessary backup in case of absence, employees have been cross-trained within the department. In order to balance the workload, duties have been organized by work site rather than by function. Some attempt has been made to benchmark against comparable districts, however the variations in titles and duties have made those efforts unsuccessful.

Currently, the Human Resources Department has eight people assigned to it, including the assistant superintendent of Human Resources. There are three personnel assistants, a certification specialist, clerical assistant, one systems operator, and a switchboard operator.

With the recent change in leadership in this department, the organizational structure and staffing should be reviewed for effectiveness and efficiency. This review should start with the goals, objectives, and accountability measures identified in the Strategic Plan. Based on the services that the Human Resources Department must provide to meet the above goals, the district should assess the current staff members' skills and expertise in relation to those required by the tasks. Additional use of technology to streamline the operation should be evaluated in terms of cost benefit standards. Consideration should be given to contracting with an outside evaluator to perform this review. The Santa Rosa County School District is to be commended for continually looking at ways to reduce cost and increase efficiency of the Human Resources Department. Department changes, because of voluntary staff departures, have been made with minimum disruption to personnel or processes. With a new assistant superintendent in charge, it is the ideal time to more formally review the structure and staffing needs and to make additional changes if warranted.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the Human Resources Department conduct a review of it's staffing.*

Action Plan 7-6

Human Resources Department Staffing Review		
Strategy	Review the Human Resources Department staffing.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Review each staff member's assignments and responsibilities for congruence between written responsibilities and actual duties.
	Step 2:	Compare staffing with that of mean-matched districts in the state.
	Step 3:	Assess the skills and aptitudes of existing staff members.
	Step 4:	Determine if the current staff is being utilized most efficiently.
	Step 5:	Review the office's interaction and interdependence with other departments within the school district.
	Step 6:	Based on an analysis of the above, recommend appropriate changes to the superintendent and board of education.
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources	
Time Frame	Within one year of the new assistant superintendent taking office.	
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources.	

14The district has not periodically evaluated its personnel practices but the Human Resources Department is responsive to the needs of sites and is fairly effective in providing services.

The district has not systematically evaluated its personnel practices for efficiency or effectiveness. In an effort to "get the job done", the district has not formally evaluated whether it is "doing the right things in the correct manner" in the personnel practices area. However, the Human Resources Department is responsive to the needs of sites and the district and functions fairly effectively in providing services. To ensure that the personnel practices are both cost effective and efficient, we believe the district should conduct a periodic review of the human resources delivery system.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district conduct a periodic review of the human resources delivery system.*

Action Plan 7-7

Periodic Review of the Human Resources Services		
Strategy	Conduct a review of the Human Resources Department's services and practices	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Establish the review cycle.
	Step 2:	Develop the criteria to be reviewed (e.g., applicant tracking, staff development, etc.).

	Step 3:	Establish the comparison group (e.g., use the mean-matched school districts).
	Step 4:	Collect data from the comparables.
	Step 5:	Analyze data.
	Step 6:	Recommend changes, if warranted.
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources	
Time Frame	June 2003 and every five years thereafter	
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources.	

15 For classes of employees that are unionized, the district maintains an effective collective bargaining process.

The district's unionized employees report that the collective bargaining process works well. They have a positive attitude toward the process, the district, and its leaders. Employees feel well respected and compensated and they believe their input is sought and seriously considered. They have a sense of ownership for the district and are committed to its success in providing a quality education for the students.

A former employee represents the board in negotiations. The former employee has many years of experience in that role and understands the issues and personalities involved. Site administrators, supervisors, grade level directors and assistant superintendents have input into the identification of issues for the negotiating process. Union proposals are discussed with appropriate administrative units to determine the costs, feasibility, and possible implications of the proposals. The official archival records of negotiations are maintained in the superintendent's office.

There is an atmosphere of trust in the Santa Rosa County Schools that permeates all areas, including labor relations.

Recommendations
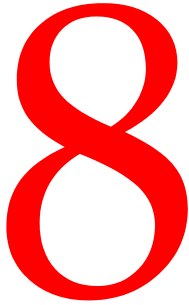
- *None*

8 Use of Lottery Proceeds

The district has defined enhancement, allocates lottery proceeds to School Advisory Councils and charter schools as required by law, and reports the costs of specific activities supported with lottery proceeds.

Conclusion

The Santa Rosa County School District is using all five best practices for the use of lottery proceeds. The district has defined educational enhancement and is spending its lottery proceeds consistent with its definition. District lottery proceeds are spent primarily to hire annual contract teachers to keep the district's pupil/teacher ratio as low as possible.

Overview of Chapter Findings

SchoolMatch Consultants, Inc., reviewed the district's use of lottery proceeds using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and associated indicators. We employed several methodologies to develop chapter conclusions and action plans. For instance, SchoolMatch Consultants, Inc., conducted on-site interviews with district managers, reviewed written policies and procedures governing the use of lottery proceeds, examined reports on the use of lottery proceeds prepared by district staff, and reviewed the use of lottery proceeds allocated to the schools.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Educational Programs

1. The district has defined "enhancement" in a way that the public clearly understands. (Page 8-4)
2. The district uses lottery money consistent with its definition of enhancement. (Page 8-4)
3. The district allocates lottery proceeds to school advisory councils as required by law. (Page 8-5)
4. The district accounts for the use of lottery money in an acceptable manner. (Page 8-5)
5. The district annually evaluates and reports the extent to which lottery fund expenditures have enhanced student education. (Page 8-6)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

There are no recommendations relating to the district's use of lottery proceeds.

Background

The district has assigned the responsibility for accounting for the use of lottery proceeds to the Assistant Superintendent for Finance. Staff who report to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction also provide district oversight for School Advisory Council (SAC) management requirements, such as reviewing school improvement plans. Exhibit 8-1 shows the organization of the finance function.

Exhibit 8-1

The Assistant Superintendent for Finance is Responsible for Accounting for the Use of Lottery Proceeds
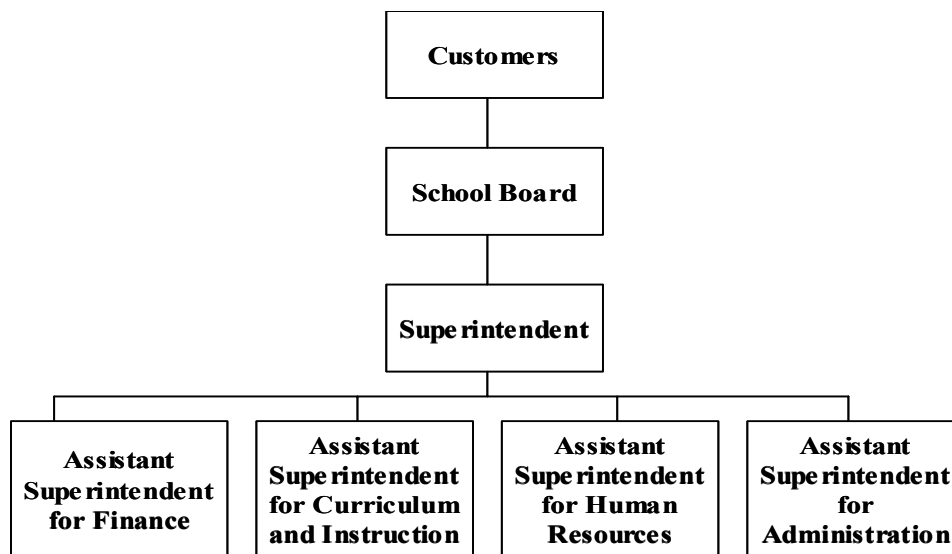
Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

State Funding

The Legislature intends that the net proceeds of lottery games be used to support improvements in public education and that such proceeds not be used as a substitute for existing resources for public education.

Each fiscal year, at least 38 percent of the gross revenue from the sale of lottery tickets and other earned revenue, excluding application processing fees, is deposited in the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund which is administered by the Department of Education. The Legislature apportions money in the trust fund among public schools, community colleges, and universities. The 2001 Legislature apportioned $170,250,000 of discretionary enhancement moneys to school districts. These moneys are allocated to the districts by prorating each district's K-12 base funding to the amount of the appropriation.

School District Proceeds

In the 2000-01 fiscal year, Santa Rosa County School District received lottery proceeds of $1,614,105. The district estimates lottery proceeds for the 2001-02 fiscal year will be $1,420,324. Exhibit 8-2 presents a historical perspective of lottery proceeds received by the district over the last five years plus projected lottery proceeds for the 2001-02 fiscal year.

Exhibit 8-2

Lottery Proceeds Received by the District Have Declined
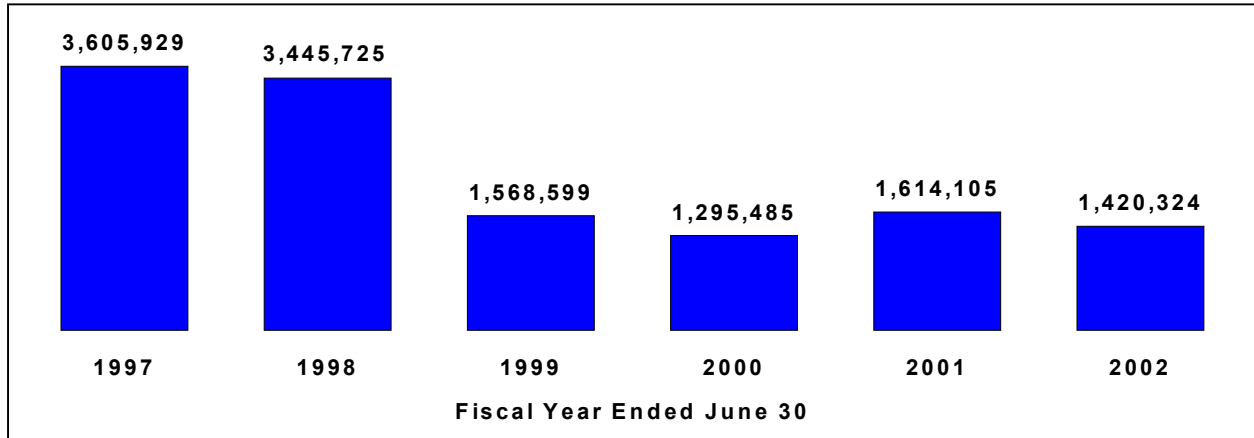
Source: Santa Rosa School District – Superintendent's Annual Financial Reports (Form ESE 145) and 2001-02 budget documents.

The significant decline that occurred beginning with the 1998-99 fiscal year is attributed to the Legislature appropriating a greater portion of the lottery moneys to support the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, Classrooms First, and 1997 School Capital Outlay Bond programs.

School District Lottery Expenditures

Once each school district receives its lottery allocation for a fiscal year, the allocation is further reduced for amounts required to be allocated to each school advisory council (SAC) and to charter schools. For example, for the 2001-02 fiscal year, the district projects its lottery allocation to be $1,420,324. From this money, the district is required to allocate $10 for each UFTE student to each school for use by the school advisory council. Also, if the district has charter schools, the district is required, pursuant to Section 228.056(13)(b), FS, to provide each of the charter schools its allocable share of lottery moneys based on the number of students attending the charter schools. The district allocated these proceeds as shown in Exhibit 8-3.

Exhibit 8-3

The District's Distribution of 2001-02 Lottery Proceeds

District Allocation	2001-02 Projected
Lottery Enhancement (Discretionary)	$1,193,153
School Advisory Councils	219,344
Charter Schools	7,827
Total	**$1,420,324**

Source: Santa Rosa County School District Board Reports.

Use of Lottery Proceeds

1   The district has defined "enhancement" in a way that the public clearly understands.

The District Has Defined Enhancement

According to Florida law, prior to the expenditure of educational enhancement (lottery) proceeds, each school district is required to:

- Establish policies and procedures that define enhancement,
- Identify the types of expenditures that are considered consistent with its definition, and
- Provide the Florida Department of Education a copy of all procedures that relate to the use of enhancement moneys.

The district's definition for enhancement identifies the allowable categories of expenditures that the district considers enhancing education. For the 2001-02 fiscal year, these categories include:

- Programs which were previously funded through state categorical programs,
- Support for partially funded state categorical programs,
- Existing program enhancement by providing cultural enrichment activities, sponsoring academic competitions, funding computer systems, and supply acquisitions,
- Maintenance of pupil/teacher ratio as low as possible,
- Innovative programs, and
- Developing and implementing school improvement plans.

To ensure that the general public understands what programs will be funded with lottery proceeds, the district specifically identifies programs to be funded with lottery proceeds. Pursuant to the administrative procedures act, the district solicits public comment on the appropriateness of the programs funded from lottery proceeds. In addition, the district provides the state with information on lottery expenditures within the required timeframes.

2   The district uses lottery money consistent with its definition of enhancement.

The District can Demonstrate that it Uses Lottery Proceeds Consistent with its Definition of Enhancement

After allocating lottery proceeds to the SACs and charter schools, the district uses the remaining lottery moneys for educational enhancement. The district uses its lottery enhancement proceeds to support activities consistent with its definition of enhancement. Our review of district records showed that over the past three years, the district has consistently spent lottery enhancement (discretionary) proceeds on salaries and benefits for hiring annual contract teachers to keep the pupil/teacher ratio as low as possible.

3   The district allocates lottery proceeds to the school advisory councils as required by law.

Each School Has an Approved School Improvement Plan

Prior to allocating $10 per UFTE to a school's educational excellence school advisory council (SAC), the school must have a school improvement plan. Section 230.23(16), FS, requires school boards to annually approve and require implementation of a new, amended, or continuation of school improvement plans for each school in the district. These plans should be designed to achieve the state education goals and student performance standards. The board has approved school improvement plans for all district schools and centers. Copies of these plans are available at the district office, and on the district's web site at http://www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/schools. Interviews with school site administrators and a review of selected school spending plans and district records confirm that the SACs determine the program or project where these proceeds will be spent and these decisions may not be overridden by the school principal.

SAC Lottery Allocations Are Used to Implement School Improvement Plans

The district has been proactive in ensuring that the SACs understand their roles and use the lottery proceeds wisely. In addition, the Assistant Superintendent for Finance periodically speaks to SACs regarding the expenditure of lottery proceeds and the SAC's role in the budget process for the school. Our review of district records and school improvement plans showed that significantly all SAC lottery proceeds were used to implement the school improvement plans. Unspent proceeds at the end of each fiscal year are re-budgeted for use in the subsequent fiscal year by the individual SACs that had the unspent moneys.

4   The district accounts for the use of lottery money in an acceptable manner.

The District Uses a Unique Funding Code to Account for Lottery Proceeds

School districts are required to use a uniform chart of accounts established by the Florida Department of Education to record accounting transactions. The Florida Department of Education has established a specific revenue account code to account for lottery moneys received by the districts. Santa Rosa County School District uses this revenue code to account for its lottery collections.

The District Has Established Specific Project Codes to Account for Expenditures of Lottery Proceeds

The district uses project and location codes to separately account for SAC expenditures and lottery (enhancement) expenditures. Project data can be obtained at the school level and in total. Use of these codes allows district staff to monitor lottery expenditures through the use of expenditure reports or by viewing the information on-line. Information available includes budget, year-to-date expenditures, encumbrances (outstanding purchase orders), outstanding requisitions, and available balances.

5 The district reports the use of lottery proceeds on a regular basis and lottery-funded programs are evaluated annually.

The District Annually Reports Lottery Expenditures to the Department of Education

As required by law, the district submits an annual report to the Florida Department of Education that identifies the expenditure of its lottery proceeds within 60 days of the end of the fiscal year.

The District Reports Lottery Expenditures to the Public

Florida law requires each school district to make available and distribute to the public on a quarterly basis the expenditure of lottery proceeds in an easy to understand format. The district prepares summary reports for the board and the public on a quarterly basis. This report shows the expenditure of lottery proceeds by category, including expenditures for elementary and secondary counselors and allocations made to SACs. These reports detail the annual budget, expenditures for the quarter, and year-to-date expenditures. The district encourages principals to make these reports available to SAC members and the public. The district also plans to put these reports on the district's web site.

9 Use of State and District Construction Funds

The Santa Rosa County School District uses state and district construction funds appropriately and in an effective manner.

Conclusion

Indications are that the district uses state and district construction funds appropriately and in a cost-effective manner. The use of prototype designs since 1989 has resulted in some of the lowest construction costs in the state (for example, see Best Practice 17 in Chapter 10 Facilities Construction). Santa Rosa built nine new schools between 1989 and 1999. The last four buildings received School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) awards for a total of $10.2 million. Enrollment projections indicate a stabilizing of growth, so the most recent five-year work plan does not include any new schools. Construction efforts will be directed toward the replacement of relocatable classrooms with permanent structures, the replacement of unsatisfactory space with satisfactory space, and general maintenance of the physical plant. Areas where the district could improve are in the development of maintenance standards and assessments of life-cycle costs.

Overview of Chapter Findings

SchoolMatch reviewed the district's use of state and district construction funds using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and associated indicators. SchoolMatch employed several methodologies to develop chapter conclusions and action plans. SchoolMatch conducted on-site interviews with district level managers and gathered information on the use of state and district construction funds activities such as the district's use of state and district construction funds activities policies and procedures. An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Facilities Construction Funds

1. The district approves use of construction funds only after determining that the project(s) are cost-efficient and in compliance with the lawfully designated purpose of the funds and the district's five-year facilities work plan. (Page 9-3)
2. The district uses capital outlay and operational funds appropriately, lawfully, and in accordance with its adopted five-year facilities work plan. (Page 9-5)
3. The district minimizes construction costs by using appropriate measures from the SMART (Soundly Made, Accountable, Reasonable and Thrifty) Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards. (Page 9-5)
4. When designing and constructing new educational facilities, the district incorporates factors to minimize the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility. Although the district incorporates factors to minimize future maintenance and operations costs, it needs to improve its

development of maintenance standards and life-cycle cost analyses and formalize the processes so intuitive savings can be empirically documented. (Page 9-7)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

No recommendations are presented in this chapter so there is no fiscal impact. The areas that need improvement are in the development of maintenance standards and life-cycle cost analyses. A recommendation and action plan to accomplish this is presented in the Facilities Maintenance chapter (see page 11-10).

Background

The district's projected facility needs and the sources of revenue to fund those needs are contained in its five-year work plan. Estimates for all capital outlay projects are documented in the five-year capital plan. These estimates are divided between major repair and maintenance projects and capital outlay projects necessary to ensure availability of satisfactory student stations for the projected student enrollment.

The Santa Rosa district annually prepares a capital planning budget that is based on the five-year work plan. The budget is developed with input from principals, grade level directors (there is a grade level director at each of the three organizational levels, elementary, middle, and high school, that serve as first line supervisors for principals), maintenance department personnel, purchasing personnel, the chief financial officer, and the superintendent. The budget is presented annually to the Board of Education for their approval. The Board receives monthly updates on the status of major construction projects.

The assistant superintendent for administrative services and the chief financial officer (the assistant superintendent for finance) share the responsibility for the development and management of the capital budget. The district has historically met the requirements of its five-year facilities work plan in a lawful and cost-effective manner.

Methodology

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed the Santa Rosa County District's own assessment of its use of state and district construction funds using the Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators adopted by the Florida Commissioner of Education as a starting point for this analysis. Studies conducted in the Santa Rosa County Schools by groups or organizations outside the school district over the past five years could have an impact on the results of this review. SchoolMatch was informed by the superintendent that the only studies of the school district, over the past five years, have been the annual financial audit conduced by the Office of the Auditor General.

The consulting team employed several methodologies to gather additional information, confirm information, formulate findings statements, offer recommendations for practices to be implemented over the next two years or sooner, and design action plans to accomplish the recommendations. SchoolMatch consultants conducted three site visits (October, 2001, December, 2001, and February, 2002) to complete an assessment of whether Santa Rosa followed Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators. Administrators, supervisors, staff members, community members, students, and others were interviewed. The list of interviewees included:

- Assistant superintendent for administrative services
- Purchasing manager
- Maintenance supervisor
- 3 maintenance craftspeople
- 2 custodians (one district employee and one Aramark employee)
- 2 principals
- 2 teachers who were also bargaining unit officers
- 6 students (one from each high school)
- Business representative who was also a parent
- Civic representative (an elected official) who was also a parent
- Military representative who also volunteered at a school
- Parent representative
- Operations manager for Aramark
- Bureau Chief of Educational Facilities and Budget for the Florida Department of Education who is also the former Executive Director of the Smart Schools Clearinghouse

SchoolMatch also collected and reviewed budget documents, strategic planning documents, policies and procedures manuals, building plans and specifications, educational specifications, legal advertisements for property, design professionals, public hearings, etc. This assessment also involved research of Florida law, auditor general audits, industry standards, and Department of Education (DOE) documents in the areas of construction and maintenance.

Facilities Construction Funds

1 **The district approves use of construction funds only after determining that the project(s) are cost-efficient and in compliance with the lawfully designated purpose of the funds and the district's five-year facilities work plan.**

The district meets all requirements of Florida law for use of construction funds

The assistant superintendent for administrative services and the chief financial officer (assistant superintendent for financial services) have main responsibility for determining that all construction funds are used for their lawfully designated purpose. Both of these positions have key roles in the planning and expenditure of construction funds. The documents that direct and assure the proper expenditure of construction funds are influenced heavily by these positions. Both are key members of the team that develops the Educational Plant Survey, the district budget, and the five-year work plan. They are also two of the three people (the third is the superintendent of schools) who sign the five-year work plan certification that states:

This is to certify that the information provided above is accurate and all capital outlay resources have been fully reported and the expenditures planned are a complete and balanced capital outlay plan for the

district. The undersigned District Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer of the School District state that the information contained in this District Facilities 5-Year work plan is true and accurate, and that by submitting this Work Program Worksheet, they certify to the SMART SCHOOLS Clearinghouse that the information contained herein is correct. Further the undersigned acknowledge that any information contained in this 5-Year Work Plan is subject to audit by the Auditor General of the State of Florida.

The auditor general has not found any non-compliance of the district in the use of state and district construction funds.

The district does not use funds from the Public Educational Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund for any new construction of educational plant space with a total cost per student station, including change orders, that exceeds the amounts specified in Florida law. Santa Rosa has chosen to not use Capital outlay and Debt Service funds for any new construction. They restrict the use of these funds to maintenance only. Therefore, the cost limits in the law for the use of these funds for new construction are not at issue. However, if the district did decide to use these funds for new construction it would not be a problem meeting the legal cost limits as evidenced by the fact that the last four new schools built by the district have received School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) awards which cannot be earned if student station cost limits are exceeded.

The district uses the district school tax as defined in Florida law, "two mill" money for construction and renovation, or other lawfully designated purposes, and the board uses state funds in a timely manner. "Two mill" money can be spent on capital items included in the district's five-year work plan and Santa Rosa expends the funds appropriately. The district has historically used state funds in a timely manner. If districts violate the purpose for certain funds or do not expend them within state required timeframes, the district must revert funds to the state in the next fiscal year. An indication that Santa Rosa uses state funds in a timely fashion is the fact that they have never had to revert any funds.

The district has considered alternatives to construction

Districts should consider alternatives to new construction like year-round education, extended day schools, changes in grade level configuration, changes in attendance boundaries, and use of relocatable classrooms to help smooth out peaks and valleys in student enrollment. The district has considered alternatives to new construction in the past and is in the process of studying alternatives presently. The district has primarily used relocatable classrooms as an alternative to new construction. Presently, approximately 7% of the total stations are in relocatable classrooms but the current five-year plan proposes to eliminate relocatables. The alternative presently under review involves attendance boundary changes in three middle schools and is intended to appropriately adjust enrollments to allow students from a new housing development to attend the closest educational facility. Also, boundary adjustments and potential grade level configuration changes were studied to relieve overcrowding among three elementary schools. Review of alternatives such as these reduces the need for additional classroom space resulting in lower construction funds expenditures. A complete discussion of these alternatives can be found in the Facilities Construction chapter, page 10-14.

Recommendations

- *None.*

2   The district uses capital outlay and operational funds appropriately, lawfully, and in accordance with its adopted five-year facilities work plan.

The district uses capital outlay funds appropriately

The five-year capital plan is updated annually and approved by the board. This document lays out the district's educational facilities construction spending plan and the schedule of estimated capital outlay revenue from each currently approved source. The annual budget reflects the items from the plan that are included in the facilities work plan for that year. The district uses the Department of Education's growth projections, the survey process and the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) data to determine whether facilities needs are met. Materials include the educational plant survey, FISH data on satisfactory student stations and capacity, annual facility evaluation, and state and district enrollment projections. The district gets appropriate board approval of construction projects and follows the requirements of F.S. 236.25 on the district school tax uses, PECO maintenance monies, and other types of capital funds.

The district maximizes the use of local revenue alternatives to increase construction funding

Although the district does not maximize local revenue through the standard process of assessing the full amount of the "two mill" money, they do have an alternative that helps maximize local construction revenue. When the district wanted to increase its local construction revenue in 1998, they studied various alternatives and came to the conclusion that with the commercial growth occurring in the district it would be better to have a one-half cent sales tax instead of the rest of the "two mill" money. The superintendent told the community that if they would pass a sales tax, the district would retain the assessment of 1.4 mills of the allowed 2 mills property tax. The electorate passed a one-half cent sales tax for a 10-year period. According to the assistant superintendent for administrative services, the projections are proving correct regarding the sales tax providing more revenue than the additional 0.6 mills of property tax.

Recommendations ───────────────────────

- *None.*

3   The district minimizes construction costs by using appropriate measures from the SMART (Soundly Made, Accountable, Reasonable and Thrifty) Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards.

The district uses SMART Schools Construction Standards

The district had a track record of using frugal construction standards before the frugal construction standards were adopted on January 25, 2000. The district started to develop a cost-effective prototype construction design in the mid-1980's and it resulted in their first elementary prototype when Berryhill

Elementary School was built in 1989 (see a more detailed discussion in the Facilities Construction chapter, page 10-28). In addition, the assistant superintendent for administrative services was a member of the workgroup that developed the SMART Schools Design and Performance Criteria and Frugal Construction Standards. The assistant superintendent for administrative services also provided a memo to all design professionals holding contracts with Santa Rosa that indicated the district wanted to follow SMART Schools standards. The memo stated:

POLICY STATEMENT

SMART School Design philosophy and practical design solutions are to be considered in all facilities construction projects and final designs are to be functional and cost effective.

The district meets 86% of the frugal construction standards. The district encourages a partnering or "team building" approach among the owner, design, and construction team members. One person is designated with the authority, expertise, and responsibility to keep facilities construction projects within budget and on schedule. New facilities are planned to accommodate siting of future relocatables or expansion, the district has considered joint-use agreements, interior walls and partitions are non-load bearing to provide flexibility to accommodate changing instructional approaches, etc. In addition, the district selects construction designs that will earn School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) awards for frugal construction practices. In fact, the last four schools built by Santa Rosa received SIT awards as indicated in Exhibit 9-1.

Exhibit 9-1

SIT Award Schools

Year of Construction	School	Amount of Award
1998-99	Thomas L. Sims, M.S.	$3,108,752
1999-00	Avalon Middle School	$3,523,778
1999-00	West Navarre Elementary	$1,403,605
1999-00	Woodlawn Beach M.S.	$2,172,527
Total		**$10,208,662**

Source: Santa Rosa County Schools.

Recommendations

- *None.*

4   When designing and constructing new educational facilities, the district incorporates factors to minimize the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility. Although the district incorporates factors to minimize future maintenance and operations costs, it needs to improve its development of maintenance standards and life-cycle cost analyses and formalize the processes so intuitive savings can be empirically documented.

The district incorporates factors to minimize maintenance and operation costs of new facilities

The district has used prototypical designs since the late 1980s, and maintenance experience and input from building users is used to improve the cost effectiveness of each iteration of the design. During a visit to the construction site at Bagdad Elementary School the assistant superintendent for administrative services pointed out changes to the design to improve life-cycle costs and reduce the need for maintenance. These examples included the use of a new ceiling tile that is waterproof so it will not become saturated and fall due to roof or mechanical system leaks. Another change was the use of ceramic tile from floor to ceiling in the restrooms to eliminate the deterioration of the material above the ceramic tile and eliminate the need to periodically paint the area above the tile. The district has also standardized on bathroom partitions, door closers, energy efficient ballasts, light fixtures, and lockers. These types of changes reduce the need for maintenance and increase the energy efficiency thereby reducing operation costs at the facilities. Although the district incorporates factors to minimize future maintenance and operations costs, it needs to improve its development of maintenance standards and life-cycle cost analyses and formalize the processes so intuitive savings can be empirically documented.

The district needs to establish maintenance standards and conduct cost analyses

Although the district can empirically demonstrate some of the maintenance and operation changes that have occurred from one building to another, they cannot formally document the savings or the expected reduction in maintenance costs over the expected life of the equipment or material. Intuitively, the district can say these changes will or have minimized the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility but they can't make comparisons to industry standards, comparable school districts, its own maintenance standards, or an analysis of maintenance and operations costs. The district needs to establish maintenance standards and conduct appropriate cost comparisons. A recommendation and action plan to accomplish this is presented in the Facilities Maintenance chapter (see Action Plan 11-2 in Facilities Maintenance.)

Recommendations ─────────────────────────

- *We recommend the district establish uniform maintenance standards (see Action Plan 11-2 in Facilities Maintenance).*

10 Facilities Construction

The Santa Rosa County School District has successfully planned and built facilities. However, this success has resulted from the experience of key staff members as opposed to formalized and documented management practices. The district needs to institutionalize its procedures so successful facilities construction can continue.

Conclusion

Santa Rosa has been effective in planning and building facilities. Santa Rosa has achieved commendably low square foot costs for construction as evidenced by receiving School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) awards for its last four new schools. This accomplishment is due mainly to the implementation of prototype designs at all organizational levels. However, the success of the construction program has been due to the experience of management rather than an effective and structured system of management practices that are independent of individuals. Practices need to be formalized and institutionalized to better meet the best practice standards of excellence.

The district needs to be more interactive with its stakeholders so all constituencies can become involved in the facility planning process. Formal involvement of faculty, staff, students, community members, and business and civic leaders in the facility planning process has been very limited. The district is missing a potentially rich vein of input and support without such involvement.

The district needs to improve its documentation of procedures, criteria, and standards with respect to planning construction projects, site selection and evaluation, development of educational specifications, and the orientation of users to new facilities.

One major issue that the district needs to assess is facility capacity. In 2000-01 the district had excess capacity in its buildings of over 6,000 students providing an overall utilization rate of 78 percent. Enrollment projections indicate that in 2005-06, the district will have increased its enrollment by approximately 1,200 students. However, over the next five years, the district plans to spend $59.8 million for major renovations, repairs, and other capital projects. These projects will result in an increased building capacity of 1,900 students and a projected overall utilization rate of 77 percent. The district needs to conduct a thorough study of its capacity to see if some alternatives to construction, such as the change of attendance zones and alternative grade configurations, could accommodate the pockets of overcrowding thereby saving or deferring the expenditure of substantial capital dollars.

Exhibit 10-1

Five-Year Facilities Work Program 2001-02 through 2005-06

Purpose	Amount
New Schools	$ 0
Classroom Additions[1]	45,727,368
Major Maintenance/Renovations	36,037,998
Other Capital Outlay	10,347,000
Total	**$92,112,366**

[1] For increased capacity, to replace unsatisfactory space, or replace relocatable classrooms.

Source: Five-Year Facilities Work Program, 2001-02.

During the course of this review, SchoolMatch identified a number of district accomplishments in the facilities construction area, some of which are included in Exhibit 10-2 below.

Exhibit 10-2

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Facilities Construction in the Last Three Years

- The district has received four SIT awards totaling $10,208,662 for frugal construction.
- The district has developed prototype plans for each organizational level which saves design and construction dollars.
- The district has standardized equipment and materials in buildings which saves future operation costs and simplifies maintenance.
- The district recently received a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant of over $600,000 to provide storm shield hurricane barriers over the doors and windows of three schools.
- The district will eliminate all non-federal relocatable classrooms used for instruction by 2004-05 and 75% of them will be gone after 2001-02 school year.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Overview of Chapter Findings

SchoolMatch reviewed the district's facilities construction using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and associated indicators. SchoolMatch conducted on-site interviews with district level managers, principals, teachers, union members, maintenance and custodial staff, business and community members, parents, and students and gathered information on the facilities construction activities such as the district's facilities construction activities policies and procedures.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Facilities Work Plan

1. The district has not established a facilities planning committee that includes a broad base of school district personnel, parents, construction professionals, and other community stakeholders. (Page 10-7)
2. The district has established authority and assigned responsibilities for facilities planning. However, this authority and responsibility resides in one administrative position and not a facilities committee. (Page 10-9)
3. The five-year facilities work plan provides budgetary plans and priorities based on the master plan and input provided for through public hearings. (Page 10-10)

4. The five-year facilities work plan is based on a thorough demographic study and enrollment projections. (Page 10-12)
5. The five-year facilities work plan is based on an evaluation of the physical condition and the ability of facilities to meet educational needs. (Page 10-12)
6. When developing the annual five-year facilities work plan, the district evaluates alternatives to minimize the need for new construction. (Page 10-14)
7. District planning prioritizes construction needs. (Page 10-17)
8. The district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the current Laws of Florida. (Page 10-18)
9. For all projects with dates of construction contracted after March 1, 2002, the district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the Florida Building Code. (Page 10-19)
10. The school board ensures responsiveness to the community through open communication about the construction program and the five-year facilities work plan. (Page 10-19)

Educational Specifications

11. The district does not develop descriptions and educational specifications for each project. (Page 10-20)
12. Educational specifications are not always prepared for new construction, remodeling, and renovations but plans and building specifications can provide an acceptable substitute in many cases. (Page 10-22)
13. The architectural design fulfills the building specification needs as determined by the district. (Page 10-23)
14. New construction, remodeling, and renovations incorporate effective safety features. (Page 10-25)

Acquisition of School Sites

15. The district begins school site selection well in advance of future need based on expected growth patterns. (Page 10-25)
16. The board considers the most economical and practical locations for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as need to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to development, and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties. (Page 10-27)

Construction Costs

17. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the construction program. (Page 10-28)
18. The district has considered, and where possible implemented, the general requirements recommended in the SMART Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards. (Page 10-29)
19. The district minimizes construction costs through the use of prototype school designs and frugal construction practices. (Page 10-30)
20. The district secures appropriate professional services to assist in facility planning, design, and construction. (Page 10-31)
21. The district can demonstrate that funds collected for school projects were raised appropriately. (Page 10-32)

Timely Completion of Projects

22. District planning provides realistic time frames for implementation that are coordinated with the opening of schools. (Page 10-33)
23. For each project or group of projects, the architect and district facilities planner develop a conceptual site plan and building specifications. (Page 10-34)
24. The district follows generally accepted and legal contracting practices to control costs. (Page 10-34)
25. The district has assigned one person with the authority and responsibility to keep facilities construction projects within budget and on schedule. (Page 10-37)

26. The board minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to minimize project costs. (Page 10-37)
27. The architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project. (Page 10-38)
28. The district requires appropriate inspection of all school construction projects. (Page 10-39)

Construction Program

29. The district does not conduct a comprehensive orientation to the new facility prior to its use so that users better understand the building design and function. (Page 10-40)
30. The district does not conduct comprehensive building evaluations at the end of the first year of operation and regularly during the next three to five years to collect information about building operation and performance. (Page 10-41)
31. The district does not analyze building evaluations to determine whether facilities are fully used, operating costs are minimized, and changes in the district's construction planning process are needed. (Page 10-42)
32. The district does not analyze maintenance and operations costs to identify improvements to the district's construction planning process. (Page 10-42)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

The recommendations within the facilities construction area can be completed with existing resources.

Background

Santa Rosa Count covers over 1,000 square miles and its population is widely dispersed due to some unique geography. The southern portion of the county is separated from the northern portion by Escambia Bay and East Bay. This creates a peninsula with limited access. In addition, large areas of the county are devoted to military (e.g., Eglin Air Force Base and Whiting Field) use and state forests. These factors complicate the reconfiguration of attendance boundaries as a means to avoid new construction thereby saving construction dollars. Thus, it probably is not possible to realize the full potential of $7.25 million in savings from alternative grade configuration and attendance boundary changes but some portion of these savings is possible.

The Santa Rosa County School District does not have a facilities construction department. District-level facilities construction functions are performed by a single staff member, namely, the assistant superintendent for administrative services. This position coordinates and directs all facility planning, educational specification development, acquisition of design services, awarding of construction contracts, selection and acquisition of sites, and all processing and reporting to the Board of Education and the State of Florida.

The Santa Rosa County School District has six high schools, seven middle schools, 16 elementary schools, one vocational school, other special purpose schools and administrative and maintenance facilities. In the 1999-2000 school year the district's schools contained 3,427,513 gross square feet of space and served 21,702 students, or approximately 158 square feet per student. The district's square feet per student ratio is slightly higher than the 152 average gross square feet per student ratio in peer districts. (Exhibit 10-3). The peer districts for facilities construction and facilities maintenance are Escambia, Lake, Okaloosa, Putnam, and Suwannee.

Santa Rosa County built nine new schools from 1989 through 1999. The district does not see the need for new schools in the next five years. Capital improvement planning and expenditures are concentrated on the replacement of unsatisfactory classroom space, the elimination of relocatable classrooms, the abandonment of old two-story structures, and the provision of additional classrooms to accommodate pockets of increased enrollment. The district proposes to spend between $5.8 and $13.1 million in each of the next five years on additions and renovations for the above purposes.

Exhibit 10-3

Gross Square Feet Per Student

District	FISH Gross S.F.	Enrollment	GSF Per Student
Putnam	2,274,458	12,147	187.24
Suwannee	945,256	5,840	161.86
Escambia	6,665,829	43,967	151.61
Okaloosa	4,197,837	29,065	144.43
Lake	4,104,376	28,484	144.09
Peer District Avg.			**152.19**
Santa Rosa	**3,427,513**	**21,702**	**157.94**

Source: Santa Rosa School District.

See Exhibit 10-4 for the new schools built between 1989 and 1999 and Exhibit 10-5 for the number of schools and amount proposed to be spent on additions and/or renovations in each of the next five years.

Exhibit 10-4

New Schools Built Between 1989 and 1999 in Santa Rosa County

School	Construction Year	Net Square Footage	Capacity in Students
Berryhill Elementary	1989	96,628	1,002
Holley Navarre Middle School	1989	98,419	851
Dixon Intermediate	1993	90,830	871
Holley Navarre Primary	1993	111,744	1,026
Navarre High	1996	161,708	1,210
Sims Middle	1997	102,228	1,014
Avalon Middle	1998	95,893	939
West Navarre Elementary	1998	105,961	904
Woodlawn Beach Middle	1999	97,611	856
Totals		**961,022**	**8,673**

Source: Santa Rosa School District.

Exhibit 10-5

Number of Schools and Proposed Expenditures for Additions/Renovations Over Next Five Years

Year	Number of Schools[1]	Amount in Millions
2001-02	7	6.8
2002-03	12	9.9
2003-04	10	9.4
2004-05	7	5.8
2005-06	12	13.1

[1] Some of the same buildings are included in different years.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Methodology

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed the Santa Rosa County District's own assessment of its facilities construction using the Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators adopted by the Florida Commissioner of Education as a starting point for this analysis. Studies conducted in the Santa Rosa County Schools by groups or organizations outside the school district over the past five years could have an impact on the results of this review. SchoolMatch was informed by the superintendent that the only studies of the school district over the past five years have been the annual financial audit conduced by the Office of the Auditor General.

The consulting team employed several methodologies to gather additional information, confirm information, formulate findings statements, offer recommendations for practices to be implemented over the next two years or sooner, and design action plans to accomplish the recommendations. SchoolMatch consultants conduced three site visits (October, 2001, December, 2001, and February, 2002) to complete an assessment of whether Santa Rosa followed Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators. Administrators, supervisors, staff members, community members, students, and others were interviewed. The list of interviewees included:

- Assistant superintendent for administrative services
- Purchasing manager
- Maintenance supervisor
- 3 maintenance craftspeople
- 2 custodians (one district employee and one Aramark employee)
- 2 principals
- 2 teachers who were also bargaining unit officers
- 6 students (one from each high school)
- Business representative who was also a parent
- Civic representative (an elected official) who was also a parent
- Military representative who also volunteered at a school
- Parent representative
- Operations manager for Aramark
- Bureau Chief of Educational Facilities and Budget for the Florida Department of Education who is

also the former Executive Director of the Smart Schools Clearinghouse

SchoolMatch also collected and reviewed budget documents, strategic planning documents, policies and procedures manuals, building plans and specifications, educational specifications, legal advertisements for property, design professionals, public hearings, etc. This assessment also involved research of Florida law, auditor general audits, industry standards, and DOE documents in the areas of construction and maintenance.

Facilities Work Plan

1 The district has not established a facilities planning committee that includes a broad base of school district personnel, parents, construction professionals, and other community stakeholders.

The district needs to form a broad base facilities advisory committee

The district does not have a standing committee that includes a broad base of school district and community stakeholders. The district established a committee to develop the last five-year plant survey but the committee was composed entirely of district administrative personnel. The composition of the committee was the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for administration, the assistant superintendent for instruction, the assistant superintendent for finance, the directors for secondary, middle schools, elementary education, and the director of technical, adult, and community education. This composition precludes input from faculty, staff, students, parents, business and civic leaders, and planning professionals on a continuing basis over time.

Interviews with principals, teachers, students, business and civic leaders, and parents indicated that committees have been established on an ad hoc basis for certain projects or to discuss certain issues. For example, a committee was formed in October, 2001, to discuss a change in grade configuration and attendance boundaries among three schools to relieve overcrowding. Some of the interviewees had served on committees to write educational specifications for a new building, study a particular issue like year-round school, or provide input into the design of an area within a building. In addition, if a project is occurring at a particular building, the principal will discuss the project with the School Advisory Council at that particular building to receive input and keep them informed of progress. [1]

The ad hoc committees, however, cannot provide the same benefit to the district that can be derived from a standing committee. A standing committee serves over time and once knowledgeable facilities planning, design, and construction professionals as well as the educational staff from the district provide the committee with appropriate background information, they can assist the school board on all facility planning activities including review and approval of Educational Plant Surveys, Five-Year Facilities Work Programs, Project Priorities Lists and Capital Budgets. A broad-based committee can help ensure that community needs are being addressed, voting constituencies are being represented, and key stakeholder interests are represented in the facility planning process.

---

[1] State-mandated councils usually composed of faculty, staff, parents, business leaders, and, at the secondary level, students with the responsibility of approving the school budget and the school improvement plan and overseeing the implementation of the school improvement plan.

The better approach to community involvement is to create a diverse, permanent facilities advisory committee, perhaps chaired by a member of the school board. Membership can be drawn from such rich sources as the business community, design, construction and real estate professionals, parents, teachers, district and school level administrators and staff, and students. Once a permanent core committee is established, issues such as work programs, site selection, professional selection, capital project priorities and rezoning issues are assured due public deliberation and community input. Ad hoc members should be appointed to the committee as appropriate for those issues that may require special expertise such as the educational specification development process. The committee's involvement in planning for and allocation of district capital dollars should prove invaluable to the board.

Recommendations

- *We recommend the district create a permanent facilities advisory committee with set goals and objectives and in accordance with certain guidelines.*

- *Objectives:*

  1. *The development and approval of criteria for establishing capital outlay priorities.*

  2. *The review of goals and objectives; capital outlay needs throughout the district.*

  3. *Based on information gathered by the committee, supplied by district staff and other planning, design, and construction professionals, recommend a five-year capital improvement plan for Board adoption.*

  4. *Periodically review and update the status of work on the long-range plan.*

  5. *Be available to provide knowledge, expertise and community input in any facilities issues that may come before the board.*

- *Guidelines:*

  1. *Membership is to be broadly representative of the community.*

  2. *The Chair of the committee shall not be selected from the district staff.*

  3. *Members are to be free of conflict of interest.*

  4. *A school board member shall be a member of the committee.*

  5. *Committee membership will be solicited from citizens throughout the district with overall appointment based on: geographical representation; variety of professional backgrounds; representation from staff, faculty, business community, parents, senior citizens, the public sector, and students as appropriate. Permanent members may be term limited.*

  6. *Ad Hoc members will be appointed to the committee as necessary and appropriate to deal with issues that may require special expertise.*

  7. *Specify the role and responsibilities of the committee, provide a reporting mechanism back to the Board, and establish reporting targets. The main role/responsibility of the committee should be to review and comment on all facility planning activities including educational plant surveys, five-year facilities work plans, project priorities lists, site selection, educational specification development and capital budgets.*

Action Plan 10-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-1

Establish a Standing Facilities Committee	
Strategy	The Board needs to establish a permanent facilities advisory committee with set goals and objectives and in accordance with certain guidelines.
Action Needed	Step 1. Assistant superintendent for administration should develop criteria and procedures for the committee and present these to the superintendent.
	Step 2. Superintendent should present to the Board for approval.
	Step 3. District should solicit the appropriate membership categories to serve.
	Step 4. Superintendent should appoint permanent facilities advisory committee members.
	Step 5. Assistant superintendent for administration should coordinate committee activities.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services
Time Frame	Development of criteria – Summer, 2002
	Board approval – Summer, 2002
	Committee appointed and in operation – Summer, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

2   The district has established authority and assigned responsibilities for facilities planning. However, this authority and responsibility resides in one administrative position and not a facilities committee.

Authority and responsibility for facility planning has been established but it does not reside in a planning committee

The indicators of this best practice assume that a facility planning committee has been appointed, roles and responsibilities assigned and the district can demonstrate that the committee has:

- evaluated existing facilities support of current and planned programs and activities;

- had an opportunity to reassess goals and objectives and to plan further programs and activities;

- reassessed the educational program and identified future needs that will impact the design of each new facility;

- communicated all program requirements to the architect before the commencement of schematic drawings; and has reported its findings and recommendations to the superintendent and the governing board.

Although these responsibilities do not reside in a committee, staff does have the assignment to accomplish these responsibilities. In addition, a recommendation to create an appropriate committee has been made, with an action plan to implement same, under Best Practice number one on page 10-9.

Facilities planning responsibilities are included in the job description of the assistant superintendent for administrative services. The qualifications for this position require five years of experience in facilities management and knowledge of laws, rules and regulations controlling facilities. The job goal for this position is "to assist the Superintendent in the task of providing comprehensive leadership for institutional services with emphasis on an efficient, safe, and healthful utilization of facilities..." The performance responsibilities of the position include:

- Coordinate the development and implementation of the master plan for capital improvements.

- Take action to ensure District compliance with applicable codes, rules and statutes.
- Keep personally abreast of new developments in facility design, operation of systems, and maintenance techniques to ensure maximum efficiency from operational expenditures.
- Direct the development of the District long-range capital improvement plan and funding alternatives.
- Oversee the selection of design and construction professionals.
- Monitor and evaluate the planning and completion of capital improvement projects.
- Facilitate close communication between the maintenance and facilities functions to ensure cost efficiency.
- Oversee the selection and acquisition of school sites and major equipment/vehicle purchases.
- Ensure that both capital and major maintenance projects are coordinated with appropriate regulatory agencies.

If the Board implements the recommendation regarding a facilities advisory committee delineated on the responsibilities of the assistant superintendent for administrative services will complement and provide appropriate staff support for overall facility planning activities.

Recommendations

- *Once the recommendation under best practice number 1 is implemented, staff will complement and provide appropriate support for the facility planning activities.*

3   The five-year facilities work plan provides budgetary plans and priorities based on the master plan and input provided for through public hearings.

The district has established its latest five-year work plan based on its master plan

State law requires school districts to prepare an Educational Plant Survey at least every five years. This survey represents the district's master plan and presents an assessment of school facilities, identifying needed major repairs and renovations, major equipment replacements, and the need for additional space or schools. Santa Rosa conducted its last Educational Plant Survey in 1998.

The Educational Plant Survey items form the basis to develop a five-year facilities work program that must be updated annually. The five-year work plan shows estimates of costs for individual projects, and identifies sources of funding. The first year in the Facilities Work Program becomes the capital budget for the school district's applicable budget year.

The five-year facilities work plan itemizes capital outlay projects for new construction to house the student population, provides a schedule of major repair and renovation projects, and projects the long-term use of relocatables. The plan also provides projected enrollments, building utilization rates, the estimated cost for each project, a schedule of capital outlay over the next five years, and an itemization of the source of funds for the projects. The 2001-2002 through 2005-2006 work plan aligns with the projects and stated goals of the most recent Educational Plant Survey and was adopted by the Santa Rosa County School Board of Education on September 13, 2001.

The five-year work plan is developed by a committee of district administrators that includes the assistant superintendents for instruction and administration, and the directors for elementary, middle, secondary and technical education. Input for the plan is solicited from principals, assistant principals and directors. District level knowledge about capacity, maintenance, and safety needs is folded in to produce a proposed plan to be presented to the superintendent for approval before presentation to the Board. Approximately one week before the Board is to act on the plan, a Notice of Public Hearing is placed in the local newspaper stating where the plan is available for review and when and where the hearing will occur before the Board acts on the plan. One week may be insufficient notice to allow the public the opportunity to review such plans. Consideration should be given to extending the advertising and notice time frames. The school district needs to do more to involve its stakeholders in its capital improvement program and adoption of the previous recommendation on the establishment of a facilities advisory committee will enhance this involvement.

The district will benefit by the involvement of a broad-based facility advisory committee because it provides an external, non-administratively biased sounding board for proposals. Such a group also helps ensure that community needs are being addressed, voting constituencies are being represented, and key stakeholder interests are represented in the facility planning process. One final benefit is that such a committee can serve as a liaison and support group for the district with the community at large.

The school board establishes budgets for each construction project that cannot be changed without board approval

The school board establishes a capital budget for each year and for each construction project in the Educational Plant Survey and each Five-Year Facilities Work Program. The annual capital budget cannot be changed without board approval. Likewise the allocated amount for each construction project cannot be changed without board approval so the board does establish a total "not-to-exceed" cost for each project. The board, at its monthly meeting, receives a report on each current construction project. The report provides the status of each project and the projected timelines for certain milestone events (i.e., bid date, award date, project completion date, etc.). Any concerns regarding budget or the need for change orders, etc. can also be presented during this report. The district has historically had some of the lowest construction costs per square foot and per student station in the state (see the discussion and exhibits under Best Practices 17, 18, 19 and 24 for detail).

There are two main reasons for the low construction cost history in Santa Rosa. The nature of the construction process and local expertise mitigates against major cost overruns. The use of prototype designs structures design activity, materials and equipment selection, size of spaces, etc. through standardization. Each set of plans receives an independent review by a different design firm than the one doing the design. In addition, the district has three employees that are certified building inspectors and one is also a certified building administrator. The construction expertise represented by this group in their understanding of the prototypes and oversight of projects will be hard to replace. It is critical that the processes used by these individuals in the management and administration of construction projects becomes institutionalized in some fashion before they leave the district.

Recommendations

- *None*

4 The five-year facilities work plan is based on a thorough demographic study and enrollment projections.

The district has depended on the state enrollment projections supplemented by local sources of information

The district has historically used the enrollment projections produced by the Florida Department of Education in May of each year as the basis for the five-year plan. These projections are supplemented by U.S. Census information and local information. The district uses its records on the historical school district student growth. The district also uses various utility services connection records. These include hook-ups for water, sewer, telephone, electricity, gas, etc. In addition, the district gets records of newly platted subdivisions and building permits from the city/county planning departments. The district uses this information to do a projection for the next year as a comparison to the state data. The district has found that this approach has been sufficiently accurate to serve its planning needs. The actual enrollments versus the state projections for the last five years have varied by an average of 2.7%, as shown in Exhibit 10-6.

Exhibit 10-6

School District of Santa Rosa County
Actual Student Enrollment vs. State Projections

Year	Actual	Projection	Difference from Projection	Percentage of Difference From Projection
1996-97	19,958	19,575	383	1.90%
1997-98	20,772	20,015	757	3.80%
1998-99	21,137	20,468	669	3.30%
1999-00	21,358	20,829	529	2.50%
2000-01	21,697	21,241	456	2.10%
			Avg. Difference	**2.70%**

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Recommendations

- *None*

5 The five-year facilities work plan is based on an evaluation of the physical condition and the ability of facilities to meet educational needs.

The district uses building level surveys, safety inspections, and building walk-throughs to determine the physical condition and ability to meet educational needs

Building administrators prepare annual requests for capital improvements at their buildings. The improvement requests may range from remodeling to building additions or the placement of relocatables

to increase capacity. The principals are directed to list their requests in priority order. Once the central office receives the requests, a committee composed of the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and the Grade Level Directors reviews the requests and discusses them with the building administrators to see if the need can be met in some fashion short of construction. [2] For example, instead of adding capacity through the placement of relocatable classrooms, it may be possible to change the usage of existing space to accommodate the needs.

The district also uses various types of surveys, inspections, and building walk-throughs to determine the physical condition and the ability of its facilities to meet educational needs. An annual Safety and Sanitation Inspection is conducted by contracted state certified inspectors. The results of this inspection are presented to the Santa Rosa Board of Education with a copy sent to the Florida Department of Education. A fire-safety inspection is conducted by state certified inspectors from the City Fire and County Building departments. The report from this inspection is given to the Board and the State Fire Marshall. Certified inspectors also conduct annual inspections of all boilers, fire extinguishers, fire alarm systems, and playground equipment. The Health Department inspects for safety and sanitation of the buildings in general and especially the food preparation areas. A contractor inspects all building roofs each spring with additional ad hoc inspections occurring in response to storm activity. Periodic building walk-throughs by the maintenance supervisor and building administrator provides additional information for inclusion in the facilities work plan.

The district uses FISH data to move toward a more optimal use of building capacity

The district annually checks the accuracy of its FISH data by having each principal conduct a review of their school. The assistant superintendent for administrative services sends a memo requesting that the principal review the FISH report attached to the memo for obvious errors like not listing all buildings on the campus, recent new construction, and the number of relocatables is correct. The principal is also asked to review the small-scale drawing that is also attached to the memo and report any necessary changes. Any errors and/or changes are to be reported to the office of the assistant superintendent for administrative services for resolution.

The assistant superintendent for administrative services recently reviewed the current FISH data and determined the number of student stations multiplied by the percentage of usage allowed by the State to produce the available capacity for each building. He then listed the buildings with a utilization rate over 90% and the buildings with a rate under 75%. This analysis was sent to the assistant superintendent for instruction with the following statement:

The bottom line is that we need to consider altering school attendance zones to balance the equation. It is not prudent to continue to construct classrooms when we have empty or under-utilized classrooms at other near by schools.

Exhibit 10-7

Analysis of School Capacity

Schools Over 90% of Capacity		Schools Under 75/% of Capacity	
School	*Percentage*	*School*	*Percentage*
Central High	108	Bagdad Elementary	70
Chumuckla Elementary	185	East Milton Elementary	63
Gulf Breeze Middle	93	Hobbs Middle	66
Navarre High	117	Holley Navarre Intermediate	75
Sims Middle	93	Holley Navarre Primary	63
West Navarre Elementary	100	Locklin Technical	57

---

[2] A grade level director exists for elementary, middle and high school. They serve as the supervisor for the principals and assist them in curricular and facility related problem solving.

Schools Over 90% of Capacity		Schools Under 75/% of Capacity	
School	*Percentage*	*School*	*Percentage*
		Munson Elementary	60
		Pace High	72
		Pea Ridge Elementary	73
		Jackson Pre-K Center	54

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Recommendations

- *None*

6   When developing the annual five-year facilities work plan, the district evaluates alternatives to minimize the need for new construction.

The district has considered various alternatives to minimize the need for new construction

In determining space needs, districts should consider alternatives to new construction such as year-round education, extended day schools, changes in grade level configuration, changes in attendance boundaries, and use of relocatable classrooms to help smooth out the impact of peaks and valleys in future student enrollment. The district has and continues to look at various alternatives to new construction.

The district has primarily used relocatable classrooms as an alternative to new construction. Currently, the district uses 126 relocatable classrooms representing 7% of the total student stations available in the district. The district's 1998 Educational Plant Survey stated that all relocatable classrooms are scheduled for elimination or replacement with a permanent educational facility during the term of the plan. The current five-year plan shows a schedule that would remove 95 of the remaining 126 by the end of the 2002-03 school year.

The district evaluated year-round school in its 1998 Educational Plant Survey and showed the amount of increased capacity and costs of necessary remodeling and ancillary facility needs (e.g., a transportation site) to accommodate year-round education. The district's analysis indicated that a 20% increase in capacity after necessary remodeling and renovations would result in 28,754 student stations. The estimated cost for the renovations was $59.1 million. The district already had 25,554 student stations and enrollment was projected to peak at 23,653 students. The district didn't feel the approach was very cost-efficient and community reaction was negative toward the concept. With almost 2,000 excess student stations without going to a year-round schedule, there was no driving need to actively pursue this option.

The district has changed attendance boundaries in the past and as indicated under best practice number 5, this alternative is under consideration again. In addition to attendance boundary changes at three elementary schools, grade level configuration changes were considered recently for two (a K-2 primary and 3-5 intermediate to K-5 elementary schools) of the three buildings to relieve overcrowding and avoid the necessity of additions or relocatable classrooms.

A committee composed of school advisory council members, parents, faculty, and administrators was convened to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of changing from a K-2 and a 3-5 to two K-5 schools and make a recommendation to the superintendent. At the initial meeting of the group the

superintendent outlined the reasons for the committee to study the change and one of those was that before the Florida Department of Education would approve the building of new space, the district had to demonstrate the effective use of current classroom space. The committee reviewed growth projections for the area, surveyed parents, faculty, staff, and school advisory council members and the majority wanted to maintain the present grade level configuration with appropriate attendance boundary changes to relieve the overcrowding at the third elementary school.

The elementary attendance boundary changes discussed above will be included in board legislation in late January, 2002, along with proposed attendance boundary changes among three middle schools to allow the adjustment of enrollments at the three buildings and the children from a new housing development to attend the school geographically closer to the development.

The district needs to give serious consideration to more aggressive alternatives to improve facility utilization

Exhibit 10-8 provides the 2000-01 capacity and utilization rate and the 2005-06 projected capacity and utilization rate of all schools in the district. Overall the district is proposing to add capacity for an additional 1,900 students going from 28,471 to 30,371. The district had 22,335 students in 2000-01 and they are projecting 23,511 in 2005-06. This results in a utilization rate of 78 percent of capacity in 2000-01 and 77 percent in 2005-06. The district is proposing to add capacity at 14 buildings during the term of this five-year work plan. Of the buildings proposed to receive additional capacity, five are at or above capacity, in 2000-01, and nine are below capacity. The nine buildings that are presently under enrolled and are scheduled to receive additional capacity include Dixon Primary, Gulf Breeze High School, Hobbs Middle School, Jay Elementary, King Middle School, Milton High School, Pace High School, Rhodes Elementary, and Woodlawn Beach Middle School. Once the additional capacity is added, only one building is projected to be at or above capacity with two others within a few percentage points of capacity. In 2000-01 the district had excess capacity of 6,136 and this is projected to increase to 6,860 in 2005-06. The district needs to seriously examine alternatives to attempt to increase facility utilization.

One potential that needs to be explored is comprehensive redistricting. The district has changed attendance boundaries to deal with pockets of overcrowding and changed grade-level configurations when new schools were built. However, it has not explored the potential for redistricting as a tool for managing student growth. In 2000-01, the high schools had excess capacity of 24%, the middle schools 20%, and the elementary schools 21%. School districts have achieved better utilization of existing capacity by altering attendance boundaries only slightly, but on a district-wide basis. There are computerized redistricting programs that account for the current capacity of every school facility by grade type, the current student enrollment by grade type, the projected growth in enrollment by grade type, and the physical geography of the district.

If the feasibility study is conducted and complete redistricting is possible, the district could avoid a maximum of $7,250,000 in new construction costs. However, the geographic layout of the county and residential distribution of students suggests that the maximum savings will not be achieved although lesser savings are likely.

