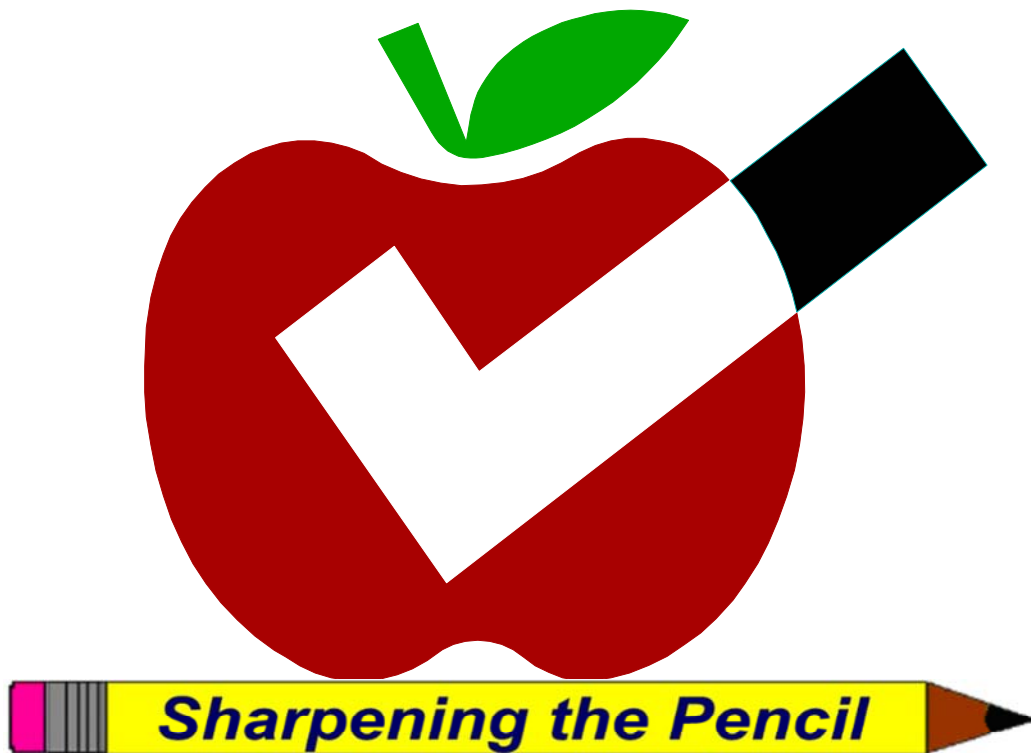


Sharpening the Pencil

Best Financial Management Practices Review

Collier County School District



GIBSON
CONSULTING GROUP

Under contract with
Office of Program Policy Analysis
and Government Accountability
an office of the Florida Legislature
Report No. 03-53



The Florida Legislature

OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY



Gary R. VanLandingham, Interim Director

October 2003

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

I have directed that a Best Financial Management Practices Review be conducted of the Collier 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, Collier 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 Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. of Austin, TX; OPPAGA; and the Auditor General. Gibson Consulting Group, 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 Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Kathy McGuire was the contract manager for this review, which was supervised by David Summers. Other OPPAGA staff included Cyndie Cline, Mark Frederick, Chuck Hefren, Rae Hendlin, Rashada Houston, Kerry Langston, Julie Thomas and Martha Wellman. Auditor General staff included Jim Kiedinger and Randy McNeill under the supervision of David Martin.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary R. VanLandingham".

Gary R. VanLandingham
Interim Director

GRV/mc

cc: The Honorable Jeb Bush, Governor
Mr. Jim Horne, Commissioner of Education

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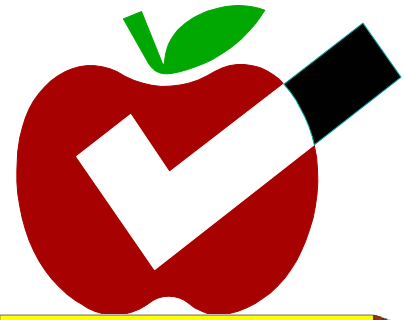
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Digest of the Best Financial Management Practices Review

Collier County School District



Sharpening the Pencil

Report No. 03-53A

October 2003

Results in Brief

Created in 2001, the Sharpening the Pencil Program (s. 1008.35, Florida Statutes) is intended to improve school district management and use of resources and to identify cost savings opportunities. Florida law directs the Commissioner of Education to adopt the best practices as standards for the Best Financial Management Practices Review and establishes using 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 Florida law, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) and the Auditor General conducted a Best Financial Management Practices Review of the Collier County School District beginning in Fiscal Year 2002-03.¹ The Collier County School District currently is using 75% (111 of 148) of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education. The percentage of best practices used by the Collier County School District is comparable to that used by other districts reviewed. The district is using a majority of the best practices in 8 of the 10 areas reviewed. The report contains action plans to address the remaining best practices and to make the district eligible for the Seal of Best Financial Management. (See Exhibit 1.)