Exhibit 10-8

2000-01 Capacity and Utilization and Projected Capacity and Utilization for 2005-06

Location	2000-01 Student Stations	2000-01 FISH Capacity	Actual Enrollment	2000-01 Utilization	Capacity To be Added	Projected 2005-06 Enroll.	Projected 2005-06 Utilization
Avalon Middle	1,044	939	724	77%	0	824	88%
Bagdad Elem.	828	828	580	70%	0	580	70%

Location	2000-01 Student Stations	2000-01 FISH Capacity	Actual Enrollment	2000-01 Utilization	Capacity To be Added	Projected 2005-06 Enroll.	Projected 2005-06 Utilization
Berryhill Elem.	1,002	1,002	875	87%	0	875	87%
Central High	332	298	307	103%	240	307	57%
Chumuckla Elem.	114	114	208	182%	160	208	76%
Dixon Primary	865	865	679	78%	30	679	76%
Dixon Intermediate	871	871	769	88%	0	769	88%
E. Milton Elem.	1,165	1,165	773	66%	0	773	66%
Gulf Breeze Elem.	834	834	689	83%	0	689	83%
Gulf Breeze Middle	1,077	969	877	91%	240	877	73%
Gulf Breeze High	1,582	1,502	1,235	82%	60	1,435	92%
Hobbs Middle	936	842	508	60%	60	508	56%
Holley Navarre Primary	1,096	1,096	665	61%	0	715	65%
Holley Navarre Intermediate	954	954	730	77%	0	780	82%
Holley Navarre Middle	1,018	916	720	79%	0	720	79%
Jackson Pre-K Ctr.	522	522	411	79%	0	411	79%
Jay Elem.	666	666	557	84%	200	557	64%
Jay High	746	671	478	71%	0	478	71%
King Middle	1,013	911	745	82%	120	745	72%
Locklin Tech. Ctr.	443	531	323	61%	0	323	61%
Milton High	2,175	2,066	1,487	72%	110	1,487	68%
Munson Elem.	166	166	94	57%	0	94	57%
Navarre High	1,345	1,210	1,183	98%	240	1,410	97%
Oriole Beach Elem.	1,053	1,053	883	84%	0	883	84%
Pace High	2,638	2,506	1,595	64%	120	2,150	82%
Pea Ridge Elementary	1,086	1,086	836	77%	0	836	77%
Rhodes Elem.	1,119	1,119	866	77%	80	866	72%
Sims Middle	1,127	1,014	916	90%	120	1,010	89%
W. Navarre Elem.	904	904	953	105%	0	853	94%
Woodlawn Beach M.S.	946	851	669	79%	120	669	69%
Totals	**29,667**	**28,471**	**22,335**	**78%**	**1,900**	**23,511**	**77%**

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Recommendations

- *We recommend the district conduct feasibility studies of alternative grade configurations and*

> *attendance zones to increase overall district capacity without building additional classroom space.*

Action Plan 10-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-2

Conduct studies of alternatives to construction	
Strategy	Facilities Advisory Committee conducts feasibility studies of alternative grade configurations and attendance zones to increase overall district capacity.
Action Needed	Step 1. Evaluate current and future school capacity and identify plausible options to improve facility use.
	Step 2. Conduct financial feasibility study of different grade configurations and different attendance zone configurations.
	Step 3. Communicate potential savings to taxpayers from alternatives to new construction.
	Step 4. (FAC) makes recommendations to board on specific program to increase facility use.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent, FAC, assistant superintendents for administrative services, instruction, finance and human resources.
Time Frame	Summer 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed using existing resources.

7   District planning prioritizes construction needs.

The district prioritizes all construction projects and gives higher priority to instructional capacity over administrative or support projects

The process for gathering data for the five-year facilities plan builds in a prioritization of construction needs. A primary source of construction and maintenance needs is the building level administrator. The district requests input from building administrators each year as part of the development of the five-year plan. When the request is made, the administrator is asked to list the requests in order of need with the most pressing need first. This provides one level of prioritization. Once the requests are received from the buildings, the grade level directors review the requests and rank them in priority order. The grade level directors use the student enrollment projections, building capacity, the student occupancy, any requirements for housing special programs, and the staffing plan for the building to help rank the requests. These rankings are reviewed by the assistant superintendent for instruction to provide uniform judgment in the establishment of rankings and to provide equitable treatment across the district. District level construction needs are added and the entire ranked listing is given to the Superintendent for approval. Thus, several levels of prioritization occur before a final plan is developed.

A review of the five-year plan clearly indicates that instructional capacity construction receives a higher priority than administrative or support construction. In the most recent five-year plan, all of the construction proposed in the first year of the plan is instructionally related. Of the seven projects proposed in this year's budget, four are regular classroom additions, two are ESE classroom additions, and one is an art suite at a high school. Looking at the entire five year plan, of the $46.2 million of new construction only $900,000 or less than 2% is proposed to be used for a non-instructional use. The proposed use is for the renovation of the office complex at two schools.

Recommendations

- *None*

8   **The district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the current Laws of Florida.**

The district submits the required reports to the Department of Education in a timely manner and construction costs do not exceed the amount legally allowed per student station.

The assistant superintendent for administrative services provided an example of a Construction Project List that showed the dates when reports to the DOE were submitted for the FISH Update report and Certificate of Occupancy. The DOE was also contacted and confirmed the submission of reports, in a timely manner, by Santa Rosa.

The evidence that construction costs in the Santa Rosa County School District do not exceed the amount legally allowed per student station is provided by the fact that the last four new schools have won School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) awards. These awards are only given to projects that demonstrate frugal construction techniques that result in costs well below that allowed by the state. For example, see Exhibit 10-10 which compares the state allowed maximum dollar amount per student station with the actual costs per student station for the last four new schools built in Santa Rosa.

Exhibit 10-9

Santa Rosa County Costs Per Student Station
vs. State Allowed Maximum Cost

School	Maximum $/Student Station	Actual Cost	Amount Below Maximum	Percentage Below Max.
Sims Middle 1998-1999	$13,604	$7,027	$6,577	48%
West Navarre Elem. 1999-2000	$12,102	$8,429	$3,673	30%
Avalon Middle 1999-2000	$13,875	$6,657	$7,218	52%
Woodlawn Beach M.S. 2000-2001	$14,197	$9,011	$5,186	36%

Source: Santa Rosa County School District

Recommendations

- *None*

9 For all projects with dates of construction contracted after March 1, 2002, the district can demonstrate that the construction program complies with the Florida Building Code. [3]

Although not applicable yet due to an extension in the effective date of the legislation, the district has personnel qualified to inspect under the Florida Building Code and all projects will be in compliance as of the effective date.

The assistant superintendent for administrative services is certified as a building code inspector and a building code administrator that allows the district to have its own code inspection department. The two supervisors in the Maintenance Department are licensed for all building codes so the district is prepared to inspect once the schools fall under the Florida Building Code. All projects awarded after the effective date will be designed in compliance with the applicable code.

Recommendations

- *None*

10 The school board ensures responsiveness to the community through open communication about the construction program and the five-year facilities work plan.

The school district holds a public hearing on the facilities work plan but it needs to establish a facilities committee to assist throughout the facility planning process.

The school district does hold a public hearing on the five-year work plan before the board approves the plan. The district places a legal ad in the local newspaper (Press Gazette) from one to two weeks before the board is to act on the five-year work plan. The district should give consideration to extending the advertising and notice parameters to allow more time for public comment. The ad states when and where the board will act on the plan and invites interested parties to appear at the board meeting to comment on the plan. It also states that the entire plan is available for review during specified hours in the office of the assistant superintendent for administrative services. The district holds a public hearing on the plan at the specified time on the date of the board meeting when action is to be taken.

However, the district needs to implement recommendation 10-1. This would establish a facilities advisory committee with broad based stakeholder representation so the entire process of plan preparation would have the benefit of input from a diverse constituency. A public hearing just prior to the approval action of the Board does not allow for open discussion of the plan and responsiveness to concerns that may be expressed about the plan.

---

[3] The implementation of the Florida Building Code was delayed until March 1, 2002.

Recommendations

- *We recommend the district implement the recommendation and action plan under best practice 10-1.*

Educational Specifications

11 The district does not develop descriptions and educational specifications for each project.

To assist in an adequate discussion of educational specifications it should be understood what the term means. Educational programs can and do change rapidly and architects should not be expected to keep pace without help from professional educators who can define immediate and long-range activities that a proposed school plant will house. Dwayne Gardner (the former Executive Director of the Council of Educational Facility Planners, International) defines educational specifications as follows: "Educational specifications may be defined as a written communication from the owner or the educator to the design professions, particularly the architect, describing the educational activities that the school plant should accommodate, present and future." In other words, a good set of educational specifications describes briefly and clearly the activities to be housed, nature of the people involved, spatial relationships of the school plant to site, interrelationships of one instructional area to another and to the non-instructional areas, equipment and the furniture to be housed, and any special provisions which deal primarily with environmental conditions of the school plant.

The district does not develop educational specifications for each project.

The district uses prototype designs for new schools and additions at each organizational level. They do not prepare educational specifications for each project. According to the assistant superintendent for administrative services, teachers using the latest iteration of the prototype (at the appropriate grade level) are polled to see what they feel should be changed to better meet their needs.

Educational Specifications Need to be Developed For Each New School and Major Renovation

The facilities guide for the State of Washington states: "Districts may consider the development of standardized educational specifications for the various types of school plant facilities within the district, i.e., elementary schools, middle/junior high schools, and high schools. Standardized specifications can augment uniformity of program from school to school within the district and eliminate some duplication of effort. A standardized specification, however, cannot eliminate the need for an individually considered specification for specific projects as each project will have its own unique characteristics." This quote states very well the reason for educational specifications being needed for each project.

Educational specifications need to be developed for new schools, building additions, and the renovation of existing space into a new instructional space, especially if it is a specialized area (e.g., an art suite or science area from generic classroom space). The specifications need to meet the best practice standards

delineated in Action Plan 10-3. The main benefit to the district will be a benchmark against which to judge how well the space is functioning for the instructional activity that is occurring in that space. Post occupancy evaluations can be conducted to see if the space is performing as intended.

Recommendations

- *We recommend the district develop project specific educational specifications for each new building or major renovation. The educational specifications need to be developed by the facilities advisory committee that include administrative staff (especially, the principal of the building), instructional staff, non-instructional staff (i.e., food services, transportation), and design professionals. The specifications should be project specific. This recommendation is not intended to eliminate the practice of using prototype plans in the district. These educational specifications can be used as a formal means of evaluating the prototypes based on the program needs.*

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

Action Plan 10-3

Develop Educational Specifications		
Strategy	Develop educational specifications, under the general guidance of the FAC, for each new building and major renovation, even if prototype designs are used	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Assign responsibility for educational specifications to the Facilities Advisory Committee project.
	Step 2:	Appoint Ad Hoc members to the FAC as necessary to aid in the educational specification development process.
	Step 3:	Develop project specific educational specifications to include:
		• Purpose of document
		• Rationale for the project
		• Number of students and staff to be housed
		• Description of the educational program to be housed including its philosophy
		• Description of the instructional methodologies to be implemented
		• Program groupings
		• Relationships among instructional areas
		• Spatial relationships of various activity areas
		• Support facilities required
		• Environmental variables
		• Utility requirements
		• Storage requirements
		• Display requirements
		• Furniture and equipment required
		• Proposed attendance area for school
		• Date of completion and opening
		• Community uses (have community representatives review and comment on this section)

Who is Responsible	Facilities Advisory Committee and the assistant superintendent of administrative services will coordinate the educational specification development for each project
Time Frame	Dependent upon timing of each project
Fiscal Impact	In-house instructional staff can be trained to aid in the development of educational specifications. This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

12 Educational specifications are not always prepared for new construction, remodeling, and renovations, but plans and building specifications can provide an acceptable substitute in many cases.

The district does not produce classically defined educational specifications for each project but they have recently begun to produce a document that covers many of the areas normally found in educational specifications. Areas missed in this document are covered by the plans and building specifications

The district has recently developed "educational specifications" which cover many of the areas delineated under the indicators of best practice 12. These documents are not the classically defined educational specifications with a rationale for the project, discussions of the curriculum and instructional methods, staffing, school-community relationships, etc. However, the nature of the projects (small classroom additions, renovation of existing spaces, and covered play areas) doesn't require much of this type of discussion because these types of things have already been established at the schools in question. Thus, these documents meet many of the same objectives.

The document provides the architect with a standard set of overall considerations that can be used to develop the building plans and specifications. Add to this the standard things that are included in plans and specifications, and, as delineated in Exhibit 10-10, the indicators under best practice 12 are well covered.

Exhibit 10-10

The district covers most of the educational specifications criteria

Educational Specification Criteria	How District Provides For It
The number and size of areas and spatial relationships to one another.	The overall considerations cover spatial relationships and pupil/teacher ratio. The plans and specifications indicate the size and relationship of spaces.
Specifications address curriculum, staffing, and support services.	Neither the overall considerations or the plans and specifications deal with this aspect.
The number and size of areas required has been derived as the result of an analysis of current space requirements, master schedule, staffing patterns, and planned student groupings.	The course offerings and the space needed are delineated in the overall considerations document.
The space relationship requirements for the separation of large-and-small-group areas and for convenient student and staff circulation.	Covered in the prototype building plans and specifications.
Instructional support and co-curricular facilities have been addressed.	Covered in the prototype building plans and specifications.
Specific space for instructional support and pupil services programs, general support services, and special programs such as exceptional and vocational education has been identified and meets legal requirements.	Covered in the prototype building plans and specifications.

Educational Specification Criteria	How District Provides For It
Environmental variables such as acoustical needs, visual needs, thermal requirements, and special aesthetic concerns have been identified and described.	Covered in the overall considerations and the building plans and specifications.
All utility needs, including water, sewer, drainage, electrical gas, compressed air, telephone, fire alarm, conduit cable for technology, television, energy management systems, and satellite dish, have been identified.	Covered in the overall considerations and the prototype building plans and specifications.
Storage requirements for individual activity areas and teaching stations have been identified along with extra storage space for year-round educational programs.	Covered in the overall considerations and the prototype building plans and specifications for activity areas and teaching stations. No special provision for year-round education.
Display areas for chalkboards, tack boards, and display cases have been identified.	Covered in the overall consideration and the prototype building plans and specifications.
The number, kind, and size of furniture and equipment items have been identified for each activity area.	Covered in the overall considerations document.
Emergency shelter accommodations have been included where required.	Included in the prototype building plans and specifications.
A planned expansion (relocatables) strategy has been included.	Covered in the overall considerations and the prototype building plans and specifications.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Recommendations

- *We recommend the district review the recommendation and action plan under 10-11 and incorporate some of the features included in the recommendation for projects of an appropriate size and scope to warrant it.*

13 The architectural design fulfills the building specification needs as determined by the district.

The district can demonstrate that the architect has drawn a schematic layout of buildings, parking, roads, and playground areas.

The district provided a copy of the architectural drawings for New Elementary School C and Woodlawn Beach Middle School. These drawings show the layout of the buildings, parking, roads, and playground areas. One of the drawings indicated the school site dimension, utility plan for the school and provisions for future expansion. Other areas covered included provision for future expansion, and bus loading and unloading areas separated from other vehicle traffic. The district further verifies that the plans cover its needs by having an independent review by another architectural firm.

Provisions are made for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, parking, access by disabled persons, and bus loading and unloading areas separate from other vehicle traffic

The "educational specifications" include an entire section on traffic control, both vehicular and pedestrian. Exhibit 10-11 includes the description of traffic related activities occurring on the school site and the special considerations that the district wants the architect to take into consideration.

Exhibit 10-11

Traffic Control

Vehicular and Pedestrian
Description
The following traffic related activities occur on the school site:
School buses will enter and exit the site at the beginning and end of each day. Staff vehicles will enter the site daily and remain on site until the end of the school day
Service vehicles will enter and exit the site daily.
Delivery vehicles will enter and exit the site periodically.
Parents and other persons will visit the school on official business throughout the day.
Students will ride bicycles to school on a daily basis
Special Considerations
Bus loading zones shall be provided with appropriate safety rails.
A staff parking area for at least minimum number allowed in code. Consideration should be given for a parking lot to be located at the rear of the facility for faculty/staff.
All parking lots shall be provided with sidewalks to the facility and designed to accommodate the handicapped and comply with ADA.
Bus loading zones and traffic shall be separated from private vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic.
All bus traffic shall be designated to flow one way.
Visitor parking shall be provided near the administrative suite.
All drives and service areas shall be paved and so marked to indicate fire lanes, no parking, loading zones, busses only, and handicapped spaces.
No student shall cross any driveway en route to play fields.
Sheltered areas shall be available for protection of pupils from inclement weather including the loading zones for handicapped children.
Ramps shall be provided for wheelchairs in areas requiring elevation.
All exterior passageways shall be covered.
Provide sidewalks to playground area(s).
All applicable signage should be considered.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

There are descriptions of the public address, closed-circuit television, telephone, computer networking, and security systems

The "educational specifications" include sections describing the nature of the security system to be designed, the characteristics of the intercommunication system, the number, location, and minimum number of stations on the closed-circuit televisions, the number of lines and locations for telephones, and the computer lines and where they should be located.

Joint uses of the facility by the community and others are considered

The "educational specifications" recognize and provide for community use of the facility during non-school hours. The documents contain a section on Public Convenience/Community Use which talks about conveniently locating water fountains throughout the building, providing adequate fire alarm systems to accommodate the hearing impaired in all locations, it also states:

The general plan and campus design should be arranged to permit and facilitate use of all appropriate school facilities by community groups when these spaces are not in use for the regular school program. Special considerations include outside (parking area/walkways) lighting and ready access from parking lots to media center, cafeteria, rest rooms, and other special areas.

Recommendations

- *None*

14New construction, remodeling, and renovations incorporate effective safety features.

The district can demonstrate that appropriate safety features are incorporated into both new and renovated facilities.

The building prototypes include security systems, fire alarm systems, intercommunication systems, individual exits from every classroom, and lockdown procedures. All recent new construction included such safety features as sufficient entrances and exits, signs, and front desks having views of the entrance. The district is presently designing renovations to make it possible for the front desks to have views of the entrance. The assistant superintendent for administrative services showed the consultants during a walk-through of a remodeling at Bagdad Elementary School how the district is providing views of the entrance to the building from the administrative office complex.

Recommendations

- *None*

Acquisition of School Sites

15The district begins school site selection well in advance of future need based on expected growth patterns.

The district uses an administrative committee to specify site location and then advertises in the press for proposals of sites meeting the local and state mandated criteria.

An administrative committee composed of the assistant superintendents of instruction and administrative services, plus the appropriate grade level supervisor (elementary, middle or high school), decide where the site should be to serve the proposed population. The administrative committee determines the general

geographic area for acceptable sites based on student counts and the location of the current schools that will be supplying students to the new school. Site selection determinations are a sensitive public issue, which can and often does place undue burdens and expectations on district staff. The assistance and oversight functions that can be provided by a facilities advisory committee help to assure that a complex issue is managed in a straightforwardmanner. Once the geographic area and state requirements are established, the district places a legal advertisement in the appropriate newspaper for the area requesting site proposals meeting the criteria delineated in the advertisement (see exhibit 10-12). As delineated in the advertisement, the selection criteria include site size appropriate for the proposed level (elementary, middle or high school) of school, a location that will relieve existing schools and serve projected future growth, good accessibility to roads (two directions of egress), availability of utilities, not located in a flood plain, and it must meet the requirements of the State Board of Education. The district demonstrated meeting these criteria in a legal manner as delineated under best practice 16. The search starts well before the need for the site. For example, the advertisement for land in Midway for the Woodlawn Beach Middle School site was placed two years before the school was scheduled to open.

Exhibit 10-12

Sample Legal Ad

LEGAL AD

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SANTA ROSA COUNTY
REQUEST FOR SITE PROPOSAL FOR
New Middle School "AC"

The School District of Santa Rosa County invites interested persons to submit proposals for a middle school site containing a minimum of 30 developable acres. The site should be generally located in the area considered as Midway in South Santa Rosa County, Florida. Proposed site must have good accessibility to roads, (two directions of egress), utilities, not be located in a flood plain, and meet certain requirements of the State Board of Education. Please contact the Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services for additional details (850) 983-5123. Proposals should be clearly marked New Middle School "AC" and submitted no later than September 22, 1998 to: Steve Ratliff, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services, 6544 Firehouse Road, Milton, FL 32570.

Rights are reserved to reject any and all proposals and to waive technicalities.

      To run in the Gulf Breeze Sentinel

      Run three times with proof of publication.

      Weeks of August 31, 1998
            September 7, 1998
            September 14, 1998

Source: Santa Rosa County Public Schools.

Recommendations ———————————————

- *We recommend that the district implement recommendation and action plan 10-1 so a facilities advisory committee is involved in the process of site selection.*

16 The board considers the most economical and practical locations for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as need to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to development, and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties.

The district can demonstrate that it properly anticipated and evaluated obstacles to development and that it paid a fair market value for a site based on independent appraisal.

The assistant superintendent for administrative services provided several documents demonstrating that the site for Woodlawn Beach Middle School was reviewed by architects, ecologists, engineers, and other professionals to determine if any problems existed that would provide obstacles to the development of the site. Documents were also provided to show that the planning was coordinated with the required agencies including the county, the utility company, the telephone company, the water system, the metropolitan planning organization, the sheriff, the soil conservation service, the division of emergency management, and the county community planning, zoning and development department. The assistant superintendent also provided an appraisal indicating that the district paid a fair market value for the site. The appraised value for the 23.55 acre site was $465,000 and the district paid $473,575. Although the price paid was slightly (1.8%) over the appraised value, the district received an additional 41 acres of land for roadway, storm water retention and conservation easements for wetlands mitigation.

Recommendations ———————————————

- *None*

Construction Costs

17 **The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the construction program.**

The district uses the adjoining counties cost per square foot and the state average as benchmarks for the cost-effectiveness of its construction program.

Construction cost comparisons with peer districts, the entire state, and the state average indicate that the adoption of prototypical designs and standardization of equipment and materials has produced a very cost-effective construction program in Santa Rosa County. The board is provided a copy of the statewide costs of construction each year when the Department of Education publishes it so the board is able to assess the performance of its district with others in the state and with the state average. Comparisons are generally very positive for Santa Rosa. For example, of all new middle schools built in the State of Florida in 1997, 1998, and 1999, the Santa Rosa County School district had the lowest cost per student station. Comparison with adjoining districts and the state average indicates that the district has very low construction costs. Recent data from the two counties surrounding Santa Rosa (Escambia and Okaloosa) indicates that classroom additions at the elementary school level, on a cost per square foot basis, in Santa Rosa were 29% lower than Escambia and 41% lower than the state average. New construction on a middle school in Santa Rosa was 40% below Okaloosa on a cost per student station basis and 41% below the state average and 32% below Okaloosa on a square foot basis and 42% below the state average.

The district has established and implemented strategies to assess the reliability of program performance

Monthly reports to the board on the project budget status, schedule, and any issues that need to be addressed serves as a reliability check on all construction projects. The board is updated on every project in design at either the design development, working drawings, or about to go to bid state, and every project that is about to be awarded or has been awarded receives a report at each monthly board meeting. This provides a means to continually assess the program performance and cost data on each project.

Recommendations

- *None*

18 **The district has considered, and where possible implemented, the general requirements recommended in the SMART Schools Clearinghouse Frugal Construction Standards.**

In 1997, the Florida Legislature established the SMART (Soundly Made, Accountable, Reasonable, and Thrifty) Schools Clearinghouse as the agency responsible for administering several programs designed to

assist and encourage Florida's school districts to build SMART schools. As part of this initiative, the Legislature directed the SMART Schools Clearinghouse to develop frugal Construction standards that ensure appropriate industry standards and optimal life cycles for efficient and cost-effective school construction.

The district has a written policy that encourages the design team to comply with the SMART school design philosophy and develop design solutions that are functional and cost effective

The assistant superintendent for administrative services provided documents that indicated that the district followed the SMART school design philosophy and encouraged all design professionals employed by the district to do the same.

The assistant superintendent for administrative services provided a Certificate of Appreciation for serving on the workgroup that developed the SMART Schools Design and Performance Criteria and Frugal Construction Standards. The assistant superintendent also provided the consultant with a memo to all design professionals holding contracts with the Santa Rosa County School Board that stated the following:

POLICY STATEMENT

> *SMART School Design philosophy and practical design solutions are to be considered in all facilities construction projects and final designs are to be functional and cost effective.*

Santa Rosa meets eighty-six percent of the frugal construction standards

A telephone interview with Spessard Boatright (who was the Executive Director of the SMART Schools Clearinghouse and is now the Bureau Chief of Educational Facilities and Budget for the Florida Department of Education) indicated that Santa Rosa is and has been a leader in the area of frugal school construction. Mr. Boatright stated, "Santa Rosa was building frugal schools before frugal schools existed (the frugal construction standards were adopted on Jan. 25, 2000). Steve (referring to Steve Ratliff, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services in the Santa Rosa County School District) was doing it before the state recommended it. He is the model."

Santa Rosa does meet the majority of the frugal construction standards. The district designates one person with the authority, expertise, and responsibility to keep facilities construction projects within budget and on schedule, new school facilities are planned to accommodate siting of future relocatables or expansion of permanent facilities, the district has considered joint-use agreements with junior colleges and municipalities, and it considers passive design concepts such as building orientation and shading walls and fenestration in its designs. The General Requirements section of the Frugal Construction Standards lists 22 requirements and Santa Rosa meets 19 of these on new construction. And the district selects construction designs that will earn SIT awards for frugal construction practices as delineated in the next finding.

The district selects construction designs that will earn SIT awards for frugal construction practices

The last four schools built by Santa Rosa have received SIT awards. The schools and the amounts of the awards follow:

Exhibit 10-13

Santa Rosa County School District SIT Awards

Year	School	Amount of Award
1998-99	Thomas L. Sims M.S.	$ 3,108,752
1999-00	Avalon Middle School	3,523,778
1999-00	West Navarre Elementary	1,403,605
1999-00	Woodlawn Beach M.S.	2,172,527
Total		**$10,208,662**

Source: Santa Rosa County Public Schools.

Recommendations

- *None*

19 The district minimizes construction costs through the use of prototype school designs and frugal construction practices.

The district has an on-going policy to follow the SMART school design philosophy and follow cost-effective construction practices

The district demonstrated its frugal construction practices through the receipt of SIT awards for the last four schools built as delineated under best practice 18. In addition, the district uses prototype designs at each of the organizational levels. The assistant superintendent for administrative services provided plans for a five-classroom addition at Holley-Navarre Primary School that demonstrated the prototype for elementary schools.

In 1986, the district decided that it wanted to design a "practical" school. It started working with a local architectural firm to develop the design. The, then, assistant superintendent for administrative services, the maintenance staff, and personnel from the instructional services area worked closely with the architect to develop the design.

This collaboration resulted in the basis for the current elementary prototype with the construction of Berryhill Elementary School in 1989. The basic prototype has been refined since that time with the input of teachers and other staff playing a key role in the refinement. A prototype design saves in a number of ways. One way is in design costs in that a totally new shape, size, etc. does not have to be conceptualized and developed before a building can go through design development on its way to final working drawings. Essentially, the same building is adapted to a new site and it is ready to go except for changes in materials or equipment specifications due to what has been learned through the use of previous buildings. Another way is in the bidding process. Contractors are familiar with the design, how it fits together and what, if any, the problems have been with previous iterations of the design. This provides a confidence level that allows bidders to not have to hedge bids to cover for unknown or unexpected circumstances.

The district does not use the Department of Education (DOE) prototypes. The assistant superintendent for administrative services was a member of the committee that developed the DOE prototypes. Santa Rosa doesn't use the state design because it had already developed a local prototype that has been adapted for

local conditions. If the DOE prototype would be used it, too, would have to be adapted to local conditions. One of the main factors of the DOE prototype is that it is a "compact" design that lends itself well to areas that do not have large amounts of available land for school development. Santa Rosa has available land to develop and prefers its "finger" design with every classroom having a door to the outside. Santa Rosa feels its design is less expensive and safer.

Recommendations

- *None*

20The district secures appropriate professional services to assist in facility planning, design, and construction.

The district can demonstrate that procedures for selection of a design firm were in compliance with Florida law

The district provided documents indicating a legal advertisement for design services for projects at Central High School, Chumuckla Elementary, Gulf Breeze Middle School, and Milton High School. The ad stated that parties interested in submitting proposals could examine current contract documents in the office of the assistant superintendent for administration. It also gave a deadline date, time, and place where the written proposal had to be delivered to be considered. It also pointed out that applying firms may be required to offer an oral presentation on a specified date. The ad stated that competitive selection and negotiation will be made in accordance with the Florida law.

The district appoints a selection committee to find appropriate professionals

The school district demonstrated that it appointed a selection committee to find appropriate professionals for each project. This is a function that would be performed by a facilities advisory committee. A document indicated that a committee composed of the assistant superintendent for administrative services, the principals for two of the schools with proposed projects, and two assistant principals from the other two schools with proposed projects interviewed the applicants.

The district demonstrated that the interviewers rated the applicants on several variables

The district produced the rating document of one of the interviewers indicating the variables used to rate the firm and the scoring from 0 indicating unsatisfactory to 4 indicating outstanding. Each firm was rated on seven characteristics including: volume of business with school boards, proximity of firm to Santa Rosa County, basic services in past performances, personnel cooperation and relations, staff capabilities, availability, appropriate make-up, ability to meet required deadline, and experience for this type of work. Each firm received a total score on the seven characteristics from each of the five raters and those were totaled to provide an overall rating for each firm. The scores, the rank order of firms was presented to the superintendent with a recommendation that the board accept the highest ranking firm and appoint them to provide the architectural services for the four projects.

The district demonstrated that the contract with the professional included the district's requirements, met the requirements of current law, and did not encourage extravagant project costs

The architectural contract included sections on basic services, information that would be provided by the board, limitations on design, expected design documents at the schematic, preliminary, and final design phases, supervision and inspection of construction, architectural fees, payment of fees, responsibility of the architect, the requirement of professional liability insurance, and the ownership of the documents.

The limitations on design section emphasized that the minimum standards adopted by the Florida Department of Education had to be achieved, that the local and state laws, codes, ordinances, and regulations had to be met but the project design shall not exceed the amount budgeted by the board for construction of the project.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district implement recommendation and action plan 10-1 so a facilities advisory committee can be involved in the professional services selection process.*

21 The district can demonstrate that funds collected for school projects were raised appropriately.

The district uses several sources of funds for capital improvements including:

PECO – Public Education Capital Outlay funds supplied by the state from taxes on gross utility receipts. These funds can only be spent on capital items identified in the five-year facility survey.

$2 mill property tax – The district assesses 1.4 mills of the maximum 2 mill amount. A former superintendent promised to hold this tax at the 1.4 mill level if the voters would approve a sales tax. These monies have the same restrictions as PECO funds.

CO & DS – Capital Outlay and Debt Service funds from the state as a result of taxes on wagering and car tags. These funds can only be spent on items listed on the Project Priority List. This source provides the least amount of funding with the most restrictions.

½ Cent Sales Tax – In October, 1998, the district was successful in passing a half-cent sales tax to be levied for a ten-year period. These funds can be spent on any capital project, repair and maintenance or equipment and the projects do not have to be on the district's Educational Plant Survey.

To demonstrate that the sales tax funds were raised appropriately, the district supplied the following ballot language for the issue.

<div align="center">

COUNTY-WIDE SCHOOL HALF-CENT
SALES SURTAX FOR ACQUISITION,
RENOVATION AND CONSTRUCTION
OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Shall a Half-Cent Sales Surtax be levied only for
ten (10) years in Santa Rosa county to provide
for the acquisition, improvement, renovation and

</div>

construction of public school facilities in the county?
Projects throughout the county to be funded include
the construction of new schools, addition of classrooms
to existing schools, renovation of older schools and
acquisition of equipment. Effective date of the
Half-Cent Sales Tax shall be Oct. 1, 1998.

Recommendations

- *Implementation of recommendation and action plan 11-8 in the Facilities Maintenance Chapter would match the source of funds budgeted for a project with the actual expenditure of funds and assist the board and public in seeing that funds are raised and expended appropriately.*

Timely Completion of Projects

22District planning provides realistic time frames for implementation that are coordinated with the opening of schools.

The district provided the schedule for projects for 2001-2002 which indicated eight projects with bid dates in December of 2001 and January of 2002 and completion dates of Summer, 2002 and Christmas Break, 2002. Considering the scope of each of the projects the time frames are realistic and coordinated with either the opening of school or during a school vacation.

A review of past project projected occupancy dates compared to actual occupancy indicates that projects were completed and occupied as scheduled. The data indicates that the district does extremely well on projecting when projects will be completed and occupied, but not all of the projects are scheduled for completion during summer or Christmas breaks.

Exhibit 10-14

Comparison of Scheduled vs. Actual Occupancy Dates For Recent Projects

Project	Scheduled Occupancy	Actual Occupancy
King Middle – Media Center	11/29/00	11/29/00
Jay Elementary – K-3 Classroom Addition	1/25/01	1/25/01
Bagdad Elem. – Classroom Addition	3/28/01	3/28/01
East Milton Elem. – K-3 Classroom Addition	6/01/01	6/01/01
Berryhill Elem. – K-3 Classroom Addition	5/29/01	5/29/01
King Middle – Classroom Addition	7/27/01	7/27/01
Navarre High – NJROTC/Classroom Addition	7/30/01	7/30/01
Hobbs Middle – ESE Classroom Addition	9/06/01	9/06/01

Source: Santa Rosa County Public Schools.

The board receives regularly scheduled updates on each project during each phase of design

The assistant superintendent for administrative services supplied the consultant with a board agenda indicating that the board receives an update on all current construction projects on a monthly basis at a regular board meeting. A section entitled "Review status report of current projects" is a regular part of the School Plant Planning section of the board agenda. During this review, either the project architect and/or the assistant superintendent for administrative services comments on each project and its present status and any concerns that may exist on a project. Projects are included in the report from the start of design through project completion. It would also be appropriate for the board to receive project updates through the facilities advisory committee. The board is kept totally aware of each project.

Recommendations

- *None*

23 For each project or group of projects, the architect and district facilities planner develop a conceptual site plan and building specifications.

The district has an architect develop a conceptual site plan and building specifications for each construction project

The district provided conceptual site plans for Dixon Intermediate and Woodlawn Beach Middle School showing the proposed layout of buildings and grounds, parking and roads, and playing field areas, as well as future additions. To demonstrate that building specifications are developed for each construction project, the consultant reviewed a complete set of building specifications for a four-classroom addition at Berryhill Elementary School and the tables of content for three other projects. The projects included a media center expansion at Hobbs Middle School, an addition and alterations to the administrative area at Holley Navarre Intermediate School, and a five-classroom addition at Pea Ridge Elementary School. Each of the specifications included the standard 16 divisions usually found in building specifications. Included are: general requirements, site work, concrete, masonry, metals, carpentry, thermal and moisture protection, doors and windows, finishes, specialties, equipment, furnishings, mechanical, and electrical.

Recommendations

- *None*

24 The district follows generally accepted and legal contracting practices to control costs.

Santa Rosa's construction costs compare very favorably with the state average and its peer districts indicating that it does an excellent job of controlling costs. See Exhibits 10-16, 10-17 and 10-18.

The district uses generally accepted bidding procedures and can demonstrate meeting all legal requirements for awards of contract.

The district uses generally accepted bidding procedures and can demonstrate compliance with Florida law. The district supplied the consultant with examples of a bid advertisement, a bid tabulation, an AIA contract with a contractor, a contract with an architect, a bid bond, and other legal documents to demonstrate bidding and award of contract procedures. Included in the documents were contracts signed by the appropriate district officials, as well as required documents from the contractor. These included a signed owner-contractor agreement, a worker's compensation insurance certificate, a payment bond, and a performance bond.

The district has not evaluated privatizing the construction program or considered using an innovative bidding system

The district has continued to follow the traditional system of public works bidding. The traditional design-bid-build process includes the owner retaining an architect who designs the project based on the owners' programmatic requirements. Once the owner approves the design development stage, the architect prepares contract documents for bidding purposes, including plans and specifications. The owner then has the architect put the project out for bids and a general contractor is selected based upon the lowest responsible bid. This process has produced some of the lowest construction costs among its peer districts as well as the entire state (see Exhibits 10-15, 10-16 and 10-17). In fact, of all middle schools built in the state of Florida during 1997, 1998, and 1999, Santa Rosa had the lowest cost per student station. Due to this experience they have not examined other techniques of bidding or managing construction projects. In the event student populations are projected to grow rapidly or if there is significant growth in the district's construction program, we recommend the district be prepared to implement alternative construction methods. We recommend the district assess the cost, long-term quality of construction, and management implications of using a innovative construction system to further improve on their construction costs.

Exhibit 10-15

District's School Facility Costs Are Less Than The State Average[1]

School Type	1997-99 Average Cost/Sq. Ft.		1997-99 Average Cost/ Student Station	
	State	Santa Rosa	State	Santa Rosa
Elementary	$106.14	$78.22	$11,718	$9,098
Middle	$118.87	$80.20	$13,485	$8,138

[1] Santa Rosa only built elementary and middle schools during the years that state data is available, so high school information is not included in the table. To reflect comparable costs, state averages for the specic school type were used as opposed to average costs for all schools.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Exhibit 10-16

Comparison of Construction Costs for New Schools
Among Santa Rosa and Three Peer Districts[1]

District	Year of Construction	Type of School	Cost per Student Station	Cost per Square Foot
Lake	1999	Middle	$18,853	$143.81
Santa Rosa	1999	Middle	$9,863	$94.33
State Average	1999	Middle	$13,571	$120.11
Suwannee	1998	Elementary	$8,701	$77.67
Santa Rosa	1998	Elementary	$9,098	$78.22
State Average	1998	Elementary	$11,157	$102.35

District	Year of Construction	Type of School	Cost per Student Station	Cost per Square Foot
Okaloosa	1996	2 Middle	$12,436[2]	$99.47
Santa Rosa	**1997**	**Middle**	**$7,478**	**$67.33**
State Average	1997	Middle	$12.759	$116.81

[1] Two of the Peer districts did not build new schools during the period of available state data.

[2] CPI for 1997 applied to average cost of two buildings to match Santa Rosa year of construction.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Exhibit 10-17

Comparison of Classroom Addition Construction Costs Among Santa Rosa And Two Peer Districts[1]

District	Year of Construction	Type of School	Cost per Square Foot
Escambia	1997	2 Elementaries	$90.00 (average)
Santa Rosa	1997	2 Elementaries	$64.20 (average)
State Average	1997	All	$108.86
Putnam	1999	Middle	$116.01
Santa Rosa	1998	Middle	$66.94[2]
State Average	1999	All	$106.89

[1] Two peer districts only built classroom additions during the years of available state data so comparisons were made on that basis.

2 CPI for 1999 applied to cost of construction to match Putnam year of construction.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district investigate the cost, long-term quality of construction, and management implications of using an innovative construction system such as design/build, construction manager, or construction manager at-risk versus the traditional design-bid-build construction system.*

Action Plan 10-4 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-4

Investigate Innovative Construction Systems Compared to the Traditional System	
Strategy	We recommend the district investigate the cost, long-term quality of construction, and management implications of using an innovative construction system versus the traditional design-bid-build system.
Action Needed	Step 1: The board should assign the facilities advisory committee responsibility to study alternative construction systems and their advantages and disadvantages. The FAC should include a board member, assistant superintendent for administrative services, purchasing manager, and legal counsel, some of whom may be ad hoc appointments.
	Step 2: The FAC should gather comments from other districts that have used the various construction systems and the state DOE.
	Step 3: The FAC should recommend to the board whether to try a new innovative approach or stay with the traditional system the district has always used.

Who is Responsible	Facilities advisory committee and the assistant superintendent of administrative services
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent of administrative services
Time Frame	Conduct study during summer 2002.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

25 The district has assigned one person with the authority and responsibility to keep facilities construction projects within budget and on schedule.

The district has assigned responsibility for keeping construction projects within budget to the assistant superintendent for administrative services.

The assistant superintendent for administrative services is primarily responsible for the completion of all construction projects. The job description has established the qualifications and performance responsibilities for this position.

- Five years experience in facilities management
- Knowledge of laws, rules and regulations controlling facilities
- Coordinate the development and implementation of the master plan for capital improvements
- Direct the development of the District long-range capital improvement plan and funding alternatives
- Oversee the selection of design and construction professionals
- Monitor and evaluate the planning and completion of capital improvement projects
- Oversee the selection and acquisition of school sites
- Ensure that both capital and major maintenance projects are coordinated with appropriate regulatory agencies

Each construction project also has an architect who reports to the assistant superintendent for administrative services.

Recommendations

- *None*

26 The board minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to minimize project costs.

The district minimizes changes to facilities plans

The use of prototypical plans and the close supervision of the assistant superintendent for administrative services (a certified building code inspector and administrator), the two maintenance supervisors (both

licensed code inspectors), and the project architect serve to keep changes to facilities plans at a minimum. Only the board can approve change orders and when they are presented for approval the reasons for the change are included. Review of change order requests would fall within the purview of a facilities advisory committee that would recommend action to the board.

See Exhibit 10-18 that shows that the average percentage for change orders on eleven reviewed projects was 1.5%. This is excellent when one considers that generally accepted industry standards are 1 to 5 percent on new construction and up to 15% on remodeling projects.

Exhibit 10-18

Change Orders on Eleven Selected Projects

Project	Original Contract	Total Change Order	Percentage of Changes
Jay Elem. – K-3 Classroom Additions	$960,000	$25,328	3%
Holley Nav. Interm. – Media/Classroom Renovation	$566,000	$10,553	2%
East Milton Elem. – K-3 Classroom Additions	$940,000	$11,563	1%
Gulf Breeze Elem. – Classroom Additions	$370,000	$2,391	<1%
Sims Middle – Classroom Additions	$432,000	$1,320	<1%
King Middle – Science Classroom Additions	$318,000	$244	<1%
Berryhill Elem. – K-3 Classroom Additions	$680,000	$10,605	2%
Bagdad Elem. – ESE/Classroom Additions	$1,329,000	$8,795	<1%
Hobbs Middle – ESE/Classroom Addition	$500,839	$25,518	5%
Navarre High – JROTC Classroom Additions	$796,000	$10,460	1.5%
King Middle – Computer Lab/Home Ec.	$522,000	$4,060	<1%
Average Change Order Percentage	$7,413,839	$110,837	1.5%

Source: Santa Rosa County Public Schools

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district implement recommendation and action plan 10-1 so a facilities advisory committee is involved in the process of approving change orders.*

27 The architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project.

Contractor requests for payment are paid based on the percentage of correctly completed work

Payment records reflect that the architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work that has been completed in conformance with the contract documents. The contractor submits a pay request based on the amount of work completed on an AIA form with their notarized signature. The architect reviews the pay request and certifies the payment amount based on his review of the request and inspection of the work.

The district can demonstrate that a percentage of the contract is withheld pending final project completion and that internal controls exist to ensure payment only after appropriate approvals

Documents indicate that 10% of each pay request is retained until final payment is made. Once a pay request is reviewed and certified by the architect for payment it is sent to the assistant superintendent for administrative services. The assistant superintendent reviews the request and upon passing his inspection, he approves it for payment. The request then goes to the senior accountant in the finance department to check the calculations and confirm that all required signatures are in place. If the accountant is satisfied he initiates payment to the contractor. This process is followed up to the 90% payment. At that point no payment is made until the school board accepts the construction as final. The board authorizes the assistant superintendent for administrative services and the architect to disperse the funds in proportions to the completion of the final punch list items. The district customarily withholds twice the value of the remaining punch list items until all are satisfactorily completed.

Recommendations

- *None*

28 **The district requires appropriate inspection of all school construction projects.**

The district can demonstrate that it requires appropriate inspection and a certificate of occupancy before the building is occupied

The architect conducts regular inspections of each project during the construction process as does the assistant superintendent for administrative services who is a certified uniform building code inspector. The district provided examples of final building inspection reports indicating inspection before receipt of the occupancy permit and that no facilities failed to pass inspection. The district also filed the appropriate documentation with the Florida Department of Education and updated its FISH data.

Recommendations

- *None*

Construction Program

29 The district does not conduct a comprehensive orientation to the facility prior to its use so that users better understand the building design and function.

The district does not conduct a comprehensive orientation for users of new buildings

No formal documented program for a comprehensive orientation to a new building exists. Some systems do get reviewed for certain groups of people. For example, the assistant superintendent for administrative services stated that custodians and maintenance personnel get a walk-through on the mechanical systems of the building. A letter from the Branch Service Manager of Simplex Time Recorder Company, the company that installed the telecommunication and electronic systems in the building, indicated training sessions had been established at Woodlawn Beach Middle School for faculty and staff to learn about the fire alarm system, the integrated telecommunication system, the telemedia system, and the electronic bulletin board.

The district needs to establish a more comprehensive orientation for users of new buildings so they better understand the building design and function. As part of the orientation materials, a facility user manual should be developed for teachers, administrators, and support staff. The manual should include a map of the facility, identifying exits, location of fire extinguishers, telephones, etc. It should also provide information on the energy management system and what latitude building users have in controlling the system.

Recommendations ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

- *We recommend the district formalize a facility orientation program modified appropriately for each new school.*

Action Plan 10-5 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-5

Comprehensive User Orientation Program	
Strategy	Formalize and document a facility orientation program that is modified for each new school.
Action Needed	Step 1. Conduct a formal, documented orientation program and provide users a manual for new schools. The orientation program should be comprehensive and the district should be able to demonstrate that users have a better understanding of the building design and function. The architect, contractor, and/or educational administrator should share the responsibility for the orientation program.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services
Time Frame	Summer 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

30 The district does not conduct comprehensive building evaluations at the end of the first year of operation and regularly during the next three to five years to collect information about building operation and performance.

The district does not conduct any formal comprehensive building evaluation on a regular basis

The district does not conduct a comprehensive building evaluation at the end of the first year of operation and periodically during the next three to five years to collect information about building operation and performance. Such evaluations can be beneficial to the district. Several areas need to be evaluated including whether the facility is economical to operate and maintain, whether the facility functions as intended and how well it accommodates the educational program, and whether the facility performs adequately in terms of circulation pattern, appropriate sizes and configuration of spaces, etc. Information from these evaluations can be very valuable in identifying improvements for future classroom and other educational spaces.

Recommendations

- *We recommend the district develop and implement a post-occupancy evaluation of all major projects*

  Action Plan 10-6 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-6

Conducting Post-Occupancy Evaluations		
Strategy	Conduct post-occupancy evaluations regularly.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Develop procedure to ensure that post occupancy evaluations regularly occur and include educational adequacy, function, safety, efficiency, and suggestions for future improvements.
	Step 2:	The evaluation should include:
		• An analysis of the educational program improvements for consideration by future educational specification committees
		• An operational cost analysis
		• A comparison of the finished product with the educational and construction specifications
		• Recommendations for future changes
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and site administrators	
Time Frame	All new facilities beginning with the 2002-03 year	
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with current resources	

31 The district does not analyze building evaluations to determine whether facilities are fully used, operating costs are minimized, and changes in the district's construction planning process are needed.

The district does not conduct building evaluations so they cannot analyze them to improve the construction planning process

The district does not conduct formal evaluations of how the building functions. However, the assistant superintendent for administrative services stated that the building administrators are instructed during the occupancy meeting to send every building problem they experience during the first year to the architect via e-mail. A copy is also sent to the assistant superintendent for administrative services. The problems are corrected, and a copy is placed in a file to be used to inform future construction. The assistant superintendent supplied representative copies of such e-mails for Woodlawn Beach Middle School.

The district needs to implement Recommendation 10-30 and then it will be possible to utilize the results of post-occupancy evaluations to better inform future construction planning processes. Examination of these evaluations will help determine whether facilities are fully used, whether operating costs are minimized, how the building is performing for the delivery of the educational program and what changes may need to be made in future buildings.

Recommendations

- *See recommendation and action plan 10-6 on the development and implementation of post-occupancy evaluations.*

32 The district does not analyze maintenance and operations costs to identify improvements to the district's construction planning process.

Maintenance and operations costs should be included in the post-occupancy evaluation

The district does not have an institutionalized process for comparing maintenance and operations costs at recently completed projects for the purpose of implementing cost savings measures on a district-wide basis. Therefore, the district has not

- Identified and analyzed measures of maintenance and operations costs;
- Identified improvements made to its construction planning process based on its analysis of maintenance and operations costs;
- Implemented changes that have resulted in documented cost savings, or
- Identified cost savings actions that are consistently used on a district-wide basis.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop a formal process of analyzing maintenance and operations costs on new and renovated facilities for the purpose of implementing cost saving measures district-wide.*

Action Plan 10-7 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-7

Analyze maintenance and operations costs at recently completed facilities	
Strategy	Develop a formal process of analyzing maintenance and operations costs on new and renovated facilities for the purpose of implementing cost saving measurers district-wide.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop a procedure to ensure that post-occupancy evaluations include an analysis of the maintenance and operations costs.
	Step 2: Compare these costs with other district facilities to identify unusual variances.
	Step 3: Determine the reason for variance and identify areas for improvement in future construction planning processes.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and maintenance supervisor
Time Frame	All new facilities beginning with the 2002-03 year in conjunction with the other post-occupancy evaluation activity recommended in action plan 10-30.
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

11 Facilities Maintenance

The Santa Rosa County School District has a dedicated and experienced maintenance staff that keeps facilities in good operating condition. Custodial services are contracted to ServiceMaster Company (now ARAMARK). Few operating procedures are in writing and performance standards are missing.

Conclusion

The Santa Rosa County School District (the district) has an experienced and dedicated maintenance staff. This is fortunate since there are few operating procedures in writing. A sudden loss of personnel would adversely affect the district's ability to perform needed maintenance in a timely and cost effective way. There is little evidence of written performance standards and customer feedback is almost non-existent.

A site visit and interviews with staff, parents, and community members indicate that Santa Rosa County School District facilities are adequately maintained. The facilities maintenance department lacks defined maintenance and worker performance standards, and staffing formulas. This has led to a large backlog of deferred maintenance and a reactive instead of a proactive maintenance approach that is more costly in the long run.

The district's work order tracking system simply stores data and is unable to perform any analysis which limits management's effectiveness in planning and controlling its workload and analyzing its performance.

The district needs to formalize its approach to facilities maintenance by strengthening its policies, procedures, and standards. It also needs to improve its analysis of costs and the evaluation of more cost-effective approaches to getting the work done.

The district, under its contract with Aramark, has a properly sized and assigned custodial staff that gets good marks from staff and parents as evidenced by our interviews and the surveys conducted by the company. Data indicates that it is also very cost effective compared to the former district run custodial operation.

Exhibit 11-1

The District Has Had Some Notable Accomplishments in Facilities Maintenance in the Last Three Years

- The district has initiated preventive maintenance for roof surveys and repairs, mechanical system filter replacement, fire alarm system and fire extinguisher inspections and repairs.
- The district has contracted for the Energy Watchdog Internet-based online utility billing /energy data tracking, analysis, auditing, and reporting service that will provide a cost effective and powerful tool for managing utility/energy consumption and costs.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Overview of Chapter Findings —————

SchoolMatch reviewed the district's facilities maintenance using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the commissioner of education and associated indicators. The consulting team employed several methodologies to develop chapter conclusions and action plans. For instance, SchoolMatch conducted on-site interviews with district level managers, maintenance staff, teachers and principals, and gathered information on the facilities maintenance activities such as the district's facilities maintenance activities policies and procedures.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Maintenance and Operations Functions

1. The district's maintenance and operations department mission and organizational structure are established in writing. Operating procedures are limited. (Page 11-5)

2. The district has not established maintenance standards in its short- and long-term plans for providing appropriately and equitably maintained facilities within budget and in accordance with the district's five-year facilities work plan and annual budget. (Page 11-9)

3. The district does not identify and communicate performance standards and expected outcomes to maintenance staff. The district does communicate performance standards for custodial staff through its contract with ARAMARK. (Page 11-11)

4. The district does not ensure that maintenance standards are regularly updated to implement new technology and procedures. Custodial standards are revised if cleaning processes are changed due to new technology or procedures. (Page 11-12)

5. The district does not obtain and use customer feedback to identify and implement program improvements within the maintenance department. (Page 11-13)

6. The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance and efficiency of the maintenance program. The custodial services department has established accountability mechanisms. (Page 11-15)

Budget for Facilities Maintenance

7. The district accurately projects cost estimates of major maintenance projects. (Page 11-16)

8. The administration has developed an annual budget with spending limits that comply with the lawful funding for each category of facilities maintenance and operations. (Page 11-18)

9. The board maintains a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations. (Page 11-20)

10. The maintenance department does not regularly evaluate maintenance activities to determine the most cost-effective method of providing needed services. Custodial services were evaluated and privatized several years ago. (Page 11-20)

11. The district minimizes equipment costs through purchasing practices and maintenance. (Page 11-24)

12. The district uses some proactive maintenance practices but it does not have a preventive maintenance program to reduce maintenance costs. (Page 11-26)

Maintenance Program Goals and Outcomes

13. The maintenance and operations department does not review the organizational structure of the maintenance program to minimize administrative layers and processes. (Page 11-28)

14. The maintenance department does not regularly review the staffing levels of the maintenance program to maximize the efficient use of personnel. The custodial department, under its contract with ARAMARK, does review staffing levels. (Page 11-29)

15. The maintenance and operations department ensures qualified staff by using appropriate hiring practices. (Page 11-31)

16. The maintenance and operations departments have a written job description for each position within the department. (Page 11-31)

17. The district provides appropriate supervision of maintenance and operations staff. (Page 11-32)

18. The district does not provide a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff to enhance worker job satisfaction, efficiency and safety. (Page 11-34)

19. The district provides maintenance and operations department staffs the tools and equipment required to accomplish their assigned tasks. (Page 11-36)

Computerized Maintenance Management System

20. A computerized control and tracking system is not used to accurately track work orders and inventory. (Page 11-37)

21. The maintenance and operations department does not have a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the district. (Page 11-38)

School Equipment and Facilities

22. District policies and procedures clearly address the health and safety conditions of facilities. (Page 11-40)

23. The maintenance and operations department identifies and implements strategies to contain energy costs. (Page 11-42)

24. The district has a rudimentary energy management system in place. (Page 11-44)

25. The school district complies with federal and state regulatory mandates regarding facility health, safety, and energy efficiency conditions. (Page 11-46)

26. The district is aware of and prepared for the permitting and inspection requirements of the Florida Building Code. (Page 11-47)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Most recommendations in facilities maintenance will improve district performance but are neutral in terms of fiscal impact. However, Exhibit 11-2 shows four recommendations that will have fiscal impact.

Exhibit 11-2

Implementing the Recommendations for Facilities Maintenance will have the Following Fiscal Impact

Recommendation	Five Year Fiscal Impact
• Increase Trade Association Memberships and publication subscriptions	• This will result in an additional annual cost of $2,500 or a 5-year cost of $12,500.
• Upgrade computerized Maintenance System : • If able to do in-house • If use outside system	 • Cost should be zero. • Systems cost from $5,000 to $50,000.

Recommendation	Five Year Fiscal Impact
• Comprehensive Energy Management Program	• This recommendation could result in savings of up to 20% of the district utility costs or potentially $600,000 per year. After implementation costs of $400,000 this would yields a potential savings of $2,600,000.
• Review of Indoor Air Quality Plan by a CIH	• This will result in a one-time cost of $2,500.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Background

The Maintenance Department is responsible for the upkeep and repair of all schools and administrative facilities. The school district has six high schools, seven middle schools, 16 elementary schools, one vocational school, other special purpose schools and administrative and maintenance facilities. The district's maintenance budget is approximately $4.5 million and it has the third highest maintenance cost per square foot among its peer districts (see exhibit 11-6). Okaloosa and Putnam have higher per square foot costs while Lake, Suwannee and Escambia have lower square foot costs.

A maintenance supervisor heads the department and reports to the assistant superintendent for administrative services. The department is divided into a mechanical division reporting directly to a foreman and a structural division reporting through a crew leader to the same foreman (see the department organization chart on page 11-6). The department has 39 craftspeople, three supervisory personnel and two secretaries for a total of 44 employees.

Custodial Services have been outsourced to ServiceMaster (recently purchased by Aramark) since 1993 and are not part of the Maintenance Department. The purchasing manager provides oversight for the district and reports to the assistant superintendent for administrative services. The organizational structure for Aramark includes an operations manager, a custodial manager, two regional supervisors, and each building has a lead custodian (see organization chart on page 11-7). Aramark uses 169 custodians and 6 supervisory personnel to clean the district's facilities. The custodial budget is approximately $3.5 million.

Methodology

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed the Santa Rosa County District's own assessment of its facilities maintenance using the Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators adopted by the Florida Commissioner of Education as a starting point for this analysis. Studies conducted in the Santa Rosa County Schools by groups or organizations outside the school district over the past five years could have an impact on the results of this review. SchoolMatch was informed by the superintendent that the only studies of the school district over the past five years have been the annual financial audit conduced by the Office of the Auditor General.

The consulting team employed several methodologies to gather additional information, confirm information, formulate findings statements, offer recommendations for practices to be implemented over the next two years or sooner, and design action plans to accomplish the recommendations. SchoolMatch consultants conduced three site visits (October, 2001, December, 2001, and February, 2002) to complete an assessment of whether Santa Rosa followed Best Financial Management Practices and associated

indicators. Administrators, supervisors, staff members, community members, students, and others were interviewed. The list of interviewees included:

- Assistant superintendent for administrative services
- Purchasing manager
- Maintenance supervisor
- 3 maintenance craftspeople
- 2 custodians (one district employee and one Aramark employee)
- 2 principals
- 2 teachers who were also bargaining unit officers
- 6 students (one from each high school)
- Business representative who was also a parent
- Civic representative (an elected official) who was also a parent
- Military representative who also volunteered at a school
- Parent representative
- Operations manager for Aramark
- Bureau Chief of Educational Facilities and Budget for the Florida Department of Education who is also the former Executive Director of the Smart Schools Clearinghouse

SchoolMatch also collected and reviewed budget documents, strategic planning documents, policies and procedures manuals, building plans and specifications, educational specifications, legal advertisements for property, design professionals, public hearings, etc. This assessment also involved research of Florida law, auditor general audits, industry standards, and DOE documents in the areas of construction and maintenance.

Maintenance and Operations

1 The district's maintenance and operations department mission and organizational structure are established in writing. Operating procedures are limited.

The district has a mission statement for its maintenance and operations departments

The mission statement for the Maintenance Department appears in the <u>Maintenance Department Handbook</u> that was approved by the Board on August 28, 2001, and is as follows:

1. The chief propose of the Maintenance Department shall be to provide maintenance to all buildings and grounds owned by the Santa Rosa County School District and to provide the students and faculty of the School District with an environment that will lend itself to the learning process.

2. The Maintenance Department has the responsibility of keeping all buildings, equipment and grounds in a good state of repair for the entire School District and to keep accurate records of all work performed.