¹ This review was conducted by Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., of Austin, TX, under contract with OPPAGA.

A detailed listing of all the best practices that identifies the district's status in relation to each is on page 6 of this report.

Exhibit 1 The District Is Using 75% of the Best Practices

Best Practice Area (Total Practices)	Is the District Using Individual Best Practices?	
	Yes	No
Management Structures (14)	11	3
Performance Accountability System (3)	1	2
Educational Service Delivery (12)	10	2
Administrative and Instructional Technology (9)	7	2
Personnel Systems and Benefits (11)	6	5
Facilities Construction (24)	20	4
Facilities Maintenance (22)	20	2
Transportation (20)	18	2
Food Service Operations (11)	10	1
Cost Control Systems (22)	8	14
All Areas (148)	111	37

As seen in Exhibit 2, the review identified additional opportunities to reduce costs and increase revenues. Implementing these opportunities would have a positive impact of \$55,985,731 over a five-year period. Determining whether to take advantage of these opportunities is a district decision and should be based on many factors including district needs, public input, and school board priorities. If the district uses these opportunities to reduce costs and increase revenue, it would be able to redirect the funds to other priorities, such as directing more money into the classroom or making improvements suggested by this report.

Exhibit 2

The Review Identified Ways the District Could Further Reduce Costs and Increase Revenues

Ways to Save	Projected Five-Year Cost Savings or Increased Revenue
<u>Management Structures</u>	
• Eliminate the position of deputy superintendent (Best Practice 5, page 2-19)	\$ 837,965
<u>Educational Service Delivery</u>	
• Participate in the Medicaid Certified Match Program. (Best Practice 2, page 4-20)	2,734,990
• Reallocate assistant principals/deans to meet SACS standards. (Best Practice 8, page 4-55)	8,211,745
• Revisit district level staffing. (Best Practice 8, page 4-55)	5,884,990
<u>Personnel Systems and Benefits</u>	
• Reestablish a third party administrator for the workers’ compensation plan (Best Practice 8, page 6-23)	1,176,549
<u>Facilities Construction</u>	
• Reduce new construction costs. (Best Practice 12, page 7-20)	32,618,000
<u>Facilities Maintenance</u>	
• Implement Energy Conservation Incentive Program. (Best Practice 15, page 8-20)	492,416
<u>Transportation</u>	
• Revise staggered bell times to increase the number of school buses assigned to three-tier routes. (Best Practice 3, page 9-9)	1,280,000
• Reduce bus driver overtime. (Best Practice 6, page 9-14)	285,135
• Make claims for Medicaid reimbursement. (Best Practice 14, page 9-23)	307,620
<u>Food Service Operations</u>	
• Implement a shared manager program. (Best Practice 2, page 10-10)	371,292
• Reduce labor hours by reducing the number of scratch items on the menu and raise the MPLH standards. (Best Practice 2, page 10-10)	500,000
• Expand Breakfast-in-a-Bag program. (Best Practice 6, page 10-16)	694,165
• Renovate four schools per year with \$50,000 budget to increase participation and net revenue. (Best Practice 6, page 10-16)	510,944
<u>Cost Control Systems</u>	
• Restructure the Business Services Department. (Best Practice 1, page 11-8)	79,920
TOTALS	\$55,985,731

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.² Florida law directs OPPAGA and the Auditor General to review 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

Two of the most important provisions of the Sharpening the Pencil Program 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.

Florida law 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.

² A list of cost saving opportunities identified in prior best practices reviews is available under [Ways to Save](#) on OPPAGA’s website, the *Florida Monitor*, at <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us>.

The best practices are designed to encourage districts to

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

In accordance with Florida law, OPPAGA contracted with Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., of Austin, TX, a private consulting firm, to conduct this review. Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., was primarily responsible for fieldwork and developing report findings and recommendations. OPPAGA and 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 Auditor General staff attended site visits and provided assistance to the consultant during the course of the review, which included report drafting.

With 36,475 students in the 2001-02 school year, the district was the 18th largest in the state. The district, located in southwest Florida, operates 56 schools; 22 elementary, 8 middle, 5 high, 1 vocational technical, 2 charter, 1 adult, 12 alternative, 2 special, and 3 other schools.

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 describe the specific steps the district should take if it decides to implement the recommendation within two years. Pursuant to s. 1008.35, *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 Collier County School Board and district employees who provided information and assistance during the review.

General Overview and District Obligations

Currently, the Collier County School District is using 75% of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner and at this time is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial

Management. Appendix A of the full report contains an action plan detailing how the district could meet the best practice standards within two years.

As provided by law, 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 Collier County School District is using 11 of the 14 of the best practices in management structures. The district has up-to-date policies and procedures, uses legal services appropriately, has clear lines of authority, and periodically reviews and adjusts administrative staffing as needed. In addition, the district has assigned principals adequate authority, has good planning and budgeting practices, and appropriately works with parents and business leaders. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its management structures, the board should take measures to run its meetings more efficiently; enhance its training, especially in the area of finance, while securing Master Board certification; and conduct annual self-evaluations. In addition, the district should ensure that the board is informed of the fiscal impact of all decisions to improve oversight of fiscal resources.

Performance Accountability System

The Collier County School District is using one of the three performance accountability best practices. The district publicly reports on the effectiveness of its major educational and operational programs. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its educational and operational programs, the district should ensure that all major educational and operational programs have measurable goals and objectives and implement a peer review process to monitor educational programs when full evaluations cannot be completed.

Educational Service Delivery

The Collier County School District is using 10 of the 12 educational service delivery best practices. The district uses data to improve student performance, provides effective accelerated and workforce development programs, and ensures that schools use effective planning and evaluation processes. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its educational programs, the district should require individual schools to include in their improvement plans ways to increase the participation of students with disabilities in regular education environments and should assess the number of central office administrators.

Administrative and Instructional Technology

The Collier County School District is using seven of the nine administrative and instructional technology best practices. The district acquires technology that will best meet its instructional and administrative needs. It delivers training on these technologies and has appropriate written policies for how technology is to be used. Its infrastructure maximizes network performance. The district uses technology to improve communication and general controls for access and security have been established. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its administrative and instructional technology, the district should create measurable goals and tasks for its technology plan using input from a technology committee that has broad stakeholders, expand the technology needs assessment process to all areas, create accountability and better performance measures for its technical support services, and improve the cost-effectiveness of technology acquisitions with comprehensive cost/benefit analyses.

Personnel Systems and Benefits

The Collier County School District is using 6 of the 11 personnel systems and benefits best practices. The district recruits and hires sufficient personnel to fill vacant positions and provides staff development. Its evaluation system rewards excellent performance and removes employees of concern. The district's employee benefits program is particularly notable. The district has identified illness trends and implemented wellness programs to address the illnesses prior to expensive medical treatments. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its personnel systems and benefits program, the district should implement recruiting and retention strategies; evaluate the working environment and develop plans to address major areas of employee dissatisfaction; monitor employee absenteeism and create strategies to reduce absenteeism among workers; increase the quality of workers' compensation claims data, purchase aggregate workers' compensation stop-loss coverage, and analyze and report claims information and trends to the superintendent and the board on a regular basis; and institute performance measures for the human resource department.

Facilities Construction

The Collier County School District is using 20 of the 24 facilities construction best practices. All items in the facilities five-year work plan prepared in 1998 have been completed, additional projects have been added, and all new construction and major renovation projects have been brought in on time and on budget. Facility users are satisfied with the condition and suitability of schools for educational purposes. There are no major deferred maintenance issues outstanding in the district, and the

district has a proactive program for the replacement of major building systems as they reach the end of their expected or actual useful lives. The district adheres to high standards for safety and security in facilities. The district has an effective and commendable process for site selection and acquisition that is based on long-range (20-year) planning. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its facilities construction program, the district should establish a plan for the evaluation and potential reduction of new construction costs, develop a consistent program for facilities post-occupancy evaluations, develop effective accountability mechanisms and establish benchmarks and collect and report appropriate performance data relative to those benchmarks.

Facilities Maintenance

The Collier County School District is using 20 of 22 best practices relating to facilities maintenance. District facilities are safe, secure, clean, and equitably maintained. The department is managed well with staff ratios below staffing formulas and an overall excellent operation. To implement the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its facilities maintenance program, the district should establish procedures and staff performance standards to improve training for custodians and to ensure that all maintenance department employees have a clear understanding of how they can individually improve their performance and increase efficiency for the district while advancing their own careers.

Transportation

The Collier County School District is using 18 of the 20 best practices for transportation. The district plans for future transportation needs; effectively organizes and staffs the transportation department; efficiently trains and supervises bus drivers and attendants; provides timely servicing for buses; efficiently provides fuel; maintains secure facilities; ensures regular bus routes and activity trips operate in accordance with established routines; provides efficient transportation for exceptional students; acts promptly in response to accidents and breakdowns; maintains appropriate student behavior on buses; provides technological and computer support for transportation functions and operations; effectively monitors the fiscal condition of transportation functions; and has explored the prospect of student transportation privatization. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its transportation program, the district should enforce policies and procedures for cost-effective bus routing and adopt a performance monitoring and reporting system for student transportation.

Food Service Operations

The Collier County School District is using 10 of the 11 best practices for food service. The district's food service program developed strategic plans, has a training program for employees, manages its operations well, and has a strong performance accountability system. To use the remaining best practice and ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its food service program, the district should institute a shared manager program, balance the amount of scratch menu items with convenience foods, and convert the central warehouse to house food items only.