Custodial services for all district buildings have been contracted out to ServiceMaster (now Aramark) for the last eight years. Aramark has a general vision and mission for the Company. The vision is: "Growth through client value creation." The mission is: "To create unlimited partnerships with our clients, offering more services, solving more problems. There are no limits to what we will do to help our clients achieve their goals." Aramark does not have a mission statement specific to the Santa Rosa school district.
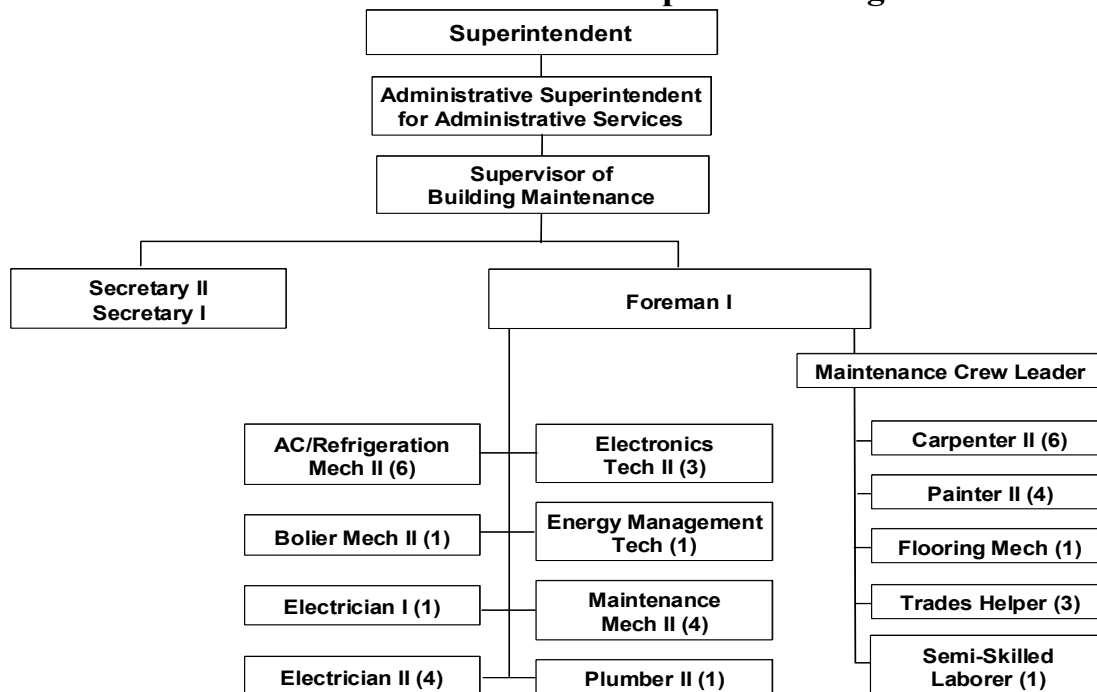
The Maintenance and Custodial departments are administered in accordance with published organizational charts

The Maintenance Department Handbook was approved by the Board of Education on August 28, 2001 and contains a delineated chain of command that is to be followed by maintenance personnel at all times and an organizational chart representing the department structure as of July 1, 2001. The chain of command is as follows:

1. Employee
2. Leaderman (if existing in employee's trade division)
3. Foreman
4. Supervisor of building maintenance
5. Assistant superintendent for administrative services
6. Superintendent of schools

Exhibit 11-3

Administrative Services/Maintenance Department Organization Chart

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │      Superintendent      │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Administrative Superintendent │
                    │ for Administrative Services  │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │      Supervisor of       │
                    │   Building Maintenance   │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
        ┌─────────────────┐            ┌─────────────────┐
        │   Secretary II   │            │    Foreman I     │
        │   Secretary I    │            └─────────────────┘
        └─────────────────┘                 ┌──────────────────────────┐
                                            │  Maintenance Crew Leader  │
                                            └──────────────────────────┘

  AC/Refrigeration    Electronics          Carpenter II (6)
  Mech II (6)         Tech II (3)
                                           Painter II (4)
  Bolier Mech II (1)  Energy Management
                      Tech (1)             Flooring Mech (1)

  Electrician I (1)   Maintenance          Trades Helper (3)
                      Mech II (4)
                                           Semi-Skilled
  Electrician II (4)  Plumber II (1)       Laborer (1)
```
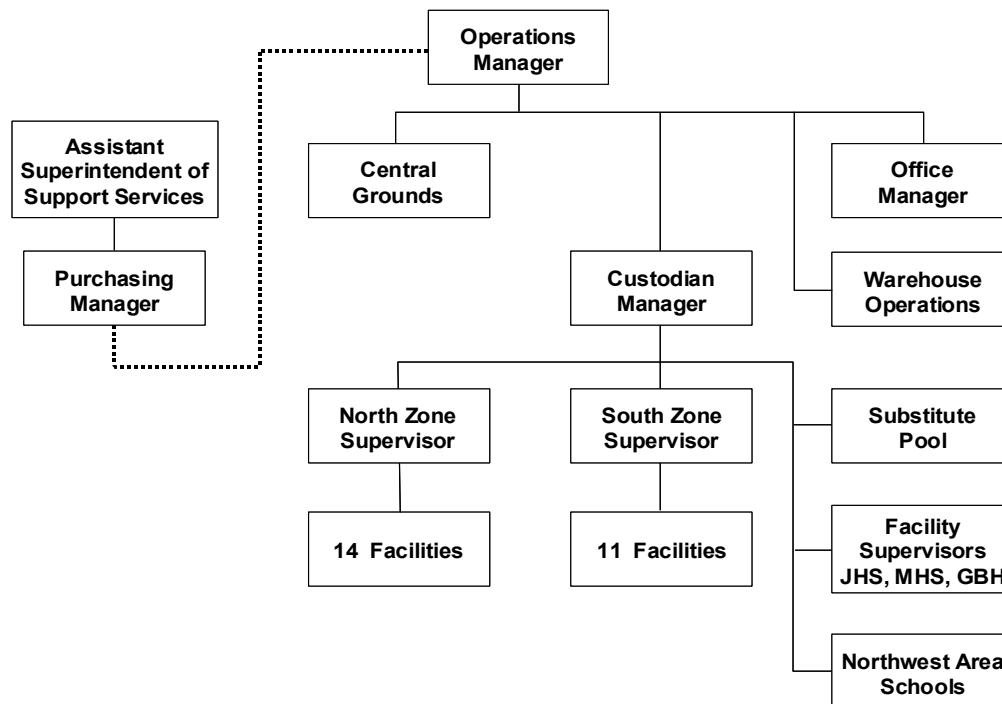
Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

The Maintenance Department is divided into mechanical and structural divisions with the mechanical division employees reporting directly to a foreman while the structural division employees report to a crew leader and then to the foreman. This department configuration occurred in 1996 when the then

maintenance supervisor was promoted to the position of assistant superintendent for administrative services. One of the two foremen in the department at that time received the promotion to maintenance supervisor. It was also decided at that time to not fill the vacated foreman position as a cost saving measure. The department was then reconfigured with one foreman and a crew leader. The present departmental structure will be discussed in more detail under best practice 17 dealing with whether the district provides appropriate supervision of the department.

The organizational chart for the custodial services provider, Aramark, follows:

Exhibit 11-4

Service Master Organizational Chart Santa Rosa County School District

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

School district oversight for the outside contractor that provides custodial services is the direct responsibility of the purchasing manager. Aramark has an operations manager as the lead position administering the custodial effort in the Santa Rosa district and reporting to the purchasing manager. The operations manager has the ground crews, the office manager, the custodial manager, and warehouse operations as direct reports. The district is divided into three regions for supervisory purposes with the custodial manager covering the northwest area schools directly with other supervisors over facilities in a north zone and a south zone.

The maintenance department has limited written operational procedures while the custodial services department does have written procedures in place

The Maintenance Department Handbook contains procedures for the following areas:

- Safety and Loss Control
- Florida's Right to Know Law
- Work Order Procedures

Facilities Maintenance

- Maintenance Policy for State of Emergency
- Maintenance Vehicles
- Property Control and Accounting
- General Policies on work hours, break time, leave and call-in procedures, etc.

The Maintenance Department does not have any written procedures that provide for:

- Replacement and selection of equipment
- Purchase of equipment, supplies and materials
- Establishing a level of maintenance expectations and maintenance standards
- Maintenance budget criteria
- Management of facilities
- Facilities standards
- Personnel staffing policies
- Use of facilities and equipment

The custodial contractor (Aramark) has written procedures and training in a number of areas. Once the employee has reviewed each of the policies and procedures or received training in an area he must sign a completion checklist. The areas of procedures, policies, and training include:

- Job Description
- Cleaning methods
- Equipment use and general maintenance
- Safety procedures
- Use of PPE
- MSDS training/locations (Right to Know)
- Attendance policy
- Tobacco use policy
- Uniform policy
- Grievance policy
- Sexual Harassment policy
- Worker's Compensation procedures
- Shoes for Crews program
- Safety contest
- Paycheck receiving
- Overtime policy

Each employee is also given a booklet "Guidelines to Partnership" which reviews the company mission and vision, work policies, retirement, evaluations, health plan, disciplinary procedures, recognition, compensation, safety pointers, etc.

Recommendations ────────────

- *We recommend the district develop board-approved operating procedures for the Maintenance Department in the following areas, at a minimum:*

  — *replacement and selection of equipment (appropriate approvals necessary for replacement of equipment)*

  — *purchasing of equipment, supplies and materials (quality and cost effectiveness)*

  — *maintenance standards for facilities (how much and what kinds of deferred maintenance will be tolerated)*

  — *criteria for establishing maintenance budget (based on maintenance standards)*

  — *community use of facilities (fees, liability and eligibility)*

  — *personnel staffing levels (staffing formulas to ensure maintenance standards can be met)*

Action Plan 11-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-1

To develop Board-Approved Maintenance Operations Procedures	
Strategy	Develop Board approved written procedures for the following items: • Replacement and selection of equipment • Purchasing of equipment, supplies and materials • Maintenance standards for facilities • Criteria for establishing maintenance budget • Community use of facilities • Personnel staffing levels
Action Needed	Step 1: The supervisor of maintenance in conjunction with the foreman and crew leader will prepare draft procedures. Step 2: The assistant superintendent for administrative services will review and approve the procedures. Step 3: The procedures will be presented to the Board for its approval.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services
Time Frame	June 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources

2   The district has not established maintenance standards in its short- and long-term plans for providing appropriately and equitably maintained facilities within budget and in accordance with the district's five-year facilities work plan and annual budget.

The maintenance department has established objectives consistent with its mission

The Maintenance Department Handbook provides the following statement and list of objectives:

This manual of guidelines and support information for proper maintenance and operation of education plants is for the purpose of meeting the goals and objectives of the Board, superintendent of schools, and Maintenance Department.

Objectives:

1. To assure maintenance services remain at a level that allows students and staff to learn and work in an environment that permits reinforcement of the instructional program.
2. To assure a safe and sanitary environment.
3. To provide protection of facilities and equipment for the maximum economic utilization.
4. To assure an appearance that will promote community pride and foster good public relations (i.e. Market the School System).

These objectives place primary importance on maintaining an appropriate learning environment that is safe and healthy so the teaching-learning process can succeed. Secondarily, the district wants to protect its capital assets to allow maximum economic use and present a positive appearance to promote community pride in its schools.

The district has not established maintenance standards in its maintenance plans

The district has appropriate objectives for its maintenance activities but they do not have the appropriate maintenance standards to allow the district to know if these goals are being realized. The Florida Department of Education's "Maintenance and Operations Administrative Guidelines for School Districts and Community Colleges" expresses the relationship between objectives and standards as follows:

> School facility administrators should operate and maintain educational physical plants to accommodate students and staff, facilitate the learning process, and promote a healthy and secure school environment. In order to realize this objective, acceptable standards for each educational facility's functional performance, safety, sanitation, physical condition, and appearance should be established by individual school districts and community colleges. The ultimate intent of these standards is to establish baseline criteria and benchmarks for maintaining and operating educational facilities which, at a minimum, reflect the expectations of the educational facility customers, school administration, government officials, and the taxpaying public. This criteria also forms the basis by which maintenance and operations administrators can plan and implement new programs, modify existing ones, measure effectiveness, and gauge customer satisfaction.

As the Administrative Guidelines point out the ultimate intent of maintenance standards is to establish baseline criteria and benchmarks for maintaining and operating educational facilities. Maintenance standards define procedures for maintaining facilities, equipment, and elements on the grounds that maximize their useful lives. Once standards are developed it is possible to conduct assessments of the condition of various building and grounds systems to determine the repair/replacement needs and the urgency of the needed maintenance. This allows the development of long-term maintenance plans based on assessments of need that prioritize what needs to be accomplished and when. A school district that applies maintenance standards will experience lower maintenance costs over the long run.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish maintenance standards to ensure that all buildings*

and grounds are maintained equitably and that include projections of manpower, budget, equipment and the physical condition and repair/replacement needs of district facilities.

Action Plan 11-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-2

Establish uniform district-wide maintenance standards	
Strategy	Develop maintenance standards for buildings and grounds. Standards should include at a minimum, roofs, gutters, windows, HVAC, lighting, ceilings, plumbing, interior and exterior painting, and electrical. Grounds should include paving, sidewalks, fencing, and playgrounds.
Action Needed	Step 1: Maintenance supervisor should develop maintenance standards for, at least, the identified areas.
	Step 2: These standards will be presented to the assistant superintendent for administrative services for his review and approval.
	Step 3: The final standards shall be presented to the Board for its approval.
	Step 4: Incorporate new technology that may be acquired through implementation of Action Plan 11-4 into the standards as appropriate.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and maintenance supervisor
Time Frame	Implement standards September 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

3 The district does not identify and communicate performance standards and expected outcomes to maintenance staff. The district does communicate performance standards for custodial staff through its contract with ARAMARK.

The maintenance department does not have performance standards that are written and communicated to staff.

The performance of the maintenance department is dependent on the capabilities of a competent staff. However, this staff is not held accountable for its performance. The maintenance department has not developed any performance standards for frequently repeated tasks such as repairing a lock, painting a room, replacing glass in a window, etc. Without such standards, it is difficult to hold maintenance staff accountable for their work. Performance standards provide the required time for the task thereby establishing a performance measure that can be tracked. Performance standards would provide clear expectations for employees, a basis for meaningful evaluations, a foundation for a thorough orientation and training program for employees, and a more effective scheduling of work, improved budgeting, enhanced staff morale, and improved customer service.

Aramark has established performance standards for various cleaning tasks and spaces. They establish the required daily and weekly tasks to be performed in a particular space and the allotted time to complete the tasks. For example, Process A is to be performed in each classroom on a daily basis in fifteen minutes. Process A includes the following tasks: dry clean chalk board; empty sharpeners/trash; spot clean desks; spot vacuum and/or spot mop; inspect. Similar processes are established for offices, restrooms, and other spaces.

Recommendations

- *We recommend the development of performance standards for frequently repeated tasks in the maintenance department.*

Action Plan 11-3 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-3

To develop Performance Standards		
Strategy	Develop performance standards for frequently repeated maintenance tasks. The standards should define the task and the number of hours necessary to complete the task.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	The maintenance supervisor, foreman, and crew leader will identify tasks that are appropriate for performance standards.
	Step 2:	The supervisors will research existing applicable industry/military standards.
	Step 3:	The supervisors will develop performance standards for commonly repeated tasks.
	Step 4:	Explain the standards and make them available to staff.
	Step 5:	Track the performance of staff measured against the standards for six months and adjust standards as needed.
	Step 6:	Assistant superintendent for administrative services presents standards to Board for approval.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and supervisory personnel from maintenance department.	
Time Frame	Prepare initial set of standards by January 2003. Complete six-month trial and revise standards by August 2003. Receive Board approval and implement in September 2003.	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.	

4   The district does not ensure that maintenance standards are regularly updated to implement new technology and procedures. Custodial standards are revised if cleaning processes are changed due to new technology or procedures.

Custodial standards are updated when cleaning processes change due to new technology or procedures

An interview with the operations manager for Aramark indicated that he receives 40 to 50 hours per year of training on new regulations that may impact the cleaning industry, new technology that may be available in the industry and new procedures that may be of benefit to more efficiently meet the cleaning needs of his client. In addition, the operations manager receives Cleaning Maintenance Magazine that regularly reviews the latest techniques in cleaning and new technology for the industry. It is his responsibility to decide if the new technology or procedures should be introduced in the Santa Rosa district. In 2001, several new pieces of equipment have been introduced to allow employees to accomplish their tasks more efficiently. Included in the list are new battery-powered sweepers, autoscrubbers, and propane powered burnishers. Processes are presently under analysis to see if standards should be updated.

New technology or procedures are not communicated in the maintenance department

The maintenance department does not have any maintenance standards to update due to new technology or procedures. However, even without standards, the department should develop a formalized method for providing information on new technology to workers. The maintenance department currently subscribes to several publications including Maintenance Solutions, Energy Decisions, American School & University and Heating/Piping/Air Conditioning Engineering. However, interviews with maintenance personnel indicated that these publications are not shared with the staff. The department should consider sharing these and other publications with the staff to keep current on technology developments. In addition, the department needs to participate in trade organizations to keep the district management current on new developments. The maintenance supervisor is a member of the Florida State Plant Managers Association but has not been active to date.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district provide a budget item for membership in additional trade organizations and subscriptions to additional trade publications that provide current maintenance information and procedures.*

Action Plan 11-4 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-4

Increase trade organization memberships and subscriptions to trade publications		
Strategy	The district should provide a budget item for membership in additional trade organizations and subscriptions to additional trade publications that provide current information and procedures.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	The maintenance supervisor should study several trade organizations and publications to determine which would best meet the needs of the district.
	Step 2:	The assistant superintendent for administrative services should prepare a budget item for professional organization membership and subscriptions.
	Step 3:	The Board should consider the item during the budget process.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services	
Time Frame	Budget process for fiscal year 2004	
Fiscal Impact	Annual cost up to $2,500 with a five-year cost of $12,500	

5 The district does not obtain and use customer feedback to identify and implement program improvements within the maintenance department.

The Maintenance Department does not consistently obtain customer feedback to identify and implement program improvements

No formal procedure exists to obtain customer feedback for use in a self-analysis to improve the performance and productivity of the maintenance department. Customers are not surveyed using a written instrument to determine strengths and weaknesses of the maintenance department service. It should be pointed out that although no formal procedures are in place to obtain customer satisfaction or areas needing improvement, interviews with teachers, principals, community members and students

indicated a general satisfaction with service from the maintenance department especially in cases where health and/or safety issues were involved.

There is an annual request for input from building administrators regarding maintenance and construction needs as part of the information used to develop the five-year plan, but the purpose of this is not to improve the service delivered by the maintenance department. The department did provide an example of a one-time survey regarding a company that was providing fire alarm services and inspections to see if the building administrators were satisfied with the service of the company. It was also pointed out that the School Advisory Councils at each school conduct an annual survey concerned mainly with the delivery of instructional services at the building and one of the questions involves the maintenance of the building and grounds. However, none of these examples demonstrate the intent of this best practice which is the use of customer feedback for the specific purpose of improving the delivery of maintenance services.

The custodial services contractor has a formal procedure to obtain customer feedback regarding concerns and level of satisfaction. ARAMARK has its three regional supervisors meet with their building administrators and lead custodians to walk through the buildings on a bi-weekly basis to check for areas needing improvement and/or areas of satisfaction. In addition, all teachers and other staff in each building are surveyed annually to determine their level of satisfaction. Quarterly, information from these sources is presented to the board of education at a regular board meeting.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the maintenance department set up a customer feedback program.*

    Action Plan 11-5 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-5

Develop a maintenance department customer feedback program		
Strategy	The assistant superintendent for administrative services should set up a customer feedback program.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Assistant superintendent for administrative services should identify parents and staff to participate in program
	Step 2:	Instrument to record feedback should be developed.
	Step 3:	At least annually, parents and staff should record their perceptions on instrument and deliver to assistant superintendent for administrative services
	Step 4:	The assistant superintendent and maintenance supervisor should review and base improved delivery of services on information from the surveys.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services	
Time Frame	Conduct first survey during January 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed within existing resources.	

6 The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance and efficiency of the maintenance program. The custodial services department has established accountability mechanisms.

The maintenance department does not use any performance and cost-efficiency measures to evaluate the program

The district has not established cost-effectiveness measures for its maintenance program. Examples of cost- effectiveness measures could include work order completion times, effective work hours (hours worked versus hours scheduled), work order backlogs by craft, cost per square foot, number of full-time equivalent staff per square foot, and cost per student. One valuable performance measure is the satisfaction level of your customers and under best practice five it is recommended that the maintenance department establish a customer feedback mechanism. The lack of performance measures and reports limits the district's ability to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the maintenance program.

Maintenance expenditures per square foot and per student were analyzed and compared to five peer districts (Exhibit 11-5). On both a square foot and per student basis, Santa Rosa's costs are higher than three of its peer districts. Santa Rosa needs to establish the use of cost-effectiveness measures to inform management decision-making and improve the performance and efficiency of the maintenance department program.

Exhibit 11-5

Maintenance Cost Comparison With Peer Districts, 1999-00

School District	Maintenance Cost Per Square Foot	Maintenance Cost Per Student
Okaloosa	$1.18	$170.60
Putnam	$1.02	$190.70
Santa Rosa	$0.99	$157.08
Lake	$0.97	$139.96
Suwannee	$0.92	$148.95
Escambia	$0.86	$130.73

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

The custodial services department uses accountability mechanisms

The main accountability mechanism used by Aramark to assess its performance is customer feedback. Aramark has a formal procedure to obtain customer feedback regarding its performance. One procedure involves the regional supervisors meeting with a building administrator and lead custodian at each of their buildings, on a bi-weekly basis, to walk through the building to check for areas needing improvement and/or areas of satisfaction. Another procedure used is an annual survey of all staff in each building to determine their level of satisfaction. This information forms part of a quarterly report to the board of education at a regular board meeting. In addition to the customer feedback information, the board is informed of staffing changes, promotions, training activities since the last report, accomplishments, equipment additions, and challenges or problem areas and how they are being addressed. An April 23, 2001, building-by-building assessment of ServiceMaster's overall quality of service achieved an average ranking of 4.47 out of a possible 5.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop and track cost performance measures to inform management decision-making and improve the delivery of maintenance services.*

Action Plan 11-6 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-6

Develop and Track Maintenance Cost Performance Measures	
Strategy	Develop and track cost performance measures to inform management decision-making and improve the delivery of maintenance services.
Action Needed	Step 1: The assistant superintendent for administrative services and the maintenance supervisor should work together to develop a set of performance measures and benchmarks for the maintenance function. These measures could include: • Maintenance cost per square foot • Maintenance cost per student • Square feet of building space per FTE maintenance staff • Work order backlog per craft • Maintenance hours worked versus hours scheduled • Work order completion times • Utilities cost per square foot Step 2: Track statistics and analyze trends. Step 3: Use the data to reassign personnel, reallocate resources, and implement new procedures to improve the maintenance function.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services
Time Frame	June 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources.

Budget for Facilities Maintenance

7 **The district accurately projects cost estimates of major maintenance projects.**

Cost estimates are based on the district's experience with similar projects, current estimating cost standards, and market conditions

Prior experience and the district's knowledge of costs are used to provide estimates of major maintenance projects. An additional factor assists in producing very accurate estimates. The district has many fixed price contracts, such as, roofing, carpeting, light maintenance labor, electrical labor, welding, etc. If the district is able to project appropriate quantities and time to complete the job the fixed price contracts produce estimates that are very accurate. The district provided the estimates and final purchase orders for a roofing job and carpet job as examples. The estimate for the roofing job was $50,688 and for the carpet

job, $20,000. The final price for each was $50,688.30 and $19,605.12 respectively. Current estimating cost standards like R.S. Means have also been consulted in the past and market conditions are considered by assessing the competitiveness of the bidding climate. The district also uses registered consultants like architects and mechanical and electrical engineers to design and estimate certain projects and they use estimating cost standards, industry standards, and knowledge of the current bidding climate to estimate the project.

The cost of inflation for maintenance projects is not projected for five years

An interview with the assistant superintendent for administrative services indicated that inflation for estimates five years out is not done. This administrator felt that accuracy is critical for one-year because Florida state law requires an annual balanced budget without deficit spending but it is not feasible to project inflation rates as far out as five year. In instances where estimates for projects five years out must be made, like the work plan or educational plant survey, it is acknowledged that these are simply estimates and they will be looked at more closely as the project gets closer to implementation. The administrator pointed out that they have recently experienced deflation on some of the maintenance projects so five-year inflation estimates are not very meaningful.

Granted, the assistant superintendent for administrative services makes some valid points regarding the absolute accuracy of estimates as far out as five years. However, the purpose of this best practice indicator is to encourage as accurate a planning scenario as possible for the district. It is a truism that the same project today is not going to be completed for the same amount of money one, two, or five years from now. It is also true that the project could cost less rather than more at some point in the future. However, the reality of our economic history indicates that it is generally going to cost more to do the same project in the future. For example, the Consumer Price Index since 1995 has been:

Year	Percentage
1995	3.4
1996	2.2
1997	1.6
1998	2.3
1999	3.0
2000	2.8

This represents an average inflation rate of 2.55% and out-year estimates adjusted appropriately for inflation would provide the district more accurate planning information.

The district does not regularly evaluate projected cost estimates for accuracy and utilize the information to improve future estimates

The district depends on its maintenance department's experience and professional judgment and fixed price contracts to produce accurate cost estimates. The district does not regularly evaluate projected cost estimates for accuracy. One of the main reasons this does not happen is that the district does not have an effective computerized work order management system to provide greater ability to compare projected to actual costs.

Recommendations ———————————————————

- *We recommend that the district supplement its cost estimating processes for major maintenance projects by including inflationary adjustments and evaluating projected to actual costs.*

Action Plan 11-7 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-7

Include an inflation factor and evaluate maintenance cost estimates	
Strategy	The district should supplement its major maintenance project cost estimating by including inflationary adjustments and evaluating the accuracy of projections to improve future estimates.
Action Needed	Step 1: Use the Consumer Price Index or some other method of establishing an inflation factor to apply to out-year estimates on major maintenance projects.
	Step 2: Apply the inflation factor to out-year estimates in the next series of reports requiring out-year cost estimates.
	Step 3: Periodically, review the accuracy of projected cost estimates for major maintenance projects with the actual costs for those projects and use the information to improve future estimates.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and maintenance supervisor
Time Frame	Apply inflation factor to next series of reports requiring out-year cost estimates. Implement regular evaluation of cost estimates once appropriate technology is available to make it feasible.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources.

8 The administration has developed an annual budget with spending limits that comply with the lawful funding for each category of facilities maintenance and operations.

The budget does not rely on or permit unlawful use of taxpayer dollars

The consultant reviewed the Florida statutes that present the requirements regarding maintenance funding including: 235.186—Effort index grants for school district facilities; 235.211—Educational facilities contracting and construction techniques; 235.435—Funds for comprehensive educational plant needs; construction cost maximums for school district capital projects; 236.25—District school tax. These were discussed with the assistant superintendent for administrative services to see if the district has had any problems following the guidelines established in these statues. The assistant superintendent reported that the Auditor General's Office has not cited the district in any audit for failure to use funding for maintenance projects properly and according to State Statute and Administrative Policy. The audit reports from the Auditor General's Office for both fiscal years 1999 and 2000 were reviewed by the consultant and for both years the Summary of Report on Compliance and Internal Control stated:

> The District generally complied with significant provisions of laws, administrative rules, regulations, contracts and grants, and other guidelines. The District has established and implemented procedures that generally provide for internal control of District operations.

The annual budget addresses ongoing maintenance tasks and deferred maintenance needs

The district has dedicated capital project funds for major maintenance to address recurring maintenance tasks in order to avoid high repair or replacement costs in the future years and deal with deferred maintenance. For example, over the next five years every school and several administrative buildings are scheduled for roofing repairs and carpet replacement projects. A review of the Capital Outlay Priority

List for fiscal year 2001-02 delineated each of the projects listed in the Five-Year Work Plan and provided the funding source, the budgeted amount, the location of the work, and a project description. The PPL included both new capital projects and projects to cover deferred maintenance needs.

Allocations are included for the correction of deficiencies identified in safety inspections

The district has scheduled life safety projects at twelve specific buildings over the next five years and in each of the next five years there is a budget allocation for either $400,000 or $450,000 for safety to life countywide projects.

The district could strengthen its reporting of budget allocations to actual project expenditures

The district develops an annual budget with spending limits that complies with provisions of law, administrative rules and regulations, etc. for each category of facilities maintenance and operations. If a project is going to exceed its initial allocation, the board must approve a fund transfer and a monthly budget amendment report goes to the board making the necessary adjustments by major fund category. However, the district does not provide the board with an expenditure recap of each project completed during that fiscal year with the source of funds, the initial cost estimate, the actual cost, etc. This is not a legal requirement but it would help the board and public see that funds allocated for a particular need were used for the intended purpose.

Recommendations —————————————

- *We recommend that the district prepare a facilities project report for each fiscal year matching the proposed source of funds, the original project scope and estimate, with the actual funds used for the*

Action Plan 11-8

Prepare an expenditure recap report for facilities projects	
Strategy	The district should prepare a facilities expenditure report after each fiscal year that compares the budget information for each project with the actual expenditure information for that project.
Action Needed	Step 1: The assistant superintendent for finance and administrative services should prepare the expenditure recap report.
	Step 2: The report should be presented to the board for its information.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for finance and administrative services.
Time Frame	The first report would cover the 2002 fiscal year.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources.

9   The board maintains a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations.

A Reserve Fund is Available to Maintenance

The maintenance department does have a reserve fund to meet unique situations created by new programs mandated by the state or federal government or for emergency situations. The district's reserve fund is Fund 390 that is the Local Capital Improvement Fund. The fund had approximately $625,000 in it as of June 30, 2001. The maintenance department does not use the reserve fund for recurring expenses. The last and only time the reserve fund has been used, at least since 1975, was in 1995 when the district experienced two hurricanes, Erin and Opal, within a 45-day period. The reserve fund was utilized to cover the recovery expenses until the insurance and FEMA reimbursements were received. Ultimately, the district was totally reimbursed for all the costs of the two hurricanes.

The Budgetary Policy is Flexible

The budgetary policy is flexible enough to ensure funding of unforeseen maintenance needs that could adversely affect the district's mission if not funded (e.g., emergency funds). The assistant superintendent for administrative services job description provides the authority to request that funds be appropriated from the one-half cent sales tax fund to meet emergency needs. Once the request is made, the assistant superintendent for finance, the superintendent, and the board must approve the request. If this source would not be sufficient, the General Operating Fund can also be used. However, this is not done with either fund unless the need is really justified.

Recommendations ————————————

- *No recommendations.*

10 The maintenance department does not regularly evaluate maintenance activities to determine the most cost-effective method of providing needed services. Custodial services were evaluated and privatized several years ago.

Cost-effectiveness measures have not been established for the maintenance department

Cost-effectiveness measures were discussed under best practice six regarding accountability mechanisms and a recommendation was made to implement such measures. See Action Plan 11-6.

Certain maintenance activities have been outsourced but the department does not regularly evaluate existing services to explore the feasibility of alternative methods of providing services

The district has outsourced a number of maintenance activities. It has entered into a number of five-year contracts with companies to provide fire extinguisher inspection and maintenance, fire alarm system inspection and repair, roof surveys and repairs, mechanical system filter changes, day labor to provide assistance for maintenance technicians, light maintenance and painting, electrical wiring, heating, ventilating, and air conditioning work, plumbing and telecommunications. The in-house maintenance staffing levels have not changed since 1979 (a more detailed discussion of this occurs under best practice 14) even though almost one million square feet of new space was added between 1989 and 1999.

Outsourcing these activities has allowed the in-house maintenance staff to concentrate on maintenance activities and not be diverted toward capital improvement projects like building partitions and replacing equipment. It is commendable that a focus on maintenance activities has been emphasized in the department. However, the district has not developed any cost-effectiveness measures for its in-house (see discussion and recommendation under best practice 6) maintenance activities and written evaluations of the costs and benefits of outside contracting were not produced to verify the effectiveness and/or cost savings from the outsourced activities.

Several years ago the district received a quotation from ServiceMaster (the company that provides the custodial services for the district) to provide maintenance management and the following related programs:

- Preventive maintenance
- Management information programs
- Casualty prevention and control
- Training programs
- Life expectancy programs and reports
- Technical assistance
- Work order control system
- Construction management program
- Energy management analysis
- Inventory control
- New regulatory compliance programs and information
- Asbestos management and training programs

The proposal also provided a twelve month maintenance implementation schedule (see exhibit 11-x) that included a timeline for the implementation of some 23 different activities that would have included such things as meeting with school principals, evaluation of the skills of the maintenance staff, setting up a computerized maintenance system, implementing warehouse/supply procedures, employee training, a preventive maintenance program, work order procedures, and a utility usage analysis to name just some of the activities. The cost of the program would have been $0.55 per square foot. The cost of present school board employees would have been included without fringe benefits. Equipment, utilities, purchased services, and repairs and maintenance would have been at an additional cost. The district has not completed a cost/benefit analysis of providing these same services in-house versus through the contractor.

Exhibit 11-6

Maintenance Implementation Schedule   "SAMPLE"

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Identify key concerns of Principals/Adm.	►											
Employee Orientation	►											
Office Set-up	►											
Order Dedicated Phone Line	►											
Meet & Tour Schools With Principals	►											
Index Equipment	►	►										
Work Order Procedures	►											
Utility Analysis	►											
Computerized Maintenance System Set-up & Implementation	►	►										
Work Order Scheduling Board	►											
Skill Evaluation of Staff		►										
Implement Warehouse/Supply Procedures	►	►										
Supervisor/Foremen Orientation	►											
Team Meeting	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►
Establish Building Engineer System	►	►	►									
Employee Training			►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►
Job Description		►										
Monthly Joint Reviews	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►	►
Implement Organization Changes		►	►									
Preventive Maintenance Program			►	►								
Leadership Development		►	►	►	►	►						
Program Review							►				►	
Program Review	►			►			►			►		
Q.P.E. (Quality Performance Evaluation)												

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

The district privatized custodial services in 1993

The district entered into a five-year contract with ServiceMaster (recently purchased by Aramark) in 1993 and renewed it in 1998 for another five years. The contract provides all the custodial services and grounds maintenance for the schools and administrative functions, workers compensation processing, ordering and paying for product and equipment. This has the benefit of relieving school administrators of the day-to-day duties, such as custodial supervision and scheduling, training, ordering and purchasing supplies and equipment, etc. The original annual contract was $157,000 below the board's custodial costs at the time.

A comparison of present costs with Santa Rosa's peer district indicates that one district has very high costs (Lake) in comparison with the other districts, one has relatively high costs (Suwannee) and the other four districts cluster together based on a cost per square foot basis. Exhibit 7 indicates that Okaloosa, Escambia, Putnam, and Santa Rosa are within five cents per square foot of each other when looking at an annual cost per square foot and less than one-half cent per square foot separates the districts on a monthly cost per square foot basis. Santa Rosa does much better than either Lake County or Suwannee. Although privatization has not produced the lowest custodial costs among its peer districts, the costs are very

competitive and the district feels they have achieved a much more consistent appearance to grounds and buildings district-wide and administrators, especially at the building level, have been able to concentrate more on instructional activities.

Exhibit 11-7

Peer District Custodial Cost Comparison

District	FISH Sq. Ft.	Custodial Budget	Annual Cost per Sq. Ft.	Monthly Cost per Sq. Ft.
Lake	4,104,376	$5,590,262	$1.362	$0.1135
Suwannee	945,256	$1,042,444	$1.102	$0.0919
Santa Rosa	3,427,513	$3,279,300	$0.956	$0.0797
Putnam	2,274,458	$2,149,797	$0.945	$0.0788
Escambia	6,665,829	$6,238,049	$0.936	$0.0780
Okaloosa	4,197,837	$3,803,971	$0.906	$0.0755
Average Cost			$1.023	$0.0852

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

The maintenance department needs to evaluate alternative methods of providing services such as privatization

A number of factors would suggest that Santa Rosa should consider the privatization alternative more fully. First, the district has had a positive experience with the privatization of custodial services. Second, the district's maintenance costs are higher than three of its peer districts (see discussion under best practice number six). Third, the district's maintenance staffing levels are well below those recommended by the Florida Department of Education for the amount of building square footage in the district (see discussion under best practice number fourteen) and brining them in line with the recommendation would add over one million dollars to the maintenance budget. Fourth, the sample implementation schedule (see exhibit 11-y) from ServiceMaster indicates that the department would get many of the critical things needed to make the maintenance function more efficient and improve the delivery of service, including a computerized maintenance system, employee training, and a preventive maintenance program.

Traditional areas considered appropriate for privatization include food service, custodial, transportation and maintenance services. The decision to outsource or privatize a function must be based on sound financial principles and a well-grounded understanding of the benefits, and possible pitfalls, that may accrue to the district. Since all school districts are required to follow standard accounting principles as directed in the Florida Department of Education's <u>Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting Manual for Florida Schools</u>, the district should have available to them data which will allow an analysis of the financial implications of outsourcing plant operations and maintenance. Other issues to be identified and considered will include employee training, supervision, equipment and supplies, insurance and benefits, and a quality of service feedback system; all of which should be measured against the district's ability to provide such in comparison to a private contractor. A valuable resource for the district when considering outsourcing issues or developing RFP's can be found at <u>www.floridataxwatch.org</u> and is titled "Full Cost Analysis Procedures and Development of Request for Proposals for Management of Non-Instructional Educational Services." It is noted that Santa Rosa administrators participated in the preparation of the publication referenced.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district consider outsourcing the maintenance function based on a privatization study.*

Action Plan 11-9 provides the needed steps to implement this recommendation..

Action Plan 11-9

The district should consider privatization of the maintenance function		
Strategy	Consider privatization of the maintenance function.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Identify maintenance functions that could be privatized.
	Step 2:	Identify criteria for use in determining whether to outsource functions.
	Step 3:	Contact additional vendors besides Aramark to determine costs to privatize these functions.
	Step 4:	Analyze costs to perform same services with in-house staff.
	Step 5:	Compare in-house costs to outsourced costs.
	Step 6:	Determine the feasibility of privatizing maintenance functions based on the results of the comparison.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and the maintenance supervisor	
Time Frame	January 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources	

11 The district minimizes equipment costs through purchasing practices and maintenance.

Volume purchases are made according to legal bidding requirements and to achieve cost-effectiveness whenever possible

The Purchasing Department has a purchasing manual that, in several places, encourages cost-effective purchasing practices and volume purchases. The Mission Statement encourages legal and cost-effective purchasing practices.

> It is the mission of the Santa Rosa County School Board Purchasing Department first and foremost to conduct all purchasing duties in accordance with all applicable Federal, State and Local laws, statues, ordinances, regulations and rules. The purchasing department will also strive to receive the maximum value for the tax payer's dollar, obtain the goods and services at the best possible prices, provide the highest quality service to teachers, administrators and support staff, develop mutually beneficial relationships with the vendors with which the board does business, and ensure that all purchasing personnel conduct their duties within the highest degree of ethical behavior.

In Chapter 3 under Bidding Procedures, section 3.1.1, Consolidation of Purchasing the manual states:

> All schools, departments and agencies under the Santa Rosa County School Board's jurisdiction will anticipate their annual needs for supplies and equipment to the greatest degree practicable. The Purchasing

> Department will consolidate the needs in order to accomplish quantity
> buying under competitive bidding.

Again, in Chapter 6 under Purchasing Procedures, section 6.1.8, Small Orders Discouraged, the manual states:

> Small orders are extremely costly to the District and even more so to
> vendors.

The district quantity purchases whenever possible and follows legal and good business practice in either quoting or bidding purchases. Annual bids are received on certain materials and equipment for the maintenance department (e.g., paint). The district also bids contracts with suppliers like Home Depot, Best Buy, and Lowes so parts and equipment can be acquired at a predetermined price.

The district has not implemented preventive maintenance programs for most of its mechanical or structural systems

The department has entered into contracts for the regular replacement of mechanical system filters and on the structural side for the regular inspection and repair of roofs. Beyond this, however, there is no preventive maintenance program in place to minimize equipment costs through maintenance practices. A preventive maintenance program spreads the maintenance cost of equipment over the life of the equipment and extends the functional life of the equipment.

The five-year facilities work program includes $4.9 million in furniture and equipment replacement projections. The district develops these projections based on its perceived needs or inspection results rather than on a formal equipment replacement program. A formal replacement program helps avoid unnecessary repairs for equipment that should be replaced. A replacement program also supports more accurate budgeting of future equipment needs.

Recommendations ───────────────

- *We recommend that the district develop a formal equipment replacement program for all equipment with a cost greater than $10,000.*

- *We recommend that the district implement a mechanical and structural preventive maintenance program.*

Action Plan 11-10 provides the steps needed to implement the equipment replacement program recommendation.

Action Plan 11-11 under best practice 12 provides the steps needed to implement a preventive maintenance program.

Action Plan 11-10

Develop a formal equipment replacement program	
Strategy	Develop a formal equipment replacement program for all equipment with a cost greater than $10,000.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop inventory of equipment with a cost greater than $10,000 (from fixed asset inventory.)

	Step 2:	Review equipment documentation to identify estimated useful life. Contact vendors if necessary to obtain estimates of useful life. Determine when each piece of equipment will need to be replaced at current replacement value.
	Step 3:	Develop long-range equipment replacement plan by documenting replacement cost estimates for each prospective year and applying an inflation factor.
	Step 4:	Incorporate requirements into five-year facilities work program and capital budget for the following year.
Who is Responsible		Assistant superintendent for administrative services and maintenance supervisor
Time Frame		Develop during fiscal year 2003 for implementation in 2004.
Fiscal Impact		This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

12 The district uses some proactive maintenance practices but it does not have a preventive maintenance program to reduce maintenance costs.

No overall preventive maintenance program has been implemented in the district to reduce long-term maintenance costs.

The maintenance department is reactive instead of being proactive. According to the maintenance supervisor, the department presently has a backlog of 3,000 work orders with more arriving on a daily basis. The district has 30 schools so this is an average of 100 work orders per building. The district needs to consider a different approach to the delivery of maintenance services in an attempt to gain on the vast amount of deferred maintenance. One way of doing this is to become more proactive with the implementation of a preventive maintenance program.

The district has recently implemented scheduled roof surveys and repairs and a filter replacement program for mechanical equipment. These activities serve as one component in a preventive maintenance program. However, no overall preventive maintenance program exists for either mechanical equipment or structural systems.

The maintenance department evaluates facilities designs and implements strategies to reduce labor and long-term maintenance costs.

The district has used a prototypical design for its buildings since the early 1990's and feedback is sought from users of the prototype to improve the following building. During a visit to the construction site for Bagdad Elementary School, the assistant superintendent for administrative services pointed out several changes in the prototype's design to improve the life-cycle costs of various materials and reduce the maintenance costs. One example was the change to a waterproof ceiling tile that will not become saturated and fall due to leaks in either the roof or mechanical system piping. Another improvement involved the use of ceramic tile from floor to ceiling in restrooms which eliminates the problem of deterioration of the wall material above the ceramic tile in previous designs.

The administration can demonstrate that a process is in place to ensure policies and procedures are followed to dispose of surplus furniture and equipment

The district has several documents and forms to specify the exact procedure that needs to be followed for the disposal of surplus (old, outdated, worn out, and/or otherwise unusable) furniture and equipment. The Maintenance Department Handbook has a section entitled, "Property Control and Accounting" that states:

> Each employee of the Maintenance Department has the responsibility of
> not disposing of any School District property or moving it without
> notifying the Property Control Department and completing the proper
> transfer forms. Employees do not have the authority to dispose of

equipment belonging to the School District other than in the manner
described in the Property Accounting Manual.

The district has two manuals to assist in the disposition of surplus property. These are the "Property Accounting Policies and Procedures For Property Custodians," and the "Textbook Depository and Surplus Property Warehouse Policies and Procedures." There is also a "Transfer to Surplus" form that must be completed before any furniture or equipment is moved. Once it is ascertained that the property is no longer needed within the school district, the property is auctioned.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district develop and implement a preventive maintenance program for both mechanical and structural systems.*

Action Plan 11-11 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-11

Develop and implement a preventive maintenance program		
Strategy	Develop and implement a preventive maintenance (PM) program for mechanical and structural systems.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Identify equipment and other components that will be included in a preventive maintenance program.
	Step 2:	Review equipment documentation and other material to identify the type and frequency of preventive maintenance tasks.
	Step 3:	Establish PM teams composed of staff from each trade such as electrical, plumbing, carpentry, mechanical.
	Step 4:	Assign PM teams on a scheduled basis to the buildings for an established period of time to work on previously submitted work orders and assess what other needs may exist. Initially, until the backlog of work orders is pared down, the teams may stay in a high school for 5 days, a middle school for 3 days, and an elementary school for 2 days. Once the backlog of work orders is manageable the number of days at each type of facility may be able to be adjusted.
	Step 5:	Prior knowledge of the work orders will allow the PM team to pull together required materials and equipment to respond to the work orders and reduce wasted time driving around for parts before any work can be accomplished.
	Step 6:	School administrators will be informed at least two weeks before PM team visits so they can prepare work requests and submit them. Scheduled PM can occur during regular visits.
	Step 7:	Implement the PM program.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and maintenance supervisor	
Time Frame	Implement in the fall of 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation will reduce the long-term costs of maintenance but it is not possible to project the dollar amount.	

Maintenance Program Goals and Outcomes

13The maintenance department does not regularly review the organizational structure of the maintenance program to minimize administrative layers and processes.

The maintenance department does not regularly review the program's organizational structure

The maintenance department cannot demonstrate that it regularly reviews its organizational structure and staffing levels to minimize administrative layers and processes. The district has not conducted a comparison of its program's organizational structure and administrative staffing levels compared to programs in comparable districts and it has not sought feedback from staff and the public.

The maintenance program structure has been reviewed and changed within the last five years

The administrative structure of the maintenance department was assessed and changed in 1996. At that time the structure included a maintenance supervisor and two maintenance foremen. The maintenance supervisor was promoted to the assistant superintendent for administrative services. One of the two foremen received the maintenance supervisor position. The district took this opportunity to review the administrative structure of the maintenance department and as a cost cutting measure it was decided not to replace one of the foreman positions. The structure was changed from having a separate foreman over a mechanical and structural division to having one foreman serving directly over the mechanical division and as the second line supervisor over the structural division. A crew leader position was placed directly over the structural division to assist in supervisory tasks. The administrative reorganization that resulted from this review created a minimized organizational structure. Based on industry standards this reduction in supervisory personnel may have created an unreasonable span of control in the department. This is discussed in more detail under best practice 17.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district investigate the span of control in the two divisions of the maintenance department to determine if appropriate supervision can be provided with the present organizational structure (see Action Plan 11-13).*

14 The maintenance department does not regularly review the staffing levels of the maintenance program to maximize the efficient use of personnel. The custodial department under its contract with ARAMARK does review staffing levels.

The district has an outside contractor provide custodial services and staffing level reviews are conducted

Servicemaster (now Aramark) has been providing custodial services for Santa Rosa for the last eight years. The contract is a fixed-priced contract with certain levels of cleanliness established and Aramark determines the number of personnel needed to meet the cleaning standards. The contract does provide for increases in staff if additional square footage is added and likewise, decreases if square footage is taken out of service.

An interview with the operations manager for Aramark indicated that a staffing formula is used that takes into account the number of square feet in the building and the type of cleaning surfaces in the building. The staff presently in custodial services totals 175 of which six are administrative leaving a total of 169 custodians. To provide a benchmark, the custodial staffing formula from the Florida Department of Education's "Maintenance and Operations Administrative Guidelines for School Districts and Community Colleges" would recommend 185 full-time equivalent custodians for the cleanable square footage in the Santa Rosa district. Although below this benchmark, Aramark receives very high satisfaction ratings from building users. Staffing levels are reviewed based on feedback from district personnel and changes do occur. For example, recent review and discussion with the district will result in the addition of one more supervisory type for Santa Rosa. Staffing level changes are reported to the board during the quarterly business review reports that occur at regular board meetings.

The maintenance department periodically reviews staffing composition

The assistant superintendent for administrative services indicated that the number of staff members in the Maintenance Department has not changed since 1979. Although the number of staff has remained the same, the composition of the staff has changed. As employees leave the district through retirement or for other reasons, the administration considers whether the position should remain in the same craft or be changed to a different craft. Since 1979, the number of carpenters has steadily decreased while mechanical and electrical crafts have increased.

Maintenance does not use a staffing formula and staffing levels are below state benchmarks

The maintenance department does not use a staffing formula to provide for additional staff either as new facilities are brought on-line or facilities age and require more maintenance. Square footage requiring maintenance has increased (almost 1 million square feet between 1989 and 1999) but staffing levels have remained static. This has been possible through the use of outside contractors. The district has entered into a number of five-year contracts to have certain services performed. The district has contracted for day labor, light maintenance and painting, filter replacement, fire extinguisher inspection, fire alarm service, roofing surveys and repairs, electrical wiring, heating, ventilating, air conditioning work, plumbing, and telecommunications.

Using the maintenance staffing formula from the Florida Department of Education's "Maintenance and Operations Administrative Guidelines for School Districts and Community Colleges" the square footage of buildings in the Santa Rosa district would suggest a staff of 76 craftspeople and 11 support staff. By comparisons, Santa Rosa has 39 craftspeople and 5 support staff. This would indicate that Santa Rosa is at one-half of the staffing level recommended by the Florida Department of Education.

Comparison can also be made with Santa Rosa's peer districts, Lake, Escambia, Putnam, Suwannee, and Okaloosa. If we look at the percentage of the DOE recommended staffing level for these districts we find Lake at 90%, Escambia at 74%, Putnam at 64%, Suwannee at 79% and Okaloosa at 69% compared to Santa Rosa at 50%. Exhibit 11-8 shows the amount of square footage each craftsperson must maintain in each of the districts. This comparison indicates that each maintenance craftsperson in Santa Rosa must maintain 84% more square footage than a craftsperson in Lake County and 25% more than a craftsperson in Okaloosa County which has the highest square footage per craftsperson next to Santa Rosa.

Santa Rosa has outsourced most of its major maintenance and construction needs so the maintenance craftsperson can concentrate on maintenance repairs and not be diverted to capital improvement projects. However, the district still has a high level of deferred maintenance that is not being responded to by the staff. This indicates that the district needs to look closely at the adequacy of its maintenance staffing levels, spans of control, and deployment of personnel to see if departmental efficiency can be improved or if a different approach needs to be considered.

Exhibit 11-8

Peer District Comparison of Square Footage Per Maintenance Craftsperson

School District	Sq. Ft. per craftsperson
Santa Rosa	**87,885**
Okaloosa	69,964
Putnam	66,896
Escambia	62,885
Suwannee	59,078
Lake	47,725

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district review its staffing levels, backlog of deferred maintenance work orders, and determine if the present staffing level can meet district needs.*

Action Plan 11-12 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-12

Determine if present staffing level can provide appropriate maintenance services		
Strategy	Review staffing levels, backlog of work orders, and determine if present staffing level can meet district needs.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Gather data from peer districts, review various staffing formulas from schools, industry, and the state as well as deferred maintenance levels, and other organizational structures for comparison purposes.
	Step 2:	Determine how district's approach compares to benchmark districts and whether productive changes can be made.
	Step 3:	Determine if an alternative service delivery methodology should be implemented.
	Step 4:	Present findings to Superintendent and Board for further direction.
	Step 5:	Determine a course of action.

Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services
Time Frame	Gather data and review by end of 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources.

15 The maintenance and operations department ensures qualified staff by using appropriate hiring practices.

Procedures are established for attracting qualified applicants

Procedures are established for attracting qualified applicants based on district size, location, and needs. Santa Rosa follows civil service procedures in the hiring of their maintenance employees. Job vacancy notices describe job responsibilities, job qualifications, educational/professional requirements, application and selection criteria, and salary and benefits. Positions are advertised when necessary and the district reports that response is adequate to meet its needs. The employee selection process meets state and federal guidelines related to equal employment opportunities. The district supplied the civil service paperwork to fill the last electronic technician II position. The district requested the certified list of applicants, conducted interviews, selected the person they wanted to hire and notified Civil Service of the selection, employment starting date, and pay range.

Recommendations

- *No recommendations.*

16 The maintenance and operations departments have a written job description for each position within the department.

The district has a written job description for each position within the maintenance and operations departments

The maintenance and custodial departments have written job descriptions for all positions. These descriptions define specific job responsibilities for each position and indicate the position's level of supervisory responsibility. A copy of each Maintenance Department job description is in the Maintenance Department Handbook that was approved by the Board of Education on August 28, 2001. The Handbook is available to all employees and, if requested, to the public. The job descriptions have revisions dated from 1996 through 2001. The custodial job descriptions are in the Aramark handbook for custodians and are updated whenever there is a change in a custodial process. These are also available to the employees and the public. Periodic updating of job descriptions allows the district to address changing requirements for certain positions as well as changes in actual practices.

Recommendations

- *No recommendations*

17The district provides appropriate supervision of maintenance and operations staff.

Evaluations Are Performed for Each Employee on an Annual Basis

Evaluations are performed on an annual basis for maintenance and custodial personnel. The maintenance foreman performs the maintenance evaluations for each maintenance craftsperson and the maintenance supervisor reviews and approves the foreman's appraisal. Each custodian receives an evaluation from his/her regional manager. The percentage increase (3,4, or 5%) of an employee's raise is impacted by one's evaluation. The evaluations use a board approved standard evaluation form (CSB Form VIII-(A)) for Non-Instructional Employees. The appraisal covers the areas of dependability, quality of work, quantity of work, initiative, professional growth/knowledge, interpersonal/attitude, personal, and specific job responsibilities. The employee is rated on a number of indicators under each of the eight areas on a scale of satisfactory, needs improvement, unsatisfactory, or not applicable/not observed. The evaluator signs the appraisal form and the employee signs acknowledging that the evaluation was discussed with him/her and he/she received a copy but not necessarily that they are in agreement with the evaluation. The employee has ten calendar days from the receipt of the evaluation to submit a written response to the evaluation to the personnel office. The evaluations become part of the employee's personnel file.

Levels of Authority and Responsibility Are Defined for each position

Levels of authority and responsibility have been assigned to each position in the Maintenance Department through its job description. Each job description delineates the following:

- The position title
- Whether the position is supervisory or not
- The pay range designation
- A general description of what the position entails
- The essential job functions or duties of the position
- The essential physical skills required of the position
- The environmental conditions encountered in the job
- The required knowledge for the position
- What abilities are expected
- What skills are expected
- The minimum qualifications for the position
- Any licenses required
- Any certifications required

There are 26 different job descriptions in the Maintenance Department. All descriptions received revisions within a five-year period. One was revised in 1996, one in 1997, nine in 1998, fourteen in 1999,

and one in 2000. Revisions are made when changes occur in the job requirements. The changes could be due to changes in law requiring certain new qualifications for a position, changes in the negotiated contract, or district initiated changes.

Supervisor/Employee Ratios Are Stretched

A reorganization of the Maintenance Department occurred in 1996 when the then maintenance supervisor became the assistant superintendent for administrative services. The maintenance supervisor position was filled by one of the foreman in the department. However, his position was not filled at that time. Instead, the remaining foreman position received overall supervisory responsibility for both the mechanical and structural side of the department. A crew leader reporting to the foreman was assigned over the structural employees to assist with the supervision tasks.

The present organizational structure of the Maintenance Department has the one remaining foreman serving as the first line supervisor over 24 employees and the second line supervisor over an additional 15 employees. The crew leader serves as first line supervisor over the 15 structural employees. In Facilities Management published by The Association of Physical Plant Administrators of Universities and Colleges, it is stated that the supervisor/mechanic ratio should range from 1 to 10 to 1 to 15 at the first line of supervision depending on skills and geographic dispersal of job locations and from 1 to 20 to 1 to 40 at the second line of supervision. Based on this benchmark, the district should investigate the addition of a foreman over the structural employees and moving the crew leader position to the mechanical side to reduce the span of control for this foreman.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district investigate the span of control in the two divisions of the maintenance department to determine if appropriate supervision can be provided with the present organizational structure.*

    Action Plan 11-13 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-13

Investigate the span of control in the maintenance department to see if appropriate supervision is being provided		
Strategy	Investigate whether the span of control is appropriate in the maintenance department.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Review industry standards and other districts organizational structures and interview maintenance staff to determine if appropriate supervision is being provided.
	Step 2:	Propose a reorganization of the supervisory structure if warranted.
	Step 3:	If warranted, investigate budget implications and a methodology to implement the changes.
Who is Responsible	The assistant superintendent for administrative services and the maintenance supervisor.	
Time Frame	Review can occur as soon as feasible.	
Fiscal Impact	This investigation can be implemented within existing resources.	
	If a reorganization is proposed the cost will depend on the number of supervisory changes and how it is able to be accomplished.	

18The district does not provide a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff to enhance worker job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.

District staff development does not support the maintenance department

The district does have a Professional Development Center that provides staff development and training but the emphasis in on educational staff, not support staff. There are no annual training programs for trades and custodial personnel. Interviews with the maintenance supervisor, three maintenance staff members, and two custodians indicated that no training occurs in the areas of interpersonal skills development, district policy awareness, or enhancement of worker job satisfaction.

Pre-service and in-service training programs are made available to operations personnel

The custodial services contractor provides pre-service training to each new employee in the following areas:

- Organization's and department's mission
- Policies and procedures
- Their job description
- Job specific training
- Performance expectations
- Hazardous materials
- Hazardous communication
- Bloodborne pathogens for all employees who may be exposed
- Lock out/tag out
- Personal protective equipment
- Respiratory protection/TB awareness for employees who may be exposed
- Asbestos awareness for employees who may be exposed
- Confined spaces for employees who may be exposed

In-service training in safety occurs within the first 90 days of employment in:

- Back safety/lifting
- Trash handling precautions for those who may be exposed
- Noise hazards for employees above a certain decibel level for extended times
- Electrical safety
- Infection control precautions for those who may be exposed
- Eye wash/emergency shower use for those who may be exposed

After the ninety- day period, most training is repeated on an annual basis. For example, lead custodian training occurs annually as does safety training for each employee. Training on new or changed cleaning processes or new equipment is performed at the monthly staff meetings held for all employees.

No written training goals exist for maintenance

There are no written training goals for the maintenance staff. The staff does not receive training in trades enhancement, cross trades utilization, interpersonal team skills, district policy awareness, or department procedures.

The Maintenance Supervisor should work closely with the Professional Development Center staff to plan specific programs for maintenance personnel

The maintenance supervisor does not work closely with the staff development department to ensure a planned, sequential program for personnel skills development. District staff development programs usually concentrate on principals and classroom teachers because they are directly involved in the teaching-learning process with students which is the reason for being of a school system. The staff development staff should have the expertise to assist the maintenance department in the development and refinement of a training program to fit the needs of the maintenance and operations staff members.

Some specialized training does occur and safety training occurs quarterly

The Maintenance Supervisor conducts safety reviews of various areas at the quarterly departmental safety meetings. Santa Rosa produced a safety handbook entitled, "Comprehensive Safety Plan Handbook" that serves as the main resource in the safety meetings (the specific content of the manual will be discussed later in the health and safety section). In addition to safety training, there is periodic specialized training on an as-needed basis. As an example, in an interview with a maintenance mechanic it was stated that he had received training on electrical, backflow prevention, and roof repairs. Generally, instructors from an appropriate trade area or manufacturer representatives will come to the maintenance shop to provide the training but at times personnel will be sent to seminars for specialized training. There is no formal mechanism in place to gather staff feedback or evaluations of training opportunities.

The district should implement an apprenticeship program

The district does not have an apprenticeship program for maintenance employees. If the district intends to stay in the maintenance business, these programs are effective in identifying and training future employees and provide a means of training for newly hired employees. Apprenticeship programs improve a district's ability to recruit and maintain a qualified work force over the long term. The district already has a partial foundation for such a program in that it has job descriptions approved by the Board for apprentice level technician positions in its maintenance handbook.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district design and implement a formal training program for maintenance workers.*

    Action Plan 11-14 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-14

The district should develop a training program for maintenance staff		
Strategy	Design and implement a formal training program for the maintenance staff.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Identify and prioritize training needs for maintenance staff, including job skills, job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.

	Step 2:	Establish minimum requirements for maintenance training.
	Step 3:	Develop a three-year training program for maintenance staff.
Who is Responsible	Maintenance supervisor in conjunction with a staff development representative.	
Time Frame	Design June-December 2002 for implementation in 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

19 The district provides maintenance and operations department staff the tools and equipment required to accomplish their assigned tasks.

Maintenance and operations department employees are provided the tools necessary to accomplish assigned duties.

An interview with the maintenance supervisor indicated that maintenance personnel are provided the tools and equipment necessary to accomplish their assigned tasks. Interviews with three maintenance employees confirmed that the tools and equipment provided by the district are appropriate. Upon employment each technician receives an allowance to establish an initial toolbox that can be supplemented as needed with approval of the maintenance supervisor. Seldom needed tools and equipment are rented on an as needed basis and the employees said this approach works satisfactorily.

The operations manager for custodial services stated that all cleaning implements, equipment, and supplies are provided as part of the contract with the district. Interviews with two custodians confirmed that all required cleaning equipment and supplies are provided.

A procedure exists for maintenance staff to acquire parts and materials not stocked by the district

The district has recently phased out its maintenance warehouse. Parts, materials, and equipment that is not stocked on maintenance vehicles are acquired either through the use of procurement cards or from vendors that have won bids to supply maintenance items. The district supplies each maintenance employee with a credit card that allows them to purchase needed materials up to a value of $750. The district has also entered into contracts with local hardware stores and large home improvement chains like Best Buy, Home Depot, and Lowes to allow maintenance personnel to charge needed maintenance equipment and materials.

Recommendations

- *No recommendations.*

Computerized Maintenance Management Systems

20A computerized control and tracking system is not used to accurately track work orders and inventory.

A work order tracking system is not used to increase management capability

The district has a computerized work order system that was developed by in-house data processing staff. The system allows the maintenance secretaries to input the employee who completed the work, the number of hours taken to complete the job, and how much was spent on materials to complete the work order. However, the system does not have any analytical capability. It cannot compile data by craft, or age of work order, or if certain equipment is failing frequently, etc. Without this type of capability the system cannot assist management in determining how efficiently or effectively the maintenance department is meeting its mission so performance can be improved. This is an issue that should also be addressed in any deliberations concerning privatization of the maintenance function. (See chapter finding 10).

The department needs a computerized facilities management system that can coordinate tasks, personnel, budgets, and other facets of work associated with maintaining facilities. The Florida Department of Education's "Maintenance and Operations Administrative Guidelines for School Districts and Community Colleges" suggests that a maintenance management system should be able to do the following:

- Facilities conditions assessments
- Statistical data bases and maintenance histories
- Interface with other software
- Generate schedules
- Personnel management
- Cost accounting, budgeting, estimating, and financial planning functions
- Inventory control
- Coordinate/control work activities
- Report generation
- Equipment and furniture management
- Data and telecommunications management
- Transactions and contracts
- Audits
- Purchase orders and requisitions

Santa Rosa does not necessarily need all these features in an initial system but it does need a system that will do more than simply store data. Santa Rosa needs to improve the present system to provide some of the capabilities listed above or if that is not possible, investigate the purchase of an outside system with the appropriate capabilities.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district investigate whether the current computerized maintenance system can be upgraded to include some of the capabilities necessary to provide useful management information like work order control and tracking, maintenance records and performance histories, project scheduling, and materials and equipment inventories and if that is not possible, the district investigate the acquisition of a system that will provide these capabilities.*

Action Plan 11-15 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-15

Upgrade present computerized maintenance system or acquire one with appropriate capabilities		
Strategy		Investigate whether current maintenance system can be upgraded to include necessary capabilities for work order control and tracking, maintenance records and performance histories, project scheduling, and materials and equipment inventories and if not possible, acquire a system that will provide these capabilities.
Action Needed	Step 1:	Assign in-house data processing staff and, if necessary, an outside consultant to investigate whether present system can be upgraded and if possible, accomplish the task.
	Step 2:	If system cannot be upgraded, assign a committee composed of, at a minimum, maintenance, data processing, and purchasing personnel to review and recommend a new system.
	Step 3:	Present recommendation to assistant superintendent for administrative services to process with superintendent and Board
Who is Responsible		Assistant superintendent for administrative services
Time Frame		Upgrade present system or install new system by June 2003
Fiscal Impact		If in-house staff able to accomplish, this recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources. If in-house staff cannot accomplish or system unable to be upgraded, cost could be up to $50,000.

21 The maintenance and operations department does not have a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the district.

The district needs to establish guidelines to determine priorities of maintenance needs

The Maintenance Department Handbook establishes procedures for all maintenance personnel to follow in a state of emergency due to natural or manmade causes. However, the district has not developed formal guidelines to determine priorities of ongoing maintenance needs. Maintenance priorities are not tied to educational program needs, changing enrollment projections, or long-range facility planning.

The maintenance foreman distributes work orders each morning and he prioritizes some of them. Interviews with three maintenance employees indicated that the foreman does prioritize those involving safety or health or certain other ones that he wants done first. However, beyond that, prioritization is left to the judgment of the individual worker. District policies and procedures do not define what constitutes an emergency or provide guidance on prioritizing work orders. Without defined criteria those requesting

work cannot understand the priority that their request will receive and workers are left without clear direction.

With a backlog of 3,000 work orders, a system for prioritization becomes especially important. The <u>Maintenance Department Handbook</u> states that the Maintenance Division Foreman has the responsibility to review all maintenance requests and honor all requests where funding and staffing is available. Requests that cannot be honored are to be returned to the cost center with an explanation as to why they cannot be honored at this time. No timeline is established in the handbook for notifying the cost center which work orders cannot be honored and why. The assistant superintendent for administrative services states that periodically the maintenance supervisor will take the uncompleted work orders and meet with the school administration to cull out needs versus wants. A prioritization system would define the criteria for work order completion and assist the understanding of everyone involved in the process.

A system needs to be developed that recognizes emergency needs and educational program needs and maintenance repairs need to be completed according to the prioritized needs. One possible prioritization scheme follows:

Emergency (Priority 1)--Work requiring immediate action to prevent or correct loss or damage to property; to restore essential services disrupted by an interruption or breakdown of utilities; or to eliminate imminent hazards to persons or property.

Urgent (Priority 2)--Work required to prevent interruption of the educational process or work required to prevent breakdown of essential operations or housekeeping functions. Urgent work requests should be addressed within five working days.

Routine (Priority 3)--The day-to-day work required to maintain or repair the building, grounds, and equipment to their original condition. This type of work will be scheduled for completion during the next preventive maintenance visit to the school.

Desirable (Priority 4)--This would be convenience items not qualifying for a higher priority. These will be reviewed periodically for priority upgrades, funding availability, or return and cancellation.

Recommendations ——————————————

- *We recommend that the district establish and document criteria for prioritizing maintenance work orders.*

  Action Plan 11-16 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-16

Develop criteria for prioritizing work orders		
Strategy	The district should establish and document criteria for prioritizing maintenance work orders.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Define and document criteria for emergency work orders. Criteria should include life safety, public health and the prevention of instruction.
	Step 2:	Define and document criteria for prioritizing other work orders. Criteria could include:
		• General school safety
		• Adverse impact on instruction
		• Adverse impact on operations or productivity
		• Long-range facility planning

	• Educational program needs
	• Comfort
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and maintenance supervisor
Time Frame	January 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources

School Equipment and Facilities

22 District policies and procedures clearly address the health and safety conditions of facilities.

The district has established health and safety standards

The district has established standards for health and safety. Health and safety is part of several documents including being one of the ten major goals in the district's "Strategic Improvement Plan, 2001-2006". The district has published a "Comprehensive Safety Plan Handbook" with a Table of Contents that includes:

1. Scope and Policy Statement
2. Minimum requirements
3. Administrative responsibilities
4. Safety training
5. Occupational Safety and Health Inspections
6. Investigations
7. Medical treatment of Industrial Injuries and Illness
8. Accident Reporting procedures
9. Industrial Injury and illness controls
10. Motor vehicle accident control
11. Property damage and liability control
12. District safety accident review committee
13. Site safety committee

The district has a risk manager and a risk management department to provide oversight and it is stressed in documents that it is each administrator's responsibility to implement the safety and health policies of the district.

Health and Safety building condition evaluations are made and documented

The district conducts evaluations of the condition of buildings and documents the results of these evaluations. The district uses surveys, inspections, and building walk-throughs to determine the health and safety conditions of its buildings. An annual Safety and Sanitation Inspection is conducted by contracted state certified inspectors. The results of this inspection are presented to the Santa Rosa board of education with a copy sent to the Florida Department of Education. A fire-safety inspection is conducted by state certified inspectors from the City Fire and County Building departments. The report from this inspection is given to the board and the State Fire Marshall. Certified inspectors also conduct

annual inspections of all boilers, fire extinguishers, fire alarm systems, and playground equipment. The Health Department inspects for safety and sanitation of the buildings in general and especially the food preparation areas. A contractor inspects all building roofs each spring with additional ad hoc inspections occurring in response to storm activity. Interviews with both principals and teachers indicated that the maintenance department responds to health and safety concerns in a timely manner.

External benchmarks are not used to evaluate cost-effectiveness

The district does not use external benchmarks to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of its health and safety standards. The district should establish benchmarks to ensure that it is meeting health and safety standards in a cost effective manner.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the district establish and use benchmarks to evaluate the cost effectiveness of meeting its health and safety standards.*

    Action Plan 11-17 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 11-17

Develop external benchmarks for health and safety standards		
Strategy	Develop and use external benchmarks to determine the cost effectiveness of meeting health and safety standards.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	The assistant superintendent for administrative services, purchasing manager, and the risk manger should meet to identify appropriate benchmarks and appropriate districts to measure the cost-effectiveness of the district.
	Step 2:	The risk manager should research the benchmarks, compare the district with them and prepare a report. Some benchmarks might include:
		• Number of staff accidents per staff
		• Number of student accidents per student
		• Number of security staff per facility
		• Cost of cleaning supplies per square feet
		• Ratio of custodians to square feet
	Step 3:	The risk manager and assistant superintendent for administrative services should present report to Board.
Who is Responsible	Risk manager	
Time Frame	Present report to Board in January 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation could be accomplished within existing resources.	

23 The maintenance and operations department identifies and implements strategies to contain energy costs.

The district collaborates with other organizations, compares itself to peer districts, and implements energy retrofits

The district collaborates with its utility providers and other organizations to identify energy efficiencies and implement actions to increase cost-efficiency. The district receives monthly reports from utility companies showing detailed usage information by meter as well as trend data that is reviewed by the energy technician in the maintenance department to check for areas that may be out-of-balance and need investigation for correction.

The district compares its energy costs to the other district in the state, the state average, and its two closest surrounding counties, on an annual basis. The assistant superintendent showed the consultant a memo sent to board members, the assistant superintendent for instruction, the maintenance supervisor, the maintenance foreman, the purchasing manager, the energy management technician, and a representative from the Gulf Power Company. The memo compared the district with its two surrounding counties specifically and the DOE report on all districts in the state was attached to allow other comparisons to be made by the reader. Santa Rosa had the lowest costs, on both a square foot and per student basis, among the three adjoining counties (Santa Rosa, Escambia, and Okaloosa) and was well below the state average on both measures as well. When compared to its peer districts for this analysis, Santa Rosa had the second lowest energy costs of the six districts (See exhibit 11-4 under best practice 24).

The district looks for ways to reduce energy usage. The most recent district-wide program that has been implemented is a lighting retrofit program to replace less energy-efficient ballasts and lamps with high efficiency electronic ballasts and lower wattage lamps. A lighting retrofit program of this nature can produce substantial savings. The EPA Green Lights Program estimates that lighting accounts for 20 to 25 percent of all electricity sold in the United States. A lighting retrofit program can reduce a district's lighting electricity bill by 50 percent and the district can realize a rate of return on its initial investment of 30 percent or more.

The district does not have a written energy management plan

The district has a board policy about conserving energy (9.11 Conservation of Energy) that delineates measures for plant operation but does not assign any responsibility for accomplishing the tasks or what type of accountability mechanisms will be in place to see if the measures are being followed. The measures include:

- Turn off lights when rooms are not occupied during class hours. Reduce corridor lighting to a minimum necessary for safety.

- Set thermostats to a level no higher or lower than necessary for health and comfort. If it recommended that thermostats be set at 68 degrees during the winter and 76 degrees during the warm weather.

- Eliminate all unnecessary and decorative outside lighting.

- Heating systems shall be checked on a regular basis for combustion efficiency. This means giving special attention to changing filters in air handling systems in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation and removing scale in boilers.

- Keep window and doors closed while heating the buildings.

- Seal off unused rooms and close heating vents.

- Turn off lights on clear days in buildings with a sufficient amount of glass which can admit the needed amount of natural nonglare lights.
- Reexamine the use of night security lights, internal and external, reducing illumination where possible.
- Repair leaking hot water faucets, thus conserving two resources at one time.
- Reduce the number of hours devoted to night time custodial cleaning programs.

The assistant superintendent for administrative services sends memoranda periodically to building administrators and staff regarding suggestions for energy conservation but no evidence of an actual plan was produced. For example, as recently as October 2001, a memo was sent to buildings regarding energy conservation. The memo pointed out that energy costs are paid from the same fund that pays salaries and with the recent threats of budget cuts, the staff must do all that is possible to contain energy costs. Several suggestions were made to help reduce costs:

- Turn off lights when not needed. In newer classrooms with automatic sensors to turn off lights, make sure they are working. Aramark is working with the district to minimize required night-time lighting.
- Lower heat settings, but not to the point of affecting student performance.
- Raise air conditioning settings, but not to point of affecting student performance.
- Insure that energy management time clock reduces the heating and air conditioning time to lowest possible amount without allowing humidity above 60%.
- Turn off machines and equipment when not in use and after hours.
- Energy conservation includes other utilities, e.g. water. Report all leaks.
- Consider appointing a three-member energy conservation team to conduct an informal and common sense evaluation of energy usage and make recommendations to the faculty on how they could modify behavior to reduce costs as well as retrofits that would help.