Cost Control Systems

The Collier County School District is using 8 of the 22 cost control systems best practices. The district uses processes to ensure that significant expenditures are controlled; receives an annual external audit, ensures that capital outlay purchases meet strategic plan objectives, and uses updated procedures to provide for effective debt management. District staff also monitors compliance with regulations related to debt management and prepare analyses for insurance coverage and inventory management. To use the remaining best practice standards and enhance the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its cost control systems, the district should perform a risk assessment of its operations; reorganize the business services department to better facilitate effective operations; establish budget planning processes that tie the district's strategic plan objectives to the development of the budget; develop comprehensive written procedures that ensure consistency throughout the functional areas related to cost controls; and identify strategies to strengthen the financial condition of its general fund in line with district targets and implement procedures to monitor the success of those strategies.

Collier County School District Best Financial Management Practices

Currently, the Collier County School District is using 75% (111 of 148) of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education, and at this time, is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. The detailed list below contains all the best practices and identifies the district's current status in relation to each.

<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Is the District Using Best Practices?</i>		
<u>MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent have been clearly delineated, and board members and the superintendent have policies to ensure that they have effective working relationships.		✓	2-9
2. The board and superintendent have procedures to ensure that board meetings are efficient and effective.		✓	2-11
3. The board and superintendent have established written policies and procedures that are routinely updated to ensure that they are relevant and complete.	✓		2-13
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.	✓		2-15
5. The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority that minimize administrative costs.	✓		2-19
6. The district periodically reviews its administrative staffing and makes changes to eliminate unnecessary positions and improve operating efficiency.	✓		2-21
7. The superintendent and school board exercise effective oversight of the district's financial resources.		✓	2-22
8. The district has clearly assigned school principals the authority they need to effectively manage their schools while adhering to districtwide policies and procedures.	✓		2-23
9. The district has a multi-year strategic plan with annual goals and measurable objectives based on identified needs, projected enrollment, and revenues.	✓		2-24
10. The district has a system to accurately project enrollment.	✓		2-26
11. The district links its financial plans and budgets to its annual priorities in the strategic plan and its goals and objectives; and district resources are focused towards achieving those goals and objectives.	✓		2-27
12. When necessary, the district considers options to increase revenue.	✓		2-28
13. The district actively involves parents and guardians in the district's decision making and activities.	✓		2-29
14. The district actively involves business partners and community organizations in the district's decision making and activities.	✓		2-30

Best Practices

Is the District Using Best Practices?

<u>PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has clearly stated goals and measurable objectives that can be achieved within budget for each major educational and operational program. These major programs are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational/Technical Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages Education, Facilities Construction, Facilities Maintenance, Transportation, Food Services, and Safety and Security.³ 		✓	3-5
2. 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.		✓	3-8
3. 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.	✓		3-11

<u>EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. District administrators use both academic and nonacademic data to improve K-12 education programs.	✓		4-10
2. The district provides effective and efficient Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs for students with disabilities and students who are gifted. ⁴		✓	4-20
3. The district provides effective and efficient programs to meet the needs of at-risk students [including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Title I, and alternative education]. ⁵	✓		4-36
4. The district provides an appropriate range of accelerated programs (such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Dual Enrollment).	✓		4-40
5. The district provides effective and efficient workforce development programs (such as vocational-technical, adult basic education, and adult high school programs).	✓		4-48
6. The district ensures that schools use effective planning and evaluation processes to improve student outcomes, including school improvement plans and other data driven processes such as the Sterling process.	✓		4-51
7. The district ensures effective progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 that maximizes student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards and prepares students for work and continued education	✓		4-54
8. The district's organizational structure and staffing of educational programs minimizes administrative layers and processes.		✓	4-55
9. The district ensures that students and teachers have sufficient current textbooks and other instructional materials available to support instruction in core subjects and to meet the needs of teachers and students.	✓		4-62

³ Each district should define those programs considered "major" within these two broad areas. At a minimum, they should include the programs listed. However, the district should have some defensible, logical criteria to identify major educational and operational programs. Criteria may include funding, number of children or full-time equivalents (FTEs) served, or state or federal requirements.

⁴ Programs for students with disabilities are required by federal law to serve children aged 3 through 21.

⁵ These are students who need academic and/or social skills interventions to assist them to perform to their capacity.

Best Practices

Is the District Using Best Practices?

<u>EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
10. The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction.	✓		4-64
11. The district utilizes instructional technology in the classroom to enhance curriculum and improve student achievement.	✓		4-65
12. The district provides necessary support services (guidance counseling, psychological, social work and health) to meet student needs and to ensure students are able to learn.	✓		4-68

<u>ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has a comprehensive technology plan that provides direction for administrative and instructional technology decision making.		✓	5-8
2. The district acquires technology in a cost-effective manner that will best meet its instructional and administrative needs. ⁶	✓		5-11
3. District and school-based staff receive professional development training for all technologies used in the district.	✓		5-13
4. The district provides timely and cost-effective technical support that enables educators and district staff to successfully implement technology in the workplace.		✓	5-14
5. The district maintains a dependable, standards-based infrastructure employing strategies that cost-effectively maximize network and Internet access and performance.	✓		5-18
6. The district uses technology to improve communication.	✓		5-19
7. The district has written policies that apply safe, ethical, and appropriate use practices that comply with legal and professional standards.	✓		5-20
8. 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.	✓		5-21
9. The information needs of administrative and instructional personnel are met by applying appropriate project management techniques to define, schedule, track and evaluate purchasing, developing, and the timing of delivering IT products and services requested.	✓		5-22

<u>PERSONNEL SYSTEMS AND BENEFITS</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district efficiently and effectively recruits and hires qualified instructional and non-instructional personnel.	✓		6-6
2. To the extent possible given factors outside the district's control, the district works to maintain a reasonably stable work force and a satisfying work environment by addressing factors that contribute to increased turnover or low employee morale. ⁷		✓	6-9

⁶ Instructional needs include incorporating technology into the curriculum and needs of students learning how to use technology.

⁷ A reasonably stable work force is characterized by a turnover rate that is low enough so that vacancies can be filled in a timely manner without requiring extraordinary recruitment efforts. This includes both a focus on the district as a whole as well as individual schools and departments. Evidence of an unstable work force could include situations in which school sites or a support departments have been beset by an extremely high turnover rate so that programs and activities have been disrupted, discontinued or have decreased value.

Best Practices

Is the District Using Best Practices?

<u>PERSONNEL SYSTEMS AND BENEFITS</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
3. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program to improve student achievement and to achieve and maintain high levels of productivity and employee performance among non-instructional, instructional, and administrative employees. ⁸	✓		6-13
4. The district's system for formally evaluating employees improves and rewards excellent performance and productivity, and identifies and addresses performance that does not meet the district's expectations for the employee.	✓		6-15
5. 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. ⁹	✓		6-16
6. The district has efficient and cost-effective system for managing absenteeism and the use of substitute teachers and other substitute personnel.		✓	6-17
7. The district maintains personnel records in an efficient and readily accessible manner.		✓	6-21
8. The district uses cost containment practices for its Workers' Compensation Program.		✓	6-23
9. The district uses cost-containment practices for its employee benefits programs, including health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, and retirement.	✓		6-33
10. The district's human resource program is managed effectively and efficiently.		✓	6-34
11. For classes of employees that are unionized, the district maintains an effective collective bargaining process.	✓		6-36

<u>FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has effective long-range planning processes. ¹⁰	✓		7-8
2. When developing the annual five-year facilities work plan the district evaluates alternatives to minimize the need for new construction.	✓		7-10
3. The five-year facilities work plan establishes budgetary plans and priorities.	✓		7-11

⁸ In some districts, the staff development programs and issues related to non-instructional, instructional, and administrative employees may vary widely. In such cases, it is acceptable to separate this best practice into two or three separate best practices, and to deal with these employee groups separately.

⁹ Evidence of a problem in this best practice area could include one or more of the following examples:

- the forced reinstatements of employees who had been dismissed;
- large monetary settlements to employees who had been dismissed;
- public forum, survey or focus group results that suggest that poor performing employees are transferred from site to site rather than being dismissed; or
- incidents occur that are adverse to students involving employees who had previously been identified by the district as poor-performers or as potentially harmful to students.

Evidence that a district is performing this best practice should include

- general consensus from the public forum, survey, and/or focus groups that behavior and performance problems are dealt with effectively by the district;
- if there are cases or incidents as those described above, the district should be able to explain how such cases or incidents were exceptional and should not repeatedly occur within the district; and
- on the indicators listed under this best practice, it is more important that the district provide examples of the application of these procedures than that it provide evidence that a particular procedure is written down some place.

¹⁰ Long-range covers 5-20 years out.

<u>FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
4. The school board ensures responsiveness to the community through open communication about the construction program and the five-year facilities work plan.	✓		7-13
5. The district has an effective site selection process based on expected growth patterns.	✓		7-14
6. The board considers the most economical and practical sites for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as need to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to development, and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties.	✓		7-15
7. Funds collected for school projects were raised appropriately.	✓		7-16
8. The district approves and uses 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.	✓		7-16
9. The district develops thorough descriptions and educational specifications for each construction project. ¹¹	✓		7-17
10. The architectural design fulfills the building specification needs as determined by the district.	✓		7-18
11. New construction, remodeling, and renovations incorporate effective safety features.	✓		7-20
12. The district minimizes construction and maintenance and operations costs through the use of cost-effective designs, prototype school designs, and frugal construction practices.		✓	7-20
13. The district has effective management processes for construction projects.	✓		7-26
14. District planning provides realistic time frames for implementation that are coordinated with the opening of schools.	✓		7-28
15. All projects started after March 1, 2002, comply with the Florida Building Code.	✓		7-29
16. The district requires appropriate inspection of all school construction projects.	✓		7-29
17. The district retains appropriate professionals to assist in facility planning, design, and construction.	✓		7-30
18. The district follows generally accepted and legal contracting practices to control costs.	✓		7-30
19. The district minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to control project costs.	✓		7-32
20. The architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project.	✓		7-32
21. The district conducts a comprehensive orientation to the new facility prior to its use so that users better understand the building design and function.	✓		7-33

¹¹ This includes such descriptions as a rationale for the project; a determination of the size of the facility and that it meets the space requirements of current *Laws of Florida*; a determination of the grade level the facility will serve; a determination of whether the new facility will serve all parts of the district on an open enrollment basis or will be a "magnet" school or a special school; a map has been prepared that shows the location of the planned facility within the community and the proposed attendance area of the school; construction budget that meets the state averages or requirements of current *Laws of Florida*, relative to cost per student station; the source of funding for the project; planning and construction time line; durability and maintenance costs; an estimate plan for the time of construction; the date of completion and opening.