The district needs to consider the preparation of an energy management plan as part of a comprehensive energy management program. The consultant is aware of programs that concentrate not only on mechanical system retrofits to conserve energy but also on the "people factor." These programs train the staff to accomplish the types of behavior alluded to in the memo above and result in savings as high as 20% of utility costs.

The district does not have a written plan for healthy indoor air quality

The district does not have a written plan for healthy indoor air quality that requires routine monitoring of indoor air quality and includes corrective action plans for indoor air quality problems. The assistant superintendent for administrative services stated that the district has an informal procedure to follow that is known by the building administration. If any problems are suspected the building administrator is supposed to contact the Maintenance Department or Risk Management Department to have the problem investigated and corrected if necessary. According to the assistant superintendent the district follows the suggestions contained in the EPA Tools for Schools Action Kit on indoor air quality.

Recommendations ———————————————————

- *We recommend that the district consider the implementation of a district-wide comprehensive energy management program*

- *We recommend that the district prepare and implement a written plan for healthy indoor air quality.*

Action Plan 11-18 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

Action Plan 11-18

Implement Comprehensive Energy Management Program		
Strategy	The district should consider implementation of a comprehensive energy management program.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	The assistant superintendent for administrative services should contact several energy management companies to solicit proposals for a conservation program covering equipment retrofits and human behavior changes that result in energy conservation.
	Step 2:	Review and evaluate the proposals to determine the most cost effective one for the district.
	Step 3:	Present the best proposal to the Board for approval.
	Step 4:	Implement the proposal.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services, purchasing manager, and energy management technician.	
Time Frame	Implementation in the fall of 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation could result in savings of up to 20% of the district utility costs or potentially $600,000 per year. After implementation costs of $400,000 this would yields a potential savings of $2,600,000.	

Action Plan 11-19

Prepare and implement plan for healthy indoor air quality		
Strategy	Prepare a written plan for healthy indoor air quality.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Review the EPA Tools for Schools Action Kit on indoor air quality for ideas on areas to include in a plan.
	Step 2:	Prepare a plan that requires routine monitoring and corrective action when necessary.
	Step 3:	Have the plan reviewed by a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH).
	Step 4:	Present the plan to the Board for approval.
	Step 5:	Implement the plan.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services	
Time Frame	Implement in the fall of 2003	
Fiscal Impact	$2,500 for review by CIH.	

24 The district has a rudimentary energy management system in place.

The district abandoned a computer-based system for a time clock system

The district does not have a sophisticated computer based energy management system in place in its buildings. According to the assistant superintendent for administrative services, the district had a computer-based energy management system in some of the buildings, but it was abandoned in favor of a simple time clock system because the computer based system was too labor and resource intensive to maintain in relation to its cost effectiveness. The system was building-based without any remote

reporting or inquiry capability so each time a system would fail someone had to go to the building to solve the problem and get the mechanical system back on line. This became too costly so the systems were abandoned and each building now has a time clock which goes to a night setback mode to save energy overnight and then brings the building systems up at some point in the morning. Although the district does not have a sophisticated computer based energy management system they do quite well on energy costs compared to its peer districts and the state average (Exhibit 11-24). The district ranks second lowest in energy costs among its peer districts on both a square foot and per student basis. The district is also well below the state average for both measures.

Exhibit 11-9

Energy Cost Comparisons With Peer Districts and the State Average for 1999-00

District	Energy Cost per sq. ft.	Energy Cost per Student
Putnam	$0.57	$107.56
Santa Rosa	**$0.72**	**$112.94**
Escambia	$0.78	$118.82
Okaloosa	$0.85	$122.05
Suwannee	$0.86	$139.67
Lake	$0.90	$129.46
State Average	**$0.84**	**$119.10**

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

The district plans to implement a system that will track energy usage

The district has recently entered into an agreement with Energy Watchdog (an Internet-based online utility billing/energy data tracking, analysis, auditing, and reporting service). With this software, the district will have a powerful management tool to be able to track energy efficiency measures and identify possible savings opportunities. The district can avail themselves of the following reports:

- Use/Cost per account year
- Use trend
- Cost trend
- Use per day trend
- Cost per day trend
- Average unit cost by account
- Use per square foot by account
- Cost per square foot by account
- Use per customer
- Cost per customer
- User per average customer sale
- Cost per average customer sale
- BTU per square foot
- Billed demand per account year comparison
- Billed demand vs. registered demand
- Hours use
- On peak/off peak

- Use by building
- Cost by building
- Use per square foot by building
- Cost per square foot by building
- Account list
- Building list
- Vendor list
- Average unit cost comparison
- Annual use building report
- Annual cost by building report
- Meter check
- Savings opportunity by priority, type or status
- Use/cost by vendor

This information will provide a potentially powerful tool to identify energy usage problems, but the district still needs a formal energy management program in place to systematically address the problems and save additional energy.

Recommendations

- *The district needs to implement recommendation and action plan 23A so a comprehensive energy management plan is in place to systematically take advantage of the information provided by the Energy Watchdog program.*

25 The school district complies with federal and state regulatory mandates regarding facility health, safety, and energy efficiency conditions.

The district's procedures comply with requirements

The procedures comply with all relevant federal and state requirements including EPA guidelines, Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Hazardous Communication Standards, federal and state regulations hazardous materials plans, Asbestos Hazardous Emergency Response Act rules, other mandated environmental and safety issues like Refrigerant Use and Disposal, and Florida Department of Labor and Employment regulations. The assistant superintendent for administrative services provided examples of the proper disposal of chemicals with the Uniform Hazardous Waste Manifest, the required three-year updates to the original AHERA report, MSDS sheets, and other examples.

The district regularly updates employee safety program training

The maintenance department holds safety meetings on a quarterly basis as discussed earlier in this chapter. It also provides training on the handling of materials like refrigerants and gets the appropriate employees certified to protect them and the environment. In addition, Material Safety Data Sheets, which explain the hazards of materials and chemicals used by the district, are readily available to the employees.

The district does not participate in state and federal voluntary efforts

The district does not participate in state and federal voluntary efforts regarding facility health, safety, and energy efficiency conditions so it cannot document cost savings and/or avoidance. These efforts include things like the EPA green star partnership or the EPA energy star partnership. The assistant superintendent for administrative services indicated that the district reviewed participation but the required reports were so labor intensive that staff was not available to allow participation. Although the district does not participate it has accomplished many of the same types of retrofits (e.g., energy efficient lighting) and uses some of the construction techniques (e.g., passive environmentally conscious) suggested by these partnerships. Even if the district decides not to participate in the program, it would be positive to evaluate the EPA energy green lights recommendations and the energy star recommended products to assess whether the district could reduce its energy usage and contribution to pollution by following these recommendations in their energy retrofits.

Recommendations

- *No recommendation.*

26The district is aware of and prepared for the permitting and inspection requirements of the Florida Building Code.

Maintenance staff has reviewed the Florida Building Code, received training, and have a procedure in place to ensure all required permits are obtained in a timely fashion and that all necessary inspections will take place

The district assistant superintendent for administrative services is a certified building inspector and building code administrator and both the maintenance supervisor and foreman have training and are state certified building inspectors. With the assistant superintendent for administrative services qualified as a building code administrator it allows the district to have its own inspection department. Inspections will be conducted in-house and other acceptable methods will be used if it becomes necessary. These methods could include the use of consultants or through the local municipality. Thus, the district has procedures in place to ensure the required permitting and inspections will occur once the Florida Building Code becomes effective for schools. Preparation for compliance with the Florida Building Code is also discussed under best practice number 9 in the Facilities Construction chapter.

Recommendations

- *No recommendations*

12 Student Transportation

The Santa Rosa County School District operates a student transportation system that satisfies the needs of its customers. Effective with the 1998-99 school year, the district entered into a contract with Laidlaw Transit, Inc., under which Laidlaw operates the transportation system for the school district. With additional attention to operating and cost efficiencies, the transportation system can be even more effective.

Conclusion

The Santa Rosa County School District has a privatized student transportation system, which the district believes allows management to focus on its core mission of providing quality education to its students. However, the district privatized the transportation function without adequately demonstrating that it would increase the cost efficiency of the operation, as should be done to justify the move to privatization. The district is exploring additional ways to achieve cost savings and increased efficiencies including implementing a three-tiered route schedule and eliminating courtesy busing where safety is not an issue.

The working relationship with Laidlaw, the contracted vendor, appears to be excellent, and, in fact, SchoolMatch consultants found that the district and Laidlaw work as a single, seamless unit providing transportation services for the district under a well-organized plan.

During the course of this review, SchoolMatch consultants identified a number of positive accomplishments in student transportation, some of which are included in the exhibit below.

Exhibit 12-1

**The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments
in Student Transportation in Recent Years**

- Effective for 1998-99, the district privatized student transportation through a contract with Laidlaw Transit, Inc.

- Under the contract with Laidlaw, the district gains the use of 25 new buses each year, beginning with the 1998-99 school year, thereby obtaining buses needed for growth and upgrading the quality of the fleet.

- Under the contract with Laidlaw, the district upgraded its vehicle maintenance operations to more-formalized and better-documented procedures; and, in some instances, the district exceeds Department of Education standards.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Overview of Chapter Findings

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed the district's student transportation program using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and associated indicators. An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Student Transportation Services

1. The district utilizes good bus routing procedures; however, changes can be made which will make the operation more efficient and cost-effective. (Page 12-7)

2. The district ensures that all regular school bus routes and activity trips operate in accordance with established routines, and any unexpected contingencies affecting those operations are handled safely and promptly. (Page 12-11)

3. The district effectively and efficiently recruits and retains the bus drivers and attendants it needs. (Page 12-13)

4. The district has a comprehensive training program for bus drivers. The drivers are trained to meet bus-driving standards and maintain acceptable student behavior on the buses; but the district needs to develop an oversight program for observing and monitoring the performance of bus drivers. (Page 12-14)

5. The district provides transportation services to students in exceptional student education (ESE) programs that minimizes hardships to students and accurately reports ESE students transported, for state funding purposes. (Page 12-16)

6. The district ensures that staff act promptly and appropriately in response to any accidents that occur. (Page 12-18)

7. The district ensures that appropriate student behavior is maintained on the bus at all times. (Page 12-18)

Student Transportation Functions

8. The school district is assured of an adequate school bus fleet through its contract with Laidlaw; however, in order to work toward optimal efficiency and the mutual benefit of the district and Laidlaw, the district needs to work with Laidlaw and consider a 12-year bus replacement cycle in lieu of the current 10-year cycle. (Page 12-19)

9. The district provides timely routine servicing for buses and other district vehicles, as well as prompt response for breakdowns and other unforeseen contingencies. (Page 12-21)

10. The district ensures that fuel purchases are cost-effective and that school buses and other vehicles are efficiently supplied with fuel. (Page 12-23)

11. The district maintains facilities that are conveniently situated to provide sufficient and secure support for vehicle maintenance and other student transportation functions. (Page 12-24)

12. The district maintains an effective staffing level in the vehicle maintenance area and provides support for vehicle maintenance staff to develop their skills. (Page 12-26)

13. The district maintains an inventory of parts, supplies, and equipment needed to support student transportation functions that balances the concerns of immediate need and inventory costs. (Page 12-27)

Managerial Oversight

14. The district provides appropriate technological and computer support for student transportation functions and operations. (Page 12-28)

15. The district needs to improve its accountability system for student transportation by formally obtaining stakeholder input and by establishing performance measures and making regular periodic assessments and reports of performance. And, since Laidlaw is responsible for providing the district's transportation system, these accountability measures should be made a part of the contract with Laidlaw. (Page 12-29)

16. The district coordinates planning and budgeting for student transportation within the context of district and community planning; however, the district needs to institute a long-range planning process for student transportation. (Page 12-32)

17. The district monitors the fiscal condition of the student transportation function by analyzing expenditures and reviewing them against the budget, but as discussed under Best Practice No. 15, the district needs a more formal performance accountability system. (Page 12-34)

18. The district provides regular, accurate, and timely counts to the Florida Department of Education of the number of students transported as part of the Florida Education Finance Program, but better coordination among all district departments is needed in order to ensure that FTE counts are scheduled at times which will result in the district earning optimal state funding. (Page 12-35)

19. Although the district has privatized the student transportation function, largely for non-financial reasons, the district needs to demonstrate, on an ongoing basis, that the privatized approach is more cost-effective than an in-house operation, or that any extra cost of privatization is justified by added value to the district. (Page 12-36)

20. Under the contract with Laidlaw, much of the responsibility for organizational structure and staffing levels is the responsibility of Laidlaw, but the district maintains an organizational chart and periodically reviews staffing over which it has direct control outside of the Laidlaw contract. (Page 12-37)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Three of this chapter's recommendations have a direct fiscal impact:

A. Implement a three-tiered bus routing system to replace the current two-tiered system,

B. Eliminate courtesy busing where safety is not an issue,

C. Eliminate the position of district transportation director in view of privatization of transportation services.

Exhibit 12-2 shows the impact of the recommendations.

Exhibit 12-2

Three Student Transportation Action Plan Recommendations Have Fiscal Impacts

Recommendation	Five Year Fiscal Impact
• Implement a three-tiered bus routing system to replace the current two-tiered system.	• The approximate annual savings in operating and capital outlay costs that would result from implementing this recommendation, as furnished by the district on December 13, 2001, is $378,345 or $1,891,725 over a five-year period.
• Eliminate courtesy busing where safety is not an issue.	• The approximate annual savings in operating and capital outlay costs that would result from implementing this recommendation, as furnished by the district on December 13, 2001 is $534,500, or $2,672,500 over a five-year period.

Recommendation	Five Year Fiscal Impact
• Eliminate the position of District Transportation Director when a contract manager has been trained and is ready to assume the current duties of the Transportation Director.	• The average annual cost of an administrative position, including fringe benefits is $84,400, which is the approximate annual savings from this recommendation. The five-year savings potential is $422,000.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants, with District Input/Data.

Background

Located in Florida's panhandle, Santa Rosa County stretches from the Alabama state line to the Gulf of Mexico. It covers 1,024 square miles, and the northern half of the county is a rural farming community with the county seat, Milton, as the largest population center in the northern area. The southern half of the county, along the coast, is more densely populated, and includes the city of Gulf Breeze and the communities of Midway and Navarre Beach. The geographic disparity and the dispersion of the population pose a significant challenge for school transportation officials.

To help meet this challenge, the Santa Rosa County School District has organized its student transportation operations across three geographic sub-areas, with zones covering the northern section, the coastal section and the county's midsection.

In school year 1999-2000, the Santa Rosa County School District transported 13,199 students (59.4%) from its total student population of 22,226 delivering students to 30 education centers across the county. The buses traveled a total of 4,119,609 miles during this same school year. School choice is currently available in the northern-most rural region only, but the district anticipates discontinuing the choice plan in school year 2002-03.

In school year 2001-02, the district operates 276 buses, using 191 for regular daily routes, 38 for exceptional education services (ESE) transportation, and retains 47 buses as spares for use when buses are being repaired and for high demand times, such as for sporting events and field trips. The district runs 229 routes per day, with most buses running two routes (two each in the morning and afternoon), for a two-tiered system.

The Santa Rosa County School District operated its own transportation system until 1998. The district had not purchased new buses on a regular schedule and was confronted with an aging bus fleet, prone to breakdowns and expensive repairs. In addition, the district was experiencing a high rate of worker's compensation claims from employees in the transportation department. As a result, the district decided to pursue a contract with a private vendor to manage the student transportation department. The district pursued a fixed price contract arrangement that assured costs would not exceed the department's current expenditures. Nevertheless, the decision to contract was not merely a financial decision, but one based to a large extent on systemic considerations.

The district entered into a five-year contract with Laidlaw Transit, Inc. effective from July 01, 1998, through June 30, 2003. Laidlaw is based in Canada and, according to corporate claims, is the largest provider of bus transportation services, including student transportation, in North America. To date, one other school district in Florida, Martin County, has recently privatized its student transportation services with Laidlaw, and one other district in Florida, Duval, has a long-standing privatized student transportation system. At this time, Santa Rosa is the smallest district to contract for this service.

The contract requires Laidlaw to provide the district with the following support and services:

- Laidlaw is required to provide the district with the use of 25 new buses per year, thereby enabling the district to dispose of 25 older buses, and ensuring a 10-year replacement cycle for all of the district's buses. The cost of the new buses is included in the contract; however, the district is, in effect, leasing the buses from Laidlaw, as the buses remain the property of Laidlaw.

- The district retains possession of all buses owned prior to the contract and realizes the proceeds from the sale of these older buses. If the contract were continued on in its present form, the district would eventually not own any buses.

- All new drivers and mechanics are Laidlaw employees. Existing district staff had the option of switching employment to Laidlaw or remaining as school district employees. Thus, in current operations, a mix of Laidlaw and school district employees work together to provide transportation services under the direction and supervision of Laidlaw.

- Laidlaw is responsible for all driver training, random drug testing of all staff, route development, responding to disabled buses, inventory management and related support functions. However, the district retains responsibility for purchasing fuel.

- The bus compound and maintenance areas are leased to Laidlaw for $1.00 per year, with the vendor responsible for maintenance, upkeep, and safety assurances for these facilities.

The district retained its transportation director to oversee the contract and to work with the vendor to ensure legal compliance, to address problems as they arise, and to serve as the liaison between district administration and Laidlaw operations.

The transportation department's organizational structure, which includes Laidlaw staff, is presented below.

Exhibit 12-3

Santa Rosa County School Board Transportation Organizational Chart
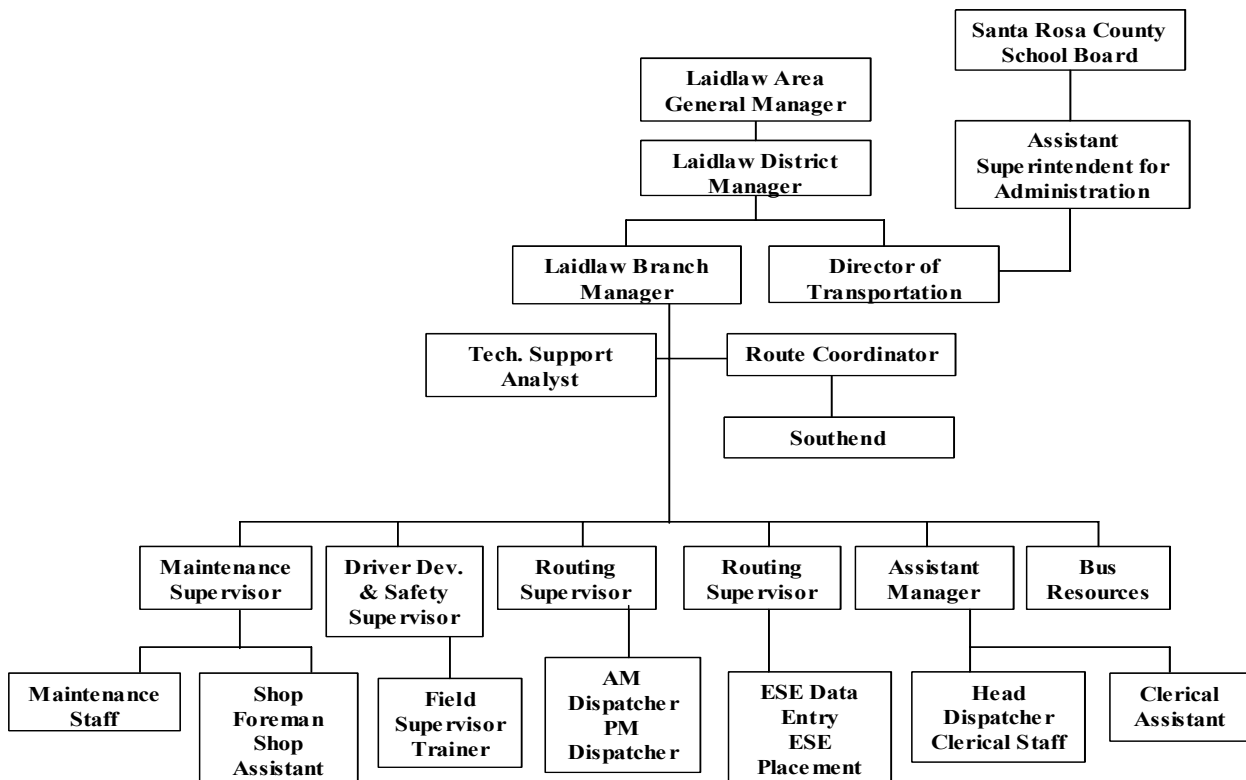
Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Exhibit 12-4 presents selected transportation school data for the Santa Rosa County School District compared to five peer districts across the state for the 1999-2000 school year. The primary source of data shown in this exhibit, as well as others to follow in this chapter, is an annual publication entitled "Q Link" (Quality Link), which is published by the school transportation management section of the Florida Department of Education. The data in the publication provide vital benchmark information for all of Florida's 67 public school districts to utilize in evaluating the efficiency of their transportation programs. However, the following instructive, cautionary wording, found in the introduction to the publication, should be noted:

> *This document should encourage thoughtful, probing questions and more complex data collection to explain many of the variations in costs among districts. Great care should be taken when making comparisons among districts. Conclusions should be drawn with extreme caution and only after careful scrutiny and analysis.*

These words of caution are particularly relevant in the case of the Santa Rosa County School District, in that Santa Rosa is one of only three districts in the state which have privatized student transportation programs, and some of the data must be re-cast in order to make valid comparisons to other districts. For example, as footnoted in Exhibit 12-4, because the capital cost of buses is included in Santa Rosa's operational expenses, SchoolMatch consultants removed these costs in order to make the operating cost data comparable.

In summary, Santa Rosa County School District transports a greater percentage of its students than all but one peer district, which is also busing students for desegregation purposes. Staffing for student transportation also represents a greater percentage of district staff than all peer districts. Finally, the district spends a greater percentage of its budget on student transportation than all but one peer district, but the cost per mile is mid-range compared to its peers.

Exhibit 12-4

Comparative Student Transportation Data for Santa Rosa County School District and Five Peer Districts for 1999-00

Measure	Santa Rosa*	Charlotte	Lake	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns
Square Miles	1,024	690	954	936	1,350	617
Number of Students Enrolled	22,226	16,753	28,503	30,248	31,884	19,001
Number (Percent) of Students Transported	13,199 (59.4%)	8,451 (50.4%)	15,804 (55.5%)	13,799 (45.6%)	15,638 (49.0%)	11,337 (59.7%)
Number of School Centers	35	21 (in 1998-99)	43	40	35	28
Busing for desegregation?	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Number of Student Transportation Staff	296	176	304	288	311	190
Number of all District Staff	2,234	1,961	3,435	3,439	3,781	2,179
Percentage of Student Transportation Staff	13.2%	9.0%	8.9%	8.4%	8.2%	8.7%
Number of Buses (Daily Service)	210	112	200	195	182	136
Number of Bus	1	2	3	3	2	2

Measure	Santa Rosa*	Charlotte	Lake	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns
Maintenance Facilities						
Number of Miles Driven	3,941,423	1,587,255	4,166,165	2,697,873	2,720,734	2,865,690
Student Transportation Expenditure	$6,593,177	$5,062,878	$8,937,310	$7,112,400	$7,099,153	$5,065,195
All District Expenditures	$117,021,798	$96,299,115	$152,265,171	$164,625,678	$167,257,549	$105,605,214
Percentage of Expenditures for Student Transportation	5.6%	5.3%	5.9%	4.3%	4.2%	4.8%
Transportation Operating Expenditures per Student	$500	$496	$439	$438	$424	$391
Operating Expenditures Per Annual Mile	$1.67	$2.44	$1.60	$2.10	$2.08	$1.41
Average Student Transportation salary-plus-benefit	$13,781	$18,412	$17,033	$18,783	$18,481	$18,974

*Cost data in this exhibit have been adjusted by SchoolMatch to eliminate the cost of buses from general fund expenditures and to remove the cost of support vehicles ("white fleet") from transportation expenditures.

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, School Year 1999-00. Calculations by SchoolMatch.

Methodology

The consulting team employed several methodologies to develop chapter conclusions and action plans. For instance, SchoolMatch conducted on-site interviews with district level managers and Laidlaw management personnel and gathered information on the student transportation activities such as the district's student transportation activities, policies, and procedures. Among the procedures employed was the examination of all available documents that provided evidence of the extent to which the district is utilizing the best financial management practices.

Student Transportation Services

1 The district utilizes good bus routing procedures; however, changes can be made which will make the operation more efficient and cost-effective.

Bus Routing System

The district utilizes a computerized bus routing system, which is furnished by Laidlaw, the contracted provider of transportation services for the district. Input for the computerized system comes from detailed

manual route schedules prepared by each driver, which are submitted to the route supervisor for review. These schedules show each stop on the entire route. They contain names of all students transported on the route and the approximate time for each stop on the route, as well as the total time for the route. After the supervisor's review, these data are entered into the computerized system, and computer-generated bus reports are prepared. The route supervisor uses the computer-generated bus route to review the bus driver's reported time needed to complete the route, the reasonableness of the route, and to take any investigative action regarding the route that might be needed. The computer system is then able to prepare other related reports about the bus routes, including updated bus routes needed to reflect changes as they occur. Additionally, route maps are produced by the computerized system and are disseminated to schools and the dispatch office.

District transportation personnel report that routing efficiencies suggested by the computerized routing system can be, and sometimes are, overridden by transportation staff, especially for elementary students. As with any computerized system, occasional overrides are to be expected, and are sometimes desirable. However, frequently overriding the system reduces efficiency and can be a serious concern, for instance, if it creates stops that are too frequent to ensure that all safety procedures are observed. Nevertheless, these safety concerns can be resolved if the district follows the recommendation relative to courtesy busing presented below.

In general, routing efficiency is closely tied to school starting times and the number of daily runs made by each bus. The district currently utilizes a "two-tiered" routing system, which means that each bus generally makes two runs each morning and afternoon. However, this two-tiered system is not providing the most efficient bus routes. Exhibit 12-5 compares Santa Rosa's bus occupancy rate (a statistical measure utilized by the Department of Education that reflects the level of efficiency of a district's bus utilization) with its peers. The illustration shows that the bus occupancy rate of the district is significantly lower than all of its peers.

Exhibit 12-5

Bus Occupancy Rate in Santa Rosa Is Lower Than Peer Districts

	Santa Rosa	Charlotte	Lake	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns
Bus Occupancy Rate	62.85	75.45	79.22	70.95	85.92	83.36

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, School Year 1999-00.

In light of this low bus occupancy rate, and other factors, the district realizes that considerable efficiency and cost-savings can be gained by moving to a "three-tiered" system, under which each bus generally runs three routes each morning and afternoon; and, the district is planning to implement a change to a "three-tiered" system for the 2002-03 school year. This change will also significantly increase the district's occupancy rate, which is a function of the number of seats used per bus each day.

Gaining the efficiency of a "three-tiered" system involves a significant downside in terms of the school starting times required for its implementation. Under the current system, the district can utilize school starting times that are relatively close to each other for all grade levels, but in order to implement the contemplated change, starting times will, of necessity, be more divergent. And, in fact, one grade level, e.g. high schools, will need to start school as late as 9:00 a.m., so this is the most difficult part of the planning process in which the district is engaged. Despite these scheduling challenges, SchoolMatch endorses the districts plan to move to a "three-tiered" routing system, as indicated in the recommendations set forth below.

Route Management, Reporting, and Monitoring Activities

Routing supervisors make on-the-scene reviews of all proposed new bus routes and new bus stops to ensure that they are safe, before they are approved for service. Additionally, complaints from school site staff, parents, or the general public about existing or proposed routes, or about a bus driver's performance on an official assignment are investigated and resolved immediately.

As required by state law, all students within two miles of their schools who are being transported due to hazardous walking conditions are reported to the Department of Education. These students are identified on the basis of the staff's knowledge of areas where hazardous conditions exist, which are reviewed periodically by transportation staff. The record of the students who live within the hazardous areas is included in the computerized routing system. The Santa Rosa County School District compares favorably to its peer districts relative to the number of students being transported due to hazardous conditions, as illustrated in the exhibit below.

Exhibit 12-6

Comparative Student Transportation data for Santa Rosa County Percentage of Ridership Due to Hazardous Walking Conditions

	Santa Rosa	Charlotte	Lake	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns
Average Student Transportation	13,199	8,451	15,804	13,799	15,338	11,337
Hazardous Walking Ridership	566	1,056	289	1,213	224	430
Percentage	4.3%	12.5%	1.8%	8.8%	1.4%	3.8%

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, School Year 1999-00. Calculations by SchoolMatch.

Courtesy Riders

Courtesy riders are students who live within two miles of a school and do not have hazardous walking conditions, yet ride on district buses. Courtesy riders are transported at district expense because they are not eligible for state transportation funding. Currently, the district does not have a formal school board policy relative to transporting courtesy riders; instead, according to district staff, the district follows a long-standing practice of providing transportation to any student requesting ridership. In comparison to its peer districts, Santa Rosa County transports a relatively high number of courtesy riders, as shown in the following exhibit, although its has a relatively low percentage of students transported due to hazardous walking conditions.

Exhibit 12-7

Santa Rosa County Provides Transportation to a Relatively High Number of Courtesy Riders

	Santa Rosa	Charlotte	Lake	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns
Total Number Riding Bus	13,199	8,451	15,804	13,799	15,338	11,337
Number of Courtesy Students Riding Bus	1,947	607	242	3,282	43	680

	Santa Rosa	**Charlotte**	**Lake**	**Okaloosa**	**Osceola**	**St. Johns**
Courtesy Students as a Percentage of All Bus Riders	12.9%	6.7%	1.5%	19.2%	0.3%	5.7%

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, School Year 1999-00. Calculations by SchoolMatch.

Providing courtesy busing is a very costly practice requiring the district to run extra routes, thereby increasing the number of buses required, which involves increased capital costs for buses as well as extra operational costs. In this regard, the recommendations below provide information regarding the savings that could be achieved through the elimination of courtesy busing.

Recommendations

- *Implement a three-tiered bus-routing system in place of the current two-tiered system.*

Action Plan 12-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

- *Eliminate courtesy busing when safety is not an issue.*

Action Plan 12-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-1

Implement a Three-Tiered Bus-Routing System		
Strategy:	Replace the current two-tiered routing system with a three-tiered routing system.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Develop a schedule of school opening and closing times that will accommodate three separate morning and afternoon bus runs for each bus, and have the schedule approved by the school board.
	Step 2:	Negotiate any contract changes with Laidlaw needed to adjust the number of buses and drivers required to serve the needs of the district.
	Step 3:	Prepare revised bus schedules needed to implement a three-tiered routing system.
	Step 4:	Make needed changes in the assignment of bus drivers for the revised routes and lengthen the drivers' workdays as required.
	Step 5:	Evaluate and publicize the cost/benefit of implementing these actions.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration and director of transportation.	
Time Frame:	August 2003 (Beginning of 2003-04 school year)	
Fiscal Impact:	$378,345 per year, or $1,891,725 over a five-year period.	

Action Plan 12-2

Eliminate courtesy busing where safety is not an issue	
Strategy:	Discontinue transporting students within two miles of a school unless hazardous walking conditions or other safety concerns exist.

Action Needed:	Step 1:	Request the school board to adopt a new policy that prohibits courtesy ridership, where safety is not a concern, and publicize the change throughout the community, emphasizing the need to operate more cost-effectively.
	Step 2:	In coordination with the move to a three-tiered routing system, prepare bus schedules that do not provide for courtesy busing.
	Step 3:	Evaluate and publicize the cost/benefit of the implementing these actions.
Who Is Responsible		Assistant superintendent for administration and director of transportation.
Time Frame:		August 2002 (Beginning of 2002-03 School Year)
Fiscal Impact:		$534,500 per year, or $2,672,500 over a five-year period.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultant.

2 The district ensures that all regular school bus routes and activity trips operate in accordance with established routines, and any unexpected contingencies affecting those operations are handled safely and promptly.

The district addresses operational problems and unexpected contingencies

The district's process for responding to breakdowns and accidents is good. All regular-use buses have two-way radios for bus drivers to call in and report breakdowns and accidents. The dispatch office has procedures for sending repair crews and back-up buses. Under these procedures, if a disabled vehicle can be repaired on site, it is; if not, it is towed.

Bus drivers are expected to call the route supervisor if they are absent. Laidlaw maintains approximately 26 substitute bus drivers (referred to as "bench drivers"), who are available each day. These substitute drivers cover the substitute needs of the district's transportation system, and because of these permanent substitutes, Laidlaw is generally able to function without large delays when drivers call in sick or have emergency situations.

Santa Rosa district has established procedures requiring prompt reporting of and responses to bus overcrowding, which generally occurs during the first few weeks of school. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the buses are not overloaded and to report overcrowded situations to route supervisors. In response, route supervisors send out additional buses to meet the immediate need and then redesign the routes to fix the problems.

The district staff attempts to achieve the state-recommended "Ride-Time Standard" (50 minutes for elementary students and one hour for high school students, pursuant to Chapter 6-3.017 (6), *Florida Administrative Code*). Each student's ride-time is recorded in the computerized bus routing system, by driver and by school. The district provided information that, as of February 15, 2002, out of some 13,200 students being transported, 265 elementary students and 232 secondary students exceeded the recommended ride times to some extent. Of the 265 elementary students whose ride-times exceeded the state-recommended limit, 13 exceeded the 50-minute standard by more than 30 minutes, with only 1 student exceeding the standard ride time by more than 1 hour. Of the 232 secondary students exceeding the state-recommended limit, 48 exceeded the limit by more than 30 minutes, with 8 students exceeding the standard time by more than 1 hour.

Of the nine students who exceed the standard times by more than one hour, as well as students who exceed the standard by a lesser amount, most have extenuating circumstances such as special school

assignments or geographical locations which result in lengthy distances between home and school, primarily for students living in rural areas. Obviously, the extent to which students do not attend neighborhood schools near their homes determines the extent to which standard ride times are exceeded.

The district's written policy with respect to discharging a student at any stop other than the one to which the student is assigned, which is included in the Code of Student Conduct, requires that a student cannot be discharged at any stop other than the one the student usually uses, without a signed note from both the parent/guardian and the school principal.

The district has an effective paper process for school site staff to request and pay the cost of transportation for activity trips. The district requires schools to pay 60 cents per mile plus the hourly rate for the driver. The district maintains records of the mileage of trips in order to assign costs. The district also has a written policy for selecting drivers for activity trips, under which schools receive a list of drivers and are required to select drivers based on seniority. The school is required to document the contact with the driver and the driver's response.

Exhibit 12-8 demonstrates how the district's charge for use of buses for activity trips compares to its peer districts.

Exhibit 12-8

Rates Charged for Activity Trips Vary Among School Districts
2000-01 School Year

	Santa Rosa	**Charlotte**	**Lake**	**Okaloosa**	**Osceola**	**St. Johns**
Rate Charged for External Users	Contracted with Laidlaw Educational Services	$.55 per mile, plus $10.00 per hour	$1.50 per mile, plus $14.00 per hour	$50.00 user fee, plus $1.00 per mile	$6.00 admin fee, plus $1.15 per mile, plus $12.67 per hour	$.29 per mile, plus driver hourly rate
Rates Charged for Schools	$.60 per mile, plus $10.20 per hour	$.55 per mile, plus $10.00 per hour	$1.00 per mile, plus $14.00 per hour for field trips; $14.00 per hour for high school athletic or band trips	$15.00 per hour or $1.25 per mile for trips over 150 miles round trip	$3.50 admin fee, plus $.62 per mile, plus $12.67 per hour	$.29 per mile, plus driver hourly rate

Source: Lake County Report on Best Financial Management Practices, OPPAGA Report No. 01-68.

Exhibit 12-9 illustrates how the Santa Rosa County school district compares with peer district with respect to the scope of activity trip mileage.

Exhibit 12-9

Activity Trip Miles for Santa Rosa Are Relatively Low in Comparison to Those of Peer District

District	**Total Miles**	**Activity Trip Miles**	**Percentage of Total Miles as Activity Trips**
Santa Rosa	4,119,609	178,186	4.3%
Charlotte	1,742,255	155,000	8.9%
Lake	4,332,605	166,440	3.8%
Okaloosa	2,908,129	210,256	7.2%

District	Total Miles	Activity Trip Miles	Percentage of Total Miles as Activity Trips
Osceola	3,217,760	497,026	15.4%
St. Johns	3,202,298	336,608	10.5%
Peer Average	3,253,776	257,253	7.9%

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, School Year 1999-00. Calculations by SchoolMatch.

Recommendations

- *None*

3   The district effectively and efficiently recruits and retains the bus drivers and attendants it needs.

The district is well staffed with bus drivers and attendants

The responsibility for recruiting and retaining bus drivers is Laidlaw's under the terms of the contract. Maintaining an adequate number of trained bus drivers is a continuous challenge for most school districts, but Laidlaw, the district contractor, recruits and retains the bus drivers and attendants it needs. Laidlaw notifies the public of vacancies through ads in the newspaper and banners on buses. However, Laidlaw has a backlog of applications, so they have no trouble filling vacant positions. Once interviewed and hired, Laidlaw refers eligible applicants for training. Because Laidlaw has no trouble filling vacant positions, and does not even hire out-of-county applicants, the district does not routinely conduct salary comparisons with other school districts; however, as a point of information, the following exhibit illustrates that Santa Rosa County School District's bus driver hourly starting wages are comparable to its peer districts.

Exhibit 12-10

Bus Driver Hourly Starting Wages, School Year 2000-01

District	Starting Hourly Wage	Amount Higher or (Lower) than Santa Rosa
Santa Rosa	$8.11	
Charlotte	$8.00	($0.11)
Lake	$9.85	$1.74
Okaloosa	$7.41	($0.70)
Osceola	$8.85	$0.74
St. Johns	$8.70	$0.59

Source: Lake County Report of Best Financial Management Practices, OPPAGA report 01-68. Calculations by SchoolMatch.

Currently about half of the district's 210 bus drivers are school district employees receiving standard district benefits. All newly hired drivers are Laidlaw employees, and in time through attrition, all of the drivers will be Laidlaw employees. District staff indicates that the turnover rate for district and Laidlaw employees is similar, and Laidlaw prepares a monthly report (for management staff of both Laidlaw and the district) regarding its driver turnover rate and recruitment practices.

Both Laidlaw and district employees have comprehensive benefit packages. Both have group health,

dental, and life insurance. The district employees participate in the Florida Retirement System's defined-benefit retirement plan, which is a more costly and employee-favorable plan than Laidlaw's 401(k) plan. With respect to unemployment compensation benefits, the district employees, as government employees, are not eligible for unemployment compensation during the summer months provided they have been reappointed for the next year. By contrast, Laidlaw employees, as non-government employees, are eligible for unemployment compensation during the summer months.

Laidlaw provides a safety awards program for both Laidlaw and district drivers, with incentives and awards for good performance as demonstrated by safety record, timeliness, and ability to maintain discipline on the bus. While Laidlaw appears to be effectively recruiting, training and rewarding drivers, the district's contract lacks any specific accountability requirements. (Please see the discussion of Best Practice No. 15, for more discussion of accountability provisions needed in the district's contract with Laidlaw.)

Recommendations

- *None*

4

The district has a comprehensive training program for bus drivers. The drivers are trained to meet bus-driving standards and maintain acceptable student behavior on the buses; but the district needs to develop an oversight program for observing and monitoring the performance of bus drivers.

Bus driver activities and student discipline

Laidlaw is responsible for ensuring that bus drivers meet driving standards and maintain acceptable student discipline. Laidlaw's staff provides the initial training required for prospective bus drivers to receive a commercial driver's license as well as periodic in-service training of all drivers and attendants. Route supervisors and safety staff conduct a 40-hour bus driver-training course for all new drivers. Additional in-service training is provided annually to meet continuing education requirements. The topics covered range from safety and managing student behavior to unique concerns of the district. In addition, staff meetings are held monthly to ensure that staff concerns are brought to supervisors' attention.

Laidlaw staff does not routinely provide direct oversight of drivers' basic bus-handling skills, safe driving practices, and pupil management techniques. However, if there is a concern about the abilities of a given driver, appropriate oversight and training are provided. The transportation director indicates that requiring this oversight on a routine basis is in the planning stage and the district anticipates requiring Laidlaw to meet this standard beginning in school year 2002-03.

All drivers receive a physical exam when hired and as required by state statute, all drivers receive an annual physical exam, which the district schedules in July of each year. Laidlaw pays for these exams and the results are retained in Laidlaw's own computer system. Laidlaw also checks motor vehicle records for driving violations prior to hiring new staff and cross checks all drivers with the state traffic violations database each Friday.

By contract, Laidlaw is required to complete drug testing at the time of employment, at random intervals, under reasonable suspicion, and when qualifying serious accidents occur. The contract requires that the

number of random drug tests during the year must equal or exceed 50% of the total number of drivers. Those drivers who are determined to have a drug or alcohol problem are dismissed, and this policy is the same for drivers employed by both the district and by Laidlaw. Laidlaw bears the cost of drug testing for both district and Laidlaw employees.

The district has adopted and enforces a safe driver policy, which was instituted effective July 1, 1995, as required by the state. This lengthy policy delineates criteria for suspension or revocation of driving privileges according to a detailed point system. For example, if a driver accumulates 10 points within any three-month period, the driver is subject to suspension without pay for five workdays, and if a driver accumulates 12 points within one year, driving privileges for the district are suspended for one year. Some examples of the types of traffic infractions for which drivers might be assessed points are the following:

Infraction	Points
Driving with suspended license	12
Failure to obey traffic control device	6
Improper passing	6
Unlawful speed in excess of 15 miles per hour	6
Reckless driving	10
Improper backing	3

Recommendations

- *SchoolMatch recommends that the district adopt a bus driver oversight plan for observing and reviewing basic bus handling skills, safe driving practices, and pupil management techniques of all school bus drivers.*

Action Plan 12-3 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-3

Develop and implement a bus driver performance oversight plan.		
Strategy:	Institute a program for observing bus drivers' performance skills at least annually.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Charge Laidlaw with the responsibility of setting up a program under which bus drivers are periodically observed by route managers to see that they possess and maintain needed driving skills.
	Step 2:	Assign to route managers the responsibility for periodically riding with drivers assigned to them to detect needs for additional skills training and other forms of assistance.
	Step 3:	Develop a strategy for route managers to schedule times for riding with each driver at least once each year without detracting from their other job duties.
	Step 4:	Evaluate whether or not this program can be implemented with existing resources, and if not, make appropriate recommendations for funding.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for support services, district transportation director, and Laidlaw site manager.	
Time Frame:	Beginning with 2002-03 School Year	
Fiscal Impact:	Any additional costs are indeterminate at this time; however, it is likely that this can be accomplished with existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

5 The district provides transportation services to students in exceptional student education (ESE) programs that minimizes hardships to students and accurately reports ESE students transported, for state funding purposes.

The district follows state guidelines in transporting ESE students

The district provides adequate transportation services for exceptional students. The district transports 578 ESE students utilizing 38 buses, the configurations of which can change to accommodate seating or wheelchairs as needed.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) largely controls the decision-making process for the education of exceptional students. IDEA establishes that an individual education plan (IEP) must be developed for every exceptional student, and that those plans control the services exceptional students receive, including transportation. The intent of the IEP is to determine how best to serve exceptional students in the least restrictive environment. However, in the Santa Rosa School District, transportation staff is not involved in the IEP meetings where decisions are made regarding how the students will be transported. Transportation is notified of the outcome of the meetings and what the transportation needs are through the ESE bus assignment form, which is submitted to transportation. Transportation staff works with the exceptional student education staff to review changing needs as a child's condition changes, but SchoolMatch consultants were informed that this is usually done on an annual basis. District transportation staff state that the present system is adequate; however, SchoolMatch consultants note that the most appropriate accommodations of the transportation needs of ESE students could be better assured through more formal interaction between the ESE department and the transportation department.

The student transportation staff records the number of exceptional students transported who qualify for state supplemental funding and reports these to the state on the FTE reports in October and February of each year. However, the district does not make claims for Medicaid reimbursement for the transportation of eligible ESE students, as the administration is not certain that the cost of setting up and maintaining a billing system is justified in terms of the amount of money the district could expect to recoup. However, the district should explore instituting a claims reimbursement program, in cooperation with other districts, thereby minimizing the local set-up and implementation costs.

The district ensures that exceptional students ride a regular school bus whenever possible but maintains sufficient school buses and equipment suitable to accommodate students with special needs. District staff furnished to SchoolMatch consultants a list of all ESE buses and their capacities. This information indicates that the district has transportation capacity for approximately twice as many ESE students as the district currently transports. This excess capacity appears justified because the students are scattered throughout the district, and the buses cannot feasibly run at full capacity.

Recommendations

- *SchoolMatch recommends that the district hold periodic meetings between ESE and transportation staff to ensure that ESE students' transportation needs are appropriately met and the state reimbursement for these services is maximized.*

Action Plan 12-4 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

- *SchoolMatch recommends that the district consider instituting a program for filing claims for Medicaid reimbursement for eligible ESE transportation expenditures.*

Action Plan 12-5 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-4

Improve communications between ESE staff and transportation staff to ensure appropriate transportation services and maximum reimbursement for ESE students		
Strategy:	Hold regular meetings between ESE staff and transportation staff to ensure that ESE transportation services are optimized.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Assistant Superintendents for curriculum and instruction and for administration communicate to their respective subordinates the need to establish and maintain effective communication between ESE and transportation staffs.
	Step 2:	Reach agreement that transportation department personnel be consulted when establishing or changing the location of ESE programs, so that the transportation factor may be incorporated as an important ingredient in ESE program location decisions.
	Step 3:	Institute regular meetings between ESE and transportation staff relative to the transportation needs of individual ESE students and consider having a transportation staff member present at the staffing meetings for ESE students.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, assistant superintendent for administration, and director of transportation	
Time Frame:	2002-03 School Year and continuing into the future.	
Fiscal Impact:	Should be attainable with existing staff and other resources.	

Action Plan 12-5

Consider instituting a program for filing Medicaid claims for eligible ESE transportation expenditures		
Strategy:	Utilize contracted services to file Medicaid claims for ESE transportation expenditures.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Determine what contracted claims filing services other districts are using.
	Step 2:	Evaluate the various claims filing services being utilized by other districts and identify one that would be suitable for Santa Rosa County District Schools.
	Step 3:	Contract for and implement the service, in cooperation with another district, for claims filing support that is appropriate for Santa Rosa.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for finance and director of transportation.	
Time Frame:	By July 1, 2003 or earlier if feasible.	
Fiscal Impact:	To be determined.	

Source: SchoolMatch Consultant.

6   The district ensures that staff acts promptly and appropriately in response to any accidents that occur.

The district works to prevent accidents and respond promptly when they do occur

Santa Rosa County School District has all school buses and service vehicles equipped with two-way communication devices, with staff monitoring communications from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., which covers all times when vehicles are in regular service. In addition, drivers inspect buses prior to each run

as required by the state's Department of Education. Maintenance staff reviews these inspections periodically.

Currently Laidlaw oversees district practices concerning bus safety. Laidlaw coordinates bus evacuation drills at the schools and records are maintained in the transportation safety office. Laidlaw has a review system in place to ensure that these drills are conducted. As part of its training program Laidlaw instructs all drivers in procedures to follow in the event of an accident of other emergency. In the event of an accident or other emergency, accident forms are prepared and kept in the Risk Management office of the district, as well as in the transportation safety office. Laidlaw promptly investigates and evaluates all accidents that occur and official report forms are maintained in the district and are sent to the Florida Department of Education.

Recommendations

- *None*

7   The district ensures that appropriate student behavior is maintained on the bus at all times.

The district has an effective student discipline program for transported students

The Santa Rosa School District has established policies governing pupil ridership. The School Board policy emphasizes proper conduct on buses for safety purposes and applies the same rules as the district's Student Code of Conduct for campus behavior. A school bus driver may not discipline a student by means other than reasonable verbal reprimand. In the event the driver experiences discipline problems with a student, the basic referral process is described below:

- When bus drivers report disciplinary infractions on a bus, the driver writes up the student on a standard form and gives the completed form to the school principal.
- The principal is responsible for disciplining the student.
- The driver retains a copy of the discipline referral form before and after action is taken.
- If chronic or especially acute student discipline problem occur, the student's parents or guardian receive a copy of the bus referral from the school.

In order to determine the nature and scope of disciplinary infractions, SchoolMatch consultants obtained from the district transportation director a report (dated 2/15/02) of students whose transportation privileges were suspended during the period from the beginning of the 2001-02 school year up to the report date. During this period of time, which represents a little more than one-half of a school year, a total of 187 students (1.4% of riders) were suspended. Some examples of reasons for suspensions are as follows:

- Use of profanity/vulgar language
- Fighting
- Screaming
- Distracting the driver
- Boisterous and disrespectful to the driver
- "Mooning" out the back window

Route supervisors work with bus drivers and contact schools to resolve discipline problems. As problems arise, the route supervisors monitored the problems. Additionally, the route supervisors consult with ESE staff when appropriate, and the schools notify the parents when appropriate.

As a means of attempting to manage and minimize student transportation discipline problems, issues concerning the appropriate management of students are included as part of the regular curriculum for bus drivers during their initial training, and these matters are also covered during in-service classes each year. During bus driver in-service training sessions, pupil management is an instructional topic discussed in detail.

Recommendations

- *None*

Student Transportation Functions

8 **The school district is assured of an adequate school bus fleet through its contract with Laidlaw; however, in order to work toward optimal efficiency and the mutual benefit of the district and Laidlaw, the district needs to work with Laidlaw and consider a 12-year bus replacement cycle in lieu of the current 10-year cycle.**

The district has an adequate transportation fleet

The district's fleet includes 276 buses, 47 of which are spare buses. Historically, prior to privatizing in 1998-99, the district had not followed its bus replacement policy of replacing buses on a 10-year cycle, which had resulted in an aging fleet and was one of the primary considerations that prompted the district to enter into the Laidlaw contract effective July 1, 1998. The five-year contract with Laidlaw requires the vendor to provide a minimum of 25 new buses per year, and 25 buses have been provided for each year since the inception of the contract. Thus, as of 2001-02, and four contract years, Laidlaw has provided 100 new buses for the district. With a current fleet of 276 buses and 25 new buses each year, the district is now on a 10-year replacement cycle, placing the district in a good position with respect to current needs and to adequately meet future transportation needs.

At an average of 19,617 miles per bus per year, Santa Rosa is only slightly higher than the average number of miles per bus for peer districts. (Exhibit 12-11). Further, since the majority of the roads in the county are paved and well-maintained, this suggests that the district should consider moving from its

current practice of a 10-year replacement cycle to a 12-year replacement cycle, which would reduce by approximately six the number of buses the district would need to replace each year. However, some of the savings in the cost of buses would be slightly offset by increased maintenance costs for using and maintaining older buses. Therefore, additional study of the total financial impact should be made before actually adopting a 12-year replacement plan.

Exhibit 12-11

Comparative Student Transportation Data for Santa Rosa County Average Annual Miles per Bus, School Year 1999-2000

	Santa Rosa	Charlotte	Lake	Okaloosa	Osceola	St. Johns
Total Annual Miles	4,119,609	1,742,255	4,332,605	2,908,129	3,217,760	3,202,298
Buses in Daily Service	210	112	200	195	182	136
Average Annual Miles per Bus	19,617	15,556	21,663	14,913	17,680	23,546

NOTE: Average annual miles per bus for Santa Rosa and 5 peers = 18,862.

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, School Year 1999-00. Calculations by SchoolMatch.

The contract with Laidlaw stipulates that the vendor retains ownership of the buses that it provides; therefore, the district is in effect leasing the buses. At the end of the contract period, the district has the option to purchase the buses from Laidlaw at the current depreciated value, which would put the district in the position of being able to return to an in-house operation. This could be accomplished through several options: (a) purchasing the buses from Laidlaw and financing them over a period of time, (b) by leasing other buses if the in-house option were chosen or, (c) having buses provided by another vendor, if the district should change vendors but continue a contracted service.

SchoolMatch consultants have calculated that the approximately $1.5 million being paid to Laidlaw for the acquisition of 25 buses per year would provide adequate funding to lease approximately 162 buses, at a lease cost of $9,252 per bus per year. Thus, if the district chooses to return to an in-house operation, current funding levels could lease the 125 buses Laidlaw will supply under the current contract. However, should the district renew the current plan with Laidlaw for another five years, any future decisions to return to an in-house operation would cost the district considerably more than the current expenditure level in order to reestablish its fleet.

The contract with Laidlaw requires the vendor to support a spare fleet of at least 10% over the base fleet. The district currently maintains a spare fleet of 47 buses, or 17% of its fleet. For comparison purposes, SchoolMatch consultants referred to the Lake County Report of Best Financial Management Practices, 2001, p. 12-21, Exhibit 12-16, which shows an average percentage of spare buses to total buses of 17% for Lake County's peer districts, which includes Santa Rosa County. Thus, Santa Rosa County School District's spare fleet is comparable to its peers. Santa Rosa's spare buses range from 1989 to 1994 models.

In cooperation with Laidlaw, the district maintains adequate records of all school buses. New buses are inspected when received and are placed on routes with the greatest need. Older buses are reviewed to determine whether or not they should remain in service, and if no longer needed, those buses owned by the district are disposed of at public auctions.

Recommendations

- *Conduct a study of the feasibility of changing to a 12-year bus replacement cycle from the current 10-year cycle.*

Action Plan 12-6 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-6

Study the feasibility of a 12-year bus replacement cycle.	
Strategy:	Evaluate the cost effectiveness of changing from a 10-year bus replacement plan to a 12-year bus replacement plan.
Action Needed:	Step 1: Conduct an assessment to determine whether it would be cost-effective to adopt a 12-year bus replacement cycle. The assessment should include an analysis of all of the variables that impact the life cycle of the current fleet, such as safety, specification and design, and economy and efficiency. The assessment should include consultations with other districts presently utilizing a 12-year replacement cycle, and with DOE.
	Step 2: The feasibility study should include an estimate of the anticipated reduction in the cost of buses that would be purchased, along with a careful analysis of the impact of utilizing older buses on operational expenses. (It should be noted that reducing the number of buses purchased reduces the capital projects expenditures of the district, while increasing operational costs in the general fund, so the sources of funding need to be a part of the feasibility study.)
	Step 3: If adoption of a 12-year replacement cycle proves to be advantageous, the district's current replacement policy must be amended and all appropriate recommendations need to be made to the Board for its approval.
	Step 4: If adoption of a 12-year cycle appears to be feasible, amendments to the contract with Laidlaw, which would give the district the benefit of such a change should be negotiated.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration, director of transportation and the Laidlaw branch manager.
Time Frame:	Complete the study by December 31, 2002
Fiscal Impact:	To be determined by study, with careful attention to funding sources under the various scenarios.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

9 The district provides timely routine servicing for buses and other district vehicles, as well as prompt response for breakdowns and other unforeseen contingencies. All district buses and support vehicles are regularly inspected and maintained

Laidlaw is responsible for all routine service of buses and other vehicles. Laidlaw meets or exceeds the state standards by inspecting and servicing each bus every 20 days or every 3,000 miles, whichever is first. The district utilizes employees who are state-certified inspectors, and the inspectors work from a standardized checklist from the Department of Education in performing the inspections. The computerized tracking system provides planned scheduling for buses due for inspection, thereby

facilitating an efficient rotation of buses, and the files documenting safety inspections are maintained in secure files in the transportation maintenance office. Further evidence of the effectiveness of the district's inspection program is the fact that the student transportation department received no adverse comments during the most recent DOE review of the district's 20-day inspections.

A computerized fleet maintenance system, provided by Laidlaw, tracks service work on each vehicle. This computerized system also provides data on the maintenance costs, performance, and operations of the vehicles. A transportation supervisory employee reviews these inspection records to determine their completeness and accuracy, and to ensure quality control.

In addition to maintaining school buses, the transportation department is responsible for the maintenance of the district-owned support vehicles, also known as the white fleet, with the records for the maintenance management and scheduling system for the white fleet vehicles kept on a separate computer system owned by the district. The student transportation staff communicates with other departments whose vehicles are due for service to ensure that routine maintenance is provided in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Charges for routine servicing and repair work done on the white fleet vehicles are kept on the district's computer record system and the district reimburses Laidlaw for these expenses. The district's costs for servicing all white fleet vehicles is assigned to the transportation department under cost center Function 7800. A more accurate accounting of the cost for maintenance of both buses and the white fleet could be made if costs associated with the white fleet vehicles were charged to the appropriate departments.

Staff responds appropriately to bus breakdowns

The district has procedures in place to promptly respond to bus breakdowns. In the event of a breakdown, drivers call in to the transportation maintenance office for service using two-way radios, which are installed in all buses. In responding to breakdowns, a mechanic or qualified helper takes a spare bus and switches buses with the driver so that she/he can complete the run. A service truck equipped with tools and parts is dispatched to the vehicle in need. If the repair can be done on location, it is; if not, the maintenance office dispatches a tow vehicle. A log of all road calls is kept in the maintenance office.

The vehicle maintenance staff follows established guidelines to assist in making cost-effective decisions about expensive repairs on older buses. Based on Laidlaw policy, its corporate office must approve, in advance, all repairs expected to exceed $2,500.

Contract Considerations

While Laidlaw appears to be effectively addressing routine maintenance needs, the district's contract lacks any specific accountability requirements in this area. See the later evaluation of best practice 15 for more discussion on contracting.

Recommendations

- *The district should charge the cost of maintaining non-transportation vehicles (the "White Fleet") to the departments they serve, rather than charging the cost of all maintenance to the transportation department.*

Action Plan 12-7 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-7

Charge the cost of non-transportation support vehicles to their respective departments		
Strategy:	Finance and transportation will work together to charge vehicle maintenance and operational costs to the proper departments and accounts.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Data-processing will make any software changes needed to accommodate this recommendation.
	Step 2:	Transportation will code expenditures in such a way that costs can be charged to appropriate departments.
	Step 3:	Finance will begin charging all non-student transportation vehicle operational and maintenance costs to the appropriate departments.
Who Is Responsible	Senior accountant and transportation director.	
Time Frame:	Begin with the 2001-02 school year.	
Fiscal Impact:	Can be done with existing resources and reports of transportation costs will be more accurate.	

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

10 The district ensures that fuel purchases are cost-effective and that school buses and other vehicles are efficiently supplied with fuel.

The district has an efficient, well-controlled fuel supply system

When the district entered into the privatization contract with Laidlaw, the district retained the responsibility of all fuel purchasing and management of all related activities. By retaining the fuel supply responsibility, the district saves substantial amounts in state and federal fuel taxes. The district's purchasing department is responsible for all fuel purchases and obtains fuel on a competitive bid basis in order to ensure that fuel purchases are made on a cost-effective basis. The current fuel-purchase contract is for a five-year period, and bids are obtained as often as the purchasing department deems advisable. The district purchases fuel for its own use and is not involved in cooperative arrangements with other local governments.

The district operates seven secure and well-controlled fueling stations, which are adequate to meet the needs of the district. At six of its seven fueling locations, the district utilizes an automated fueling system to enhance control over fuel costs. Fuel is accessed using key system and records initiated at the pump are transmitted to the district's central computer system. The system maintains records of fuel consumption for each vehicle and flags vehicles with unusually high fuel charges, which, in turn, may lead to a work order for maintenance or to the discovery of unauthorized use.

The fuel inventory is controlled through the use of the records maintained by the automated dispensing system and daily manual fuel tank readings obtained by "sticking" the tanks with a measuring stick. In addition to maintaining records of fuel consumption, the system also includes procedures that determine when orders to refill the fueling stations should be placed.

The computerized records provide the information needed to bill fuel costs to the appropriate departments; however, up to the present time all fuel costs have been charged to the transportation department thereby inflating the actual cost of transportation. However, the district plans to begin charging all transportation costs, including the cost of fuel, to the appropriate departments. (Please see the recommendation under best practice 9 in this chapter for a recommendation that all operating costs be charged out appropriately.)

The district cooperates with other governmental agencies charged with conducting environmental inspections of fueling stations. The environmental protection agency, accompanied by the director of transportation, annually inspects of all of the district's 11 fuel tanks. In addition, tanks are monitored on an ongoing basis for any possible leakage. The district transportation staff maintains records of each inspection. There have been no citations or corrective actions required in recent years.

Recommendations

- *Please see recommendation and action plan under the discussion of best practice 9 in this chapter regarding charging the operating costs of non-transportation vehicles to the departments they serve. That recommended improvement also applies to accounting for fuel cost.*

11 The district maintains facilities that are conveniently situated to provide sufficient and secure support for vehicle maintenance and other student transportation functions.

The district has adequate vehicle maintenance facilities

The district has one centrally located service center. The school district has completed a cost-benefit analysis of building a second service center in the southern part of the county. This analysis suggests that the savings generated from the availability of the service center could pay for the construction costs over a 10- to 15-year period; however, this capital outlay project has been put on hold because of questions about whether or not the service center is needed at the present time and how the cost of the facility would be funded, including whether it would be funded by Laidlaw.

The question of the possible need for an additional vehicle service center in the southern part of the county may be cast in a different light when the district changes to the three-tiered schedule, as the district could operate with fewer buses under this system. Also, if the district reduces courtesy riders, most of whom are in the southern part of the county, this would further reducing the number of district buses, especially in the southern end of the county. Thus, after these changes, the south facility might not be needed. Therefore, SchoolMatch consultants believe this issue should be reevaluated after the other plans and recommendations are implemented.

Laidlaw is responsible for all maintenance activities, including upkeep and repairs to the maintenance facility, which is leased to Laidlaw for a token fee. After entering into the contract with the district, Laidlaw completed several capital improvements to the maintenance facility, including a covered work area at the end of the work garage, substantially increasing the amount of covered workspace available.

The vehicle service center now has a shop layout that allows mechanics to work in covered areas and specialized tools are supplied when needed. The shop floor layout is properly designed to avoid worker safety problems and safety apparatus are readily available. These include fire extinguishers, eye wash stations, and first aid kits.

The following two exhibits provide information about how the district compares to its peers with respect to service facilities and work bays. Santa Rosa's limited number of maintenance facilities compared to peers, combined with its ability to maintain buses in a timely and effective manner (See best practice 9 of this chapter) suggests that Santa Rosa County School District is operating very efficiently in its bus maintenance efforts.

Exhibit 12-12

Number of Transportation Facilities in Santa Rosa is Comparable to Its Peers

School District	Total Buses in Daily Service	Area in Square Miles	Bus Maintenance Facilities
Santa Rosa	210	1,024	1
Charlotte	112	690	2
Lake	200	954	3
Okaloosa	195	936	3
Osceola	182	1,350	2
St. Johns	136	617	2
Peer Average	173	929	2

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, School Year 1999-00.

Exhibit 12-13

Number of Work Bays to Mechanics Is Lower Than Peer Districts

School District	Total Number of Mechanics	Number of Work Bays	Ratio of Work Bays to Mechanics
Santa Rosa	16	8	.50
Charlotte	7	6	.86
Lake	14	13	.93
Okaloosa	13	12	.92
Osceola	13	20	1.54
St. Johns	8	8	1.00
Peer Average	12	11	.92

Source: Total number of mechanics: *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles,* School Year 1999-00. Number of work bays: Lake County Report of Best Financial Practices, OPPAGA 01-68. Calculations by SchoolMatch.

The school district minimizes the production of hazardous waste by contracting out air-conditioning and engine overhaul to shops specializing in those activities. Other hazardous waste, such as used motor oil, is safely and securely stored in accordance with federal and state requirements.

While the overall adequacy of the workshop has been improved with the additions provided by Laidlaw, visual inspection of the space available in the service center for parts, tires, and related inventory indicates that more storage space would be desirable; however, since the district has an effective vehicle maintenance program, with which it is satisfied, SchoolMatch mentions this only as an observation and not as a formal recommendation. For example, in the parts room, additional shelving would be useful. The remaining sections of the service center adequately provide the facilities needed to support maintenance and repair activities, including computer data entry, paperwork processing, and records storage.

The service center is securely fenced and lighted and is conveniently accessible for bus drivers arriving and departing. Buses that are left at the compound are locked and securely stored. Because of the large geographic area of the county, some drivers park the buses at home. Drivers are instructed to properly lock and secure the buses. This arrangement is more cost-effective than requiring all outlying buses to be returned to a compound, and the district reports that it does not have a significant problem with buses being vandalized, either within the compound or with the buses parked outside of the compound.

Recommendations

- *None*

12 The district maintains an effective staffing level in the vehicle maintenance area and provides support for vehicle maintenance staff to develop their skills.

The staffing and training of transportation maintenance personnel is good

Under the district's privatization contract, maintenance staff levels are Laidlaw's responsibility. In meeting this responsibility, Laidlaw maintains a staffing ratio of mechanics-to-vehicles needing inspection and service at one per 13 buses per day. This ratio enables mechanics to meet the 20-day inspection requirement, and the ratio appears to be adequate.

Maintenance staffing for buses used in daily operation in Santa Rosa as compared to peer districts is illustrated in the following exhibit.

Exhibit 12-14

Maintenance Staffing in 1999-00 Was Comparable With Peer Districts

School District	Total Buses	Mechanic Positions	Other Fleet Maintenance Positions	Buses Per Maintenance Employee
Santa Rosa	210	16	2	11.7
Charlotte	112	7	2	12.4
Lake	200	14	7	9.5
Okaloosa	195	13	7	9.8
Osceola	182	13	3	11.4
St. Johns	136	8	2	13.6
Peer Average	173	12	4	10.8

Source: Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, School Year 1999-00. Calculations by SchoolMatch.

Santa Rosa's director of transportation and the vehicle maintenance supervisor monitor Laidlaw's mechanic in-service training programs and activities in order to be assured of the continuation of ample, well-trained vehicle maintenance staff with expertise in modern skills and interest in school transportation vehicles.

Laidlaw also encourages staff to attend special training programs, generally offered by manufacturers outside of the district. Attendees are expected to return from training and share the information with other mechanic staff.

Incentives for vehicle maintenance staff differ for district and Laidlaw employees. The 10 district employees are provided an annual tool stipend, a shoe allowance, and Laidlaw uniforms. The remaining six Laidlaw mechanics are provided uniforms and receive a pay enhancement for ASE certification. These incentives along with fringe benefits and competitive wages have effectively provided the Santa Rosa district transportation department with qualified vehicle maintenance personnel.

Again, while Laidlaw appears to be effectively addressing maintaining a qualified mechanic workforce,

the district's contract lacks any specific accountability requirements in this area. Please see the discussion of best practice No. 15 for more discussion on contracting.

Recommendations

- *None*

13The district maintains an inventory of parts, supplies, and equipment needed to support student transportation functions that balances the concerns of immediate need and inventory costs. The district maintains conservative inventories and obtains needed parts and materials promptly and cost-effectively.

Under its contract with the district, Laidlaw is responsible for providing all parts, materials, and supplies needed for the maintenance of district transportation and support vehicles. In interviews with Laidlaw personnel, SchoolMatch consultants found that needed repair items are obtained in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Laidlaw maintains national contracts with its suppliers, which enables the company to obtain materials at favorable prices due to the large volume of purchases. Further, Laidlaw's suppliers deliver parts promptly and frequently, according to the needs of the district. In addition, Laidlaw maintains relationships with local suppliers to secure materials needed on an immediate basis and to support the local economy.

The Laidlaw representative reported to SchoolMatch consultants that inventories have been reduced substantially under their watch, down from $109,000 to $54,000. This includes inventory on service trucks, which carry frequently needed parts. The good terms and frequent delivery service available through Laidlaw's suppliers make the lower inventory levels possible, yet the district's needs are met in a timely and adequate fashion. However, since Laidlaw operates under a fixed price contract, these inventory savings are realized by Laidlaw, but are budget neutral to the district. At the same time, the district's purchasing department is relieved of the responsibility of acquiring materials for transportation, and can devote its time to other educational support services.

Inventory records are maintained on the school district's computer system. This system records minimum and maximum inventory levels, ensuring the replenishment of inventory items on an optimal basis. The computerized inventory system provides information for charging all parts used to the vehicles on which they are used. Also, parts-room employees inspect and account for all materials purchased to ensure the integrity of the procurement system.

Laidlaw uses its computer system to track all warranty items, forwarding all claims to a national processing center. This Laidlaw division completes the follow-up and paperwork and sends reimbursements to the Santa Rosa office at least once a month. While variable, these recovered expenses average approximately $5,000-$6,000 per month. Based on the contract arrangement, these savings also accrue to Laidlaw, thereby positioning the company to provide service to the district on a more competitive basis.

Finally, with respect to its inventory and procurement practices, all parts utilized are charged out on work orders to specific vehicles and inventories are housed in a secure area, thereby minimizing the potential for inappropriate use of materials.

From a management perspective, as will be discussed in greater detail in best practice 15 of this chapter, the district must ensure that it's contract price takes into consideration the savings and economies that a large vendor can offer. In this way, operational costs, like bulk purchasing savings as well as improved warranty and inventory management financially benefit the district as well as the vendor.

Recommendations

- *None*

Managerial Oversight

14The district provides appropriate technological and computer support for student transportation functions and operations.

The district and Laidlaw jointly provide technological and computer support for the district's transportation operations.

Both the district and Laidlaw have computerized management information systems that are utilized in producing management information needed for the student transportation function. The district operates a computer system for fiscal management, which was in place prior to entering into the contract with Laidlaw. This system is utilized for budget preparation and to control and record all transportation revenues and expenditures for the district, including expenditures for fuel, payroll, and the monthly payments to Laidlaw. Certain expenditures, including repairs and maintenance, are made by Laidlaw and not tracked by the district. Further, as a fixed price contract, Laidlaw is not accountable to the district in terms of providing detailed information regarding the company's expenditures.

However, in discussions with district staff, SchoolMatch consultants were advised that both the district's and Laidlaw's transportation computer systems are coordinated with other district systems, when appropriate. For instance, the district now uses Laidlaw's system for transportation FTE reporting, mapping and routing, which requires coordination with the district's computer system.

The district and Laidlaw seem to be working together well in the operation of transportation computer applications. They both provide some computers and each provides needed software, as they work cooperatively toward their common objective of providing a good transportation program for the district, with quality records needed in the process.

Laidlaw keeps records of vehicle maintenance on a computer system that is operated by district and Laidlaw employees. Additionally, Laidlaw maintains a human resources computer application, on which payroll records for Laidlaw employees are maintained. Additionally, this system maintains records of driver training and certification and driver's license data for both district and Laidlaw employees; however, the Laidlaw safety office manually maintains substance abuse records.

Student transportation and Laidlaw staff consult with each other and with district information staff as necessary to adapt, add to, and improve transportation computer applications, and to coordinate with other district systems as needed.

The district has begun establishing strategies for assessing the reliability of program performance and cost data, as described below in the discussion of best practice 15 in this chapter.

Recommendations

- *None*

15The district needs to improve its accountability system for student transportation by formally obtaining stakeholder input and by establishing performance measures and making regular periodic assessments and reports of performance. And, since Laidlaw is responsible for providing the district's transportation system, these accountability measures should be made a part of the contract with Laidlaw.

Essential goals and objectives are formalized, but efforts should be expanded

The Santa Rosa District's transportation department goals and objectives are stated in the Transportation Handbook, which is published annually, and in the school board's strategic improvement plan. However, the goals and objectives are not comprehensive in nature. Please see the discussion of best practice 16 for a recommendation that the transportation department implement a formalized planning process.

The district needs to improve its internal accountability system

In the past, the Santa Rosa County School District had not routinely compared its performance to that of peer districts. However, the district recently (Fall 2001) began using strategies to assess the reliability of program performance cost data, using district-produced data and data from DOE's annual Q-Link publication, which includes statewide data allowing peer district comparisons. These data are reported to the school board and district staff advises that this will continue on an ongoing basis. As the district works to continually improve its transportation system, an ongoing review of its progress compared to its peers should be continue to be incorporated into the district's formal planning and implementation efforts. This is an additional way for the district to ensure that activities designed to improve the system are meeting its objectives. In addition, identification of peer districts with better performance can alert district planning and operations staff to sources to contact to learn about best practice activities.

In utilizing Q-Link data, the district is finding that comparing data for privatized districts to data for non-privatized districts requires adjustments to data in the Q-Link publication; therefore, the district reports that it has asked DOE to make accommodations in the preparation of the Q-Link report that would facilitate the comparison of privatized districts to those with in-house operations, an idea which SchoolMatch consultants endorse.

A significant part of accountability includes obtaining users' satisfaction with the services being provided. The Laidlaw contract requires the provider periodically survey clients' satisfaction with transportation services, but this aspect of the contract has not been implemented. The district should ensure that periodic feedback from district users is obtained through a stakeholder survey process.

The contract with Laidlaw should contain more-specific accountability and performance assurances

Under Scope of Services, the Laidlaw contract provides as follows:

> …"Company shall provide all student transportation services, and maintain all vehicles in compliance with this agreement and all applicable provisions of Florida law and regulations governing the operation of school buses and the transportation of students. In addition company shall require all employees to follow board policies pertaining to student transportation, field trips, athletic contests, and extra-curricular trips, as well as Board's administrative guidelines pertaining to the reporting and handling of student discipline incidents."

However, the contract with Laidlaw does not specifically include any of the district's goals and objectives. While the district goals and objectives are straightforward and are verbally shared with local Laidlaw staff, it is important for the district to be certain the corporate entity responsible for implementing transportation activities maintains policies and procedures that are consistent with district goals and objectives.

In addition, the contract should include accountability and outcome measures to objectively assess Laidlaw's performance. The contract includes annual fixed price payments and establishes the responsibilities of each party (district and provider), but lacks stated measurable expectations regarding Laidlaw's anticipated level of performance. While services may be contracted, it remains the district's responsibility to ensure the quality of services and to be accountable for the level of service and expenditure of funds. Therefore, it is the district's responsibility to ensure the contracted provider meets established performance expectations.

While district and Laidlaw staffs appear to have a genuinely cooperative, respectful, and collaborative relationship, the lack of objective measures, reflecting district objectives as well as the lack of performance accountability, places both parties at risk of misunderstanding and a resulting dissatisfaction with the contract arrangement. To avoid this, the contract should be amended to include performance measures.

Further, the contract allows for amendments to increase the contract amount if the costs incurred by Laidlaw exceed the contracted amount. However, there is no corresponding language that allows the district to reduce the amount of the contract, and thus financially benefit from any realized cost savings that result from improvements or significant changes in the transportation system. Again, while district staff reports that Laidlaw would accept such changes, these policies should be clearly delineated in the contract.

Recommendations

- *The district should ensure that periodic feedback from district users regarding the level of satisfaction of the transportation program is obtained.*

Action Plan 12-8 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

- *The contract should be amended to include objective performance measures and provisions for the contract to be amended to give the district the benefit of cost-savings measurers. Performance measures should be used to implement a periodic (at least annually) review process to evaluate the performance of both the contractor and the district. While not an exhaustive list of potential measures, global measures could include the following:*