Best Practices

Is the District Using Best Practices?

<u>FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
22. 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.		✓	7-34
23. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the construction program.		✓	7-35
24. The district regularly evaluates facilities construction operations based on established benchmarks and implements improvements to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.		✓	7-38

<u>FACILITIES MAINTENANCE</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district's maintenance and operations department has a mission statement and goals and objectives that are established in writing.	✓		8-6
2. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance and efficiency of the maintenance and operations program.	✓		8-6
3. The district obtains and uses customer feedback to identify and implement program improvements.	✓		8-7
4. The district has established procedures and staff performance standards to ensure efficient operations.		✓	8-8
5. The department maintains educational and district support facilities in a condition that enhances student learning and facilitates employee productivity.	✓		8-9
6. The district regularly reviews the organizational structure of the maintenance and operations program to minimize administrative layers and assure adequate supervision and staffing levels.	✓		8-10
7. Complete job descriptions and appropriate hiring and retention practices ensure that the maintenance and operations department has qualified staff.	✓		8-11
8. The district provides a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff to enhance worker job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.		✓	8-12
9. The administration has developed an annual budget with spending limits that comply with the lawful funding for each category of facilities maintenance and operations.	✓		8-14
10. The district accurately projects cost estimates of major maintenance projects.	✓		8-15
11. The board maintains a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations.	✓		8-16
12. The district minimizes equipment costs through purchasing practices.	✓		8-17
13. The district provides maintenance and operations department staff the tools and equipment required to accomplish their assigned tasks.	✓		8-18
14. The district uses proactive maintenance practices to reduce maintenance costs.	✓		8-18
15. The maintenance and operations department identifies and implements strategies to contain energy costs.	✓		8-20
16. The district has an energy management system in place, and the system is maintained at original specifications for maximum effectiveness.	✓		8-21

Best Practices

Is the District Using Best Practices?

<u>FACILITIES MAINTENANCE</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
17. District personnel regularly review maintenance and operation's costs and services and evaluate the potential for outside contracting and privatization.	✓		8-22
18. A computerized control and tracking system is used to accurately track work orders and inventory.	✓		8-22
19. The maintenance and operations department has a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the district.	✓		8-23
20. District policies and procedures clearly address the health and safety conditions of facilities.	✓		8-25
21. The school district complies with federal and state regulatory mandates regarding facility health and safety conditions.	✓		8-25
22. The district is aware of and prepared for the permitting and inspection requirements of the Florida Building Code.	✓		8-26

<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district coordinates long-term planning and budgeting for student transportation within the context of district and community planning.	✓		9-8
2. 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.	✓		9-8
3. The transportation office plans, reviews, and establishes bus routes and stops to provide cost-efficient student transportation services for all students who qualify for transportation. ¹²		✓	9-9
4. The organizational structure and staffing levels of the district's transportation program minimizes administrative layers and processes.	✓		9-12
5. The district maintains an effective staffing level in the vehicle maintenance area and provides support for vehicle maintenance staff to develop its skills.	✓		9-13
6. The district effectively and efficiently recruits and retains the bus drivers and attendants it needs.	✓		9-14
7. The district trains, supervises, and assists bus drivers to enable them to meet bus-driving standards and maintain acceptable student discipline on the bus.	✓		9-16
8. The school district has a process to ensure that sufficient vehicles are acquired economically and will be available to meet the district's current and future transportation needs.	✓		9-16
9. The district provides timely routine servicing for buses and other district vehicles, as well as prompt response for breakdowns and other unforeseen contingencies.	✓		9-18
10. The district ensures that fuel purchases are cost-effective and that school buses and other vehicles are efficiently supplied with fuel.	✓		9-19
11. The district maintains facilities that are conveniently situated to provide sufficient and secure support for vehicle maintenance and other transportation functions.	✓		9-20

¹² Measures of cost-efficient student transportation services include reasonably high average bus occupancy and reasonably low cost per mile and cost per student.

Best Practices

Is the District Using Best Practices?