  — *Percentage of all runs that leave one or more stops early/percentage of all runs that leave one or more stops late.*

  — *Valid complaints received per month per 1,000 pupils transported.*

— *Percentage of vehicle capacity that is utilized for each route.*

— *Non-chargeable and chargeable school bus accidents per one million vehicle miles.*

— *Full cost per pupil transported each way, each day or full cost per mile (transport and non-service "dead" miles)*

• *Additional measures that reflect outputs and progress toward meeting the global objectives could include:*

— *Average percent of drivers required to report (including standby drivers) who do not report to work.*

— *Percentage of drivers who have been evaluated as having satisfactory skills at least twice within the past six months.*

— *Average number of vehicles unavailable for service each day due to repair or maintenance work.*

— *The number of buses that break down away from the central compound, each month, as a percent of the number of buses operated.*

Action Plan 12-9 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-8

Conduct an annual Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey		
Strategy:	The district in cooperation with Laidlaw, annually survey stakeholder satisfaction.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	District staff and Laidlaw staff should cooperatively design a stakeholder satisfaction survey instrument.
	Step 2:	Stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers, principals, bus drivers, mechanics, school board members, and other stakeholders identified in the planning process should be identified.
	Step 3:	The survey should be conducted annually, probably near the end of the school year, in order that respondents may have in mind pertinent information based on the experience of the past school year.
Who Is Responsible	Laidlaw branch manager and the director of transportation.	
Time Frame:	For the 2001-02 school year and continuing annually into the future.	
Fiscal Impact:	This can be accomplished within existing resources.	

Action Plan 12-9

Amend the contract with Laidlaw to include performance measures and district savings opportunities and make periodic (at least annually) assessments of performance		
Strategy:	Negotiate contract amendments with Laidlaw to incorporate performance measures and district savings opportunities and make periodic assessments of performance by reference to the performance standards and peer districts.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	In cooperation with Laidlaw, identify appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures and benchmarks for inclusion in the Laidlaw contract, using the above-listed measures as a springboard.
	Step 2:	Amend the Laidlaw contract as necessary to enable and facilitate the establishment of an accountability system that is beneficial to both the district and Laidlaw.

	Step 3:	At least annually, based on data relative to the identified performance standards, peer district information and other pertinent data contained in the DOE Q-Link publication, make an assessment report of transportation as a means of evaluating the management of the operations by both Laidlaw and the district.
	Step 4:	Present the performance report ("Report Card") to all stakeholders, including the school board, and use the information as a guide for improvements and efficiencies in the transportation operations.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration, director of transportation, senior accountant and Laidlaw's branch manager.	
Time Frame:	July 1, 2003	
Fiscal Impact:	This should be accomplished with existing resources, and should result in savings to the district that are indeterminate at this time.	

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

16 The district coordinates planning and budgeting for student transportation within the context of district and community planning; however, the district needs to institute a long-range planning process for student transportation.

The district engages in planning and budgeting on an as-needed basis

District transportation staff members meet with other district staff members when new programs and schools are being planned, in order to ensure that transportation needs are met in an efficient manner. The assistant superintendent for administration is responsible for both school facilities and transportation, and coordinates planning for new programs and schools and their related transportation needs. Both the director of transportation and Laidlaw administrators are involved in these planning activities as the need arises.

With respect to community planning activities, the assistant superintendent for administration consults with other governmental and community-based entities regarding planning and siting of new schools, and transportation considerations are part of this process.

Despite appearances that planning is well coordinated, several recent events suggest that improvements are needed. For example, while the state mandates that each district have a school choice plan, [1] Santa Rosa opted to implement its choice plan in the northern most rural section of the district. However, the district did not obtain adequate input from the transportation office regarding the anticipated cost increases associated with this plan. In addition, in school year 2001-02, the district scheduled a teacher-planning day on Thursday of the week in which the state counts the number of children who ride the bus. Maximizing this number is critical for districts, as these figures determine the amount of funds the district receives from the state to support its transportation services. While transportation staff does not believe this short week negatively impacted the district's count, the district needs to ensure that the transportation staff is included in all decisions regarding the school calendar. (Please see a related recommendation under best practice 18.)

The director of transportation and the branch manager from Laidlaw also annually meet with district

---

[1]School choice is a practice whereby students are allowed to select a school other than the one they are zoned for, usually because schools are under-performing, and this increases student options. Transportation is provided at the district's expense.

finance staff members to review the local costs associated with operating the student transportation system and to prepare an annual budget for recommendation to the School Board. Efforts to identify areas of potential cost savings are covered in these meetings; however, formalized long-range planning is needed to assess the impact of activities and other factors which impact the efficiency of the transportation program.

Efforts to benefit from implementing cost-savings improvements are not done through a formalized planning process

For the past several years the district has concentrated its efforts to obtain efficiencies in the transportation operation on the new Laidlaw privatization initiative. Under the contract with Laidlaw, which was first effective for the 1998-1999 school year, the district accomplished its objectives of obtaining an adequate bus fleet and outsourcing transportation staffing responsibilities. In the meantime, prior to the current budget crisis, areas of potential cost savings, such as reducing the number of courtesy riders, reducing the number of spare buses, realigning routes, maximizing efficiency through the use of three-tiered routing, etc., have not been the subject of formalized planning, but have tended to be addressed only as they have been incidentally impacted by the Laidlaw privatization initiative.

Safety concerns are coordinated with law enforcement and other community officials

When new schools or programs are planned, transportation safety issues relative to school bus loading and unloading areas for buses and private vehicles are evaluated by district administration (assistant superintendent for administration, who is also responsible for school facilities, and director of transportation) and by Laidlaw's safety department. When traffic patterns are evaluated, the objective of planning and design is to maximize safety and minimize conflicts with pedestrians and traffic.

Recommendations

- *Develop and maintain a long-range planning process for student transportation.*

  Action Plan 12-10 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-10

Develop and maintain a long-range planning process for student transportation		
Strategy:	Transportation staff for both Laidlaw and the district should cooperatively develop and maintain a long-range plan for the district transportation operation.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Establish a long-range planning committee composed of district transportation staff, Laidlaw administrative staff, and district finance staff.
	Step 2:	Secure the services of a resource person with experience in long-range planning, if necessary.
	Step 3:	Develop a mission statement and goals and objectives for the transportation department.
	Step 4:	Develop specific one-year and five-year plans for the transportation function, in which issues relative to efficient and safe operation of the transportation operation are addressed in detail. Any issues relative to the respective roles of district employees and Laidlaw employees should also be considered.
	Step 5:	Submit the plan to the school board for approval and update the plan on an annual basis.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration, director of transportation, and Laidlaw branch manager.	

Time Frame:	Begin with the 2002-2003 school year.
Fiscal Impact:	Can be accomplished with existing resources unless an outside resource person (as opposed to using district staff for strategic planning) is hired, in which case, the cost should be minimal.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

17 The district monitors the fiscal condition of the student transportation function by analyzing expenditures and reviewing them against the budget, but, as discussed under best practice 15, the district needs a more formal performance accountability system.

The district and Laidlaw exercise budget control over transportation expenditures

The district maintains budget control over its transportation expenditures through its centralized computer system. While the transportation function is privatized, the district maintains budget control over the monthly contract payments to Laidlaw, plus expenditures that are still the district's direct responsibility. The district continues to budget for and purchase fuel; it budgets for the cost of transportation staff that is employed by the district; it maintains a budget for the director of transportation's department; and it accounts for field trips and summer school activities. The district continues to budget for the district's transportation costs much as it did before privatization; however, many of the detailed expenditures do not appear in the district's budget, because all costs paid directly by Laidlaw are reflected in the district's records only in the monthly payment to Laidlaw for contracted services. As with all departments within the district, changes to the district's transportation budget must by submitted to and approved by the finance department.

Expenditures made by Laidlaw for labor, maintenance, training, safety, bus and other equipment purchases are recorded by Laidlaw in their own records and are subject to their internal budget controls. The district employees reported confidence in Laidlaw's budget control procedures and practices and, for example, believe Laidlaw exercises greater oversight and control over maintenance expenditures than before privatization.

The ability to limit the tracking needed with line-tem budgeting and expenditure information in a fixed-price contract is one of the advantages of this type of contract. However, without detailed fiscal information to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the contractor, it is essential for the district to establish and utilize a clear performance accountability system, as described in best practice 15, which includes comparing the contractor's performance against established measures. It is also critical for the district to diligently analyze its overall costs comparing the district's costs and performance to available expenditure and performance information in peer districts. By diligently analyzing both performance and available cost information, the district will ensure it is operating efficiently under its privatized transportation program, and has the information needed to ensure that the terms of the contract are beneficial to both parties.

Recommendations

- *None*

18The district provides regular, accurate, and timely counts to the Florida Department of Education of the number of students transported as part of the Florida Education Finance Program, but better coordination among all district departments is needed in order to ensure that FTE counts are scheduled at times which will result in the district earning optimal state funding.

The transportation department effectively conducts the required counts of transported students.

Districts receive transportation funding from The Department of Education based on the number of student riders counted during semiannual "count weeks." Thus, the district benefits from ensuring that all riders are accounted for and that the total number of riders is accurately counted. To prepare for each count week, the student transportation office begins by coordinating plans with school site staff, exceptional student education staff, and other district staff involved in the transportation student count. The student transportation office also sends drivers notice and an explanation of procedures related to the upcoming count about two to three weeks before count week.

Student information cards are distributed to schools and school-based staff coordinates this effort with the transportation office. During count week, drivers collect rider cards from students, and on a daily basis, submit these to the transportation office for computer entry and ultimate completion of the report of transported students. The route supervisors also retain this information on file for audit and reference purposes.

No on-site spot checks of the drivers' records and reports are conducted, but staff compares the submitted information to office maps and records of expected riders. A manual review of the submitted cards, to ensure that all codes are properly recorded, is also conducted prior to submitting the reports to the Department of Education.

It is noteworthy that in school year 2001-2002, a scheduled teacher-planning day reduced the number of available days for completing the count. While student transportation staff does not believe that this shortened week negatively impacted the count efforts, in future planning and coordination the district should carefully consider ensuring that a full week is available for counting ridership, in order to maximize the opportunity to obtain the fullest count.

Also noteworthy is the fact that for the February 2002 transportation rider count, the district utilized Laidlaw's computerized transportation rider reporting system, which district staff believes will result in more accurate reporting with less clerical work.

Recommendations

- *Future planning and coordination should involve careful consideration by all district staff of ensuring that a full week is available for counting transported students.*

Action Plan 12-11 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-11

Consider the number of days students are transported for FTE purposes when establishing the school calendar for the district		
Strategy:		The calendar planning committee should consider the days of student attendance for transported FTE purposes.
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Transportation staff should be included in the calendar planning process.
	Step 2:	The calendar planning committee should carefully consider the number of days students will be transported during FTE counts, in order to ensure that maximized opportunity for counting all students is factored into preparing the calendar.
Who Is Responsible		Assistant superintendent for administration, director of transportation
Time Frame:		Planning for the 2002-03 School Year, if possible. If not, the earliest opportunity thereafter.
Fiscal Impact:		Can be accomplished with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

19 Although the district has privatized the student transportation function, largely for non-financial reasons, the district needs to demonstrate, on an ongoing basis, that the privatized approach is more cost-effective than an in-house operation, or that any extra cost of privatization is justified by added value to the district.

The district's transportation system is privatized

As described in the background section of this report, the district opted to privatize its transportation system, effective in school year 1998-99. The district had not purchased new buses on a regular schedule and was confronted with an aging bus fleet, prone to breakdowns and expensive repairs. In addition, the district was experiencing a high rate of worker's compensation claims from employees in the transportation department. As a result, the district decided to pursue a contract with a private vendor to manage the student transportation department. The district pursued a fixed-price contract arrangement that assured costs would not exceed the department's expenditures. Nevertheless, the decision to contract was not totally a financial decision, but one based on primarily on other systemic considerations.

Even though the transportation function is privatized, it is incumbent upon the district to continually evaluate the efficiency of its operation so that it can justify the privatized approach. To this end, SchoolMatch consultants encourage the use of an accountability system, as discussed under best practice 15, whereby the district can make valid comparisons of its vendor's performance and of its operating costs to appropriate benchmarks and to peer school districts. Further, when the contract is being considered for renewal, the district should make a comparison of the cost of continuing with privatization, in whole or in part, to the cost of returning to an in-house operation, either totally or partially.

Quality control is exercised over work done by outside vendors

Vehicle maintenance staff members conduct quality assurance checks for vehicle maintenance work that is outsourced to ensure that work was satisfactorily completed in accordance expectations. District staff members advised SchoolMatch consultants that this is always done by the maintenance supervisory staff and that work is not accepted and approved for payment until the inspection has been done and the work

has been validated as being satisfactory.

Recommendations

- *Future contract efforts should include a cost-benefit analysis to determine if continuing a privatized approach for student transportation, in whole or in part, is a cost-effective endeavor.*

Action Plan 12-12 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-12

A cost-benefit analysis should be conducted when considering whether or not to continue with privatization		
Strategy:	A cost-benefit analysis for privatization of transportation services should be conducted.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	The transportation department and the finance department should combine efforts and assemble a work group for the purposes of conducting a cost-benefit analysis.
	Step 2:	Available literature regarding the subject should be gathered. For example, in May 1999 Florida TaxWatch published a guide for school districts entitled "Full Cost Analysis Procedures and Development of Proposals for Management of Non-Instructional Education Services." This and other pertinent resources should be considered.
	Step 3:	The cost-benefit analysis should be conducted prior to renewing the current contract with Laidlaw, or making any other significant changes in the current transportation delivery system. This will possibly involve the issuance of requests for proposals and evaluation of the proposals submitted in response thereto.
	Step 4:	Make appropriate recommendations to the school board.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration and director of transportation	
Time Frame:	2002-03 School Year, the last year of the current contract with Laidlaw.	
Fiscal Impact:	Can be done with existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch Consultant.

20 Under the contract with Laidlaw, much of the responsibility for organizational structure and staffing levels is the responsibility of Laidlaw, but the district maintains an organizational chart and periodically reviews staffing over which it has direct control outside of the Laidlaw contract.

The organizational structure and staffing levels are periodically reviewed

The board-approved organizational structure for the district is quite different from that of the typical school district that has an in-house transportation operation. As the organizational chart in the background section of this chapter depicts, management of transportation in the district is carried out with a combination of school district and Laidlaw staff members. While the structure is somewhat atypical,

SchoolMatch consultants were impressed with the cooperative manner in which the district employees and Laidlaw employees joined in what appears to be a seamless organization in conducting the transportation operations for the district.

As far as staffing of mechanics and drivers is concerned, this is a Laidlaw responsibility under the contract, but Laidlaw reports no problems in maintaining adequate staff levels in both of these areas. With respect to drivers, Laidlaw hires bus drivers only from within the county and it ensures sufficient available drivers on any given day by employing a staff of 26 permanent substitutes. With 16 mechanics, Laidlaw follows a staffing formula of 25 vehicles per mechanic, which includes all regularly used buses, spare buses, and non-transportation vehicles. District supervisory staff indicates that this staffing level for mechanics is adequate, with a low turnover rate.

Since the district organizational structure is unusual due to the fact that the transportation function is privatized, the indicators for this best practice do not directly apply in Santa Rosa's case. However, Laidlaw appears to be following good business practices in staffing to meet the district's needs. And the district, with only the director of transportation and his office staff under the direct control of the district, reviews that part of the organizational structure as it considers the staffing and structure of other district office departments.

The district has retained the position of a director of transportation to oversee the day-to-day transportation operations, serve as a liaison between Laidlaw staff and district administration, and assume responsibility for the long-term planning and implementation of the transportation program. Staff in the administrative office is responsible for negotiating and monitoring the contract with Laidlaw. While the district has thus far been well served by retaining the director of transportation position, if the changes in the contract are implemented, as recommended, and the transportation planning function is centralized as part of the overall district planning process, then the position of transportation director could be eliminated at such time as the district has a district administrator trained and available to administer the Laidlaw contract.

Recommendations

- *Eliminate the position of the director of transportation.*

Action Plan 12-13 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 12-13

Eliminate the position of district transportation director		
Strategy:	Assign the duties of Director of Transportation to the district contract manager when this position has been established.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Establish the position of contract manager and assign to this position the duties of managing the district's privatized contracts by reassignment of present employees.
	Step 2:	Expand the role of Laidlaw's manager in the management of the transportation operation.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration and superintendent of schools.	
Time Frame:	July 1, 2003 or some later date when satisfactory alternative arrangements for management of the transportation function have been made. (Please see the above related discussion.)	
Fiscal Impact:	$84,000 per year, or $422,000 over a 5-year period.	

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

13 Food Service Operations

The Santa Rosa County School District has effective, well-received food service operations. The program provides nutritious meals and does a good job of promoting its programs. However, future consideration for maintaining an adequate fund balance of the program should be a priority.

Conclusion

The Santa Rosa County School District contracted with SODEXHO Marriott Company in August 1997 to manage food service operations for the district. The management company has provided quality meals planned and evaluated by a nutrition program to meet national nutrition standards. The use of company promotional materials has enabled communication to occur throughout the community and the addition of district level staff with technical and program skills and knowledge has provided school sites with a standardized level of achievement. The district and the management company must work as a team to try to achieve an increased operating fund balance carry forward.

During the course of this review SchoolMatch identified a number of district accomplishments in the food service operations, some of which are included in Exhibit 13-1 below. These accomplishments have improved accountability, ensured nutritional standards, reduced paperwork and provided additional services to customers.

Exhibit 13-1

**The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments
In The Past Five Years**

- The district has implemented an automated district-wide point of sale system in all school cafeterias. This has improved financial and reporting accountability.
- The district has implemented an automated nutrition analysis system that ensures the district is meeting required national nutrition standards on a daily basis.
- The district has implemented an automated system for processing family applications for free and reduced price meals.
- The district has expanded the breakfast program to all schools, thereby increasing revenue and meeting student needs.

Source: SchoolMatch.

Overview of Chapter Findings

SchoolMatch reviewed the district's food service operations using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the commissioner of education and associated indicators. The consulting team employed several methodologies to develop chapter conclusions and action plans. SchoolMatch conducted on-site interviews with district level managers, reviewed automated systems, and gathered information on the food service operations activities such as the district's food service contract operations

activities policies and procedures, and cycle menus. To receive additional input, five schools were visited and the results have been validated and incorporated into this chapter where applicable.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Efficient and Effective Operation

1. The district has detailed operational procedures in-place. However, the district has been using a mission statement and strategic plan developed by and for the management company. (Page 13-7)
2. The district and contractor have a system for routinely reviewing organizational structures and job responsibilities. (Page 13-8)
3. Food service employees demonstrate results of training plan activities. (Page 13-9)
4. The food service program staff has implemented strategies to eliminate participation barriers. (Page 13-10)
5. The district communicates appropriate benchmarks to stakeholders. Page (13-11)
6. The district staff annually review cafeteria operations and performance and have a continuing need to make more efficient use of staffing. (Page 13-12)
7. The district does not have a systematic, written process to assess direct operation of service delivery if the district did not outsource food service management. (Page 13-13)

Financial Accountability and Viability

8. The food service team has not operated efficiently but may now be ready to operate without use of the general fund. (Page 13-15)
9. The district has controls in-place for ongoing review of revenue management. (Page 13-17)
10. The district has a system that can consolidate meal information for direct transfer to the state on-line reimbursement system. (Page 13-18)
11. The district reviews its purchased food products for specifications and quality. (Page 13-18)
12. The district uses automated inventory programs for both food and equipment. (Page 13-19)
13. The district has documented and implemented a receiving, storing, and disposal system for the food service program. (Page 13-19)
14. The district has a functioning preventive maintenance and repairs system. (Page 13-19)

Meal Preparation and Nutrition

15. District food service staff ensure that menus meet national nutrition standards. (Page 13-20)
16. The district food service staff produce quality food for their students. (Page 13-20)

Safety and Sanitation

17. State and national food safety regulation are followed in food preparation, but one site needs renovation. (Page 13-21)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations———————

One of the chapter's recommendations has direct fiscal results and should show savings for the program in the future. See Exhibit 13-2.

Exhibit 13-2

One Food Service Operations Action Plan Recommendation Has Fiscal Results

Recommendation	Five Year Fiscal Impact
• The district should continue to allow the contractor to replace more district employees with less expensive contract employees to reduce cost	• $200,000 ($40,000 per year)

Source: SchoolMatch.

Background

All public school districts in Florida must participate in the National School Lunch Program and all elementary schools must participate in the School Breakfast Program. The district has chosen to provide breakfast programs at all schools. These nutrition programs are regulated at the national level by the United States Department of Agriculture and provide flow-through reimbursement dollars administered by the state to districts. The district receives money for each lunch and breakfast served. Federal payments are based on family income guidelines. The district also receives USDA commodities. Available surplus food items are allocated to state and then to eligible programs.

The district serves breakfasts and lunches prepared in 32 school kitchens. Two kitchens prepare meals for small programs housed nearby. The district has implemented a family application to determine eligibility status for free or reduced price meals. This accommodates families with several children and requires only one form. The district also utilizes the statewide direct certification process, which eliminates the paperwork process for families on food stamps and children who are recipients of the temporary aid to needy families.

The district has a central warehouse and freezer. USDA commodities are stored in the central facility. Purchased food and some supplies are received from vendors at school sites.

In school year 1997-1998 the district contracted with Marriott SODEXHO to operate the school food service program. With the addition of a company utilizing the services of a registered dietitian, the district could be approved to implement the Assisted NuMenu option for breakfast and lunch. Use of this option ensures that meals served meet age-appropriate nutrition requirements.

For peer comparison changes were made to more properly compare for food service. Bay and Leon Counties are used because they are geographically near and would have similar vendor situations. Leon County was also added because it also has a contract managed food service program. Lake, Putnam and Suwannee Counties were retaining the basic peer group. Exhibit 13-3 shows a general comparison of the peer districts.

Exhibit 13-3

Peer District Comparison For the Period July 1999 Through June 2000

District	District Membership*	Free and reduced as a percentage of total membership	A la carte sales as percentage of revenue	Net ($)
Bay	25,752	30.8	14.76	(33,202)
Lake	29,290	26.9	20.40	(415,520)
Leon	32,048	19.8	23.34	(27,527)

| District	District Membership*	Free and reduced as a percentage of total membership	A la carte sales as percentage of revenue	Net ($)
Putnam	12,624	48.1	11.74	44,774
Santa Rosa	**20,067**	**25.7**	**22.11**	**(134,591)**
Suwannee	5,810	35.6	22.92	81,761

*From Education Information & Accountability Services, Florida Food and Nutrition Management section.

Source: DOE and SchoolMatch.

At the district level, every position below contract administrator, with the exception of one administrative assistant and one maintenance position, are SODEXHO employees. Exhibit 13-4 depicts the organizational structure for the administration of the food service program.

Exhibit 13-4

The District Monitors the Food Service Program Through the Contract Administrator's Office
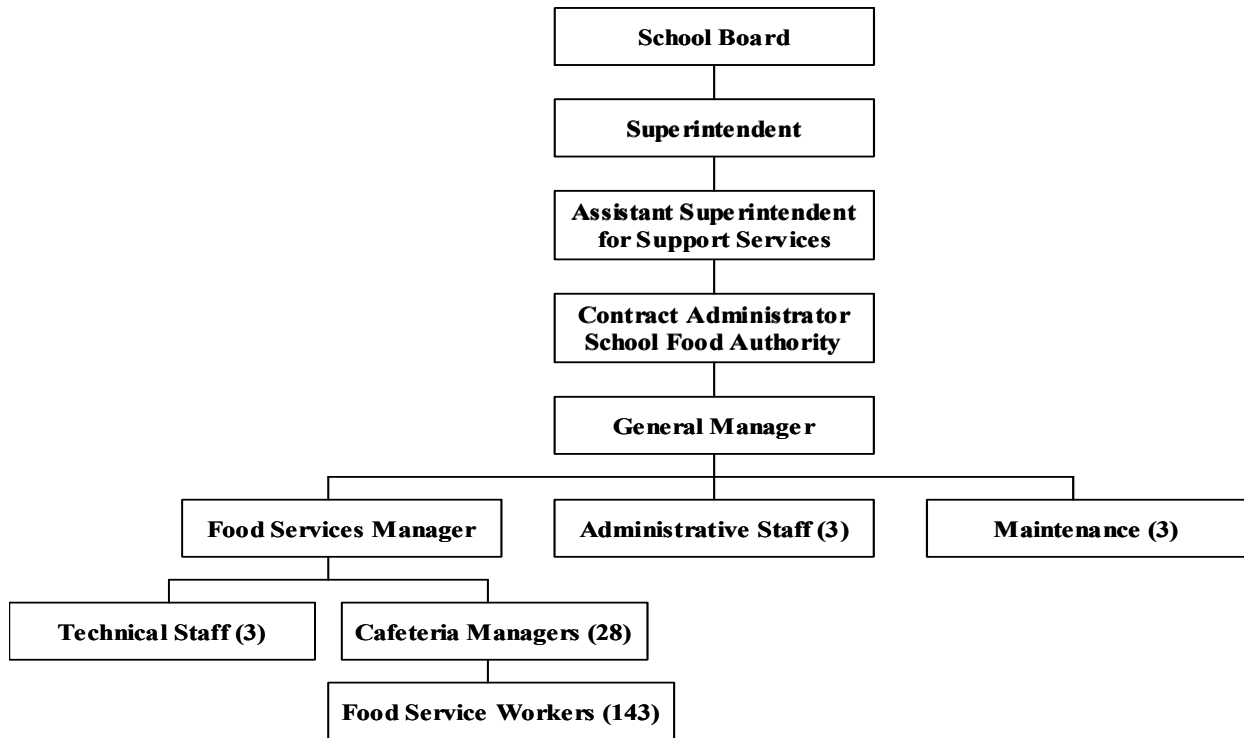
Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

According to district records, over a four year period, the loss for food service kept spiraling due to maintenance of old equipment, need to increase participation, state audits by the Auditor General's Office and the Food and Nutrition Management Office revealed that accountability deficiencies required a need to enhance efficiency. The change in meal requirements for breakfast and lunch in federal regulations requiring nutrition analysis brought on additional responsibilities for site reviews and general production oversight. The commodity audit revealed an excess stockage level equaling over six months usage. However, excess commodities in stock were items such as raisins and honey that could not be used to significantly decrease meal costs.

Therefore, the district had a need to find someone with school food service knowledge to efficiently manage the program and work as a team with the district. In transitioning to a contract management firm, it was decided that the food service director would be retained for the first four years to ensure accountability issues were met.

The food service program is funded by federal and state reimbursements and cash sales. On June 24, 2002, the district food service account is forecasted to have a year-end balance of approximately $209,000, with no transfers from the general account. This puts the program in the best financial position for the last four years when compared to the same period last year. Exhibit 13-5 below illustrates the Food Service Program revenues and expenses for the last three fiscal years

Exhibit 13-5

Profit and Loss Statements of the Santa Rosa County School District Food Service Department

	FY 1998-99		FY 1999-00		FY 2000-01	
	Dollars	**Percentage of Revenue**	**Dollars**	**Percentage of Revenue**	**Dollars**	**Percentage of Revenue**
Revenues						
National School Lunch Act	2,283,216	40	2,433,293	42	2,621,589	40
USDA Donated Foods	421,003	7	194,327	3	362,311	6
State Supplemental Income	197,297	3	51,487	1	103,580	2
Student Lunch Cash Sales	1,124,837	20	1,308,364	22	1,392,088	21
Breakfast Cash Sales	221,468	4	129,489	2	148,178	2
Ala Carte Sales	1,342,775	23	1,641,962	28	1,883,544	29
Summer Food Services	49,536	1	49,234	1	63,251	1
Other Revenue	92,035	2	37,483	1	7,299	0
Total Revenue	**$5,732,167**	**100%**	**$5,845,639**	**100%**	**$6,581,840**	**100%**
Expenditures						
Food and Supplies	2,847,669	48	2,758,133	47	3,347,656	51
Salaries	1,924,847	33	2,090,653	36	2,244,734	34
Benefits	694,367	12	637,749	11	666,396	10
Purchased Services	305,176	5	249,614	4	304,215	5
Capital Outlay	10,672	0	11,778	0	20,473	0
Other Capital Outlay	55,447	1		0	28,191	0
Other Expenses	214,315	4	232,304	4	187,675	3
Other Financing Sources*	(151,000)	-3	(135,000)	-2	(207,000)	-3
Total Expenditures	**$5,901,493**	**103%**	**$5,845,231**	**100%**	**$6,592,340**	**100%**
Net Operating Income	(169,326)		409		(10,500)	
Total (Loss)	(320,326)	-6%	(134,591)	-2%	(217,500)	-3%
Fund Balance	**$10,277**		**$10,686**		**$185**	

*Transfers from the district's general fund to off-set food program losses beyond the fund balance.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Following state and federal regulations and with review of each step in the process by Food and Nutrition Management Office of the Florida Department of Education, the Santa Rosa School District contracted with Marriott (SODEXHO) in August 1997 to manage the food service program for the district level.

A team consisting of 11 members representing all levels of district employees reviewed the two proposals received. References were checked; other contracted sites were visited. Oral presentations were made. The superintendent served as chair of the team but did not vote. Marriott (SODEXHO) received the most votes.

The contract is a fee-based contract with $0.02 management fee for each meal and a $0.287 fee for general administrative support. District food service employees remained employees of the school district. The contract requires SODEXHO to hire and fire any new personnel. Federal and state guidelines specify certain responsibilities to be retained by the district. For example, final approval of the claim, final determination of student eligibility for free and reduced price meals, and annual school site reviews are assigned to the district contract administrator position.

The district had the option to submit a proposal, but because of the current debt, the lack of personnel, and past history, the district did not choose to participate in the proposal since their goal was to achieve a higher standard of operation. Since the achievement of a higher standard, school board members receive less frequent complaints about food service.

Methodology

To develop findings related to the food service operations' best financial management practices, SchoolMatch conducted five school site visits and had lunch at two additional schools, conducted reviews of program documentation, reviewed the food service self-assessment, interviewed the contract administrator, the former food service supervisor, the general manager, the purchasing director and the finance accountant. Also interviewed were administrative assistants, technical staff and managers, employees and school staff at the five schools visited. The director of exceptional student education was also interviewed.

Additional input was received from the evening forum held by SchoolMatch and frame video containing comments by principals, staff and students regarding the performance of the management company. [1]

SchoolMatch also obtained information from other school districts in Florida that were determined to be comparable to Santa Rosa County School District. The peer districts used for comparison were Bay, Lake, Leon, Putnam and Suwannee. [2]

---

[1] Results have been incorporated into the chapter where applicable.

[2] Source Documents Used from: Florida Department of Education Food and Nutrition Management
-District Comparables (Nick Baldwin)
-Cost Report 1999-2000
-Full Price Report 2000-2001
-District Responsibility when Contracting with a Food Service Management Company (Technical Assistance Note No. 02--18 David Whetstone)
-Program Requirements Child Nutrition Regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture outlined in 7CFR Parts 210, 215, 220, 240, 245, 250, 252 and OMB Circular A-102.

Efficient and Effective Operation

1 **The district has detailed operation procedures in-place. However, the district has been using a mission statement and strategic plan developed by and for the management company.**

Before the current mission statement was adopted, the food service department sought input from the food service staff and district administration. After receiving little feedback, the general manager dispersed the SODEXHO mission statement for adoption.

The SODEXHO Company has six basic beliefs generated by the food service people through their values of service, spirit, team spirit and spirit of progress. A team approach is used and individuals evaluate their team in terms of their own feelings about the team. This process was first introduced to management staff in Santa Rosa and then followed up by presenting to all employees in the food service department.

The food service delivery is managed by the SODEXHO Company under contract for the delivery of the food service program. The SODEXHO Company has a national mission statement. The mission statement is broadly stated and allows for local input from staff, students and families by written surveys, focus groups and manager meetings.

The SODEXHO corporate mission statement reads:

> *"To create and offer services that contribute to a more pleasant way of life for people whenever and wherever they come together."*

However, because the district may not always contract out their entire food service program or may have a different management company, it is important that the district has its own mission statement and plan.

The district has a comprehensive operation handbook that is available to all employees. Site orientation manuals and cashier manuals are also used at school sites. The general manager presents goals, measures, and expected outcomes to the school board on a quarterly basis. Quarterly reports reflect the district's objective of maintaining a high quality program through increased participation levels and financial reports that reflect a financially stable program. Board reports also include other significant information such as nutritional guidelines set forth by federal guidelines and promotional items, all of which are part of the district's plan for continued quality and customer satisfaction.

Major parts of this process were completed through committee involvement in the request for proposals process when the district decided to outsource the program. This plan when documented and combined with operating policies and procedures and quarterly reports will provide the district with a complete guide which can be followed and enhanced by outsource contractors or a self-operated program.

Recommendations

- *The district should develop a plan to guide and evaluate the food service program. A plan that includes input from school-level staff and customers through school board should include a board-approved mission statement, long-range goals, strategies to meet these goals and plans of action.*

Action Plan 13-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 13-1

Recommendation 1		
Strategy	Implementation of a strategic plan for the Food Service Program.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	The superintendent directs the assistant superintendent of support services to develop a strategic plan, which includes an approved mission statement, long-range goals, strategies to accomplish goals and plans of action, for the food service program, assigns the project to a committee that includes such members as the food services contract administrator and general manager, the field technicians, and a representative group of 3-5 principals or assistant principals.
	Step 2:	After reaching consensus, the food services supervisor along with other committee members develop the detailed action plan. The plan needs to be approved by the assistant superintendent for business and support services and by the superintendent. The school board should also approve the plan.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and assistant superintendent for support services.	
Time Frame	February 1, 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.	

2   The district and contractor have a system for routinely reviewing organizational structures and job responsibilities.

Since the district has contracted food service and transportation management, it has established the position of contract administrator to oversee district-contracted services. The administrator for contracted services monitors food service, transportation and purchasing activity contractors. His duties in food service include direct supervision of the food service general manager position, serving as the approving official for free and reduced applications, and approving official of the monthly claim for reimbursement. He conducts an annual site review of each school food service operation. As director of purchasing he also has oversight for the bid and procurement process. The contractor, SODEXHO, also employs a general manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operations.

Both the contract administrator and general manager are well qualified. The contract administrator has a degree in management and has government experience in purchasing. He has served as purchasing agent for the school food service program for 15 years. He was a key participant in the development of the bid process for outsourcing of the food program. The general manager has studied Hotel Restaurant Management at Farmingdale and Johnson & Wales Universities as well as courses through the Marriott Corporation. In addition he has 13 years work-related experience in school food service programs in four public school districts.

The district's organization chart clearly identifies food service operations positions and supervisory relationships (see Exhibit 13-4). The district is transitioning staffing from district-employed to contractor-employed individuals. As of January 31, 2002 the district employed 61 food service workers and 110 employees were employed by SODEXHO. In addition, the district has centralized food service workers under the food service program management. This has reduced the number of employees each school's principal must hire and evaluate. Staffing levels are measured in the contractor's monthly Key Results Indicator Report. Staffing costs have decreased as a result of this transition. For example, according to district data it costs approximately $6.00 per hour less for each contracted employee versus

district employed staff member. As the district continues to transition staff to SODEXHO staffing costs will continue to decrease.

The district regularly reviews the program's organizational structure and staffing levels to minimize administrative layers and processes. Although the contractor is primarily responsible for service delivery, the district's contract administrator reviews and approves changes to the organizational structure. Staff feedback is also used in making decisions about the organizational changes. For example, SODEXHO uses a survey instrument and staff meetings for feedback on organizational issues. During school visits three managers verified that they provided a variety of input directly to the contract manager including suggestions on organizational changes.

To further ensure overall efficiency, the district has established a standard of 21 meals per labor hour (mplh). This standard exceeds the historical standard of 15 mplh that some other Florida school districts use. As of January 31, 2002 the district-wide average is 22.5 meals per labor hour. The four schools with low enrollment of 300 or less are able to reach an average of 17 meals per labor hour and several larger enrollment schools exceed the average. Under the district's contract, SODEXHO has flexibility to delete or add labor hours at a site and to move employees to other sites if necessary. Relocation of some employees has occurred with the addition of five new schools in a four-year period. The average hours per employee, when SODEXHO Marriott assumed operation, was 6.4 hours per day. The average employee hours as of January 31, 2002 was 5.9 hours per day.

The district has clearly identified the roles of the food service department through the development of a handbook and job descriptions for all employees. All food service employees are provided this handbook as part of the orientation process.

Principals provide temporary approvals for free and reduced applications. They have the opportunity to review the school's food service performance at the end of the year using a SODEXHO instrument designed for this purpose. This instrument is used to give recognition for food service activities beyond what is required. Principals also have the opportunity to request the removal of an employee. This request would be presented to the district or the management company as appropriate.

Staffing of cafeterias is based on the revenue generated, the size of the school and the number of staff needed to cover multiple serving lines and computer terminals. Monthly reports are provided to managers and discussed at manager meetings. Principals can make request if they have special needs. Both the food service district staff and the district contract administrator attend these meetings.

3   Food service employees demonstrate results of training plan activities.

SODEXHO is primarily responsible for providing training to the district's food service workers. Cashier training and computer training occurs as well as training on the new meal pattern requirement for Assisted NuMenu. A manager-training program is also a part of the district plan. This allows principals to have a choice among employees who have successfully completed the approved training program. The district staff are participants in the American School Food Service Association (ASFSA) and utilizes the organization's national professional training plan and certification process. SODEXHO training plans are also included in quarterly reports to the school board. ASFSA is a professional organization that provides trade journals, on the job training activities, idea sharing and recognition programs. Currently there are 55 active members of ASFSA among district food service staff.

District rosters of in-service training are used to document the hours, type off training, pass or fail, and total points for each employee attending. The form also indicates the type of evaluation and the number of training sessions for the year. This evaluation utilizes a one through four point rating system on job usefulness to their position and further needs for training.

Training is also documented as applicable during ASFSA meetings. The Florida ASFSA's Training Calendar is approved by ASFSA's national office and can be found on district's web site. Association members receive one point for each hour of training and additional points for attending regional and national conferences. Accumulation of 30 points is needed for certification by ASFSA. Last year, the district's food service department had approximately 95 certified employees.

The SODEXHO training program also provides training in all areas of food, workplace and service. The SODEXHO training program also provides training in food preparation, food handling, sanitation, customer service, food and physical safety. Training topics and evaluations are documented and are on file in the food service office. Training is provided during local ASFSA meetings, in service days, on site, and by telephone technical assistance by food service office staff. ASFSA provides job training certification approval for training provided to staff. This allows employees to meet the national standards and certification requirements described by ASFSA for their position. Managers are required to be certified in food safety and sanitation as described in the district's manager job description.

Food service workers also receive specialized training. For example, the largest number of students requiring special diets attends one school and has a wing of that school which includes a separate kitchen. Staff from the classroom puree and make other changes to the meal as needed. The Exceptional Student Education Program provides training on meal modification.

The school level observation of seven cafeterias demonstrated that staff put in practice training they receive. In addition, SODEXHO signage and signature programs are displayed at each school for educating both the staff and school community as to the meal definition under the Assisted NuMenus federal guidelines.

4   The food service program staff has implemented strategies to eliminate participation barriers.

The district's contractor takes steps to maximize student participation in the school meals program. For example, the district uses focus groups of students to evaluate new food offerings and student choice or selection determines when items are pulled from the menu. An elementary school survey rating the school food service program is used to identify likes and dislikes of students. All schools in the district are enrolled as USDA Team Nutrition Schools and receive nutrition materials offered by that program. The district menu is distributed to students and parents each month and contains the SODEXHO materials for promoting breakfast and lunch, along with free and reduced price information, and explanations of the NuMenu guideline choices. Radio shows are also used to promote the nutrition programs.

The district's contractor also takes steps to identify and eliminate specific barriers to student participation in the school meals program. For example, SODEXHO implemented automated serving systems to reduce long waits in lines, which had previously dissuaded students from purchasing school lunches[3]. This change included a pre-payment method that has reduced the amount of time to complete a transaction between the student customer and the cashier. Rather than a cash transaction, a student enters his/her identification number into a keypad and a balance of credit is displayed on the screen to the cashier.

In addition, the food service department identifies schools with low participation rates and works with those schools to eliminate participation barriers. For example, SODEXHO worked with Gulf Breeze High School to increase its participation by renovating the cafeteria, adding food service lines, and

---

[3] This change has also eliminated overt identification which may have occurred with the manual rosters and provided a secure accountability for handling prepayments.

increasing the number of menu items. Average daily participation at Gulf Breeze High School has increased approximately 30% annually over the three years since these changes. The current daily participation for each high school follows: Milton 77.5%, Pace 80.7%, Gulf Breeze 87.1% and Navarre 67.7%.

SODEXHO provides all foods offered in the schools and does not have to compete with other groups selling food at the school level. Food prices encourage students to purchase entire meals instead of individual a la carte items. The reimbursable meal provides more nutrition and value for the price charged. The ratio of lunch and breakfast participation compared to a la carte participation has increased over the last year, which shows an improvement in nutrition by participants.

5 The district communicates appropriate benchmarks to stakeholders.

The stated goals for the school cafeterias are to increase participation, decrease cost (food and labor) and to be positive and innovative. Training is provided at the beginning of the year and the district office staff provides on-site assistance.

Each school is provided a copy of their budget, meals per labor hour, and participation on a monthly basis. These documents are reviewed at managers meetings. Comparisons are made between the current year and the past two years and provide an accurate picture of each school's progress toward stated benchmark. As stated earlier in this chapter, the district has established a standard of 21 meals per labor hour. This standard exceeds the historical standard of 15 meals per labor hour (mplh) that some other Florida school districts use.

The food service department uses Key Results Indicators that compare the cost of meal equivalents to the food industry standards. This report is a measurement tool that compares industry benchmarks to the Santa Rosa County Schools. This criterion is based on national averages in both public and private sectors. Weekly operating reports and average daily payroll reports are generated based on the school calendar of 180 days for use as tools to continually assess performance and cost data.

The food service office uses email to communicate budget status weekly by worksheet to schools. The managers return a spreadsheet to the food service office regarding their status. This process provides a focus for the managers on purchases and what they have in their storeroom.

The district uses stated goals, future plans, prior year comparisons, monthly review of expenses and quarterly reports to the school board as benchmarks for evaluating the food service program. Annual statewide reports from the Department of Education are also used to evaluate district status with other districts.

The department should continue to annually compare its meal prices with those of its peers. The comparison should include analysis of department profitability for at least three years into the past, so that the board can assess when it would be prudent to adjust meal prices. Although the food service operation is currently in good financial shape, it is likely that costs will continue to rise over time and the district must guard against future revenue losses, although a price increase is not recommended at this time.

6 District staff annually review cafeteria operations and performance and have a continuing need to make more efficient use of staffing

SODEXHO and the contract manager annually conduct and document evaluations of each school's cafeteria food service operations. School principals also conduct an annual assessment of their cafeteria program using a SODEXHO-developed evaluation instrument. The results of the principal assessments are provided to SODEXHO for review. The district contract administrator uses the site review format to ensure adequate meals and meal accountability as required by the USDA on an annual basis prior to February 1. The SODEXHO visit on site is used as a supplement to the email site budget and contract manager's review. The principal review is to provide recognition of the program's achievements that are above the requirement. The combination of each of these reviews along with automated information analysis provides a complete picture of each site's operation status.

District cost per meal

The district uses evaluation results to compare its performance and cost to statewide data. SODEXHO and the contract manager use consolidated information in district annual report and compare expense categories such as salaries and purchased food to information developed by the Florida Department of Education's Food and Nutrition office annually for all school districts. The district compares itself to statewide and regional averages. A review of this data shows that the district's labor, food, and total costs are greater than peer, state, and regional averages (see Exhibit 13-6).

For food service peer comparisons use Bay, Lake, Leon, Putnam, and Suwannee Counties.   Leon County is also a district with a contracted food service program. A comparison with peer districts for salaries, purchased food and total cost per meal can be found in Exhibit 13-6. The comparison with the peer group reveals that for the 1999/2000 year the district was above the average for salaries, purchased food, and total cost per lunch meal.

Exhibit 13-6

Program Cost Per Lunch Meal, School Year 1999-2000

	Salaries	Purchased Food	Total Cost
Santa Rosa	.7629	.7802	2.1100
Bay	.7433	.8204	2.0619
Lake	.6226	.6809	1.8050
Leon	.4334	.8275	1.9062
Putnam	.7527	.7546	2.0362
Suwannee	.7509	.7842	1.9727
Peer Avg.	.6606	.7735	1.9564
Region I Avg	.6580	.7634	2.0206
State Avg	.6560	.7527	1.9496

Source: DOE Cost Reports.

The district has submitted its data and reported an overall reduction of $0.03 per meal costs for School Year 2000-1 versus the previous year. The district considers this a result of a reduction in small equipment, refrigeration, and maintenance and repair expenditures. Food costs and labor costs per meal were reported as remaining about the same. Despite annual cost of living raises, several food service employees retired during the previous year that resulted in no net increase in labor costs.

Each month the management company cash and expense reports are reviewed by the contract administrator and reconciled with the finance administrator. All expenses are recorded according to the state school accounting system (red book) and are available for auditors. An executive summary is also prepared for the district finance office each month.

Recommendations

- *The district should continue to allow the contractor to replace more district employees with less expensive contract employees to reduce cost.*

Action Plan 13-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 13-2

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Continue to reduce total salaries over the next five years by hiring new staff at lower rate of pay and fewer hours when feasible.
Action Needed	Step 1: Request a forecast of years of service for district employees each year.
	Step 2: Estimate cost savings each year.
	Step 3: Evaluate progress toward total salary reduction and reduce hours at most productive schools in needed.
Who is Responsible	Contract administrator with assistance from human resource office and food service general manager.
Time Frame	Beginning end of school year 2001-02
Fiscal Impact	$40,000 each year in projected savings.

7 The district does not have a systematic, written process to assess direct operation of service delivery if the district did not outsource food service management.

In order to ensure that decisions over how to deliver food services maximize performance and reduce costs, the district needs to consider a variety of data and other information. This includes consideration of data related to overall management and operations as well as individual program components such as food storage, delivery, and meal production. The district should have a systematic written process to collect this data and information over time to later compare alternatives for the food services program. This will enable the district to ensure that food service delivery provides a quality program at a reasonable cost. The district generally does not have a process to collect the information and data needed to make alternative service delivery decisions. As a result, these decisions are made based on information available and general perceptions that these decisions will reduce costs. However, the district does not periodically review operations to determine the best service delivery method.

In addition, districts need to review the performance services once they are contracted to ensure that they are cost-effective. As previously mentioned, the district contracted starting in 1997 for program management of its food service program. The district reviews the annual performance of the food service delivery contractor on an on-going basis. The first year of privatization showed an increase in revenue from meals of 28% according to the state cost and participation report.

The district has not chosen to return to direct operation during this period. Should they decide to return to direct operation, they have the option to hire former SODEXHO employees at the school level. These employees are all local people and would have the opportunity to apply.

Nutrition programs provided

The district currently provides breakfast and lunch programs in all schools and participates in the Summer Food Program. The district also participates in the after school snack program. Participation in all nutrition programs provides the district the opportunity to earn the maximum federal dollars available. The district is currently looking at implementing Provision 2 in schools with high numbers of free eligible students. Provision 2 allows schools approved by the state Food and Nutrition office to use an alternate system for free and reduced price meal claiming. Applications are taken in the first year and a monthly percentage is established for free, reduced price, and paid meals. This percentage is then applied for a four-year period to the total meals claimed each month. This provision encourages additional participation due to not having to go through applications every year and cuts down on serving line documentation of eligibility.

Recommendations

- *The district should periodically compare service delivery alternatives. The comparison should include a follow-up analysis of whether predicted cost savings have been achieved. As appropriate, the district should include in these analyses input from cafeteria managers and staff, as well as school principals.*

Action Plan 13-3 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 13-3

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Periodically compare service delivery alternatives for food service programs functions to determine if outsourcing or in-house operation of all or parts of the program function could be accomplished more efficiently or effectively.
Action Needed	Step 1: The food service contract administrator and the contract general manager, under the supervision of the Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, should evaluate and make a list of functions of the food service program based on their potential for consideration for greater efficiency and effectiveness through self-operation or outsourcing. Included should be such program functions as management of the food service program, warehouse, procurement of office and cleaning supplies, direct delivery of purchased foods and supplies, central food preparation, equipment maintenance, etc.
	Step 2: The food service contract administrator and the contract general manager should recommend to the Assistant Superintendent for Support Services for consideration and approval a schedule of functions and frequency for review (not to exceed five-year intervals for each identified function).

	Step 3:	During the year when a function is scheduled for evaluation and it is revealed that the district could potentially achieve greater efficiency or effectiveness through either outsourcing or in-house operations, the department should coordinate with the purchasing department how best to proceed toward district objectives. Each evaluation should be developed for the function being considered. For example, consideration of equipment maintenance should compare some actual example of repairs that occurred using the current method versus estimated costs and quality by alternative approaches. Documentation should be saved to assist future evaluations of this and other functions.
	Step 4:	When the evaluation team determines a method of service delivery can be performed more efficiently or effectively, the proper approval level for change should consider and decide to adopt, reject or delay consideration for the alternative service delivery.
Who is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Support Services is responsible for overseeing evaluations comparing service delivery alternatives.	
Time Frame	Studies of service delivery alternatives should be conducted annually beginning in the 2002-2003 school year.	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.	

Financial Accountability and Viability

8 The food service team has not operated efficiently but may now be ready to operate without use of the general fund.

An annual budget is developed by SODEXHO and the district based on revenue and expense projections on goals and objectives. Monthly operating statements and a marketing plan are also used. In addition, each school manager is given a monthly statement that compares actual expenses to goals and shows how they compare to other schools.

The district and management company reconcile operating statements and district financial statements on a monthly basis. District financial objectives are reviewed at contract renewal time. To reach the current year budget goals, a cash surplus of $110,000 was projected for the end of the year. The contract renewal for the current 2001/2002 school year guarantees that the district will have a budget surplus at the end of the year of $110,000. The district is concerned about program financial stability but also acknowledges improvements made by the program. The program has increased student participation and customer complaints are less frequent. Based on comments made by administrators and staff, the district is extremely satisfied with the quality of services that are being provided within the food service program. In the upcoming year, the district intends to add to the Request for Proposal a clause that will have a guarantee for financial security for the food service fund.

The district has a five-year plan with the objective to have an unreserved fund balance by the end of 2005-2006 of at least 5%. This plan provides a 1% per year food service minimum operating margin (approximately $65,000 per year). These goals and objectives as specified in the five-year plan apply to self-operation as well, should the district opt not to use a management company.

Exhibit 13-7 depicts profit/loss and fund balance history for eight years. These losses were, for the major part, decisions made by district to incur costs for quality improvements. District staff stated that the 1997/1998 decision to contract out for food service was an operational decision rather than a financial

decision. The program has now reached what the Board considers an acceptable level of quality. The future will now be reviewed in terms of obtaining and maintaining a positive fund balance.

Exhibit 13-7

Food Service Program Year-End Financial History

Year	Profit/(Loss) for operation	Transfers From General Fund	Fund Balance
Beginning			$1,095,605 (93)
1993-94	($150,208)	-0-	945,397
1994-95	($297,573)	-0-	647,824
1995-96	($431,336)	-0-	216,488
1996-97	($73,895)	-0-	142,592
1997-98*	$37,010	-0-	179,602
1098-99	($320,326)	$151,000	10,277
1999-2000	($134,591)	$135,000	10,686
2000-01	($217,500)	$207,000	185
2001-02	$209,000	$0	$209,185
	(Projected as of 6/24/02)		(Projected)

*SODEXHO/Marriott assumed management.

Source: Santa Rosa School District.

Recommendations ———————————————————

- *The district should form a management team that quarterly monitors program financial status and report to the board until two full years of profitable operation occurs.*

Action Plan 13-4 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 13-4

Recommendation 4		
Strategy	Review budgeted versus actual revenue and expenses on a quarterly basis. Use this information to make informed decisions and presentations to the board.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Form a management team, which should include as a minimum, the Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, the food service contract administrator, and the contract general manager.
	Step 2:	The contract administrator should collect and analyze information on revenue and expenditure projections versus actual historical performance for presentation to the team.
	Step 3:	Team members should meet to review and further discuss information and create plans for making necessary program adjustments that can reduce costs or increase revenue. Such efforts should have as a goal to discontinue the necessity for transfers from the general fund to balance food service fund, operational subsidy, and eventually create a program funding reserve.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for support services is responsible for establishing the team, ensuring the team accomplishes its purpose, and reports team results and recommendations to the board.	
Time Frame	The management team should begin quarterly meetings in the 2002-2003 school year.	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.	

9   The district has controls in-place for on-going review of revenue management.

The Computer Assisted Food Service Systems (CAFS) enables the food service department to manage its free and reduced price applications and downloads to school sites an eligible student database to use for student participation. The automation of this process increases the accountability accuracy, speed of service, and less chance of overt identification. The automated system provides record for prepaid sales and students do not have to bring money each day. The system consolidates meal counts daily by category. The consolidated counts are downloaded to the food service office, verified with bank statements and then consolidated on a district-wide basis for submission for reimbursement claim that is reviewed by contract administrator.

Training has been given on the use of the CAFS system and a district position is assigned to that function and also serves as a help desk. The School Food Authority (SODEXHO) conducts site reviews. The contract administrator also conducts annual site reviews. Both reviews provide a record of potential issues, corrective actions, and follow–up-actions. These reviews are intended to ensure proper cash handling procedures. Management has an additional automated cost reporting system, SSMARTS and MARRPAY. The Nutritional Analysis software used to analyze menus (Nutri Kids) also includes calculation of per meal costs.

Each month the district finance department reconciles the school site daily deposits with the contracted vendor. Each month the finance department reconciles all cash deposits with the bank statements and sends a variance report back to the food service office for verification and reconciliation of all monies deposited. Any variances are investigated by the food service department and reported back to the finance department.

The district continually reviews cost data to determine the best strategy for lunch and breakfast prices in the upcoming school year. The last price increase for meals occurred in School Year 1999/2000 when the lunch sale price was increased by $0.25. This price remains among the highest when compared to the peer districts. It is the same price as Bay County, the nearest district geographically. However, the price for breakfast is among the lowest when compared toe peer districts. The district goal to increase breakfast participation influenced the district's decision to increase the lunch but not the breakfast price. See Exhibit 13-8.

Exhibit 13-8

Peer District Meal Prices, School Year 2000-01

Full Priced Breakfast	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Adult Prices
Bay	0.70	0.70	0.70	1.25
Lake	0.75	N/A	N/A	1.25
Leon	0.70	0.75	0.75	1.00
Putnam	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25
Santa Rosa	**0.60**	**0.60**	**0.60**	**1.00**
Suwannee	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.90
Peer Average	**0.75**	**0.76**	**0.76**	**1.13**
Full-Priced Lunch	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Adult Prices
Bay	1.50	1.75	1.75	2.50
Lake	1.25	1.50	1.50	2.00

Full-Priced Lunch	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Adult Prices
Leon	1.25	1.35	1.35	2.00
Putnam	1.25	1.50	1.50	2.00
Santa Rosa	**1.50**	**1.75**	**1.75**	**2.25**
Suwannee	1.25	1.50	1.50	2.00
Peer Average	**1.30**	**1.52**	**1.52**	**2.10**

Source: Santa Rosa County School District and peer districts.

10 The district has a system that can consolidate meal information for direct transfer to the state on-line reimbursement system.

A student four-digit number on a keypad activates the CAFS automated system as the students leave the cafeteria line. Each student has an account based on the category of eligibility of the student. Participation edit checks are performed daily at the school sites to monitor the meals claimed in the categories of paid, free, or reduced to identify when sales exceed eligibility by meal type. The manager must document any overages or unusual circumstances. The daily totals are included in a monthly total, which is then compiled for a total for all school sites. The monthly reimbursement claim is based on electronically transmitted meal counts. This system has been approved for use in school districts and was developed with assistance from school lunch personnel at the United States Department of Agriculture as a method to ensure accurate accountability.

11 The district reviews its purchased food products for specifications and quality.

The district follows state and federal regulations and publishes bid requests for procurement. All bids comply with the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) and allows for open and fair competition with the intent to achieve the best quality product at the best price for the district. The Department of Education, Office of Food and Nutrition Management reviews the bid specification document annually. Suggestions and changes are made by the procurement specialist to ensure cost effectiveness and quality. Food costs did not increased over the past year.

Because the district utilizes the Assisted NuMenu, which requires a nutritional analysis on a daily basis, the bid specifications must be more specific than using traditional school meal patterns. The district utilizes a Master Ingredient List for specifications and quality. Recipes and nutrition analysis information determine specifications. Menus and recipes are reviewed with focus groups and taste test panels to review taste, presentation and acceptability by students, faculty and staff. There are two district positions with bid and procurement functions as a part of their job function.

12 The district uses automated inventory programs for both food and equipment.

The district uses automated inventory programs for both food and equipment. The inventory for food is conducted monthly and can be checked weekly if needed. The district provides training in inventory procedures and has a policy and procedures manual that covers this area. The district follows the first-in, first-out accounting procedure. The automated food inventory system is utilized to track the district's inventory of commodities and food service equipment. School district personnel perform inventories and distribute USDA Donated Food items. Food equipment inventory is taken each year and audited by the district's property control officer. Any variances are noted in a report to the school board. The contractor bills the district for food processed through the program and maintains tracking of inventory in school food service office. This asset accountability system is reviewed and approved by contract administrator before payment. Both food and equipment inventories are audited annually by external, independent audit.

The review team conducted a test of the perpetual inventory records for the central warehouse and Milton High School. The test of four team-selected items found that records matched actual inventory.

13 The district has documented and implemented a receiving, storing, and disposal system for the food service program.

A written policy and procedures manual for food service is provided to managers at the beginning of each school year. The district has a key control policy that limits storage area access to appropriate personnel.

The manager, or designated employee, is responsible for receiving food and supply items and checking invoices at the school level. An automated system is used to track food age, usage, and re-order quantities, which is then consolidated at the district office.

The district's central warehouse receives, stores and distributes United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Donated foods. The addition of a new central freezer has decreased the school site storage of frozen foods. By doing so, the central freezer has decreased the district's overall storage costs by no longer paying storage fees to the regional commodity distribution warehouse. District managers maintain signed and dated invoices as well as credits for returns and/or refusals. District employees are assigned to fill orders and school managers receive food items from the district's central freezer or warehouse.

Before construction of the new warehouse freezer a cost comparison study was done. The value comparison showed a savings of $26,083 when comparing previous average monthly costs and a purchase price of $74,896. Thus, the purchase of the freezer paid for itself over a three-year period.

14 The district has a functioning preventive maintenance and repairs system.

The preventive maintenance program includes a schedule for required maintenance that is compiled by each school location. Equipment types, equipment parts cleaned, repaired or replaced, and actual completion dates are all recorded in the system.

The district has three positions to perform preventative maintenance and repair of food service and refrigeration equipment. The district has a comprehensive capital equipment plan that includes scheduled year for replacement and estimated cost. The district and the contractor mutually agree on the cost of maintenance and repair, which they base on budgeted cost at the time of the annual contract renewal. All maintenance work performed is documented through work order logs and completed maintenance logs. This assists management to decide which items to repair or replace.

Meal Preparation and Nutrition

15District food service staff ensure that menus meet national nutrition standards.

The menus used in Santa Rosa County Schools comply with federal regulations found in the School Meal Initiative Act of 1996 and meet the dietary guidelines set by Congress. The school district filed a plan with the Department of Education, Food and Nutrition Management Office to use the SODEXHO menu that includes a cycle of menus for eight weeks. The cycle has been approved by the Food and Nutrition Management Office and is referred to as the Assisted NuMenu type of meal service. All recipes and food products served under this service method have been analyzed for nutritional content and meet the nutritional requirements for school age students.

An analysis by the review team of the Santa Rosa menus for the week of October 1 through October 5, 2001 revealed that the weekly averages for the NutriKids analysis showed no shortfall in nutritional content. The averages are slightly above the minimum requirements for calories, iron, calcium, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, protein, and carbohydrates and the fat and saturated fat percentages are below the required maximum allowed. These levels are in line with the goals of the School Meals Initiative Program, required by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Students with physical handicaps and the need for special diets or modifications of texture are housed in one school. Teachers and assistants are trained in preparation techniques for modification of lunch menu items to meet student's needs.

The food service department uses sample testing with small groups to look at new products for acceptability and costs. The nutrition analysis is completed by an automated nationally recognized method to evaluate the nutritional value of menus and recipes. The method used is called NutriKids, which is a menu development system approved by USDA and complies with the School Meal Initiative Act.

16The district food service staff produce quality food for their students.

The district currently utilizes USDA commodities at the rate of $0.22 per meal. The district's most recent annual commodity allocation was $282,612. The last inspection report from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Food Distribution Office stated that the district has made good use of commodities. The district was able to additional USDA Donated Foods by using accepting commodities offered but not used by other districts. The original commodity entitlement of $282,612 was based on a ratio of $0.155 cents per meal from prior year reimbursable meal participation that is a USDA

guideline for all districts. By accepting additional commodities the districts total reached $303,502 and represents an even greater entitlement of $0.166 cents per meal. This directly saves the district by offsetting food items the district would otherwise need to purchase from vendors.

The district also evaluates commodity items dollar-for-dollar compared to private vendor purchase price to optimize use of its USDA Donated Foods allocation. For example, the prices of the 12 highest usage commodity items were compared to the purchase price of the same 12 items if purchased from vendors. The highest saving was for elbow pasta with $9.13 per unit difference. The six-pack number 10 can of green beans amounted to a savings difference of $5.73. The smallest difference was less than one dollar for canned peaches.

The district recipes for the eight-week cycle menu are all analyzed and available for each school. The menu and production sheets are also automated and note serving size. The review team observed that utensils on school serving line were to appropriate size to meet necessary portions. The food service office reviews production records and production meetings are held monthly. Managers also serve on the menu committee.

Transportation of food is limited to two sites and they serve two alternative school sites and one Charter School using insulated carriers, hot or cool carts and vans. Travel time to sites is approximately two minutes.

Safe and Sanitary Environment

17 State and national food safety regulations are followed in food preparation, but one site needs renovation.

Sanitation and safety training is provided to all food service employees. The food service office also conducts SODEXHO site food safety audits. Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP)(a federally recognized food safety implementing program) materials are used in training and procedures are followed at kitchen sites. Health inspections by the county health department are conducted at least twice during the school year, corrective action taken, and reports are maintained on file. All schools visited by the review team had kitchens that appeared clean and staff demonstrated good hygiene. The team noted one exception. Baghdad Elementary kitchen has old equipment and the entire kitchen is in need of renovation. This district has identified this as a priority for the 2002-2003 school year. District staff are presently working with the architect in designing the new kitchen.

Flip charts covering medical emergencies and crisis management are posted on wall bulletin boards in kitchens. These were developed by the district in response to a need identified by district risk management inspections. The district also has training manuals covering like subjects. During January 2001 all employees attended emergency and crisis management training. Contract language requires SODEXHO to provide nutritious meals in a safe environment. There have been three accident reports for district food service employees and three incident reports for SODEXHO employees during the past year. The district monitors employee injury frequency (EIF) and lost time injury frequency (LTIF) and measures these frequencies by dividing the number of accidents by 1,000,000 labor hours. The district is measured on a national level using this criterion.

14 Cost Control Systems

The Santa Rosa County School District's cost control systems include internal auditing, financial auditing, asset management, inventory management, risk management, financial management, purchasing, and payment processing.

Conclusion

The Auditor General of the State of Florida audits the Santa Rosa County School District (district) on an annual basis. The audit is both a financial audit and a legal compliance audit. The district's most recent audit appears favorable, and the district has a consistent record of favorable audits for prior years. The audit process involves an extensive evaluation of the district's internal controls; consequently, the positive audit reports support the conclusion that the district's cost control systems are generally effective. Opportunities for improvement identified by SchoolMatch consultants are discussed below.

During the course of this review, SchoolMatch consultants also identified notable strengths in the district's cost control systems, some of which are included in Exhibit 14-1 below.

Exhibit 14-1

The District's Notable Accomplishments in Cost Control Systems in the Last Three Years

- The district's implementation of a procurement card program has made purchasing more efficient and convenient.
- The district has excelled at compiling useful budgetary information and data and presenting the information and data to the school board in an easy-to-understand format. The district also makes its budgetary data available to the general public through its website.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Overview of Chapter Findings

SchoolMatch consultants evaluated the district's cost control systems using the Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators adopted by the Commissioner of Education. The consulting team employed several methodologies to develop chapter conclusions and action plans. For instance, SchoolMatch consultants conducted on-site interviews with district level managers and gathered information on the district's cost control systems. Budgets, financial reports, audit reports, transaction documents, and the accounting system were examined. Additionally, policies and procedures that relate to cost control systems were reviewed in evaluating the effectiveness of the district's cost control systems. As a means of affirming its impressions regarding the strength of the district's cost control systems, SchoolMatch consultants received authorization and reviewed the Auditor General's work papers relative to the effectiveness of cost control systems in the district.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Internal Auditing

1. The district has not established an internal audit function. (Page 14-6)

Financial Auditing

2. The district obtains an external audit that is performed in accordance with government auditing standards. (Page 14-8)
3. The district provides for timely follow-up of findings identified in the external audit. (Page 14-8)
4. The district obtains and reviews required financial information relating to school internal accounts, direct service organizations (DSOs), and charter schools. (Page 14-9)

Asset Management

5. Segregation of Duties: The district segregates responsibilities for custody of assets from record keeping responsibilities for those assets. (Page 14-12)
6. Authorization Controls: The district has established controls that provide for proper authorization of asset acquisitions and disposals. (Page 14-12)
7. Authorization Controls: The district has established records that accumulate project costs and other relevant data to facilitate reporting construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors. (Page 14-13)
8. Asset Accountability: The district provides recorded accountability for capitalized assets. (Page 14-13)
9. Asset Safeguards: Assets are safeguarded from unauthorized use, theft, and physical damage. (Page 14-13)

Inventory Management

10. Segregation of Duties over Inventory: The district segregates responsibilities for custody of inventories from record keeping responsibilities for those assets. (Page 14-15)
11. Inventory Requisitioning Controls: The district has established and implemented controls that provide for proper inventory requisitioning. (Page 14-15)
12. Inventory Accountability and Custody: The district has established controls that provide for inventory accountability and appropriate safeguards for inventory custody. (Page 14-15)
13. Inventory Management: The district periodically evaluates the inventory function to determine its cost-effectiveness. (Page 14-16)

Risk Management

14. General: The district has a process to set objectives for risk management activities, identify and evaluate risks, and design a comprehensive program to protect itself at a reasonable cost. (Page 14-16)
15. Providing for Coverage Against Risk Exposure: The district has comprehensive policies and procedures relating to acquiring and reviewing coverage for risks of loss. (Page 14-17)

Financial Management

16. Management Control Methods: District management communicates its commitment and support of strong internal controls. (Page 14-19)
17. Financial Accounting System: The district records and reports financial transactions in accordance with prescribed standards. (Page 14-19)

18. Financial Reporting Procedures: The district prepares and distributes its financial reports timely. (Page 14-20)

19. Budget Practices: The district has a financial plan serving as an estimate of and control over operations and expenditures. (Page 14-20)

20. Cash Management: The district has effective controls to provide recorded accountability for cash resources. (Page 14-21)

21. Investment Practices: The district has an investment plan that includes investment objectives and performance criteria designed to maximize return consistent with the risks associated with each investment, and specifies the types of financial products approved for investment. (Page 14-22)

22. Receivables: The district has established effective controls for recording, collecting, adjusting, and reporting receivables. (Page 14-22)

23. Salary and Benefits Costs: The district has effective controls that provide accountability for the payment of salaries and benefits. (Page 14-22)

24. Debt Financing: The district analyzes, evaluates, monitors, and reports debt-financing alternatives. (Page 14-25)

25. Grant and Entitlement Monitoring: The district effectively monitors and reports grant activities. (Page 14-25

Purchasing

26. Segregation of Duties: The district segregates purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving functions. (Page 14-27)

27. Requisitioning: The district has established controls for authorizing purchase requisitions. (Page 14-27)

28. Purchasing: The district has established authorization controls over purchasing. (Page 14-28)

29. Receiving: The district has established controls to ensure that goods are received and meet quality standards. (Page 14-29

Payment Processing

30. Disbursements: The district has established controls to ensure that disbursements are properly authorized, documented, and recorded. (Page 14-30)

31. Invoice Processing: The district has established controls for processing invoices to ensure that quantities, prices, and terms coincide with purchase orders and receiving reports. (Page 14-30)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

The recommendation to complete a risk assessment and create an internal audit function has a direct fiscal impact. Exhibit 14-2 shows this recommendation. Assuming an average salary of $61,250 (including employee benefits), the district would incur an additional cost of $306,250 over five years if this recommendation were adopted. The consultants believe that the addition of this function is essential to making improvements and ensuring continued integrity in the maintenance of the district's cost control systems. As a means for the district to justify to the school board and general public the establishment of an internal audit function, the first part of our recommendation includes performing a comprehensive risk assessment of the financial functions of the district. We estimate the cost of such a risk assessment, if out-sourced, to be $15,000.

Exhibit 14-2

One Cost Control Systems Action Plan Recommendation Has a Fiscal Impact

Recommendation	Five Year Fiscal Impact
• Complete a comprehensive risk assessment to identify the level of risk associated with the district's various financial areas and functions. Assuming the risk assessment supports the creation of an internal audit function, we recommend the district proceed accordingly.	• The one-time cost of a comprehensive risk assessment would be $15,000, plus, the five-year cost in salary and benefits of hiring an internal auditor would be $306,250.

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

Background

Pursuant to s. 237.01, *Florida Statutes*, the Superintendent of Schools is responsible for keeping records and accounts of all financial transactions in the manner prescribed by the State Board of Education. The district follows procedures established by Florida law and State Board of Education rules in establishing budgets. With an annual budget of approximately $168 million, it is essential that effective cost control systems have been established.

The district's accounting policies conform with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to state and local governmental units. Accordingly, the district's accounting system is organized on the basis of funds and account groups. A fund is an accounting entity having a self-balancing set of accounts for recording assets, liabilities, fund equity, revenues, either expenditures or expenses depending on fund type, and other financing sources and uses. The district is also in the process of updating its accounting policies and financial reporting model for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2002, to comply with recent changes in governmental accounting standards.

The following is a table of organization for the finance function at the Santa Rosa County School District.

Exhibit 14-3

**Organization For the Finance Function
at the Santa Rosa County School District**
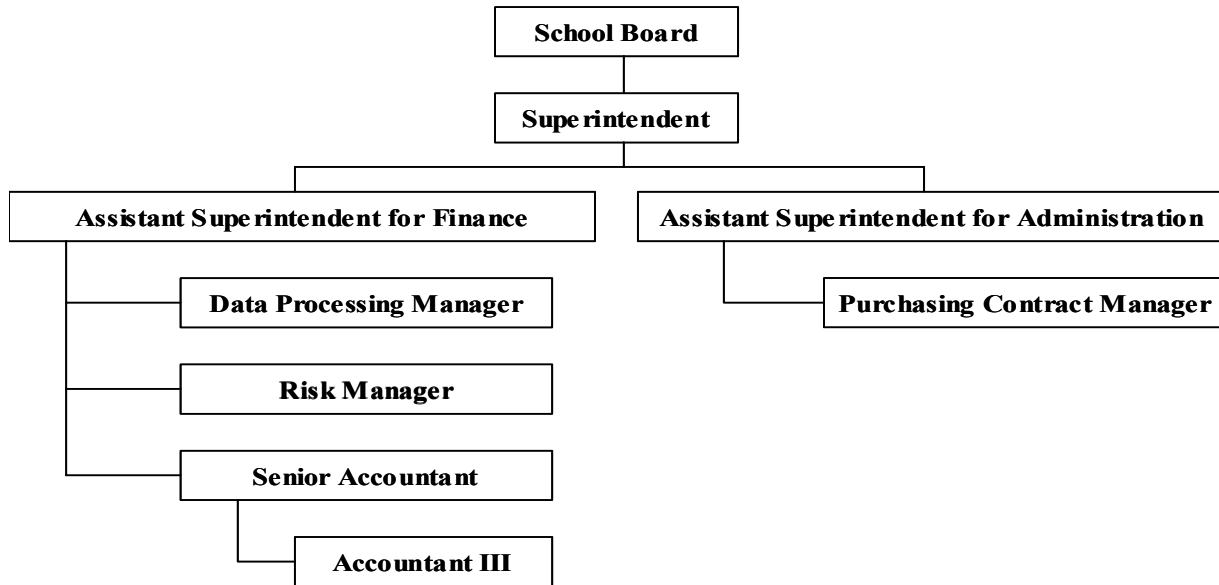
Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Internal Auditing

An Established Internal Audit Function Can Add Value to District Operations