<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
12. The district maintains an inventory of parts, supplies, and equipment needed to support transportation functions that balances the concerns of immediate need and inventory costs.	✓		9-21
13. The district ensures that all regular school bus routes and activity trips operate in accordance with established routines, and any unexpected contingencies affecting vehicle operations are handled safely and promptly.	✓		9-22
14. The district provides efficient transportation services for exceptional students in a coordinated fashion that minimizes hardships to students.	✓		9-23
15. The district ensures that staff acts promptly and appropriately in response to any accidents or breakdowns	✓		9-24
16. The district ensures that appropriate student behavior is maintained on the bus with students being held accountable for financial consequences of misbehavior related to transportation.	✓		9-25
17. The district provides appropriate technological and computer support for transportation functions and operations.	✓		9-25
18. The district monitors the fiscal condition of transportation functions by regularly analyzing expenditures and reviewing them against the budget.	✓		9-26
19. The district has reviewed the prospect for privatizing transportation functions, as a whole or in part.	✓		9-27
20. The district has established an accountability system for transportation, and it regularly tracks and makes public reports on its performance in comparison with established benchmarks.		✓	9-28

<u>FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The program has developed strategic or operational plans that are consistent with district plans, the program budget, and approved by the district.	✓		10-9
2. The district and program are organized with clear lines of responsibility and in a manner that provides the food service program sufficient authority to succeed.		✓	10-10
3. Program management has developed training designed to meet basic program needs as well as improve food services, both based on a needs assessment.	✓		10-13
4. Program management has developed comprehensive procedures manuals that are kept current.	✓		10-14
5. The district performs sound cash and account management.	✓		10-15
6. District and program management optimizes its financial opportunities.	✓		10-16
7. Food service program management has developed comprehensive performance and cost-efficiency measures that provide management with information to evaluate program performance and better manage operations.	✓		10-22
8. At least annually, the program inspects and evaluates its operational components and the system as a whole, and then takes action to initiate needed change.	✓		10-23

Best Practices	Is the District Using Best Practices?
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FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS	YES	NO	PAGE
9. District and program administrators effectively manage costs of the food services program and use performance measures, benchmarks, and budgets on a regular basis to evaluate performance and use the analysis for action or change.	✓		10-24
10. The food service program and district complies with federal state and district policy.	✓		10-25
11. The district conducts activities to ensures that customer needs are met and acts to improve services and food quality where needed.	✓		10-25

COST CONTROL SYSTEMS	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district periodically analyzes the structure and staffing of its financial services organization.		✓	11-8
2. Management has developed and distributed written procedures for critical accounting processes and promotes ethical financial management practices.		✓	11-15
3. The district has adequate financial information systems that provide useful, timely, and accurate information.		✓	11-17
4. District financial staff analyzes significant expenditure processes to ensure they are appropriately controlled.	✓		11-20
5. The district has established adequate internal controls.		✓	11-21
6. Management proactively responds to identified internal control weaknesses and takes immediate steps to correct the weaknesses.		✓	11-24
7. The district produces an annual budget that is tied to the strategic plan and provides useful and understandable information to users.	✓		11-25
8. Management analyzes strategic plans for measurable objectives or measurable results.		✓	11-25
9. The district ensures that it receives an annual external audit and uses the audit to improve its operations.	✓		11-27
10. The district has an effective internal audit function and uses the audits to improve its operations. ¹³		✓	11-27
11. The district ensures that audits of internal funds and discretely presented component units (foundations and charter schools) are performed timely.		✓	11-30
12. The district periodically reviews cash management activities, banking relationships, investment performance, and considers alternatives.		✓	11-31
13. The district has established written policies and procedures and periodically updates them to provide for effective management of capital assets.		✓	11-32
14. The district ensures significant capital outlay purchases meet strategic plan objectives.	✓		11-35
15. The district has established written policies and procedures and periodically updates them to provide for effective debt management.	✓		11-35
16. The district ensures that significant debt financings meet strategic plan objectives.		✓	11-36

¹³ Most school districts do not have an internal auditor. They generally do have internal accounts auditors, whose responsibility is to audit the school internal accounts. These internal accounts auditors should not be confused with internal auditors. However, school districts that do have internal audit functions often assign the audits of the school internal accounts to the internal auditor for efficiency purposes.

Best Practices

Is the District Using Best Practices?

<u>COST CONTROL SYSTEMS</u>	YES	NO	PAGE
17. The district has established written policies and procedures and periodically updates them to provide for effective risk management		✓	11-37
18. District staff periodically monitors the district's compliance with various laws and regulations related to risk management.	✓		11-41
19. The district prepares appropriate written cost and benefit analyses for insurance coverage.	✓		11-41
20. The district has established written policies and procedures to take maximum advantage of competitive bidding, volume discounts, and special pricing agreements.		✓	11-43
21. The district has established written policies and procedures and periodically updates them to provide for effective management of inventories.	✓		11-48
22. The district periodically evaluates the warehousing function to determine its cost-effectiveness.		✓	11-49



The Florida Legislature

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

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[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.

[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.

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1 Introduction

Overview

The 2001 Florida Legislature created the Sharpening the Pencil Program to improve school district management and use of resources and to identify cost savings. Florida law requires each school district to undergo a Best Financial Management Practices Review once every five years and provides a review schedule.