The Institute of Internal Auditors defines internal auditing as "an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It helps an organization accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes." A completely established internal audit function's responsibilities (scope) can include verifying the reliability and integrity of information; determining compliance with laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and contracts; ensuring the safeguarding of assets; appraising the economical and efficient use of resources; and determining and/or measuring whether established objectives and goals for operations or programs have been accomplished.

Another benefit of an internal audit function is that it would provide the district assurance that internal control processes in the organization are adequately designed and functioning effectively. This would, in turn, promote public confidence that public funds entrusted to the board are handled with integrity and are used solely for the support and delivery of educational services.

Typically, internal audit functions are used to perform risk assessments so that identified risks can be prioritized and addressed. Risks addressed by internal audit functions, depending on their nature, can be eliminated or minimized, through the recommendation of enhanced control processes or other practices that reduce exposure to identified risks. These benefits can possibly offset the costs of an internal audit function.

In addition to resources received at the district level, the individual schools also receive moneys for club and class activities. These moneys are deposited in each school's internal accounts, which are commonly

referred to as school internal funds. Rule 6A-1.087, FAC, requires school districts to provide for annual audits of the school internal funds. As a practicality, internal auditors employed pursuant to s 230.23(10)(l), FS (2001), may also be assigned the responsibility for auditing the school internal funds. Although the district employs an internal accounts auditor to perform annual audits of the school internal accounts, this employee does not have other responsibilities typically assigned to a true internal audit function.

The scope of many internal audit functions may not include all of the above responsibilities. Management decisions, the scope of entity's operations, and the regulatory environment that the entity exists in can impact the degree of responsibility given an internal audit function. Section 230.23(10)(l), FS (2001), provides that school districts may employ an internal auditor to perform ongoing financial verification of the financial records of the school district. This law also provides that the internal auditor shall report directly to the board or its designee.

1   The district has not established an internal audit function.

The district desires to establish an internal audit function; however, it has not done so because of budget constraints. Consequently, the district continues to rely on the annual external audit by the Auditor General and its own internal control system to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of its cost control systems. Though important, such external reviews do not substitute for the responsibilities assigned to an internal audit function.

Regardless of whether or not the district has an internal audit function, it should perform a risk assessment of its operations and activities on an annual basis to determine and prioritize risks that should be addressed and corrected. Risk assessments are typically conducted in all large organizations as a means to protect against undesirable acts and to identify means to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. Without a properly conducted risk assessment, the district cannot determine what risks exist that should be addressed.

Typically, internal audit functions are used to address risks identified in a risk assessment. Recommendations made by the internal audit function to resolve these identified risks often result in cost savings and avoidances. The value of these cost savings and avoidances often justify the costs of an internal audit function. As the district attempts to resolve risks identified in annual risk assessments, it may find that the most efficient means to do so is with an in-house internal audit function.

The annual risk assessment will also help the district determine the workload requirements for an in-house internal audit function, should it decide to establish one. A factor to consider is whether to hire one part-time, one full-time, or multiple internal auditors. This factor may not be known until after the risk assessment is complete. In addition, the qualifications and level of experience needed in a potential internal auditor may be dependent on the risk assessment. Some factors to consider are: hiring a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) versus a non-certified accountant; how many years of experience is needed; and whether or not specific experience with school districts is needed. Also, the in-house internal audit function could perform the annual risk assessment, saving the cost of out-sourcing it.

Based on demographic salary statistics from human resource databases, we estimate that a moderately experienced internal auditor (four to six years of experience as an internal auditor) could be hired for a salary of $49,000 per year, plus employee benefits approximating an additional 25% (based on fiscal year 2000-01 benefit costs), for a total of $61,250 per year. The various factors discussed in the above paragraph may impact this cost either positively or negatively. As an alternative, the district should consider realigning the job responsibilities of certain personnel who may be qualified for such a position, in order to create the position internally. This may be a less expensive alternative; however, we

understand from discussions with district staff that the current staff is not able to take on additional responsibilities at this time.

We estimate a one-time risk assessment could be performed for $15,000, if out-sourced. This amount is based on an estimate of 175 hours at an average rate of $85 per hour ($14,875 rounded up to $15,000). However, the district should consider completing the assessment in-house, if an internal audit function is established.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district authorize a comprehensive risk assessment to identify the level of risk associated with the district's various financial areas and functions. Assuming the risk assessment supports the creation of an internal audit function, we recommend the district proceed accordingly.*

Action Plan 14-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 14-1

Establish a professional level internal auditor position	
Strategy	Justify the necessity of hiring an internal auditor and determine the district's needs by completing a comprehensive risk assessment.
Action Needed	Step 1. Determine whether the risk assessment will be performed by internal staff or out-sourced to an independent firm.
	Step 2. Should the decision be made to out-source the risk assessment, send qualified firms a RFP to conduct the risk assessment. Review returned proposals and engage the most qualified firm.
	Step 3. Review the results of the risk assessment and determine the level of risk borne by the district. Assuming a significant level of risk, recommend to the board the creation of an internal auditor position.
	Step 4. Prepare a job description for the position. The description should specify that the position report directly to the school board.
	Step 5. Establish a policy and/or charter describing the duties of the position and have it adopted by the school board.
	Step 6. Complete the hiring process.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent
Time Frame	July 1, 2003, or as soon thereafter as funding is available
Fiscal Impact	An out-sourced comprehensive risk assessment would cost the district approximately $15,000. If an internal auditor is hired, the cost would be approximately $61,250 per year with a five-year cost of $306,250.
	It is likely that addressing the risks identified in the risk assessment and the hiring of an internal auditor will result in cost savings and avoidances that will offset the associated costs of these activities. However, the cost impact of these potential savings and avoidances cannot be determined at this time.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Financial Auditing

Section 11.45(c), FS, defines a financial audit as an examination of financial statements in order to express an opinion on the fairness with which they are presented in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles, and an examination to determine whether operations are properly conducted in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Financial audits must be conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and government auditing standards as adopted by the Board of Accountancy.

In many instances, school districts are primary governments that include one or more component units. Component units can either be "blended" into the financial transactions of a particular fund, or they may be "discretely presented" in separate column(s) in the financial statements. Accounting standards provide specific criteria that are used to identify component units and to determine whether they should be blended or discretely presented.

As of June 30, 2001, the district had one foundation (direct-support organization), The Santa Rosa Educational Foundation. The Foundation is considered to be a discretely presented component unit. As permitted by Section 228.056, Florida Statutes, the district also has a charter school, The Learning Academy, Inc., of Santa Rosa County, which is to provide an alternative educational system for "at risk" students.

2   The district obtains an external audit that is performed in accordance with governmental auditing standards.

The Auditor General of the State of Florida conducts annual financial and compliance audits

Florida law governs the district's responsibility to obtain annual financial audits. Section 11.45(2)(i), FS, provides that the Auditor General will conduct financial audits of the accounts and records of all school districts in the population category that Santa Rosa County School District is in.

The Auditor General timely conducts annual audits of the district. The district has received favorable audit reports for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2000, and 2001.

3   The district provides for timely follow-up of audit findings identified in the external audit.

Audit findings are appropriately followed-up by district staff

Audit findings are discussed in Finance Department staff meetings. Corrective measures are developed, and the Assistant Superintendent for Finance monitors the implementation of these measures. The three audit findings noted in the audit report for the 1999-00 fiscal year are in the process of being resolved and corrective measures will be reported to the board, as appropriate.

School districts are required to submit monthly financial statements to the board and the Auditor General. The last audit report pointed out that this was not being done as required. SchoolMatch reviewed the

status of these monthly financial statements and found that they are now being presented to the board on schedule. Further, SchoolMatch suggested that the district add to the monthly financial statements a comparison of actual revenues and expenditures to budget and confirmed that this is now being done (effective December 13, 2001).

4 The district obtains and reviews required financial information relating to school internal accounts, direct service organizations (DSOs), and charter schools.

The district obtains and reviews required financial information for the school internal accounts

In addition to resources received at the district level, the individual schools also receive moneys for club and class activities. These moneys are deposited in each school's internal accounts, which are commonly referred to as school internal funds. Rule 6A-1.087, FAC, requires school districts to provide for annual audits of the school internal funds. Most school districts, including Santa Rosa County School District, employ internal accounts auditors to perform the audits of the internal funds. Others contract with certified public accountants to perform the audits. Exhibit 14-4 summarizes the district's internal accounts activity for the past three fiscal years.

Exhibit 14-4

Three Year Summary of Internal Accounts Activity

	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Revenues	$3,857,865	$4,431,019	$4,525,282
Expenditures	3,861,469	4,377,394	4,419,236
Fund Balance	1,583,715	1,637,340	1,743,385

Source: Santa Rosa County School District – Audit by the Auditor General.

The district has policies and procedures that govern the handling of internal accounts, and these guidelines are patterned after and are consistent with the State Accounting Manual promulgated by the Department of Education. These policies and procedures were being integrated into financial procedures manuals that were still in the development stage at the time of this review.

The internal accounts auditor and other district finance staff members advised SchoolMatch consultants that the conduct of the audits has not always been timely in the past, a condition which is undesirable because the more timely the audits are, the more effective remedial action will be. Fortunately, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2001, the audits were completed for presentation to the board for review on December 13, 2001.

Presentation of Internal Accounts Audit Reports and findings to the board follow procedures similar to those for audits of other district funds. Findings are presented to school principals either formally in an audit exit conference, or, informally, via phone or e-mail; however, findings are frequently left uncorrected and are repeated in following year audits. The accountability for audit findings is not well defined.

The district obtains and reviews required financial information for DSO's and charter schools

The Santa Rosa Educational Foundation is a separate not-for-profit corporation whose primary purpose is to raise funds for supplementing and assisting the Santa Rosa County School District. Total expenditures for the Foundation for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2001, were $139,805. The Foundation is audited annually by an independent certified public accountant, and the audit report is submitted to the district, as required by the agreement between the Foundation and the district.

Total expenditures for the Learning Academy, Inc. of Santa Rosa County (charter school) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2001, were $717,625. The charter school agreement specifies that the school shall provide for an audit within 75 days of the close of the fiscal year. The Director of Middle Schools presents copies of the annual report to board members. The current agreement between the district and the charter school requires annual financial information relating to charter school activities. The district is considering an additional requirement for quarterly financial information from the charter school, which we believe would enhance the district's understanding of the school's financial activity. Though not a critical best practice, we encourage the district to implement the quarterly requirement.

Recommendation

- *Principals and others responsible for internal accounts should be held more accountable for resolving adverse internal accounts audit findings. In all cases, audit findings and the related corrective actions should be formalized and documented in writing between the internal accounts auditor and principals, with increased monitoring and oversight of the resolution process by the Superintendent.*

Action Plan 14-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 14-2

Internal Accounts Audit Findings	
Strategy	Establish a better accountability system for resolving adverse internal accounts audit findings. Audit findings and the related corrective actions should be formalized and documented in writing between the Internal Accounts Auditor and the principals, with increased monitoring and oversight of the resolution process by the Superintendent.
Action Needed	Step 1. The internal accounts auditor will prepare letters detailing adverse findings to the principals for the Superintendent's signature.
	Step 2. Principals will be required to make a written response to the Superintendent within a reasonable length of time. The responses should explain the reason(s) for the cited deficiencies and give the details of corrective actions taken.
	Step 3. The internal accounts auditor will keep careful records of letters from the Superintendent and responses by the principals.
	Step 4. The internal accounts auditor will inform the Superintendent of any failures to properly respond to adverse findings letters and will monitor all of the situations until they are appropriately resolved.
Who is Responsible	Internal Accounts Auditor and Superintendent
Time Frame	Begin with the 2001-2002 fiscal year's internal accounts audit report.
Fiscal Impact	No fiscal impact

Source: SchoolMatch Consultant.

Asset Management

The district has a fiduciary responsibility to protect publicly financed fixed assets and tangible personal property acquired to educate students. To carry out this fiduciary responsibility, the district must develop effective accounting and tracking processes that will ensure that these assets are properly accounted for, reported, and safeguarded.

Accounting for fixed assets involves tracking and reconciling additions and deletions to property and performing physical verifications of the existence of the property. The most important purposes for keeping and maintaining accurate accounting records of fixed assets are:

- Properly kept property records furnish taxpayers with information about the investment of tax dollars in the district;

- Adequate property records provide the basis for insurance coverage;

- Reliable information about currently owned fixed assets and tangible personal property can provide material assistance in determining future requirements (replacement, etc.); and

- Periodic physical inventories identify lost or stolen items so that insurance claims can be filed, additional controls instituted, and accounting records adjusted to reflect the losses.

The district records expenditures for the acquisition or construction of fixed assets in the governmental fund type or expendable trust fund that paid for the acquisition or construction. The fixed assets so acquired are recorded at cost in the general fixed assets account group on the financial statements. The depreciation of general fixed assets is not recorded in the district's accounts. Effective with the 2001-02 fiscal year, accounting practices relating to the reporting of fixed assets, including depreciation on these assets will change as the district implements Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement 34. However, for the purposes of this report, information is presented using current accounting standards.

Florida law and *Rules of the Auditor General* govern school district responsibilities relative to fixed assets. Florida law defines property as fixtures and other tangible personal property of a nonconsumable nature, the value of which is $750 or more and the normal expected life of which is one year or more. School districts are permitted to use lower capitalization thresholds if they choose. Santa Rosa County School District uses a capitalization threshold of $750.

Information related to general fixed asset balances over the most recent three fiscal years is shown in Exhibit 14-5.

Exhibit 14-5

Three Year Summary of General Fixed Assets

General Fixed Assets	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Land	$ 3,364,251	$ 3,363,063	$ 4,560,749
Improvements Other than Buildings	7,520,371	8,126,283	12,646,761
Buildings and Fixed Equipment	120,080,846	120,716,520	164,370,327
Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment	14,501,760	13,896,828	16,433,290
Motor Vehicles	8,629,604	8,148,447	8,142,213
Construction in Progress	19,949,223	14,226,732	2,928,430
Audio Visual Materials & Computer Software	1,602,822	2,309,356	3,418,972
Total General Fixed Assets	$175,648,877	$170,787,229	$212,500,742

Source: Santa Rosa County School District – Audit by the Auditor General.

The Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment; Buildings and Fixed Equipment; and the Construction In Progress categories are the most active and are the accounts for which effective cost controls are most needed.

5   Segregation of Duties: The district segregates responsibilities for custody of assets from record keeping responsibilities for those assets.

The control of assets is separated from those who maintain asset records

The organizational chart for the district illustrates the fact that the responsibilities for acquiring, purchasing, and maintaining custody of capital assets are appropriately separated. Purchases of capital assets are initiated by schools or district-wide departments and must follow purchasing policies and procedures established by the board. Requisitions are prepared by requesting schools and departments and are reviewed by the Purchasing Department for conformance with relevant policies and procedures. Expenditures for all capital assets are processed through the Finance Department, and then the property control accountant maintains control over all capital assets. School principals and department managers have custodial responsibilities for property charged to and under their area of responsibility.

The responsibility for property records and an annual inventory of tangible personal property is assigned to the Purchasing Manager, who reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Administration, and the annual audit of tangible personnel property, which is required by law, is performed by an independent contractor.

6   Authorization Controls: The district has established controls that provide for proper authorization of asset acquisitions and disposals.

Appropriate policies and procedures govern the acquisition and disposal of assets

All asset acquisitions, which are initiated by cost center heads, are controlled by the Purchasing Department, which reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Administration. Competitive bids are required for purchases over $25,000, and informal quotes are required for purchases over $8,333. Decisions regarding financing alternatives and the use of appropriate accounting procedures are made by the Finance Department because of their special expertise in these areas.

Separate capital project budgets and accounts are maintained, and the board has promulgated policy requiring its approval of all material capital asset projects or acquisitions. Board policy and the property control manual ensure that all property dispositions are made in accordance with legal requirements.

When capital assets are acquired with grant funds, the terms of the grant govern the approval procedures followed; however, these funds are subject to the same accounting procedures and controls that are used for internally funded purchases.

7 Authorization Controls: The district has established records that accumulate project costs and other relevant data to facilitate reporting construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors.

The district's accounting system accommodates project accounting

Separate accounts are maintained for all capital outlay projects and for maintenance projects of a material amount, for both in-progress and completed projects. Files for completed projects are transferred to Property Control, the cost of in-progress projects is properly reported, and the cost of completed projects is transferred to the appropriate fixed asset accounts on a timely basis. Though the district uses a largely manual process for tracking multiple-year projects and project costs, the process appears to be effective.

Where contractors do construction work, procedures are in place for ensuring that the terms of the contract are followed. Progress payments must be in accordance with the terms of the contract.

Though federally funded projects are rare (currently, there is only one federally funded construction project in progress), contractors are monitored to ensure compliance with EEO, Davis-Bacon, and other regulations and non-financial contract provisions.

8 Asset Accountability: The district provides recorded accountability for capitalized assets.

Capital assets are accounted for pursuant to law and acceptable accounting principles.

As required by law and as dictated by generally accepted accounting principles, capital assets, including self-constructed, donated, and leased assets, are properly marked and inventoried by the district.

In accordance with Board Policy 6.08(3), a threshold for the capitalization of assets is established and approved by the board, and this amount is presently $750. Additionally, the district follows appropriate procedures to properly distinguish between capital and operating expenditures, including distinguishing between capital and operating leases.

Detailed property records are required to be maintained per the Property Accounting Manual. The Florida Public Lands Research Program provides the district with an annual listing of property rights. Property Accounting periodically reviews this list.

9 Asset Safeguards: Assets are safeguarded from unauthorized use, theft, and physical damage.

The district's tangible personal property is adequately safeguarded

Capital property is safeguarded and controlled pursuant to policies adopted by the board. These assets are acquired in accordance with established procedures and their ownership is documented in property records. Each item of tangible personal property is assigned to a custodian who is responsible for

safeguarding the property. The custodian is held accountable through an annual inventory (performed by contract through an outside firm) of her/his property, whereby all items are either located or identified as missing. Reports of missing property are prepared and custodians are required to make every effort to locate each item. If a custodian cannot locate an item that is missing, she/he must give a satisfactory explanation. Reports detailing missing property items are prepared by the Property Manager and presented to the board.

While detailed property records are compared to existing assets on an annual basis as a part of the above-referenced audit process, there is less accountability when there is a change in property custodian. Ideally, the out-going custodian should certify the property under her/his control at the time of the change in custodians.

Tangible personal property is tagged when purchased, thereby facilitating the periodic inventories and assisting in searches for missing items. Detailed property records are maintained and are periodically reconciled to the general ledger control accounts.

Property dispositions are made in accordance with Florida statutes and procedures in the district's Property Accounting Manual, and accounting records are properly adjusted when dispositions occur. Dispositions of tangible personal property are made, to the economic advantage of the district, through the periodic sale of surplus property via public auctions.

Inventory Management

Inventories consist of expendable supplies held for consumption in the course of district operations. The maintenance, warehouse, transportation, and gas supplies are recorded in the General Fund; purchased food, commodities, and related non-food items are reported in the Special Revenue Fund. Inventories are stated at cost using a weighted-average basis except that United States Department of Agriculture surplus commodities are stated at their fair value as determined at the time of donation to the district's food service program by the Florida Department of agriculture and Consumer Services, Bureau of Food Distribution. The costs of inventories are recorded as expenditures when used rather than purchased. Exhibit 14-6 below illustrates inventory balances in the General and Special Revenue Funds over the past three years.

Exhibit 14-6

Three Year Summary of Inventories

Inventories	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
General Fund	$ 221,789	$ 307,144	$ 361,125
Special Revenue Fund	293,055	163,428	204,696
Total	$514,844	$470,572	$565,821

Source: Santa Rosa County School District – Superintendent's Annual Financial Reports.

10 Segregation of Duties over Inventory: The district segregates responsibilities for custody of inventories from record keeping responsibilities for those assets.

Inventories are under the custody of the warehouse staff

The purchasing buyer initiates the purchase of inventory items, and the warehouse manager and his staff are custodians of the district's inventories, but the accounting control records for the inventories are maintained in the Finance Department. This purchasing and accounting control and oversight, combined with periodic physical inventories conducted by employees who are not warehouse employees, effect appropriate controls over inventories.

11 Inventory Requisitioning Controls: The district has established and implemented controls that provide for proper inventory requisitioning.

Inventory items are delivered only on the basis of approved requisitions

Requests for warehouse stock are initiated using a warehouse catalog and warehouse requisition form. These requisitions must be reviewed and approved by the principals or department heads (or their formally appointed designees) responsible for the budget to which the requisitions will be charged. (Computerized controls are in place to prohibit unauthorized individuals from initiating a requisition.)

Warehouse personnel make ongoing comparisons of inventory requisitions to reductions in inventory balances, and periodic (both during the fiscal year and annually at the end of the year) physical inventories and reconciliations of detailed inventory records combine to control inventory items.

12 Inventory Accountability and Custody: The district has established controls that provide for inventory accountability and appropriate safeguards for inventory custody/protection.

The district's two inventory facilities have alarm systems to which only selected personnel have access codes. Additionally, warehouses are checked and cleaned daily. Items are securely stored on pallets or shelves, and the inventories are insured.

Perpetual inventory records are maintained for the inventories, and district staff reconcile inventory issues and purchase transactions on a weekly basis. As mentioned previously, periodic physical inventories are conducted and detailed inventory records are reconciled to control records. Significant differences in physical quantities and inventory records are carefully investigated.

13 Inventory Management: The district periodically evaluates the inventory function to determine its cost-effectiveness.

Though not a formal process, it is apparent that the district does evaluate the cost-effectiveness of its inventory function. As an example of this, the district recently closed its maintenance parts warehouse. This was done after the district evaluated the cost-effectiveness of keeping the parts inventory and of the maintenance function in general. The district decided that it would be more cost-effective to bid annual contracts for some supplies like paint. In addition, bid contracts are now used with home improvement and hardware companies to allow staff to acquire needed supplies. Approximately four years ago, transportation-related inventories (e.g., oil, parts, tires) were eliminated when the district determined it would be more effective to out-source the transportation function in its entirety. The Finance Department performs detailed inventory analyses to monitor inventory levels over time at the district's warehouses.

Also in an effort to reduce inventory costs, the district provides procurement cards to certain employees for purchases up to $750. The primary benefit of the procurement card program is that it ensures that needed items, such as supplies and parts, can be purchased without delay. The card also allows the district to maintain a smaller stock of items in inventory and reduce the number and types of items stored.

Risk Management

The district is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets, errors and omissions; injuries to employees; and natural disasters. Florida law requires school districts to provide effective protection against these risks. Section 230.23(9)(d), F.S., requires a school district to carry insurance on school property, including contents, boilers, and machinery. Section 230.239(10)(h), F.S., requires that school districts carry insurance (bonds) on all employees who are responsible for school funds. Section 230.23(10)(l), F.S., requires school districts to provide adequate protection against any loss or damage to school property or loss resulting from any liability for which the district or its officers, agents, or employees may be responsible for under law. This section also provides that a school district is authorized to purchase insurance, to be self-insured, to enter into risk management programs, or to have any combination of the above in any area to the extent the district is either authorized or required by law to contract for insurance.

14 General: The district has a process to set objectives for risk management activities, identify and evaluate risks, and design a comprehensive program to protect itself at a reasonable cost.

The district has an effective risk management program

The Santa Rosa County School District has established a policy for risk management. The district's Risk Management Department is charged with the responsibility of implementing the district's risk management policy and ensuring that the district has acquired all insurance coverage required by law.

The district is a member of a consortium of school districts, sponsored by the Florida School Boards Association, to provide a combined self-insurance program and risk management services to participating

members. The consortium is a public entity risk pool and provides a combined self-insurance program for property protection, general liability, automobile liability, workers' compensation, money and securities, employee fidelity and faithful performance, boiler and machinery, errors and omissions, and other coverage deemed necessary by members of the consortium. The consortium is self-sustaining through member assessments (premiums). The consortium purchases coverage through commercial companies for claims in excess of specified amounts. The intent of the consortium is to provide insurance coverage in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Health, hospitalization, life, and dental coverages are provided through purchased commercial insurance. Settled claims resulting from these risks have not exceeded commercial insurance coverage in any of the past three fiscal years. Being fully insured in these areas, it is not necessary for the district to provide for coverage in excess of any stop-loss limits.

Through the combined efforts of the insurance consortium, its insurance agent, and the district's Risk Management Director, the risk management function appears to be administered well.

15 Providing for Coverage Against Risk Exposure: The district has comprehensive policies and procedures relating to acquiring and reviewing coverage for risks of loss.

The district maintains appropriate insurance coverage

Each year, the district completes a comprehensive questionnaire about its risk exposure in all conceivable areas. This serves as the basis for securing the insurance coverage that the district needs, without overlooking any significant exposures. Additionally, the district has developed a risk management policy (Policy 7.80) that has been adopted by the board. The district has a disaster recovery plan to ensure the continuity of operations in the case of disaster.

In addition to the coverage obtained through the insurance consortium, the district secures on its own group insurance coverage for district officers and employees. Approximately every three years, the district uses a RFP process to obtain group insurance coverage. In the interim, premium amounts may be renegotiated each year.

Procedural matters such as the removal of terminated employees from insurance coverage and comparing those receiving benefits to payroll records are handled systematically with appropriate forms, which are processed through the Payroll, Personnel, and Risk Management Departments. The technical aspects of risk management such as obtaining actuarial services, establishing appropriate retention levels, and safeguarding claims revolving funds are being properly managed.

Additionally, official bonds are obtained and filed with the Florida Department of State and all board members are properly bonded.

Financial Management

During the 2000-01 fiscal year, the most recent complete fiscal year for which data is available, the district's revenues from all governmental funds were approximately $147,491,224, and expenditures were approximately $157,356,711. These amounts include both restricted and unrestricted sources and uses of resources. The district's general fund is used to account for most of the general operating activities of the

district. During the 2000-01 fiscal year, the district reported general fund revenues and other sources of funds of approximately $114,304,532, and general fund expenditures and other uses of approximately $119,725,224. Revenues were generated from federal, State, and local sources. Exhibit 14-7 provides information related to the district's general fund revenues and other sources.

Exhibit 14-7

The State Provided Most of the District's 2000-01 Fiscal Year General Fund Resources
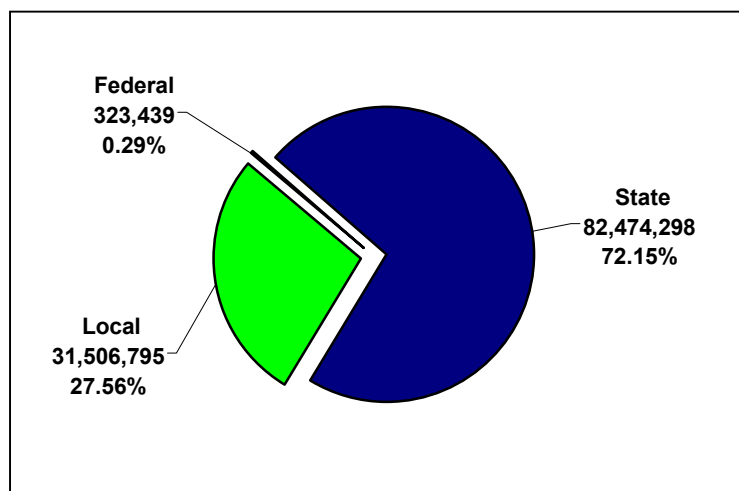
Source: District Annual Financial Report.

Three state revenue sources, administered by the Florida Department of Education, comprise most of the state revenue accounted for in the district's general fund. These were:

- The Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) whose funding is used for current operations.
- Categorical education programs whose funding is earmarked for certain programs such as instructional materials and transportation. This includes Lottery funds earmarked for educational enhancement and school advisory council activities.
- Workforce development funds used for adult and other vocational educational services.

Local revenues are primarily generated from ad valorem (property) taxes. Exhibit 14-8 shows the taxes levied for education for the 2000-01 fiscal year.

Exhibit 14-8

Ad Valorem (Property) Taxes Levied for District Purposes

Type	Millage	Taxes Levied
General Fund:		
Required Local Effort	5.957	$25,010,435.00
Basic Discretionary Local Effort	0.510	2,141,232.00
Supplemental Discretionary Local Effort	0.250	1,049,624.00
Capital Project Funds:		
Local Capital Improvements	1.400	5,877,893.00
Total	8.117	$34,079,184.00

Source: District 2000-01 fiscal year audited financial statements.

The general fund and capital project funds' levies are non-voted levies provided by law and appropriations act provisions. The required local effort is tied to Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funding and represents the amount school districts must levy in order to receive FEFP funding. Also, school districts are authorized by law to levy up to 2 mills for local capital improvements.

16 Management Control Methods: District management communicates its commitment and support of strong internal controls.

Management has created an environment that encourages the use of strong internal controls

The district has established a toll free number for employees to report fraud, irregularities, and improprieties, and it provides feedback to people who call with concerns. Additionally, the district has a written ethics policy. Further, the district's accounting system has built-in safeguards, which prevent employees from making unauthorized changes in the district's records. Through interviews with key Finance Department personnel, it is clear that upper management has a strong commitment to promulgating an effective internal control system.

17 Financial Accounting System: The district records and reports financial transactions in accordance with prescribed standards.

The district's accounting system enables the district to comply with prescribed financial accounting standards

The district's computerized accounting system is a proven accounting system that is used by many Florida school districts. The district actually assists the vendor in altering, maintaining, and adding features to the accounting system, and it has developed subsystems (e.g., warehouse/inventory accounting, internal funds accounting, and depreciation accounting) that interface with the system. The district participates in user groups and keeps up with changes in the system. The accounting system is fully compliant with the Commissioner's accounting manual, "Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida School Districts (Redbook)." The system records all transactions and produces all financial statements required of Florida school districts.

While the accounting system meets all of the accounting and reporting needs of the district, as noted in the most recent findings of the Auditor General, the consultant has observed the need for procedures manuals for use by employees in training for and utilizing the system. The district is following through on this expressed concern by preparing system procedures manuals, which are about two-thirds of the way complete.

Procedures manuals are more important now than ever. Employee turnover or just short-term absences for health or vacation reasons can force staff unfamiliar with certain processes into different or very difficult positions. Most computer access for payroll, check writing, or even general ledger posting requires the use of passwords and transaction orders that must be precise. Only written procedures manuals, together with staff training and cross-training, can assure the uninterrupted processing of important work.

Because of the controls inherent in the design of the system, the accounting system facilitates the establishment and maintenance of good internal controls and the recording of transactions. The district utilizes the forms necessary to document all entries into the accounting system. Also, the district segregates the duties of employees in accordance with good internal control practices to the greatest extent possible given current staffing levels.

Recommendation

- *The accounting procedures manuals that are in the process of being completed should be finalized.*

Action Plan 14-3 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 14-3

Completing Accounting Procedures Manuals	
Strategy	Assign the responsibility for completion of the procedures manuals and set a date for completion. Critical processes should be identified and efforts focused on completing the manuals for those areas first.
Action Needed	Step 1. Identify and assign responsibility for completion of the manuals.
	Step 2. Coordinate this effort with the effort to establish an internal audit function. Adding an internal audit position should facilitate the completion of the procedures manuals preparation work.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Finance
Time Frame	July 1, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

18 Financial Reporting Procedures: The district prepares and distributes its financial reports on a timely basis.

All required financial reports are issued in a timely manner

The Finance Department prepares monthly financial reports and submits them to the board, as required. The information contained in these reports is summary in nature and provides the board with vital management information, including comparisons of actual revenues and expenditures to budget.

All appropriate financial reports needed for grants/projects funded with restricted sources are prepared, and an annual financial report, which is the subject of the audit of the Auditor General, is prepared on time, approved by the board, and submitted to the Department of Education as required.

19 Budget Practices: The district has a financial plan serving as an estimate of and control over operations and expenditures.

Exhibit 14-9 summarizes the district's budgeted versus actual revenues and expenditures for all governmental funds (includes general, special revenue, debt service, and capital projects funds) for the

last two fiscal years. Note that budgeted expenditures are normally estimated on the high side to avoid deficit spending.

Exhibit 14-9

Two Year Budget Summary

	1999-00			2000-01		
	Budget	**Actual**	**Variance**	**Budget**	**Actual**	**Variance**
Revenues	149,001,333	148,065,293	(936,040)	149,987,021	147,491,224	(2,495,797)
Expenditures	170,735,063	148,281,505	22,453,558	173,689,577	157,356,711	16,332,866

Source: School district general ledger.

The district follows sound budget practices

The budget process in all Florida school districts is uniform and is monitored carefully by the Department of Education. In Santa Rosa County School District, all legal requirements are met in a timely manner and the Assistant Superintendent for Finance prepares the budget, on the basis of input received from the schools and district departments plus funding information received from the Florida Legislature and the Department of Education.

Approximately 74% of the district's total budget is allocated to personnel costs, including salaries, benefits, and purchased services. The personnel portion of the budget is prepared on the basis of staffing allocations provided in the district staffing plan. Control of personnel budgets is assured through the use of an effective, manual position control system.

Budget data is entered into the accounting system from the approved budget, and the system effects budget control as transactions are processed. Non-personnel items are accounted for using an encumbrance system to ensure that budget allocations are not exceeded, and budget amendments are prepared and approved by the board as needed. The budget is available for viewing on the district's website.

20 Cash Management: The district has effective controls to provide recorded accountability for cash resources.

The district follows acceptable procedures for handling and accounting for revenues

Most of the budgeted funds are received by the district by electronic transfer of funds into bank accounts maintained in approved depository banks. Funding from the state is deposited directly into the district's State Board of Administration (SBA) investment account. School level procedures for handling cash receipts and checks are prescribed in the Internal Accounts Manual. The Risk Management Department collects funds from retirees for health, dental, and life insurance, and for COBRA insurance.

The integrity of the process of receiving funds is monitored through a timely and thorough bank reconciliation process that is performed by an account clerk separate from the cash receipt and disbursement functions. All bank accounts, including the operating, SBA, and food service accounts are reconciled. Uncollected amounts from non-sufficient funds checks are referred to the State Attorney's office for collection. The district keeps its bank accounts in state approved public depositories.

The financial system is designed so that revenues for the different fund sources are accounted for separately and transfers of monies between funds and accounts are carefully documented and closely

monitored. The school board approves all budget amendments that would require interfund transfers. Funds from the Department of Education are receipted and recorded like all other revenue transactions. The Senior Accountant prepares the federal cash advance requests based on anticipated expenditures. These requests are submitted on-line. The district utilizes the SBA overnight account for investing idle funds.

21 Investment Practices: The district has an investment plan that includes investment objectives and performance criteria designed to maximize return consistent with the risk associated with each investment, and specifies the types of financial products approved for investment.

The district follows effective procedures for investing available funds

The board has an investment policy (No. 6.06) that provides for the use of a variety of types of investment vehicles; however, the district is investing its available funds with the SBA's Local Government Surplus Funds Trust Fund investment pool. The investment pool, authorized by Section 218.405 FS, is a Securities and Exchange Commission Rule2a7-like external investment pool.

The SBA pool earns a relatively strong investment return that is enhanced by investments in commercial paper. Therefore, the district can earn a good rate of return without being involved with repurchase agreements and their related administrative costs, or other types of investments that would involve administrative time and procedures. This fund offers highly liquid investments with competitive rates and provides a simplistic and conservative investment approach by allowing investments to remain with the fund. Withdrawal requests are based on periodic cash needs with no type of withdrawal penalties.

22 Receivables: The district has established effective controls for recording, collecting, adjusting, and reporting receivables.

As a service provider of free public education to children, the district generally does not have activities that would require that it bill for and attempt collection from others. Essentially all of the district's receivables relate to accounting entries to account for amounts due from other State and local governments. These amounts due from other governments are considered to be fully collectible. Based on the limited volume and nature of receivables that the district has, its procedures are generally effective to provide for the proper reporting of receivables.

23 Salary and Benefit Costs: The district has effective controls that provide accountability for the payment of salaries and benefits.

Exhibit 14-10 illustrates the changes in the district's budgeted salary and benefit costs for the current and past three fiscal years.

Exhibit 14-10

Employee Salary and Benefit Costs
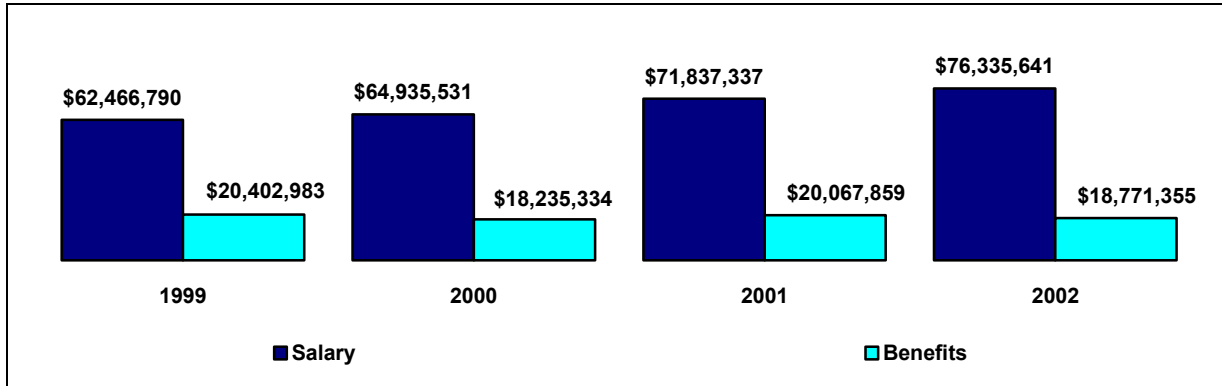
Source: Santa Rosa County School District financial statements and budget documents.

The district uses sound procedures in payroll processing

Section 236.02(4), F.S., and State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.052, F.A.C., require school districts to annually adopt salary schedules for employees that shall be the sole instrument used in determining employee compensation. The district annually adopts and includes in the board minutes, the approved salary schedules for school personnel. Additionally, the district has established procedures to ensure that amounts paid to employees are consistent with the amounts provided in the salary schedules. The Human Resources Department prepares a staffing plan on an annual basis to determine the staffing needs at each school. New hires must be made in accordance with the staffing plan.

The process of paying employees begins in the Personnel Department when employees are hired. There, the rate of pay, leave entitlement, retirement status, and other relevant information are keyed into the payroll system. Subsequent changes in employment are documented and approved on a Personnel Action Form. An Employment Separation Document is prepared for terminating employees.

Overall, internal controls over the payroll process appear to be strong. There is an appropriate division of duties between the Personnel and Payroll Departments. The district utilizes a computerized accounting system that has built-in internal controls. Furthermore, the Finance Department posts the payrolls and maintains ultimate control over payroll and fringe benefit costs. The senior accountant can monitor month-to-month payroll costs to identify unusual fluctuations.

The district has researched the possibility of out-sourcing its payroll function in order to save costs, but after obtaining information from other districts that have gone through the out-sourcing process; they have determined doing so would be too problematic for the district.

The district should promote direct deposit of payroll checks.

Although each new employee of the district is afforded the opportunity to sign up for the direct deposit method of payroll, the district does not currently have a mandatory direct deposit requirement for new employees. The district could enhance accountability and the efficiency and effectiveness of the payroll payment process by paying all employees by direct deposit. In addition, the district has not taken a proactive approach to encouraging current district employees to participate in the direct deposit program. Exhibit 14-11 shows that approximately 51% of the district's employees use direct deposit.

Exhibit 14-11

Approximately 51% of the District's Employees Use Direct Deposit

Type	Employees	Percentage	Amount	Percentage
Received Payroll Checks	1,132	49.07%	$24,447,047	49.08%
Used Direct Deposit	1,175	50.93%	25,364,350	50.92%
Total	2,307	100.00%	$49,811,397	100.00%

Source: District general ledger.

Payroll checks require tracking and follow-up from the time they are issued through the time that these checks clear the district's bank account. They additionally require subsequent reconciliations by district personnel, require payroll check filing by district personnel, require storage in district facilities, and eventual destruction by district personnel in accordance with applicable public record retention periods. Many of these time-consuming processes are eliminated or are greatly reduced with the direct deposit payroll method. Also, processes can be developed that would provide for the electronic distribution of "pay stub" information to district employees, thereby eliminating the need for mailing or delivering the information by manual means.

Although there may not be significant cost savings, the numerous control benefits associated with the direct deposit method of payroll processing would add greater efficiencies to the overall payroll transaction process. The efficiencies gained will allow the district to reallocate resources to other district priorities.

Recommendation

- *We recommend that the district proactively encourage both new and current employees to enroll in the direct deposit payroll method. The district should also consider making the direct deposit method mandatory for new employees.*

Action Plan 14-4 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 14-4

Direct Deposit Initiative	
Strategy	The district should proactively encourage both new and current employees to enroll in the direct deposit payroll method. The district should also consider making the direct deposit method mandatory for new employees.
Action Needed	Step 1. Develop strategies for encouraging both new and current employees to convert to direct deposit.
	Step 2. Obtain board approval for encouraging direct deposit.
	Step 3. Begin campaign to encourage direct deposit for those employees currently receiving paychecks. Information can be included in paycheck materials, in employee newsletters, etc.
	Step 4. Determine whether a mandatory direct deposit policy for new employees would be feasible for the district and implement accordingly.
	Step 5. Periodically report to the board the progress towards achieving 100 percent direct deposits.
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
Time Frame	June 30, 2002

Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Although cost savings are likely to be insignificant, implementing this recommendation will bring about increased efficiencies and strengthen controls in the payroll process.

24 Debt Financing: The district analyzes, evaluates, monitors, and reports debt-financing alternatives.

Debt financing is managed professionally and efficiently

Bonded debt of the district consists of various local bond and State Board of Education bond issues. When long-term financing is needed for financing capital improvements, the district hires a professional financial advisor. The district uses a RFP process to select a financial advisor. The Assistant Superintendent for Finance supervises and coordinates the process, but relies on the advisor for the technical aspects of this function.

Alternative methods of financing and choosing the method of sale are duly considered, and careful attention is given to costs of financing, credit enhancement, arbitrage calculations and considerations, preparation of all appropriate legal documents, and other details involved in obtaining financing for long-term debt. Based on the advice of the financial advisor, the district determines the best financing alternatives given the district's specific needs.

A third-party company performs arbitrage rebate calculations. The calculations are provided to the trustee that then notifies the district of the rebate amount. The trustee notifies the district when any other required actions are necessary.

The district did not issue any new long-term debt in the fiscal year ended June 30, 2001. The district's June 30, 2001, outstanding debt financing and associated maturity dates and interest rates are summarized in Exhibit 14-12.

Exhibit 14-12

The District Had $27,490,000 in Borrowed Debt at June 30, 2001

	Balance		Interest Rates	
Debt Instrument	**June 30, 2001**	**Date of Maturity**	**Low**	**High**
Certificates of Participation	17,485,000	Various dates from 2002 through 2018	3.70%	6.38%
Bonds Payable	10,005,000	Various dates from 2007 through 2019	4.38%	5.89%
Total	**$27,490,000**			

Source: District annual financial report.

25 Grant and Entitlement Monitoring: The district effectively monitors and reports grant activities.

Grants are administered in accordance with terms of agreements

The district receives significant resources from federal grantors. During the 2000-01 fiscal year, resources from federal grantors totaled $13,078,709. These grants provide resources for a variety of district programs. For example, during the 2000-01 fiscal year, the district received the following:

- The Child Nutrition Cluster (National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Summer Program for Needy Children) provided $2,684,843 to supplement the district's food service program and to provide free and reduced-price meals to eligible children.

- The Special Education Cluster provided $2,694,921 in special education grants and preschool grants.

- The Title I – Grants to Local Educational Agencies Program provided $2,653,837 to enhance delivery of educational services to elementary schools located in economically disadvantaged areas.

Most of these resources are derived from recurring grants that have been received by the district for many years. Accordingly, procedures to ensure compliance with these grants are well established. District personnel monitor changes in these grant requirements, and as appropriate, procedural changes are made to meet changing grant requirements.

Grant administrators are responsible for administering and monitoring all grants for the district in accordance with the terms of the grants. The Finance Department is a partner in this administration process, with an accountant assigned to the administration of grants and grant files maintained for each grant. The Finance Department accountant monitors financial reporting requirements, the use of funds in accordance with grant terms, and the meeting of encumbrance, expenditure, and reporting timelines of the grants.

Grants are accounted for separately utilizing the accounting system, so that these funds are not commingled with other funds. The accounting for grant funds follows the same control procedures as followed for other funds, with additional attention to special deadlines and terms of the grants. In effect, the grant funds are held in trust and administered in accordance with grant terms.

For indirect costs, such as salaries that are split among more than one grant an indirect cost allocation plan has been established and is maintained by the district. The plan is reviewed and approved by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance prior to submission to the U.S. Department of Education for approval.

Reporting requirements for grants are determined and procedures are established to ensure that grantor-required reports are submitted within established deadlines. The district does not pass through federal funds to subrecipients, so there is no requirement for the district to monitor or report on the activities of subrecipients.

A Supplementary Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards is compiled each year and is part of the district's annual financial report. The Auditor General's office audits program compliance as part of the district's annual federal Single Audit. The federal Office of Management and Budget issues program requirements and regulations in the form of OMB Circular A-133. This Circular is readily available to the district and to auditors.

Purchasing

26 Segregation of Duties: The district segregates purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving functions.

Responsibilities for purchases are appropriately segregated

Section 237.02(1)(a), F.S., provides that each school district shall develop and adopt policies establishing the plan to be followed in making purchases as may be prescribed by the State Board. State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.012, F.A.C., prescribes purchasing requirements for school districts. Generally, school districts must establish purchasing procedures that, at a minimum, meet these requirements. Through their developed policies and procedures, school districts may establish more comprehensive purchasing requirements.

The district has established a Purchasing Department to ensure that board-adopted purchasing policies have been followed. District procedures provide for the decentralized requisitioning and receiving of goods and services, and the Purchasing Department is physically and functionally separate from these activities.

The schools and departments prepare requisitions that are processed in the Purchasing Department. If all is in order, the Purchasing Department then issues purchase orders. Receiving then occurs as specified in the purchase orders, but without any contact with those in the Purchasing Department responsible for having issued the purchase orders. Receiving reports/pay authorizations and approved invoices are then forwarded to accounts payable clerks in the Finance Department who prepare the invoices for payment. The Accounts Payable Department consists of three clerks. Payments are approved and effected in the Finance Department, with appropriate separation of responsibilities for approval and recording cash disbursements and general ledger entries.

27 Requisitioning: The district has established controls for authorizing purchase requisitions.

The processing of purchase requisitions follows good internal control procedures

The district has established a comprehensive budgeting process that allocates budget to departmental and cost center (including school) levels. Department heads and principals in charge of activities at these levels are responsible for ensuring that required expenditures are kept within available budget. Consequently, authorization to request the expenditure of budgeted funds is also vested in these employees.

The requisitioning process is well controlled with appropriate separation of responsibilities. As the need arises, the department head or principal submits to the Purchasing Department on-line requisitions for the purchase of goods and services. Depending on the type and amount of the requisition, Purchasing Department employees process the requisitions, and if sufficient budget exists, a purchase is subsequently authorized.

Schools and departments initiate requisitions as authorized and controlled by the accounting system. Authorization to enter the on-line purchase orders is approved on a Financial Computer Security Services form. No one can begin the process, unless properly authorized. Requisitions go through the Purchasing Department and are encumbered by the Finance Department before they are issued as purchase orders.

Requisitions are assigned control numbers and the account numbers to which they are to be charged. The information needed by the Purchasing Department and the vendor to consummate the purchase is entered on the requisition/purchase order, or included as an attachment. The request number and cost center number prints on the requisition verification report. The appropriation to be charged is entered by the school or department requesting the purchase. The appropriation code is a required field when entering requisitions. The accounting system will not allow expenditures in excess of the budgeted amount for that line item.

28 Purchasing: The district has established authorization controls over purchasing.

Established authorization controls are used for all purchases

In addition to Florida law and State Board of Education rule purchasing requirements, the district's policies and procedures have established additional purchasing authorizing requirements and processes. For example, verbal quotations and written quotations are required for purchases that exceed specified amounts enumerated within the district's policies and procedures.

In the Santa Rosa County School District, the central Purchasing Department, board policies governing the purchasing function, and the control-oriented accounting system combine to effect proper controls over purchases. These controls include proper authorization of purchases; procurement in accordance with bid requirements, acquisition of quality products at fair prices, and overall integrity in the purchasing process.

Alternatives such as buying from bids of other governmental agencies are considered and used for the sake of efficiency in the purchasing process and efforts are made to avoid unacceptable practices such as the splitting of orders to stay within bid limits or buying from vendors who are not independent of district officers and employees. All vendors are registered through the district's purchasing website.

The purchasing agent reviews all purchases for recurring items to determine if bids are necessary. Procedures for consolidating recurring purchases are in the Purchasing Manual. Blanket purchase orders are still issued, but only for items like fuel or printing supplies and for one-time shopping purchases of $500 or less.

Three quotes are obtained for purchases more than $8,333 per board policy. Competitive bidding is required for purchases over $25,000. The bid list requirements are the same for all competitive sourcing. The criteria for rating proposals are included in the Request for Proposals. All bid prices are reviewed and approved by the board. Cost Center heads (Principals, Directors, Coordinators) review other purchase prices. To account for federally funded purchases, federal and state grant funds are assigned a specific project number. The grant/project manager is responsible for monitoring the expenditures.

The Purchasing Department subscribes to the NIGP Code of Ethics as listed on the Purchasing website and in the Purchasing Manual. All three Purchasing Department employees are NIGP certified. All three Purchasing Department employees can handle the purchasing function. The Purchasing Department encourages cross-training of school employees. Three training sessions are offered to schools each summer.

The district has made purchasing more efficient and convenient through the implementation of a purchase card program

About four years ago, the district adopted the state's purchase card program for use by district employees to make small purchases without going through the process of generating a purchase order. This program allows district staff to more efficiently obtain low cost items such as materials and supplies for immediate use. Examples of allowable purchases include, but are not limited to: books and software, postage, repair parts, small equipment, supplies, and videos. Although the purchase card provides a new tool for making small-dollar purchases, existing Florida laws governing purchasing, accounts payable, records retention, and other applicable laws must be followed. Purchase cards have been issued to most administrative staff, including school principals.

The district has established effective controls for monitoring the use of the cards. First, before a purchase card is issued, users must attend and complete training on the Purchasing Card Program. Cost Center Heads review and approve purchasing card transactions and initial each receipt. A reconciler is assigned to reconcile the cardholder receipts to the monthly statements. In addition, a Purchasing Department employee routinely audits a sample of purchase card charges for appropriateness.

One of the benefits of the purchase card program is a reduction in the number of purchase orders issued. This frees up staff resources that were normally committed to the processing of purchase orders. Purchases made with the purchasing card increased from approximately $1,326,089 in calendar year 2000, to $2,254,354 in calendar year 2001. With the increase in the use of purchase card transactions, purchasing function resources are used to review support for charges, reconcile the purchasing card statements, and other related activities to ensure that charges are for appropriate school purposes and that they are charged to the appropriate departments. To the extent that purchase card usage is increased, resources needed for processing the charges offset some of the resources that were saved from issuing fewer purchase orders.

Another benefit of the State purchase card program is that purchase rebates are earned for purchases made with the purchase cards. The rebate is equal to 40 basis points (.4%) of total purchases made with the card. To take full advantage of the rebate program, the district should consider promoting greater use of the purchase card as an alternative to the traditional purchase order system. Many purchases are still made through the traditional purchase order system. During the 2000-01 fiscal year, the district issued approximately 7,400 purchase orders for amounts less than $750, the current capitalization threshold for tangible personal property. We realize that some purchases, by their nature, are better suited to issuing purchase orders. Though most likely minimal, the savings generated from taking better advantage of the rebate program would be of benefit to the district.

29 Receiving: The district has established controls to ensure that goods are received and meet quality standards.

Procedures are established to affirm that goods are received as ordered

The Purchasing Manual prescribes standards for receiving goods and for ensuring that they are of the quality ordered. Those who receive ordered goods first inspect them for damage and for quality, and make careful counts. If goods are received as specified in the related purchase order, they then prepare Pay Authorization forms. The Pay Authorization forms (receiving reports) use the same computer-generated tracking number as the corresponding purchase order. Following the prescribed purchasing procedures, shortages are documented and loss or damage claims are made as necessary.

Cost Centers receive and account for the goods with the exception of fixed assets, which are shipped to central receiving. When goods are received outside of central receiving, control is achieved through the requirement of two signatures on the pay authorization form; the department head must sign, as well as the individual who actually received the goods. At the warehouse, personnel compare the goods received to the purchase order. The schools maintain copies of materials received.

Other controls at both the Accounts Payable Department and receiving sites help ensure that the proper goods are received prior to making and recording the related payments.

The Purchasing Manager is the contract administrator for custodial services. The directors of food service and transportation service monitor those contracts. Other contracts are monitored by the Project Manager requesting the contract.

Payment Processing

30 Disbursements: The district has established controls to ensure that disbursements are properly authorized, documented, and recorded.

The disbursement process follows good internal control procedures

Within the finance function is an accounts payable section that is responsible for processing bills and invoices for payment. The finance function reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Finance. The district has established controls for processing invoices by requiring that all invoices received for payment be forwarded to the accounts payable section of the Finance Department. The Accounts Payable Department ensures that vouchers are prepared properly and include the appropriate supporting documentation.

During the requisition process, purchases are coded to ensure that sufficient budget exists for the payment. During the process of approving requisitions for payment, the coding information is verified and corrected if necessary. When approved requisitions are processed, district purchasing staff search for unusual account coding and re-verify as necessary.

The flow of disbursement documents, the approvals required for the documents, the separation of responsibilities of employees involved in creating a disbursement, and controls built into the accounting system, all form the basis of a sound internal control system for the disbursement of funds.

31 Invoice Processing: The district has established controls for processing invoices to ensure that quantities, prices, and terms coincide with purchase orders and receiving reports.

The district uses good internal controls in the processing of invoices

Approximately 11,300 regular warrants and 37,900 payroll warrants are processed on an annual basis. All original invoices are received in the Accounts Payable Department. The Accounts Payable Department consists of three clerks.

Schools and department heads acknowledge the receipt of ordered goods. The Purchasing Department investigates shipping, quality, and pricing discrepancies.

The finance function has established procedures that provide for invoices to be reviewed, verified, and approved for completeness of supporting documents and required clerical checking before disbursements are made. Payment of invoices is effected through the preparation of voucher documents. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure timely resolution of discrepancies that may arise. Numerous validation and edit checks are embedded in the accounting system to prevent errors in the processing of invoices.

Long-term contract payments are properly approved before being posted for payment. Detailed construction files are maintained for each project. Separate procedures are in place for approving and processing utility payments and travel expense payments.

After a voucher has gone through the entire review and approval process, payment is made and the prior encumbrance of funds is liquidated.

15 Community Involvement

Although the Santa Rosa County School District has developed and maintained an effective unique site-based program of community involvement, the district continues to look for ways to provide more opportunities to involve constituents in all areas of school district operation. With the creation of a formal public relations program, a mechanism to gain feedback from non-parent volunteers and business partners, and focused efforts to establish two-way communications at the district level, even greater community involvement will occur.

Conclusion

The Santa Rosa County School District has a unique but highly effective community outreach program organized at the school building level. School improvement parent reports document community-based involvement in leadership and school governance activities, classroom support, and extracurricular activities. The fully functioning program operates without a central administrator but is closely coordinated with the superintendent's community involvement efforts and the goals and objectives of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006.

School-business partnerships are initiated and nurtured at both the school building and school district levels. The Santa Rosa County Educational Foundation offers individuals, organizations and businesses involvement at the district level and the opportunity to be an integral part of the district communications network.

Santa Rosa County School District could benefit from developing a formal school community relations program and a mission statement for community involvement to guide progress in accomplishing all objectives in Goal 8 of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 (see Recommendations 3-14 and 3-15, Chapter 3, Management Structures). Larger numbers of stakeholders in the county could benefit from the broadcast of information, results, and events via local cable access television. A regular district-level quarterly newsletter to constituents throughout Santa Rosa County School District could further increase community ownership in results and in participation in school-based activities. A Homework Hotline could also link schools to families, and soliciting feedback from business partners could lead to even greater school-business relationships in the district.

During the course of this review, SchoolMatch consultants identified a number of district accomplishments in the area of community involvement, some of which are included in Exhibit 15-1 below.

Exhibit 15-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Community Involvement in the Past Three Years

- 2001 Golden School Awards, acknowledgement of more than 143,000 hours of volunteer service by patrons, citizens, and stakeholders in the district. Santa Rosa Schools have qualified for Golden School Awards for more than 19 years.

- High levels of parent, family and community involvement in each school building.

- Effective school-business partnership development plan with results including 396 contributing school-business partners in FY2001.

- One district-wide educational foundation that raises funds for the school district.

- "The Superintendent's Circle" membership program to tie more business partners into the school district communications' loop.

- Informative school improvement parent reports and school newsletters.

- Flexible school schedules to better accommodate parents and families.

- Steady increases in district-wide parent support group membership.

- A self-supporting community school program that provides services, childcare, support for the Pre-K program, and recreation/leisure activities as well as adding revenue back to Santa Rosa County School District; $400,000 in FY2001 alone.

- A CEO Roundtable partnership, funded by the Florida Department of Education, including Santa Rosa Schools and Santa Rosa County sheriffs, fire, and emergency services departments, to stem youth violence and secure the county in the event of a disastrous event.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Overview of Chapter Findings

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed the district's community involvement using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and associated indicators. The consulting team interviewed building administrators, parents, citizens, and business leaders, and reviewed community activity calendars, the superintendent's community involvement activity calendar, educational foundation documents, Superintendent's Roundtable by-laws, the current volunteer handbook, information about Santa Rosa's community school, and school improvement parent reports from each building to draw the conclusion that the Santa Rosa County School District has a highly personalized, highly effective community involvement program across attendance areas. The community involvement program is an integral part of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Effective Communication

1. The district's Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 enhances community involvement, although it lacks a specific community involvement mission statement, goals and objectives and mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of community relations' efforts at the district level (Page 15-7).

2. The district's strategic planning process includes accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the community involvement program at schools but not the district level (Page 15-9).

3. A wide range of opportunities for parent and community involvement are marketed at the school level and to a lesser degree at the district level (Page 15-11).

4. The district has good communication with parents at the school level, but could improve formal district communications (Page 15-12).

5. The district has no dedicated community involvement staff. (Page 15-14).

Parents and Decisions

6. There are active parent organizations in each school in the district (Page 15-14).

7. Through each school, the district encourages families to be involved in the schools, quantifies family involvement, and uses data from an annual school climate survey to improve educational services, fix problems, and meet more families' needs (Page 15-15).

Community Involvement

8. The schools use community resources to strengthen schools, families, and student learning and offer school resources to strengthen partnerships with the community. There appears to be no similar district-wide initiative (Page 15-17).

9. In addition to a growing list of school business partners linked to the district and to individual schools, the Santa Rosa Educational Foundation solicits funding for the district, the CEO Roundtable brings special funding to stem youth violence and secure the district in the event of a disastrous occurrence. This is an exemplary model of school-agency partnerships in an area with limited corporate headquarters (Page 15-18)

10. The district's commitment to involve volunteers is founded in the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006. (Page 15-19).

11. Santa Rosa County School District and individual schools solicit economic support through school foundations. (Page 15-23)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations———————

Exhibit 15-2

**One Community Involvement Action Plan
Recommendation Has a Fiscal Impact**

Recommendation	Five Year Fiscal Impact
• The district should examine mechanisms for gathering feedback from school-business partners via an annual satisfaction survey.	• An annual investment of $12,000 for a contracted survey of business partners and potential partners, for a five-year cost of $60,000.

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants.

Background——————————————————

The district's central and school-based administrators perform community involvement functions as an added part of their job

A dedicated director of school community relations is typically responsible for school district's community involvement function. Each of the peer group districts has such a function (Exhibit 15-3). In Santa Rosa, the community relations officers are the district's central and school building line administrators: the superintendent of schools, assistant superintendents, directors, and building principals (Exhibit 15-4). Efforts to enhance community involvement are organized by the superintendent.

Exhibit 15-3

Peer District Comparisons: District-level Community Relations Staff

District	Community Relations Staff	Number of Community Relations Staff	CR Staff Reports to:
Santa Rosa	0	0	NA
Charlotte	Superintendent Superintendent's secretary	2	NA
Lake	Assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, Public information officer, Secretary, volunteer fingerprint clerical assistant	4	Superintendent
Okaloosa	Director of community relations, Secretaries (2)	3	Superintendent
Osceola	Community relations Coordinator, Assistant, Secretary	3	Superintendent
St. Johns	Coordinator of community relations and grants	1	Superintendent

Source: SchoolMatch Telephone Interview with Peer Districts, February 2002.

Exhibit 15-4

Santa Rosa County School District
Organizational Chart for Community Relations

Responsible Position	Duties
Superintendent of schools All central administrators All school building administrators	Write, issue press releases Write, deliver speeches Make public appearances Respond to constituent calls and visits Write, distribute regular newsletters Share all information with internal publics

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

Although Santa Rosa does not have a community involvement mission statement, the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 commits the school district to increase family, parent, community and business involvement with schools. Each school building has an advisory council and a parent/family support organization, and the principal coordinates with these groups to administer an annual school climate survey. However, the district has not established a common set of questions nor quantified information from all surveys at the district level in order to:

1. Improve the goals and objectives of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006.
2. Identify and address areas of deficiency in an effort to equitably serve all areas and constituencies in Santa Rosa County School District.

School-to-stakeholder communications are abundant and reflect each site's use of stakeholder feedback (via advisory councils, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) and others) to serve internal and external publics' needs. Effective communication from the school district to management sites, to all Santa Rosa constituents, and avenues to encourage stakeholders to give feedback to the central administration are not

evident, nor is there a formally adopted public relations program to guide these efforts throughout the school district.

Many communications resources, some through formal school-business partner agreements, are linked to school sites and contribute to strengthen the schools. Focus clearly has been at the site level. No evidence exists of business or organizational support at the district level, other than a growing membership in the Superintendent's Circle. In fact, Exhibit 15-5 shows actual reductions in the percentage of Santa Rosa funds used over the past six years for community service. Santa Rosa's financial position is improved with the efforts of The Santa Rosa County Educational Foundation to secure additional resources for the district.

The quality of the superintendent's work in managing the community involvement function and his personal and professional commitment to participate in site-based activities appear to be excellent, as evidenced by interviews, school visits, written materials [1], a structured radio station program appearance by a wide range of district administrative and supervisory personnel. [2]

Exhibit 15-5

Santa Rosa Expenditures by Major Function, FY97 through FY02, Showing Reduction in Percentage of Expenditures for Community Service

Santa Rosa County School Board Approved Appropriations FY97 through FY02						
Percentages of Expenditures by Major Function						
Major Function	**FY97**	**FY98**	**FY99**	**FY00**	**FY01**	**FY02**
Instruction	30.90%	29.90%	29.50%	29.60%	29.70%	29.60%
Instructional Support	4.60%	4.80%	4.70%	4.60%	4.50%	4.30%
General Support	12.60%	12.40%	12.70%	13.60%	13.50%	13.90%
Maintenance	11.00%	1.30%	1.50%	1.60%	1.70%	1.80%
Community Service	0.80%	0.70%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%	0.40%
Salaries	30.00%	29.50%	29.30%	30.30%	29.90%	30.20%
Employee Benefits	10.60%	12.00%	11.40%	8.50%	8.50%	7.40%
Purchased Services	3.10%	50.00%	4.90%	5.70%	5.90%	6.60%
Energy Services	1.50%	1.30%	1.20%	1.40%	1.50%	1.70%
Materials, Supplies	1.51%	1.71%	1.60%	1.70%	1.60%	2.30%
Capital Outlay	1.90%	1.70%	1.50%	1.50%	1.80%	1.20%
Other	1.10%	0.80%	0.70%	0.70%	0.71%	0.50%
Transfers	0.00%	0.15%	0.13%	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%
Total Budget ($)	$181.13	$200.07	$213.32	$214.80	$240.82	$253.13
Millions of dollars						

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

This system, while highly unusual, appears to unify school-based communities; attracting and keeping award-winning numbers of volunteers, and allowing time and material resources to flow into the schools. Results of a SchoolMatch Survey of Perceptions relative to discussions in this chapter and regarding the effectiveness of the school district appear in Exhibit 15-6 (for complete results of the Survey of Perceptions see Appendix A). The basis for effectively building a strong community involvement program is trust. Results of the perception survey indicate that stakeholders trust the leadership in Santa Rosa, understand the school district plan, and are willing to support the school district with additional revenue and volunteer efforts. Santa Rosa's approach in this area saves at least one administrative position and at least one support position in the district's budget each year.

---

[1] Santa Rosa County School District directory, maps, contact information, 2001-02.
[2] Radio station schedule, revised 10/6/99.

Exhibit 15-6

Santa Rosa County Survey of Perceptions Regarding District Vision, Results, and Willingness to Support District Initiatives

Survey Statement	Average Response*
The Santa Rosa County Public School District should strive to be among the best school systems in the State of Florida.	1.118
The district has efficiently managed the resources available to it.	1.782
Improved funding is necessary in order to improve student performance.	1.563
The new administration has been open with the community about financial priorities.	1.699
The new administrative team is doing a good job of communicating the district's current financial condition.	1.642
Data on student learning are regularly collected and reviewed with all community members.	1.904
If Santa Rosa County Public Schools need more money, I would personally be willing to pay higher taxes.	1.742

*Scores below 2.050 indicates effectiveness has been achieved in the perception of stakeholders.

Source: SchoolMatch Survey of Perceptions, Oct-Nov 2001.

Methodology

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed the Santa Rosa County District's own assessment of their management structures using the Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators adopted by the Florida Commissioner of Education as a commencement point for this analysis. Studies conducted in Santa Rosa County School District by groups or organizations outside the school district over the past five years could have an impact on the results of this review. The superintendent advised SchoolMatch that the only studies conducted in the school district over the past five years have been the annual financial audit conducted by the Office of the Auditor General.

The consulting team then employed several methodologies to gather additional information, confirm information, formulate finding statements, offer recommendations for practices to be implemented over the next two years or sooner, and design action plans to accomplish the recommendations.

During each of three separate visits to Santa Rosa County School District (October 2001, December 2001, and February 2002) SchoolMatch consultants worked to complete an assessment of whether Santa Rosa followed Best Financial Management Practices and associated indicators and conducted on-site interviews with such school district personnel as district level managers, each of the elected school board members, the elected superintendent, building level managers, bargaining unit representatives, classroom teachers, and support staff, gathering information on the district's management structures, activities, policies and procedures. [3]

A survey of the perceptions of stakeholder groups in Santa Rosa County was conducted in October and November 2001 in order to capture perceptions about the leadership, emphasis on learning, climate, monitoring results, and the quality of expectations in the school district. Summary results of this survey appear in Appendix A. Specific survey results will be presented and discussed under the indicators and best practices they reference.

---

[3] SchoolMatch Consultants' working papers, Santa Rosa County school personnel interviews, October 15-19, 2001.

SchoolMatch consultants reviewed approved school board minutes, the school board policy manual, strategic planning documents, budget documents, and individual building improvement plans to begin to understand the levels of organization and accountability already present in Santa Rosa County School District. When further understanding was necessary, SchoolMatch engaged in second-tier and third-tier interviews and requests for support documentation.

The final step in placing outcomes in Santa Rosa County School District in perspective was research to compare Santa Rosa County with Florida peer districts: Charlotte, Lake, Osceola, Okaloosa, and St. Johns. [4] Comparative data, charts, and tables appear through this chapter.

Effective Communication

1 **The district's Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 enhances community involvement, although lacks a specific community involvement mission statement, goals and objectives and mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of community relations' efforts at the district level.**

Although there is no mission statement specific to the community involvement effort the district does have a general mission statement that incorporates the community:

> *The Santa Rosa School District, a growing and diverse community of learners with strong values, promotes self-sufficient and productive learning through a comprehensive and innovative curriculum, visionary and collaborative leadership, and sound management.*

Parallel to the mission statement is a board-adopted statement of common vision elements, which include:

> *Maximize the learning potential of all students by providing equal access to instruction and ensuring students' readiness to learn at all levels.*

> *Provide a safe, nurturing, and technology-rich learning environment in order to enhance student achievement.*

> *Prepare students for success in a global society.*

Strategic Improvement Plan

The district has a well-defined strategic improvement plan, adopted by the board on August 2001, for the 2001-2006 school years. The plan enables the district to assess its current operations, determine future direction, and engage in a series of actions to achieve strategic goals. The board-adopted strategic plan guides program development and includes short-term and long-term goals, annual objectives and strategic directions.

The district's Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 focuses on collaborative leadership in the district and on mechanisms to gain community involvement and feedback to strengthen the overall plan. The

---

[4] Memorandum from William L. Bainbridge representing SchoolMatch Consultants to the Florida Legislature, OPPAGA, Steve Stolting, Program Manager, presenting peer district requests by chapter for the Santa Rosa study.

district strategic planning committee is composed of members of families and from all other stakeholder groups and the community-at-large.

Specifically, the following sections of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 address community involvement:

Goal 1:	Readiness to Start School
	Objective 1.1 Kindergarten Readiness <u>Strategies</u>
	Objective 1.2 Program Design <u>Strategies</u>
Goal 5:	School Safety and Environment
	Objective 5.3 Character Education <u>Strategies</u>
	Objective 5.4 Health Services <u>Strategies</u>
Goal 7:	Adult (and Family) Literacy (entire)
Goal 8:	Family and Community Involvement (entire)
Goal 10:	Comprehensive Operational Planning and Program Accountability
	Objectives 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, and 10.6 depend upon feedback from parents, families, and the community to move forward. Feedback is accomplished in the annual school climate survey process.

Under each of these goals are clearly delineated objectives, and strategies to meet these objectives, with specific directives to engage the community's support, gather feedback from stakeholders, and set annual goals increase community involvement. The administration's evaluation process provides oversight for school's implementation of goals and objectives.

Recommendations

- *We recommend the school district aggregate, publish, and use the resulting information from the annual school climate surveys to improve community involvement at the school and district levels. Such reports should be featured in a constituent newsletter. (see Action Plan 15-1).*

- *We recommend Santa Rosa create a community involvement mission statement, as the basis for a formal community relations process and to be incorporated in Goal 8 of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 (see Action Plan 15-2).*

- *We recommend Santa Rosa establish a formal school district community relations program (see Action Plan 15-3)*

Action Plan 15-1

Aggregate, Publish, and Use Information from the Annual School Climate Surveys to Improve Community Involvement at the Building and District Levels
Strategy — To facilitate the annual budget adoption process, to increase opportunities to engage larger and more diverse elements of the constituent base, and to facilitate review of progress toward achieving goals of the strategic improvement plan, consolidate information from the annual school climate survey and building improvement plan reviews.

Action Needed	Step 1:	Consolidate individual building progress summaries and results of annual school climate surveys into actionable information.
	Step 2:	Publish the information in regular school district newsletters.
	Step 3:	Use results to facilitate the annual budgeting process and measure progress in achieving strategic plan goals.
	Step 4:	Use results as a marketing tool to appeal for support to all Santa Rosa constituents.
Who is Responsible	School board, superintendent	
Time Frame	December 2002	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

Action Plan 15-2

Develop a Community Involvement Mission Statement		
Strategy	Focus and strengthen the community involvement program in Santa Rosa County Public Schools with a mission statement.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Develop a community involvement mission statement to present to the Santa Rosa County School Board.
	Step 2:	Arrange for the board to adopt this mission statement
Who is Responsible	Superintendent, strategic planning committee	
Time Frame	December 2002	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

Action Plan 15-3

Develop Formal School Community Relations Program		
Strategy	Unify and strengthen the school community relations program in Santa Rosa County Public Schools.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Develop a school community relations program model to present to the Santa Rosa County School Board.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent	
Time Frame	December 2002	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

2 The district's strategic planning process includes accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the community involvement program at schools, but not the district level.

Because the high priority on community involvement has been at the school level, the district's Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 has clearly stated goals and measurable objectives at the local level.   The

district's excellent strategic planning process can be further improved with addition of a mission statement for community involvement and consideration for a formal community relations program in the district (see Recommendations 15-2 and 15-3).

The effectiveness of the community involvement program is measured in annual school climate surveys and in the annual evaluation of school administrators. Both the district budget and Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 provide linkages to use the resulting information in management decision-making. The performance and cost of all programs are evaluated and analyzed for potential cost savings.

A process to consolidate the school data into a district-wide data tool could provide feedback in strategic planning, in the budgeting process, and in designing improvements to be included in school building improvement plans. At present, such aggregate data are available to school board members, superintendent and administrative staff by request, but not in a routine fashion.

Based on the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006, accountability mechanisms are developed at each school through advisory councils, parent support groups, principal leadership, and by virtue of school-business partner agreements. Principals account for all activity in their annual review, supported by data gathered in the school's annual climate survey.

For example, the district uses the goals and objectives of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006 to accomplish the following:

1. Create Pre-K programs integral to each elementary school, using entry and exit survey data to quantify the program's effectiveness, the (justification, application for funding, and approval of funding) process for expansion of the district's Head Start Program).

2. Measure increases in student participation in career and technical education activities designed to better prepare Santa Rosa graduates for work.

3. Conduct regular school-site health needs assessments to quantify and address underserved areas and to ensure compliance with federal, state and local statutes.

While annual school climate surveys gather information about community involvement at the school level, efforts to quantify community involvement at the district level could be strengthened, as discussed in Section 1 (see Action Plan 15-4).

Recommendations

- *Develop a process to further involve the school advisory councils, parent/teacher organizations, business partners, and staff in quantifying community involvement at the district-wide level. (see Action Plan 15-4)*

Action Plan 15-4

Develop a Process for Quantifying Community Involvement at the District-wide Level		
Strategy	In order to determine where strengths and weaknesses in the community involvement program lie across the district, quantify levels of community involvement at the district level.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Develop a mechanism to further involve the school advisory councils, parent/teacher organizations, business partners, and staff in quantifying community involvement at the district-wide level to quantify community involvement

	Step 2:	Develop a mechanism to further involve the school advisory councils, parent/teacher organizations, business partners, and staff in quantifying community involvement at the district-wide level to quantify community involvement
Who is Responsible	Superintendent	
Time Frame	December 2002	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch Consultants

3 A wide range of opportunities for parent and community involvement are marketed at the school level and to a lesser degree at the district level.

A review of school board approved minutes, [5] the district's publication <u>Volunteer Services,</u> [6] school improvement parent reports, [7] individual school newsletters, [8] and School Advisory Council memoranda indicate the district provides a wide variety of opportunities for parents and non-parent citizens to become involved in district programs.

The district practices are flexible. School libraries are open before and after regular school hours. Parent-teacher conferences are held before and after regular school hours, with sensitivity to parents' work schedules. Kindergarten registration is held in the evening, in addition to regular daytime registration. At regular intervals, school principals and assistants stay at their buildings into evening hours to meet with parents and citizens. Principals' extended hours are widely publicized.

The annual school climate survey captures information to further refine and expand services to stakeholders.

Additional, focused volunteer opportunities and specific parent training offerings exist in the Title I Program. [9] Santa Rosa County School District surpasses the minimum requirements of the federal Title I Program to qualify for continued funding with such volunteer opportunities as:

- Take Our Parents to School Week
- Radio and cable television interviews
- Make and take workshops for parents
- Academic content workshops for parents

All volunteers are screened and presented to the school board for approval. Volunteers do not supervise students nor do they work with students in the absence of trained school district professionals.

---

[5] Approved school board minutes (example), priority on volunteerism.

[6] <u>Volunteer Services,</u> prepared by the district coordinator of volunteers, 2001-02.

[7] November 2000 school improvement parent reports for all PreK, elementary, middle and high schools in Santa Rosa County School District.

[8] Avalon Middle, Bagdad Elementary, Dixon High, Hobbs Middle, Pace High, Rhodes Elementary and Woodlawn Beach Middle Schools' parent newsletters, 2000-01 and 2001-02.

[9] SRC Title I Program 2001-02: Parent Handbook; example of parents' day notification; example of parent advisory council minutes; 12/5/01 parent involvement overview, director.

Recommendations —————————————————————

- *None*

4 **The district has good communication with parents at the school level, but could improve formal district communications.**

The site-based management system in the district provides for well-organized communication between school principals and their constituents. [10] These regular communications include monthly (or more frequent) newsletters, annual school improvement parent reports, invitations to school events, attendance sheets from school events and parent/teacher conferences, and feedback from stakeholders to improve newsletter communications.

There does not appear to be ongoing and regular communication with all stakeholder groups from the district, nor does there appear to be an established mechanism for reporting district-wide achievement or policies to stakeholders.

While steps have been taken to increase opportunities for parent and family meetings and interaction with school staff beyond traditional school hours, family support for school and classroom educational goals could be enhanced with a Homework Hotline service and with a telephone-accessed information service.

Demographics indicate a higher availability of telephones and televisions than computers with web access and a preference for personal communications via telephone. Demographics also indicate a higher percentage of households with televisions than the percentage of households with computers.

Even in the absence of a district community-relations professional, the district uses a variety of methods of regular communication with parents. Constituents, students, and school district staff would benefit from adoption of a formal community relations program, use of cable television to broadcast school news, activities, and events, a homework hotline, and a regular superintendent's newsletter to all stakeholders.

Recommendations —————————————————————

- *We recommend the district could make better use of CountyLine Cable Television over the MediaCom System, as a means of informing the public. This could include more "question and answer programs with the superintendent," programs explaining specific academic activities, interviews with district staff, town meetings with parents and other constituents, and features focusing on student accomplishments in academic, extracurricular, and co-curricular activities (see Action Plan 15-5).*

- *We recommend instituting Homework Hotlines to help teachers connect with parents in terms of their responsibility to help children learn (see Action Plan 15-6).*

---

[10] See November 2000 school improvement parent reports, all PreK, elementary, middle and high schools in Santa Rosa County; Avalon Middle, Bagdad Elementary, Dixon High, Hobbs Middle, Pace High, Rhodes Elementary and Woodlawn Beach Middle Schools' parent newsletter, 2000-01 and 2001-02; examples from Berryhill Elementary, Dixon Middle, Gulf Breeze High, Holley Navarre Middle, King Middle (data available in every school): annual school climate survey, 2000-01 and 2001-02 ; and examples from Berryhill Elementary, Dixon Middle, Oriole Beach Elementary, Rhodes Elementary (data available in every school): invitations to and parent attendance at orientations, open Houses, workshops; PTA membership lists; PTA agendas.

- *We recommend a regular quarterly district newsletter, sponsored in part by advertising be sent from the central office to all stakeholders, as well as published on the district website (see Action Plan 15-7).*

Action Plan 15-5

Increase Use of the Television Cable Utility to Bring Santa Rosa Schools into the Community	
Strategy	Bring a wide variety of information and programming from Santa Rosa County Schools into the community via cable television.
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify broader range of programs that could inform the public of the districts efforts, including, but not limited to features of specific academic activities, interviews with district staff, town meetings with parents and other constituents, and features on student academic, extracurricular, and co-curricular accomplishments.
	Step 2: Identify public service partnerships to facilitate broadcast efforts.
	Step 3: Work with the local cable utilities to implement broadcast plans
Who is Responsible	Superintendent or designee
Time Frame	December 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing recourses, assuming the development of a public service partnership with the local cable station.

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

Action Plan 15-6

Develop a Homework Hotline Network	
Strategy	Homework Hotlines could be instituted to help teachers connect with parents in terms of their responsibility to help children learn.
Action Needed	Step 1: Investigate creating Homework Hotline opportunities at each school building site.
	Step 2: Consistent with other national models, implementation will involve developing business partnerships to underwrite the effort.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent or designee
Time Frame	August 2003
Fiscal Impact	Can be accomplished with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

Action Plan 15-7

Publish and Distribute a District-wide Newsletter for All Stakeholders	
Strategy	A regular monthly or quarterly district newsletter could be sent to all stakeholders, as well as published on the Santa Rosa Schools' website.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine the means of distribution, and frequency needed for a district-wide newsletter publication.
	Step 2: Identify business sponsors for in-kind contributions and advertising so that the costs associated with graphic design, production and distribution are budget neutral.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent or designee
Time Frame	December 2002
Fiscal Impact	This can be completed with existing resources.

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

5   **The district has no community involvement staff.**

The district has no full time dedicated community involvement staff, so that assessing the organizational structure, lines of authority, and other aspects of staff management are not applicable to this district.

Recommendations ———————————————

- *None*

Parents and Decisions

6   **There are active parent organizations in each school in the district.**

A review of PTA/PTO agendas, [11] individual school newsletters, [12] and bulletin boards in school buildings indicates a high degree of parent and citizen participation in the school district. Parent support organizations in each school meet at least four times per year. In some cases school PTA/PTO organizations meet up to 10 times per year. School advisory councils meet at least six times each year. The Santa Rosa County School District website also offers a complete section on opportunities for parent and community involvement. [13] The school system documented 143,018 hours of volunteerism for the "2001 Golden School Awards." [14]

The increase in PTA membership throughout the district is a direct result of recruitment as well as an indirect result of activities that recognize and appreciate volunteer service. [15] In addition to activities recognizing parent involvement at the school level, the district holds an annual volunteer appreciation luncheon each February.

Recommendations ———————————————

- *None*

---

[11] Examples from Berryhill Elementary, Dixon Middle, Oriole Beach Elementary, Rhodes Elementary (data available in every school): Invitations to and parent attendance at orientations, open houses, workshops; PTA membership lists; PTA meeting agendas.

[12] Samples of school/principal newsletters: 2000-01 and 2001-02: Avalon Middle, Bagdad Elementary, Dixon Middle, Hobbs Middle, Pace High, Rhodes Elementary, Woodlawn Beach Middle.

[13] www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/elem/t1parent.htm, parental involvement overview.

[14] Florida Department of Education Golden School Award Criteria; "2001 Golden School Awards" volunteer hours by school 2000-01 and 2001-02; Memo on Growth of Volunteerism.

[15] Examples: volunteer appreciation activities; invitations; responses.

7

Through each school, the district encourages families to be involved in the schools, quantifies family involvement, and uses data from an annual school climate survey to design activities to improve educational services, fix problems, and meet more families' needs.

A review of PTA/PTO agendas, [16] individual school websites, individual school newsletters, [17] and bulletin boards in school buildings indicates a high degree of parent and citizen participation in the school district. The annual Take Our Parents to School Week is one example of effective active parent engagement. [18]

Santa Rosa school libraries have a section devoted to parent and community education. [19] Flexibility in before and after school hours maximizes parent and community access to resources. The annual school climate survey also provides data to improve health and safety services at each building site.

As previously documented in Chapter 3, Management Structures, the school board has a published and fully implemented system for all constituents to express their views during school board meetings. This process, known as the Public Forum, was used five times during the 2001-02 school year. [20] Site-based managers at the schools involve parents heavily in classroom activities and seek out parents with specialized skills to assist in the teaching and learning process.

Approved Volunteers
Approved volunteers must sign in when they arrive, wear identification tags while in the facility, and sign out before leaving. Approved volunteers may accompany students on field trips for supervisory purposes. They may also supervise students on the playground and in the cafeteria, as long as there is also a teacher present. Volunteers are always under the supervision of a teacher. The Santa Rosa County School District "Volunteer Handbook" [21] is distributed to each approved volunteer. Information about volunteer opportunities and acceptance as a district volunteer are published on the school district website.

Santa Rosa recruits senior citizens and military personnel at the school level. The effectiveness of the recruitment is measured by the activities of the volunteer and the number of hours volunteered each week. In addition, teachers complete an effectiveness survey for most volunteers.

The school system documented 143,018 hours of volunteerism for the "2001 Golden School Awards". [22] For over 19 years, one or more Santa Rosa schools have been named a State of Florida Golden School. Exhibit 15-7 shows the number of volunteers per year and the total hours volunteered per year for each school and operational unit in Santa Rosa County School District for the past three years. Santa Rosa School District volunteerism increased 7.8% from 1999-00 to the 2000-01 school year. Numbers presented for the current 2001-02 school year represent volunteerism through February 2002, and should not be interpreted as final figures for that school year.

---

[16] Examples from Berryhill Elementary, Dixon Middle, Oriole Beach Elementary, Rhodes Elementary (data available in every school): Invitations to and parent attendance at orientations, open houses, workshops; PTA membership lists; PTA meeting agendas.

[17] Samples of school/principal newsletters: 2000-01 and 2001-02: Avalon Middle, Bagdad Elementary, Dixon Middle, Hobbs Middle, Pace High, Rhodes Elementary, Woodlawn Beach Middle.

[18] Florida Department of Education, Office of Family Involvement, district survey for Take Our Parents to School Week, 2,717 parents involved, 12/4/01.

[19] Example: Questions Parents Ask About Schools, Florida Department of Education, Prepared by the US Department of Education and GTE Foundation.

[20] Examples from approved school board minutes, use of public forum portion of school board meetings, 2000-01.

[21] SRCSD Volunteer Services, prepared by the district coordinator of volunteers, 2001-02.

[22] Florida Department of Education Golden School Award Criteria; "2001 Golden School Awards" volunteer hours by school 2000-01 and 2001-02; memo on growth of volunteerism.

Exhibit 15-7

Santa Rosa Volunteers and Total Volunteer Hours by School Building and Operational Unit, FY 1999, FY2001, FY2002 (to February 2002)

School	FY02 Hours*	FY02 Volunteers*	FY01 Hours	FY01 Volunteers	FY99 Hours	FY99 Volunteers
Bagdad EL	3138	156	4075	73	4060	62
Berryhill EL	8347	595	10,840	560	8193	387
Chumuckla EL	129	81	167	25	940	100
Dixon PR	6209	442	8063	465	13,282	507
Dixon INT	8193	330	10,640	295	13,312	345
East Milton EL			5982	163	4378	183
Gulf Breeze EL	8298	532	10,777	544	9100	453
Holley-Navarre PR	6104	407	7927	493	8690	505
Holley-Navarre INT	6449	613	8375	650	8583	586
Jackson Pre-K	3755	181	4876	344		
Jay EL	5159	108	6700	160	5000	160
Munson EL	953	34	1238	29	2872	86
Rhodes EL	8650	110	11,234	96	8480	106
West Navarre EL	7501	517	9742	455	9181	630
Oriole Beach EL	10,909	554	14,168	349	16,860	557
Pea Ridge EL	2499	360	3246	218	3932	126
Avalon MS	2310	152	3000	200	2730	145
Gulf Breeze MS	2198	146	2855	150	4874	275
Hobbs MS			1450	300	1292	68
Holley-Navarre MS	2310	121	3000	213	2292	125
King MS	1247	25	1619	81		
Sims MS	3927	361	5100	320	4598	115
Woodlawn MS	1100	101	1428	89		
Gulf Breeze HS		52				
Navarre HS	3619	96	4077	129		
Pace HS		4				
Milton HS		12				
Adult	1524	10	1983	11		
Totals	2/22/02 to date	2/22/02 to date	143,018	6402	132,649	5521

EL=elementary PR=primary INT=intermediate MS=middle school HS=high school.

Source: Santa Rosa County School District Volunteer Coordinator and Superintendent's Secretary, February 2002.

Board-Adopted Open Enrollment

Santa Rosa does not have a board-adopted open enrollment plan. The district does have a liberal reassignment policy that allows parents to transport their children to another school if classroom space is available, and both the losing and the receiving principal approval the transfer.

Recommendations

- *None*

Community Involvement

8 **The schools use community resources to strengthen schools, families, and student learning and offer school resources to strengthen partnerships with the community. There appears to be no similar district-wide initiative.**

In addition to efforts to connect to and solicit support from the community through print communications and information on school district websites, Santa Rosa County Schools open their doors before and after school hours to community agencies and organizations for their specific meetings and activities. [23]

The district partners with other community agencies and organizations to offer second mile program. [24] One outstanding and very successful example is the self-supporting Santa Rosa Community School, [25] now firmly established in every Santa Rosa school. Created by an act of the Florida legislature in 1970, Santa Rosa's Community School opened later in 1970 at Gulf Breeze High School, expanded to Milton High School in 1971, to Pace and Jay High Schools in 1974, and all other schools in 1983. Since 1985, the program has been under the leadership of one administrator. The program is one of the only Community School programs in the state, not only to be completely self-supporting but also contributing; generating revenue for Santa Rosa County School District (Exhibit 15-8). [26]

Exhibit 15-8

Community School Program contributions to the District FY 2000-01

School	Dollars contributed
Individual schools:	$ 41,861.00
Extended school year summer camp:	57,667.00
District:	300,000.00
Total contribution:	$399,528.00

Source: Santa Rosa County School District.

In the past 10 years, the mission of the program has changed from a primarily recreation/leisure program to one that encompasses services, childcare, and support for the Pre-K program.

Donations from the community are accepted and gratefully acknowledged at every school board meeting (please see Chapter 3, Management Structures, Section 3, for suggested policy language on gifts and donations). [27]

The superintendent and school board members solicit feedback from parents, families, and community members during regular school board meetings and publish their telephone numbers and e-mail contact information throughout the school district.

---

[23] Examples of use of Santa Rosa buildings by community-based agencies and organizations.

[24] Examples of SRCSD Second-Mile Programs: after school child care; summer camp.

[25] History of Santa Rosa Community Schools.

[26] History of Santa Rosa Community Schools.

[27] Example: approved school board minutes 9/27/01, acceptance by school board of donations.

Community Involvement

District-level activity including school board meetings, however, is centered at the administrative office location in Milton. Services are typically offered only at school building locations. The district should consider holding school board meetings at sites around the district in strategic geographic locations (see Recommendation 3-4, Chapter 3, Management Structures). Services typically offered only at school locations could be replicated at other key locations around Santa Rosa.

Recommendations

- *The district should explore ways to offer services at locations other than school sites (see Action Plan 15-8).*

Action Plan 15-8

Offer Services at Locations Other Than School Sites		
Strategy	Spread school district services around the school district at locations other than school sites.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Investigate alternate and additional school district service locations to match stakeholder needs.
	Step 2:	Develop and implement a schedule for services to be provided at school sites throughout the district.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent	
Time Frame	December 2002	
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

9 **In addition to a growing list of school business partners linked to the district and to individual schools, the Santa Rosa Educational Foundation solicits funding for the district, the CEO Roundtable brings special funding to stem youth violence and secure the district in the event of a disastrous occurrence. This is an exemplary model of school-agency partnerships in an area with limited corporate headquarters**

Santa Rosa County School District has a total of 371 business partners for the 2001-02 school year (Exhibit 15-9). Each business partner designates an employee for direct contact with the partnering school, to participate in school-wide planning, and to translate school needs into funding and/or material support. [28]

---

[28] Examples: List of district-wide and individual school building business partners 2001-02 (data available for every school); registered mentors; business partner donations.

Exhibit 15-9

Santa Rosa Business Partners, 2001-02, by Individual School Building

School	# Partners	School	# Partners
Elementaries		**Middle Schools**	
Bagdad	16	Avalon	1
Berryhill	9	Gulf Breeze	15
Chumuckla	2	Hobbs	3
East Milton	14	Holley-Navarre	8
Gulf Breeze	12	King	10
Holley-Navarre INT	16	Woodlawn Beach	3
Holley-Navarre PR	16		
Jay	18	**High Schools**	
Munson	6	Central	2
Pea Ridge	17	Milton	133
Dixon INT	5		
Dixon PR	21		
Oriole Beach	24	**Total**	**371**

Source: Superintendent's secretary, February 2002.

10 Santa Rosa County Educational Foundation collaborates with district staff.

The Santa Rosa County Educational Foundation has had as few as 5 and as many as 24 directors, each of whom serves for a three-year term. In addition, the Santa Rosa County Teacher of the Year serves as a member during his/her tenure. The immediate past chair of the foundation serves as a foundation advisor. Officers are elected for two-year terms. Although a statement of purpose or mission statement is not included in the by-laws of the Educational Foundation, the foundation exists to raise funds for Santa Rosa County School District. [29]

At the district level, the foundation in partnership with the superintendent has initiated "The Superintendent's Circle," [30] an invitation to all individuals, organizations and businesses in the Santa Rosa County School District to join the district's communication network.

The CEO Roundtable [31] is a unique primary partnership with the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Department to stem youth violence with linkages to fire, emergency, and community emergency response agencies to secure the schools and the community in the event of disastrous occurrences, an area with limited corporate headquarters. Primary funding for the CEO Roundtable comes from the Florida Department of Education in the form of annual continuation grants (Exhibit 15-10):

---

[29] By-Laws of Santa Rosa Educational Foundation

[30] "The Superintendent's Circle," Santa Rosa Educational Foundation "New Directions With Business Partnerships," SRCSD Educational Foundation Mission Statement and By-Laws

[31] CEO Roundtable Budget, Accomplishments, Mission Statement, 2002 Continuation Plan

Exhibit 15-10

CEO Roundtable Budget and Funding Sources

Year	Grant Description	Grant Award	Grant Funder
1997-98	Shared Services Network Grant	$40,000	Florida Department of Education
1998-99	Shared Services Network Grant	$40,000	Florida Department of Education
1999-2000	Shared Services Network Grant; Safe and Drug-Free Schools Enhancement Grant	$40,000 $21,587	Florida Department of Education
2000-2001	Safe and Drug-Free Schools Enhancement Grant	$13,267	Florida Department of Education
2001-2002	Safe and Drug-Free Schools Enhancement Grant	(application in review)	
Other Contributors	Holley-Navarre Middle School PTA Fraternal Order of Police 4-H County Extension Office Santa Rosa Sheriff's Office Communities in Schools	$9,109.40	

Source: CEO Co-Chairs: Santa Rosa superintendent; Santa Rosa Sheriff's Department.

Mentors and grant efforts further enhance district operations.

Mentors in each school are assigned based on student need as assessed in the annual school climate survey. Each school has a designated mentor coordinator to link mentors and students and to monitor results. Mentors must be approved and registered and a complete list is available through the superintendent's office.

Although Santa Rosa County School District does not have a dedicated grants administrator, individual administrators and teachers on assignment seek project grants. For the fiscal year through December 5, 2001, $8,018,615 had been projected and budgeted in federal funding through state projects and grants and $6,566,995 had been collected. Likewise, $2,069,250 had been projected and budgeted in direct federal grants while $927,487 had been collected. Similarly $1,661,790, including school recognition grants, had been projected, budgeted and collected from other state revenue sources. [32] A professional development center has been developed through which teachers on special assignment can pursue grants for the district. Over the last decade grant categorical funding has increased more than two fold from $13,235,786 in Fiscal Year 1991-92 to $27,576,639 in Fiscal Year 2001-02. [33]

Although no evidence exists of a regular business partner satisfaction survey, school business partners are recognized both at the school level and at the district level. Recognition is personalized at the school level. At the district level, each business partner is invited to the annual appreciation luncheon and presented with a gift.

---

[32] Santa Rosa County School District revenue ledger scan, 12/5/01, projects & grants: federal direct; federal through the state; general fund - other state revenue.

[33] Analysis of grant/categorical funding, SRCSD, FY92 through FY02, 2/7/02.

SchoolMatch Consultants

Santa Rosa graduating seniors earn a large number and great dollar value worth of scholarships each year. [34] In 2000-01, Santa Rosa seniors earned approximately $40,000 more in scholarships than in the 1999-00 school year; an increase of approximately 0.4% (Exhibit 15-11).

Exhibit 15-11

2000-2001 Santa Rosa Student Scholarship Awards by Building/Program

High School	Number Scholarships	Number Students Receiving Scholarships	Number Students Receiving Bright Futures	Dollar Amount of Bright Futures	Total Dollar Amount of all Scholarships
Central	43	22	14	$ 92,400	$ 227,000
Gulf Breeze	265	168	156	1,283,920	3,000,000
Jay	36	25	22	174,568	263,300
Milton	166	134	108	1,376,000	1,624,250
Navarre	122	76	71	555,400	1,638,240
Pace	171	143	135	1,111,050	2,611,050
Santa Rosa Adult	3	3	1	7,288	9.788
Grand Total	**806**	**571**	**507**	**$4,600,626**	**$9,373,628**

Source: Santa Rosa County assistant superintendent for finances, October 2001, and www.firn.edu/brightfutures/bffacts.htm.

Recommendations ───────────────

- *Develop an annual school-business partner satisfaction survey (see Action Plan 15-9).*

- *Add a mission statement or statements of purpose to the By-Laws of the Santa Rosa Educational Foundation (see Action Plan 15-10).*

Action Plan 15-9

Develop an Annual School-Business Partner Satisfaction Survey	
Strategy	The district should examine mechanisms for gathering feedback from school-business partners via an annual satisfaction survey.
Action Needed	Step 1: Santa Rosa County School leadership should investigate all the most effective means of communicating with school-business partners, including development of an annual satisfaction survey for business partners and potential partners, similar to the school climate survey.
	Step 2: The district should contract for the development, implementation, analysis and distribution of survey results.
	Step 3: Survey results should be used to improve the school-business partner program and bring additional school-business relationships into the district.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent, school board, strategic planning committee
Time Frame	December 2002
Fiscal Impact	An investment of $12,000 per year, for a five-year cost of $60,000.

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

---

[34] SRCSD 1999-00 and 2000-01 breakdown of scholarship awards to graduating seniors

Action Plan 15-10

Add a Mission Statement or Statements of Purpose to the By-Laws of the Santa Rosa Educational Foundation		
Strategy	Render the By-Laws of the Educational Foundation whole with the addition of a mission statement and/or statements of purpose.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Draft a mission statement for the Educational Foundation.
	Step 2:	Submit the mission statement (and/or statements of purpose) to the membership of the Educational Foundation for ratification.
Who is Responsible	Board of Directors, Educational Foundation	
Time Frame	December 2002	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.	

Source: SchoolMatch consultants.

The district's commitment to involve volunteers is founded in the Strategic Improvement Plan 2001-2006.

Approved volunteers must sign in when they arrive, wear identification tags while in the facility, and sign out before leaving. Approved volunteers may accompany students on field trips for supervisory purposes. They may also supervise students on the playground and in the cafeteria, as long as there is also a teacher present. Volunteers are always under the supervision of a teacher. The Santa Rosa County School District "Volunteer Handbook" [35] is distributed to each approved volunteer. Information about volunteer opportunities and acceptance as a district volunteer are published on the school district website.

Santa Rosa recruits senior citizens and military personnel at the school level. The effectiveness of the recruitment is measured by the activities of the volunteer and the number of hours volunteered each week. In addition, teachers complete an effectiveness survey for most volunteers.

The school system documented 143,018 hours of volunteerism for the "2001 Golden School Awards". [36] One or more Santa Rosa schools has achieved the criteria to be named a State of Florida Golden School for more than 19 years. Numbers of volunteers and total hours of volunteerism in Santa Rosa County Schools over the past three years can be found in Exhibit 15-7.

For additional discussion on volunteers, please see the discussions on involvement of volunteers in best practice sections 2, 3, 6, and 7 of this chapter.

Recommendations

- *None*

---

[35] SRCSD volunteer services, prepared by the district coordinator of volunteers, 2001-02.

[36] Florida Department of Education Golden School Award Criteria; "2001 Golden School Awards" volunteer hours by school 2000-01 and 2001-02; memo on growth of volunteerism.

11 Santa Rosa County School District and individual schools solicit economic support through the district's educational foundation.

The district's only foundation is the Santa Rosa Educational Foundation, dedicated to generating additional revenues for the schools.

District and school based business partnerships bring time, talent and resources to Santa Rosa schools and students. [37] Time and material resources donated through efforts of the school district educational foundation are reported in annual School Improvement Parent Reports.

Needs are communicated to the foundation through the results of the annual school climate survey. Membership on the educational foundation also includes school district personnel.

Santa Rosa County School District graduating seniors were awarded more than $9,334,000 at the end of the 1999-00 school year in scholarships and more than $9,373,000 at the end of the 2000-01 school year in scholarships, a number of which were provided by Santa Rosa County individuals, organizations, and businesses. [38]

Recommendations

- *None*

---

[37] Examples: List of district-wide and individual school building business partners 2001-02 (data available for every school); registered mentors; business partner donations.

[38] Santa Rosa District Schools 1999-00 scholarship awards and 2000-01 scholarship awards.

A Survey of Perceptions: Instrument and Findings

The Florida Legislature

OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

John W. Turcotte, Director

School Match, Inc. has been retained by the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to perform a Best Financial Management Practices Review of the Santa Rosa County School District. The purpose of this independent review is to assist the district in improving its management and its resources and to identify cost savings.

We appreciate your taking time to complete the attached survey and contribute your views to this process. The survey results will be analyzed by SchoolMatch to indicate perceives strengths in district operations as well as areas for possible improvement.

If you have additional input you would like to provide to assist in the review, you may call the toll-free Community Input Hotline at 1-800-877-3470 to leave recorded comments, of you mail e-mail SchoolMatch directly at audit@schoolmatch.com.

Thank you for your assistance in improving Santa Rosa Schools!

John W. Rogers

Superintendent of ScHools
5086 Canal Street
Milton, Florida 32570-6706
Phone: 850/983-5012

Suncom: 689-5012
Facsimile: 850/983-5013
E-mail: rogersj@mail.santarosa.k12.fl.us

School
Match

Santa Rosa County Schools
Survey of Perceptions

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
LEADERSHIP				
1. The new administrative team possesses the knowledge and skills needed to properly manage the resources of the district.	1	2	3	4
2. The new administrative team is doing a good job of the district's current communicating communicating financial condition.	1	2	3	4
3. The district is cUlTently spending its money wisely.	1	2	3	4
4. District officials should put a new referendum for additional funds on the ballot.	1	2	3	4
5. Today's school district officials can be trusted to make prudent decisions about effectively deploying the school system's fmancial resources	1	2	3	4
6. The new administration has been open with the community about financial priorities.	1	2	3	4
EMPHASIS ON LEARNING				
7. The school district has developed a plan to meet the future educational needs of students.	1	2	3	4
8. The district has adequate resources to provide a quality educational program.	1	2	3	4
9. The district has directed the appropriate proportion of resources to the classroom.	1	2	3	4
10. Larger class sizes at all grade levels exist because of the need to reduce expenditures.	1	2	3	4
11. There is a need to reduce class sizes (fewer pupils per teacher) throughout the school district.	1	2	3	4

DISTRICT 1	DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 3	DISTRICT 4	DISTRICT 5
Kenneth E. Smith	Hugh Winkles	Carol M. McDaniel	JoAnn Simpson	J.M. "Jim" Rigby

12. Instructional programs are given the highest priority in the allocation of resources.	1	2	3	4
13. The district needs additional funding in order to provide and perpetuate a quality educational program.	1	2	3	4
14. The school system financially supports activities that help teachers improve their skills.	1	2	3	4

SCHOOL CLIMATE

15. The district needs to modernize its school buildings.	1	2	3	4
16. The school district central offices are housed in an appropriate facility.	1	2	3	4
17. School employees are adequately paid.	1	2	3	4
18. School district spending in the area of vocational and career education is appropriate.	1	2	3	4
19. Program funding priorities recognize the needs of non-college bound students.	1	2	3	4

MONITORING

20. There is clear planning and organization in the school district.	1	2	3	4
21. Data on student learning are regularly collected and received with all community members.	1	2	3	4
22. The district has efficiently managed the resources available to it.	1	2	3	4
23. School officials have made budget cuts to try to limit expenditures.	1	2	3	4
24. Fringe benefits such as health insurance and retirement contributions of school district employees are at an appropriate level.	1	2	3	4

EXPECTATIONS

25. The Santa Rosa County Public School District should strive to be among the best school systcms in the State of Florida.	1	2	3	4
26. Improved funding is necessary in order to improve student performance.	1	2	3	4
27. If Santa Rosa County Public Schools need more money, I would personally be willing to pay higher taxes.	1	2	3	4

SchoolMatch Consultants

Table A-1

Santa Rosa County Schools Survey of Perceptions

LEADERSHIP	Average	Chapter(s)
1. The new administrative team possesses the knowledge and skills needed to properly manage the resources of the district.	1.504	Management Structures
2. The new administrative team is doing a good job of communicating the district's current financial condition.	1.642	Cost Control Systems, Management Structures
3. The district is currently spending its money wisely.	1.741	Cost Control Systems, Management Structures
4. District officials should put a new referendum for additional funds on the ballot.	1.805	Community Involvement, Costs Control Systems
5. Today's school district officials can be trusted to make prudent decisions about effectively deploying the school system's financial resources.	1.649	Management Structures
6. The new administration has been open with the community about financial priorities.	1.699	Management Structures, Community Involvement
EMPHASIS ON LEARNING		
7. The school district has developed a plan to meet the future educational needs of students.	1.717	Educational Service Delivery
8. The district has adequate resources to provide a quality educational program.	1.987	Educational Service Delivery
9. The district has directed the appropriate proportion of resources to the classroom.	1.939	Educational Service Delivery, Management Structures
10. Larger class sizes at all grade levels exist because of the need to reduce expenditures.	2.272	Educational Service Delivery
11. There is a need to reduce class sizes (fewer pupils per teacher) throughout the school district.	1.516	Educational Service Delivery
12. Instructional programs are given the highest priority in the allocation of resources.	1.900	Educational Service Delivery, Management Structures
13. The district needs additional funding in order to provide and perpetuate a quality educational program.	1.546	Educational Service Delivery, Cost Control Systems, Community Involvement, Management Structures
14. The school system financially supports activities that help teachers improve their skills.	1.841	Educational Service Delivery, Personnel Systems and Benefits
SCHOOL CLIMATE		
15. The district needs to modernize its school buildings.	2.231	Facilities Construction, Facilities Maintenance, Use of State and District Construction Funds
16. The school district central offices are housed in an appropriate facility.	1.900	Management Structures, Facilities Construction, Facilities Maintenance
17. School employees are adequately paid.	2.875	Personnel Systems and Benefits
18. School district spending in the area of vocational and career education is appropriate.	2.171	Educational Service Delivery
19. Program funding priorities recognize the needs of non-college bound students.	2.209	Educational Service Delivery

MONITORING		
20. There is clear planning and organization in the school district.	1.738	Management Structures, Educational Service Delivery, Performance Accountability
21. Data on student learning are regularly collected and reviewed with all community members.	1.904	Educational Service Delivery, Administrative and Instructional Technology, Community Involvement, Performance Accountability
22. The district has efficiently managed the resources available to it.	1.782	Cost Control Systems
23. School officials have made budget cuts to try to limit expenditures.	1.865	Cost Control Systems
24. Fringe benefits such as health insurance and retirement contributions of school district employees are at an appropriate level.	2.213	Personnel Systems and Benefits
EXPECTATIONS		
25. The Santa Rosa County Public School District should strive to be among the best school systems in the State of Florida.	1.118	Educational Service Delivery, Management Structures
26. Improved funding is necessary in order to improve student performance.	1.563	Management Structures
27. If Santa Rosa County Public Schools need more money, I would personally be willing to pay higher taxes.	1.742	Community Involvement

B Action Plans

Management Structures

Action Plan 3-5

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Complete Review and Updating of the School Board Policy Manual</td></tr>
<tr><td>Strategy</td><td>The school board of Santa Rosa County School District should review and update its "Administrative Policies, Rules and Regulations."</td></tr>
<tr><td>Action Needed</td><td>Step 1: Describe the scope of the project to include categories of policy to be addressed, compliance with Florida statutes, and complete separation of board policy from administrative rules, regulations and procedures.
Step 2: Establish a timeline with milestone dates to ensure timely completion of the project.
Step 3: Assess the clerical and technical assistance available in the district to manage the "paper trail."</td></tr>
<tr><td>Who is Responsible</td><td>School board, superintendent</td></tr>
<tr><td>Time Frame</td><td>August 2003</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fiscal Impact</td><td>To assist in updating the administrative policies and procedures, temporary clerical and/or technical staff to manage the production of documents for superintendent and board review and codification and filing of documents once board approval is accomplished is likely. An annual investment of $30,000 is a one-time cost. So five-year recurring amount remains at $30,000.</td></tr>
</table>

Action Plan 3-6

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Adopt a School Policy to Keep the School Board Policy Manual Current</td></tr>
<tr><td>Strategy</td><td>The school board of Santa Rosa County School District should adopt a policy for regular review and updating of the board policy manual.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Action Needed</td><td>Step 1: Present a draft policy for board review, discussion, and consideration for adoption.
Step 2: Modify the policy, as needed.
Step 3: Adopt the policy.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Who is Responsible</td><td>School board, superintendent</td></tr>
<tr><td>Time Frame</td><td>December 31, 2002</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fiscal Impact</td><td>Can be accomplished with existing resources.</td></tr>
</table>

Action Plan 3-7

Widely Distribute School Board Policy Manual	
Strategy	Once the review is completed, the resulting school board policy manual document needs to be made accessible to patrons, citizens, and others through an easy-to-use read-only application on the school district website.
Action Needed	Step 1: Assign the responsibility for placing a read-only copy of the school board policy manual on the school district website.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent.
Time Frame	To commence as the board policy review and updating project commences and culminating in August 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 3-11

Modify the Administrative Organization to Achieve Balance in Span of Control	
Strategy	Reorganize spans of control of assistant superintendents.
Action Needed	Step 1: Modify the organization so that the director of in-service director f risk management report to the assistant superintendent for human resources rather that to the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, thus reducing the extraordinarily large span of the latter and bring in into alignment the small span of the former.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent, school board
Time Frame	December 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Performance Accountability Systems

Action Plan 4-1

Increase Level of Accountability in the Performance Accountability System	
Strategy	Establish a team to study existing contracts and establish district specific goals and objectives for the various operational areas; develop planning documents in areas not under contract
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish an office of primary responsibility (OPR) for contract review and subsequent development of recommendations Step 2: Appoint a team to review contracts and formulate recommendations as required. Step 3: Present recommendations to the superintendent and school board for approval Step 4: Amend contracts as necessary; develop planning documents where necessary Step 5: Periodically report findings and suggestions for improvement.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, school board
Time Frame	Establish OPR and team by December 2002 Report to superintendent by July1, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources and could ultimately result in cost savings.

Action Plan 4-2

Develop a Formal Mechanism for Comparing with Peer Districts the Levels of Service Provided and the Cost Effectiveness of Various Operational Contracts	
Strategy	Appoint a multidisciplinary team to develop a plan to compare the levels of service in the various operational areas with those enjoyed in peer districts, private industry, state or federal agencies, as applicable.
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify an office of primary responsibility (OPR) for the project and appoint a team
	Step 2: Survey peer districts private industry, state or federal agencies, as applicable to gather information regarding service levels and costs
	Step 3: Review the information from the peer districts private industry, state or federal agencies, as applicable compared to the current levels of service and costs in Santa Rosa.
	Step 4: Develop recommendation as dictated by the data
	Step 5: Establish action steps to accomplish recommendations, including a review cycle to assess the degree to which recommendations have been accomplished
	Step 6: Present findings and plan to the superintendent and School Board for approval
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and/or designee
Time Frame	Plan presented to School Board by March 2003
Fiscal Impact	None for planning aspect; potential cost savings resulting from studies.

Action Plan 4-3

Develop a Protocol to Evaluate the Impact of Non-Technology Instructional Resources on Student Achievement	
Strategy	Review each existing contract and develop cost effectiveness and benchmarking measures for each. Include the same in the district strategic plan.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine the areas where contracting is employed and designate a lead person from the district and from the vendor to each of the areas.
	Step 2: Augment this committee as needed with additional school district personnel and/or community members
	Step 3: Gather information regarding peer district, state federal or industry standards and benchmarks in the various areas.
	Step 4: Develop objectives and associated strategies for incorporating cost effectives measures and benchmarking into each contractual area.
	Step 5: Revise the district strategic plan to incorporate these additional objectives.
	Step 6: Gather data required to establish the cost effectiveness of each area.
	Step 7: Report the cost effectiveness data as part of the annual report on the strategic plan. Make associated program/contract adjustments as dictated by the data.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and/or designee
Time Frame	Planning in the 2001-02 school year Implementation in the 2002-03 school year.
Fiscal Impact	Expected to be able to complete with existing resources

Action Plan 4-4

Develop a Plan to Disseminate Accountability Information	
Strategy	Develop performance data and risk assessment techniques to target areas in need of evaluation and conduct formal evaluations of the targeted areas.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop performance measures and risk assessment techniques to identify programs and strategies most in need of formal evaluation.

	Step 2: Establish a schedule of the evaluations to be conducted over the next fiscal year.
	Step 3: Contact schools of higher education for assistance in developing protocols for programs evaluation and explore the potential use of graduate student and/or faculty in the implementation of the evaluations.
	Step 4: Incorporate the results of existing evaluation studies into current evaluations.
	Step 5: Incorporate the evaluation process, including reporting results to the public, into the district strategic plan.
	Step 6: Present evaluation results to the Board and Superintendent for use in improving performance.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and/or designee
Time Frame	Planning in the 2001-2002 school year Implementation in the 2002-03 school year.
Fiscal Impact	Assuming that schools of higher education provide in-kind services, an be completed with existing resources.

Action Plan 4-5

Develop a Plan to Disseminate Accountability Information	
Strategy	Develop a dissemination plan for conveying disaggregated student academic performance data and data concerning the performance of operational programs to the public.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine cost-effective, meaningful avenues for dissemination; explore the use of existing mechanisms to reduce any associated costs.
	Step 2: Incorporate the dissemination plans into the package presented to the Superintendent and Board.
	Step 3: Adopt the disseminations that are most cost effective.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and/or designee
Time Frame	Planning in the 2001-02 school year Implementation in the 2002-03 school year.
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources

Educational Service Delivery

Action Plan 5-3

Collaborate with the Regional Workforce Development Board to provide educational programs that will attract businesses to the area and will provide improved wages for program completers	
Strategy	Strengthen coordination between the Santa Rosa County School District, ESCAROSA Regional Workforce Development Board, the Board's High Skills/High Wages Committee, and local secondary and postsecondary educational providers.
	• Provide training sites and equipment to businesses for training purposes and structure class times to suit those needed by students and businesses.
	• Work jointly to increase enrollment by marketing vocational, technical, and community education programs to the public, targeting high school students and business/industry in the region.

Action Needed	Step 1:	The Office of Applied Technology, Adult and Community Education will select personnel to develop the above strategies for improving program offerings and for increasing program enrollment.
	Step 2:	The Director of the Office of Applied Technology, Adult and Community Education will prepare a school board agenda item for approval of each strategy.
	Step 3:	The Office of Applied Technology, Adult and Community Education will supervise and ensure implementation of the strategies by coordinating with local businesses and by increasing awareness among potential students.
	Step 4:	The Office of Applied Technology, Adult and Community Education will monitor the strategies for their effectiveness.
Who is Responsible	Director of the Office of Applied Technology, Adult and Community Education	
Time Frame	Begin September 2002 and implement September 2003.	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.	

Action Plan 5-4

Further develop specific, measurable objectives that address student outcomes in the district strategic improvement plan and the individual school improvement plans		
Strategy	Review the objectives listed in the district strategic improvement plan and the individual school improvement plans to ensure that objectives are specific and measurable and that they incorporate student outcome data wherever appropriate.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Assign the responsibility for the review and revision of objectives to a senior member of the administrative staff that reports to the Superintendent. Delegation by this person to others is desirable; however, responsibility for completion should remain at the higher level.
	Step 1:	Analyze the goals and objectives as stated in the district strategic improvement plan and the school improvement plans to determine which objectives could be measured using student outcome data.
	Step 2:	Consult with the appropriate persons to revise the remaining district strategic improvement plan objectives and goals, making them more specific, measurable and outcome-based.
	Step 3:	Provide feedback and technical assistance, as needed, to individual schools to ensure that the individual school improvement plans include objectives that are specific, measurable, and outcome-based.
	Step 4:	Periodically review progress on objectives in the district strategic improvement plan and ensure that school districts are adequately measuring progress on their school improvement plans.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent	
Time Frame	April 30, 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.	

Action Plan 5-5

Implement and evaluate a new, more standardized system for managing textbook inventory and for recovering the costs of lost or damaged textbooks		
Strategy	Facilitate standardized record keeping and accounting practices at each of the district's schools and ensure that schools are recovering an increasing percentage of the costs associated with lost and damaged textbooks.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Provide each school with inventory tracking software, training, and technical support.
	Step 2:	Contact schools throughout the year to ensure that record keeping procedures are being followed accurately.

	Step 3: Collect and analyze data at the end of each of the first two semesters and evaluate each school in terms of the accuracy of the records as well as their success in recovering costs. Step 4: Provide feedback and technical assistance, as needed, to individual schools. Step 5: At the end of the school year, evaluate the effectiveness of the new record keeping system and determine whether or not a most sophisticated textbook inventory system is required.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent
Time Frame	Implement new system in August 2002 and evaluate in June 2003. If necessary, develop and implement a new textbook inventory system in August 2004.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources, unless the district determines that it needs to acquire a new textbook inventory system.

Personnel Systems and Benefits

Action Plan 7-2

Implement 360-degree Evaluation	
Strategy	Provide additional relevant input into employee evaluations.
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify the "customers" for each category of employee. Step 2: Survey the customers regarding the important performance criteria of the employee group. Step 3: Develop a survey or questionnaire to assess the desired performance criteria. Step 4: Administer the questionnaire to the customers. Step 5: Compile questionnaire results and provide feedback to employee. Step 6: Develop a training plan to address the identified needs.
Who is Responsible	Director of Staff Development
Time Frame	Fall 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources

Action Plan 7-3

Annual Analysis of Employee Evaluations	
Strategy	Annually analyze employee evaluations to determine performance issues that need to be addressed.
Action Needed	Step 1: Annually review the employee evaluations for areas of performance problems. Step 2: Categorize the types of issues. Step 3: Include those issues that occur frequently in the staff development plan for the following year.
Who is Responsible	Director of Staff Development
Time Frame	Fall 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources

Action Plan 7-5

Conduct an annual performance evaluation of the Human Resources Department.	
Strategy	Annually conduct an evaluation that measures the extent to which the district's goals for the department are met

Action Needed	Step 1:	Identify major district goals for the department and establish performance and cost efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks.
	Step 2:	Identify the appropriate benchmarks for the department using other successful districts as well as businesses
	Step 3:	Solicit feedback from department customers including district administrators, applicants, and students
	Step 4:	Review the cost of the Human Resources Department relative to other Florida school districts
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources	
Time Frame	Perform this review annually.	
Fiscal Impact	Estimated cost is $3,000 per year for clerical and other temporary help; however, the cost may be offset if the process identifies cost savings measures.	

Action Plan 7-6

Human Resources Department Staffing Review		
Strategy	Review the Human Resources Department staffing.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Review each staff member's assignments and responsibilities for congruence between written responsibilities and actual duties.
	Step 2:	Compare staffing with that of mean-matched districts in the state.
	Step 3:	Assess the skills and aptitudes of existing staff members.
	Step 4:	Determine if the current staff is being utilized most efficiently.
	Step 5:	Review the office's interaction and interdependence with other departments within the school district.
	Step 6:	Based on an analysis of the above, recommend appropriate changes to the superintendent and board of education.
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources	
Time Frame	Within one year of the new assistant superintendent taking office.	
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources.	

Action Plan 7-7

Periodic Review of the Human Resources services		
Strategy	Conduct a review of the Human Resources Department's services and practices	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Establish the review cycle.
	Step 2:	Develop the criteria to be reviewed (e.g., applicant tracking, staff development, etc.).
	Step 3:	Establish the comparison group (e.g., use the mean-matched school districts).
	Step 4:	Collect data from the comparables.
	Step 5:	Analyze data.
	Step 6:	Recommend changes, if warranted.
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources	
Time Frame	June 2003 and every five years thereafter	
Fiscal Impact	Can be completed with existing resources.	

Facilities Construction

Action Plan 10-1

Establish a Standing Facilities Committee	
Strategy	The Board needs to establish a permanent facilities advisory committee with set goals and objectives and in accordance with certain guidelines.
Action Needed	Step 1: Assistant superintendent for administration should develop criteria and procedures for the committee and present these to the superintendent. Step 2: Superintendent should present to the Board for approval. Step 3: District should solicit the appropriate membership categories to serve. Step 4: Superintendent should appoint permanent facilities advisory committee members. Step 5: Assistant superintendent for administration should coordinate committee activities.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services
Time Frame	Development of criteria – Summer, 2002 Board approval – Summer, 2002 Committee appointed and in operation – Summer, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-3

Develop Educational Specifications	
Strategy	Develop educational specifications, under the general guidance of the FAC, for each new building and major renovation, even if prototype designs are used
Action Needed	Step 1: Assign responsibility for educational specifications to the Facilities Advisory Committee project. Step 2: Appoint Ad Hoc members to the FAC as necessary to aid in the educational specification development process. Step 3: Develop project specific educational specifications to include: • Purpose of document • Rationale for the project • Number of students and staff to be housed • Description of the educational program to be housed including its philosophy • Description of the instructional methodologies to be implemented • Program groupings • Relationships among instructional areas • Spatial relationships of various activity areas • Support facilities required • Environmental variables • Utility requirements • Storage requirements • Display requirements • Furniture and equipment required • Proposed attendance area for school • Date of completion and opening • Community uses (have community representatives review and comment on this section)

Who is Responsible	Facilities Advisory Committee and the assistant superintendent of administrative services will coordinate the educational specification development for each project
Time Frame	Dependent upon timing of each project
Fiscal Impact	In-house instructional staff can be trained to aid in the development of educational specifications. This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 10-5

Comprehensive User Orientation Program

Strategy	Formalize and document a facility orientation program that is modified for each new school.
Action Needed	Step 1: Conduct a formal, documented orientation program and provide users a manual for new schools. The orientation program should be comprehensive and the district should be able to demonstrate that users have a better understanding of the building design and function. The architect, contractor, and/or educational administrator should share the responsibility for the orientation program.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services
Time Frame	Summer 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-6

Conducting Post-Occupancy Evaluations

Strategy	Conduct post-occupancy evaluations regularly.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop procedure to ensure that post occupancy evaluations regularly occur and include educational adequacy, function, safety, efficiency, and suggestions for future improvements. Step 2: The evaluation should include: • An analysis of the educational program improvements for consideration by future educational specification committees • An operational cost analysis • A comparison of the finished product with the educational and construction specifications • Recommendations for future changes
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and site administrators
Time Frame	All new facilities beginning with the 2002-03 year
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with current resources

Action Plan 10-7

Analyze maintenance and operations costs at recently completed facilities

Strategy	Develop a formal process of analyzing maintenance and operations costs on new and renovated facilities for the purpose of implementing cost saving measurers district-wide.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop a procedure to ensure that post-occupancy evaluations include an analysis of the maintenance and operations costs. Step 2: Compare these costs with other district facilities to identify unusual variances. Step 3: Determine the reason for variance and identify areas for improvement in future construction planning processes.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and maintenance supervisor
Time Frame	All new facilities beginning with the 2002-03 year in conjunction with the other post-occupancy evaluation activity recommended in action plan 10-30.

Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

Facilities Maintenance

Action Plan 11-2

Establish uniform district-wide maintenance standards	
Strategy	Develop maintenance standards for buildings and grounds. Standards should include at a minimum, roofs, gutters, windows, HVAC, lighting, ceilings, plumbing, interior and exterior painting, and electrical. Grounds should include paving, sidewalks, fencing, and playgrounds.
Action Needed	Step 1: Maintenance supervisor should develop maintenance standards for, at least, the identified areas. Step 2: These standards will be presented to the assistant superintendent for administrative services for his review and approval. Step 3: The final standards shall be presented to the Board for its approval. Step 4: Incorporate new technology that may be acquired through implementation of Action Plan 11-4 into the standards as appropriate.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and maintenance supervisor
Time Frame	Implement standards September 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-3

To develop Performance Standards	
Strategy	Develop performance standards for frequently repeated maintenance tasks. The standards should define the task and the number of hours necessary to complete the task.
Action Needed	Step 1: The maintenance supervisor, foreman, and crew leader will identify tasks that are appropriate for performance standards. Step 2: The supervisors will research existing applicable industry/military standards. Step 3: The supervisors will develop performance standards for commonly repeated tasks. Step 4: Explain the standards and make them available to staff. Step 5: Track the performance of staff measured against the standards for six months and adjust standards as needed. Step 6: Assistant superintendent for administrative services presents standards to Board for approval.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and supervisory personnel from maintenance department.
Time Frame	Prepare initial set of standards by January 2003. Complete six-month trial and revise standards by August 2003. Receive Board approval and implement in September 2003.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-4

Increase trade organization memberships and subscriptions to trade publications	
Strategy	The district should provide a budget item for membership in additional trade organizations and subscriptions to additional trade publications that provide current information and procedures.

Action Needed	Step 1:	The maintenance supervisor should study several trade organizations and publications to determine which would best meet the needs of the district.
	Step 2:	The assistant superintendent for administrative services should prepare a budget item for professional organization membership and subscriptions.
	Step 3:	The Board should consider the item during the budget process.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services	
Time Frame	Budget process for fiscal year 2004	
Fiscal Impact	Annual cost up to $2,500 with a five-year cost of $12,500	

Action Plan 11-5

Develop a maintenance department customer feedback program		
Strategy	The assistant superintendent for administrative services should set up a customer feedback program.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Assistant superintendent for administrative services should identify parents and staff to participate in program
	Step 2:	Instrument to record feedback should be developed.
	Step 3:	At least annually, parents and staff should record their perceptions on instrument and deliver to assistant superintendent for administrative services
	Step 4:	The assistant superintendent and maintenance supervisor should review and base improved delivery of services on information from the surveys.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services	
Time Frame	Conduct first survey during January 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be completed within existing resources.	

Action Plan 11-6

Develop and Track Maintenance Cost Performance Measures		
Strategy	Develop and track cost performance measures to inform management decision-making and improve the delivery of maintenance services.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	The assistant superintendent for administrative services and the maintenance supervisor should work together to develop a set of performance measures and benchmarks for the maintenance function. These measures could include: - Maintenance cost per square foot - Maintenance cost per student - Square feet of building space per FTE maintenance staff - Work order backlog per craft - Maintenance hours worked versus hours scheduled - Work order completion times - Utilities cost per square foot
	Step 2:	Track statistics and analyze trends.
	Step 3:	Use the data to reassign personnel, reallocate resources, and implement new procedures to improve the maintenance function.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services	
Time Frame	June 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources.	

Action Plan 11-9

The district should consider privatization of the maintenance function	
Strategy	Consider privatization of the maintenance function.
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify maintenance functions that could be privatized.
	Step 2: Identify criteria for use in determining whether to outsource functions.
	Step 3: Contact additional vendors besides Aramark to determine costs to privatize these functions.
	Step 4: Analyze costs to perform same services with in-house staff.
	Step 5: Compare in-house costs to outsourced costs.
	Step 6: Determine the feasibility of privatizing maintenance functions based on the results of the comparison.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and the maintenance supervisor
Time Frame	January 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources

Action Plan 11-11

Develop and implement a preventive maintenance program	
Strategy	Develop and implement a preventive maintenance (PM) program for mechanical and structural systems.
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify equipment and other components that will be included in a preventive maintenance program.
	Step 2: Review equipment documentation and other material to identify the type and frequency of preventive maintenance tasks.
	Step 3: Establish PM teams composed of staff from each trade such as electrical, plumbing, carpentry, mechanical.
	Step 4: Assign PM teams on a scheduled basis to the buildings for an established period of time to work on previously submitted work orders and assess what other needs may exist. Initially, until the backlog of work orders is pared down, the teams may stay in a high school for 5 days, a middle school for 3 days, and an elementary school for 2 days. Once the backlog of work orders is manageable the number of days at each type of facility may be able to be adjusted.
	Step 5: Prior knowledge of the work orders will allow the PM team to pull together required materials and equipment to respond to the work orders and reduce wasted time driving around for parts before any work can be accomplished.
	Step 6: School administrators will be informed at least two weeks before PM team visits so they can prepare work requests and submit them. Scheduled PM can occur during regular visits.
	Step 7: Implement the PM program.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and maintenance supervisor
Time Frame	Implement in the fall of 2003
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation will reduce the long-term costs of maintenance but it is not possible to project the dollar amount.

Action Plan 11-12

Determine if present staffing level can provide appropriate maintenance services	
Strategy	Review staffing levels, backlog of work orders, and determine if present staffing level can meet district needs.

Action Needed	Step 1:	Gather data from peer districts, review various staffing formulas from schools, industry, and the state as well as deferred maintenance levels, and other organizational structures for comparison purposes.
	Step 2:	Determine how district's approach compares to benchmark districts and whether productive changes can be made.
	Step 3:	Determine if an alternative service delivery methodology should be implemented.
	Step 4:	Present findings to Superintendent and Board for further direction.
	Step 5:	Determine a course of action.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services	
Time Frame	Gather data and review by end of 2002	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources.	

Action Plan 11-14

The district should develop a training program for maintenance staff		
Strategy	Design and implement a formal training program for the maintenance staff.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Identify and prioritize training needs for maintenance staff, including job skills, job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.
	Step 2:	Establish minimum requirements for maintenance training.
	Step 3:	Develop a three-year training program for maintenance staff.
Who is Responsible	Maintenance supervisor in conjunction with a staff development representative.	
Time Frame	Design June-December 2002 for implementation in 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.	

Action Plan 11-15

Upgrade present computerized maintenance system or acquire one with appropriate capabilities		
Strategy	Investigate whether current maintenance system can be upgraded to include necessary capabilities for work order control and tracking, maintenance records and performance histories, project scheduling, and materials and equipment inventories and if not possible, acquire a system that will provide these capabilities.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Assign in-house data processing staff and, if necessary, an outside consultant to investigate whether present system can be upgraded and if possible, accomplish the task.
	Step 2:	If system cannot be upgraded, assign a committee composed of, at a minimum, maintenance, data processing, and purchasing personnel to review and recommend a new system.
	Step 3:	Present recommendation to assistant superintendent for administrative services to process with superintendent and Board
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services	
Time Frame	Upgrade present system or install new system by June 2003	
Fiscal Impact	If in-house staff able to accomplish, this recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources. If in-house staff cannot accomplish or system unable to be upgraded, cost could be up to $50,000.	

Action Plan 11-16

Develop criteria for prioritizing work orders
Strategy	The district should establish and document criteria for prioritizing maintenance work orders.

Action Needed	Step 1:	Define and document criteria for emergency work orders. Criteria should include life safety, public health and the prevention of instruction.
	Step 2:	Define and document criteria for prioritizing other work orders. Criteria could include: • General school safety • Adverse impact on instruction • Adverse impact on operations or productivity • Long-range facility planning • Educational program needs • Comfort
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administrative services and maintenance supervisor	
Time Frame	January 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources	

Student Transportation

Action Plan 12-1

Implement a Three-Tiered Bus-Routing System		
Strategy:	Replace the current two-tiered routing system with a three-tiered routing system.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Develop a schedule of school opening and closing times that will accommodate three separate morning and afternoon bus runs for each bus, and have the schedule approved by the school board.
	Step 2:	Negotiate any contract changes with Laidlaw needed to adjust the number of buses and drivers required to serve the needs of the district.
	Step 3:	Prepare revised bus schedules needed to implement a three-tiered routing system.
	Step 4:	Make needed changes in the assignment of bus drivers for the revised routes and lengthen the drivers' workdays as required.
	Step 5:	Evaluate and publicize the cost/benefit of implementing these actions.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration and director of transportation.	
Time Frame:	August 2003 (Beginning of 2003-04 school year)	
Fiscal Impact:	$378,345 per year, or $1,891,725 over a five-year period.	

Action Plan 12-2

Eliminate courtesy busing where safety is not an issue		
Strategy:	Discontinue transporting students within two miles of a school unless hazardous walking conditions or other safety concerns exist.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Request the school board to adopt a new policy that prohibits courtesy ridership, where safety is not a concern, and publicize the change throughout the community, emphasizing the need to operate more cost-effectively.
	Step 2:	In coordination with the move to a three-tiered routing system, prepare bus schedules that do not provide for courtesy busing.
	Step 3:	Evaluate and publicize the cost/benefit of the implementing these actions.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration and director of transportation.	
Time Frame:	August 2002 (Beginning of 2002-03 School Year)	
Fiscal Impact:	$534,500 per year, or $2,672,500 over a five-year period.	

Action Plan 12-4

Improve communications between ESE staff and transportation staff to ensure appropriate transportation services and maximum reimbursement for ESE students		
Strategy:	Hold regular meetings between ESE staff and transportation staff to ensure that ESE transportation services are optimized.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Assistant Superintendents for curriculum and instruction and for administration communicate to their respective subordinates the need to establish and maintain effective communication between ESE and transportation staffs.
	Step 2:	Reach agreement that transportation department personnel be consulted when establishing or changing the location of ESE programs, so that the transportation factor may be incorporated as an important ingredient in ESE program location decisions.
	Step 3:	Institute regular meetings between ESE and transportation staff relative to the transportation needs of individual ESE students and consider having a transportation staff member present at the staffing meetings for ESE students.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, assistant superintendent for administration, and director of transportation	
Time Frame:	2002-03 School Year and continuing into the future.	
Fiscal Impact:	Should be attainable with existing staff and other resources.	

Action Plan 12-5

Consider instituting a program for filing Medicaid claims for eligible ESE transportation expenditures		
Strategy:	Utilize contracted services to file Medicaid claims for ESE transportation expenditures.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Determine what contracted claims filing services other districts are using.
	Step 2:	Evaluate the various claims filing services being utilized by other districts and identify one that would be suitable for Santa Rosa County District Schools.
	Step 3:	Contract for and implement the service, in cooperation with another district, for claims filing support that is appropriate for Santa Rosa.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for finance and director of transportation.	
Time Frame:	By July 1, 2003 or earlier if feasible.	
Fiscal Impact:	To be determined.	

Action Plan 12-7

Charge the cost of non-transportation support vehicles to their respective departments.		
Strategy:	Finance and transportation will work together to charge vehicle maintenance and operational costs to the proper departments and accounts.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Data-processing will make any software changes needed to accommodate this recommendation.
	Step 2:	Transportation will code expenditures in such a way that costs can be charged to appropriate departments.
	Step 3:	Finance will begin charging all non-student transportation vehicle operational and maintenance costs to the appropriate departments.
Who Is Responsible	Senior accountant and transportation director.	
Time Frame:	Begin with the 2001-02 school year.	
Fiscal Impact:	Can be done with existing resources and reports of transportation costs will be more accurate.	

Action Plan 12-8

Conduct an annual Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey		
Strategy:	The district in cooperation with Laidlaw, annually survey stakeholder satisfaction.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	District staff and Laidlaw staff should cooperatively design a stakeholder satisfaction survey instrument.
	Step 2:	Stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers, principals, bus drivers, mechanics, school board members, and other stakeholders identified in the planning process should be identified.
	Step 3:	The survey should be conducted annually, probably near the end of the school year, in order that respondents may have in mind pertinent information based on the experience of the past school year.
Who Is Responsible	Laidlaw branch manager and the director of transportation.	
Time Frame:	For the 2001-02 school year and continuing annually into the future.	
Fiscal Impact:	This can be accomplished within existing resources.	

Action Plan 12-9

Amend the contract with Laidlaw to include performance measures and district savings opportunities and make periodic (at least annually) assessments of performance.		
Strategy:	Negotiate contract amendments with Laidlaw to incorporate performance measures and district savings opportunities and make periodic assessments of performance by reference to the performance standards and peer districts.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	In cooperation with Laidlaw, identify appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures and benchmarks for inclusion in the Laidlaw contract, using the above-listed measures as a springboard.
	Step 2:	Amend the Laidlaw contract as necessary to enable and facilitate the establishment of an accountability system that is beneficial to both the district and Laidlaw.
	Step 3:	At least annually, based on data relative to the identified performance standards, peer district information and other pertinent data contained in the DOE Q-Link publication, make an assessment report of transportation as a means of evaluating the management of the operations by both Laidlaw and the district.
	Step 4:	Present the performance report ("Report Card") to all stakeholders, including the school board, and use the information as a guide for improvements and efficiencies in the transportation operations.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration, director of transportation, senior accountant and Laidlaw's branch manager.	
Time Frame:	July 1, 2003	
Fiscal Impact:	This should be accomplished with existing resources, and should result in savings to the district that are indeterminate at this time.	

Action Plan 12-10

Develop and maintain a long-range planning process for student transportation.		
Strategy:	Transportation staff for both Laidlaw and the district should cooperatively develop and maintain a long-range plan for the district transportation operation.	
Action Needed:	Step 1:	Establish a long-range planning committee composed of district transportation staff, Laidlaw administrative staff, and district finance staff.
	Step 2:	Secure the services of a resource person with experience in long-range planning, if necessary.

	Step 3: Develop a mission statement and goals and objectives for the transportation department.
	Step 4: Develop specific one-year and five-year plans for the transportation function, in which issues relative to efficient and safe operation of the transportation operation are addressed in detail. Any issues relative to the respective roles of district employees and Laidlaw employees should also be considered.
	Step 5: Submit the plan to the school board for approval and update the plan on an annual basis.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration, director of transportation, and Laidlaw branch manager.
Time Frame:	Begin with the 2002-2003 school year.
Fiscal Impact:	Can be accomplished with existing resources unless an outside resource person (as opposed to using district staff for strategic planning) is hired, in which case, the cost should be minimal.

Action Plan 12-12

A cost-benefit analysis should be conducted when considering whether or not to continue with privatization.	
Strategy:	A cost-benefit analysis for privatization of transportation services should be conducted.
Action Needed	Step 1: The transportation department and the finance department should combine efforts and assemble a work group for the purposes of conducting a cost-benefit analysis.
	Step 2: Available literature regarding the subject should be gathered. For example, in May 1999 Florida TaxWatch published a guide for school districts entitled "Full Cost Analysis Procedures and Development of Proposals for Management of Non-Instructional Education Services." This and other pertinent resources should be considered.
	Step 3: The cost-benefit analysis should be conducted prior to renewing the current contract with Laidlaw, or making any other significant changes in the current transportation delivery system. This will possibly involve the issuance of requests for proposals and evaluation of the proposals submitted in response thereto.
	Step 4: Make appropriate recommendations to the school board.
Who Is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for administration and director of transportation
Time Frame:	2002-03 School Year, the last year of the current contract with Laidlaw.
Fiscal Impact:	Can be done with existing resources.

Food Service Operations

Action Plan 13-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implementation of a strategic plan for the Food Service Program.
Action Needed	Step 1: The superintendent directs the assistant superintendent of support services to develop a strategic plan, which includes an approved mission statement, long-range goals, strategies to accomplish goals and plans of action, for the food service program, assigns the project to a committee that includes such members as the food services contract administrator and general manager, the field technicians, and a representative group of 3-5 principals or assistant principals.

	Step 2:	After reaching consensus, the food services supervisor along with other committee members develop the detailed action plan. The plan needs to be approved by the assistant superintendent for business and support services and by the superintendent. The school board should also approve the plan.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and assistant superintendent for support services.	
Time Frame	February 1, 2003	
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.	

Action Plan 13-3

Recommendation 3		
Strategy	Periodically compare service delivery alternatives for food service programs functions to determine if outsourcing or in-house operation of all or parts of the program function could be accomplished more efficiently or effectively.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	The food service contract administrator and the contract general manager, under the supervision of the Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, should evaluate and make a list of functions of the food service program based on their potential for consideration for greater efficiency and effectiveness through self-operation or outsourcing. Included should be such program functions as management of the food service program, warehouse, procurement of office and cleaning supplies, direct delivery of purchased foods and supplies, central food preparation, equipment maintenance, etc.
	Step 2:	The food service contract administrator and the contract general manager should recommend to the Assistant Superintendent for Support Services for consideration and approval a schedule of functions and frequency for review (not to exceed five-year intervals for each identified function).
	Step 3:	During the year when a function is scheduled for evaluation and it is revealed that the district could potentially achieve greater efficiency or effectiveness through either outsourcing or in-house operations, the department should coordinate with the purchasing department how best to proceed toward district objectives. Each evaluation should be developed for the function being considered. For example, consideration of equipment maintenance should compare some actual example of repairs that occurred using the current method versus estimated costs and quality by alternative approaches. Documentation should be saved to assist future evaluations of this and other functions.
	Step 4:	When the evaluation team determines a method of service delivery can be performed more efficiently or effectively, the proper approval level for change should consider and decide to adopt, reject or delay consideration for the alternative service delivery.
Who is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent for Support Services is responsible for overseeing evaluations comparing service delivery alternatives.	
Time Frame	Studies of service delivery alternatives should be conducted annually beginning in the 2002-2003 school year.	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.	

Action Plan 13-4

Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Review budgeted versus actual revenue and expenses on a quarterly basis. Use this information to make informed decisions and presentations to the board.

Action Needed	Step 1:	Form a management team, which should include as a minimum, the Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, the food service contract administrator, and the contract general manager.
	Step 2:	The contract administrator should collect and analyze information on revenue and expenditure projections versus actual historical performance for presentation to the team.
	Step 3:	Team members should meet to review and further discuss information and create plans for making necessary program adjustments that can reduce costs or increase revenue. Such efforts should have as a goal to discontinue the necessity for transfers from the general fund to balance food service fund, operational subsidy, and eventually create a program funding reserve.
Who is Responsible	Assistant superintendent for support services is responsible for establishing the team, ensuring the team accomplishes its purpose, and reports team results and recommendations to the board.	
Time Frame	The management team should begin quarterly meetings in the 2002-2003 school year.	
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.	

Cost Control Systems

Action Plan 14-1

Establish a professional level internal auditor position		
Strategy	Justify the necessity of hiring an internal auditor and determine the district's needs by completing a comprehensive risk assessment.	
Action Needed	Step 1:	Determine whether the risk assessment will be performed by internal staff or out-sourced to an independent firm.
	Step 2:	Should the decision be made to out-source the risk assessment, send qualified firms a RFP to conduct the risk assessment. Review returned proposals and engage the most qualified firm.
	Step 3:	Review the results of the risk assessment and determine the level of risk borne by the district. Assuming a significant level of risk, recommend to the board the creation of an internal auditor position.
	Step 4:	Prepare a job description for the position. The description should specify that the position report directly to the school board.
	Step 5:	Establish a policy and/or charter describing the duties of the position and have it adopted by the school board.
	Step 6:	Complete the hiring process.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent	
Time Frame	July 1, 2003, or as soon thereafter as funding is available	
Fiscal Impact	An out-sourced comprehensive risk assessment would cost the district approximately $15,000. If an internal auditor is hired, the cost would be approximately $61,250 per year with a five-year cost of $306,250.	
	It is likely that addressing the risks identified in the risk assessment and the hiring of an internal auditor will result in cost savings and avoidances that will offset the associated costs of these activities. However, the cost impact of these potential savings and avoidances cannot be determined at this time.	