The best practices are designed to encourage school districts to

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

The Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) and the Auditor General developed the Best Practices, which were adopted by the Commissioner of Education. Under these reviews, OPPAGA and the Auditor General examine school district operations to determine whether districts are using the best practices to evaluate programs, assess operations and performance, identify cost savings and link financial planning and budgeting to district policies. OPPAGA has contracted the review of Collier County School District to Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. As illustrated in Exhibit 1-1, the best practices address district performance in 10 broad areas.

Exhibit 1-1 Best Financial Management Practices Review Areas

-
- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| • Management Structures | • Facilities Construction |
| • Performance Accountability Systems | • Facilities Maintenance |
| • Educational Service Delivery | • Student Transportation |
| • Administrative and Instructional Technology | • Food Service Operations |
| • Personnel Systems and Benefits | • Cost Control Systems |
-

Districts found to be using the Best Financial Management Practices are be awarded a Seal of Best Financial Management by the Florida Board of Education. Districts that are found not to be using Best Financial Management Practices will be provided a detailed two-year action plan for achieving compliance. The district school board must vote whether or not to implement this action plan.

Methodology

Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. used a variety of methods to collect information about Collier County School District's use of the Best Financial Management Practices. The evaluation team made several site visits to the district. The team interviewed district administrators and personnel, met with community leaders and school advisory committee chairs, interviewed board members, held one public forum, conducted focus groups with principals and teachers, and attended school board meetings. The review team also gathered and reviewed district financial data, data on program activities, and data on student performance.

To put the district's programs and activities in context with other Florida school districts, Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. gathered information from five peer districts around the state: Lake, Lee, Manatee, Osceola and Pasco. The peer districts were selected based on their similarities across a number of categories, including the size of the student population and demographic information.

County Profile

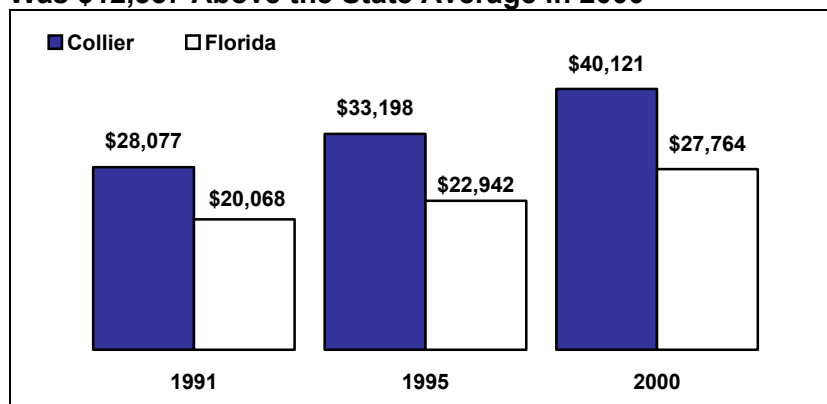
As of July 1, 2001, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that the total population of Collier County was 265,769. The population of the county increased by 65.3 percent between 1990 and 2000, which was a faster growth rate than the state's average growth of 23.5 percent during that same time period. The county seat of Collier County is the city of Naples.

Of the county's population, 98% consider themselves to be one race, while the remaining 2.2% consider themselves multi-racial. The largest proportion of the population is white, with persons of Hispanic or Latino origin comprising 20% of the population, slightly higher than the statewide figure of 16.8%. In addition, 4.5% of the county's residents are Black or African American, which is considerably lower than the statewide figure of 14.6%.

School age children, ranging in age from 5 to 19 years old, make up 20% of the county's population, with an additional 5.3% of the population are less than five years old. By contrast, 24% of the county's population is 65 years old or older. Approximately 81.8% of the county's residents aged 25 years or older are high school graduates, while 28% have graduated from college. These percentages are higher than the statewide figures of 80% and 22%, respectively. This means that the level of educational attainment in Collier County is higher than it is across the state.

Collier County's per capita income in 2000 was \$40,121, which was \$12,357 above the state average. As shown in Exhibit 1-2, the per capita income of Collier County residents has been consistently higher than the per capita income of the state as a whole.

Exhibit 1-2
Per Capita Income of Collier County Residents
Was \$12,357 Above the State Average in 2000



Source: Florida Research and Economic Database, 2003.

The unemployment rate in Collier County has been lower than the state's rate for the past five years. Although the county's unemployment rate was only slightly below the state rate during 1998, 1999 and 2000, in 2001 and 2002 the county's unemployment rate was significantly lower than the state. This suggests that students who graduate from high school in Collier County may have less difficulty finding employment than graduates in other parts of the state. As of April 2003, Collier County had a civilian labor force of 122,617 people. The county's primary sources of employment include the service industries related to retail trade, construction and real estate and professional and business services.

School District Profile

In 2001-02, the Collier County operated 56 schools, as shown in Exhibit 1-3.

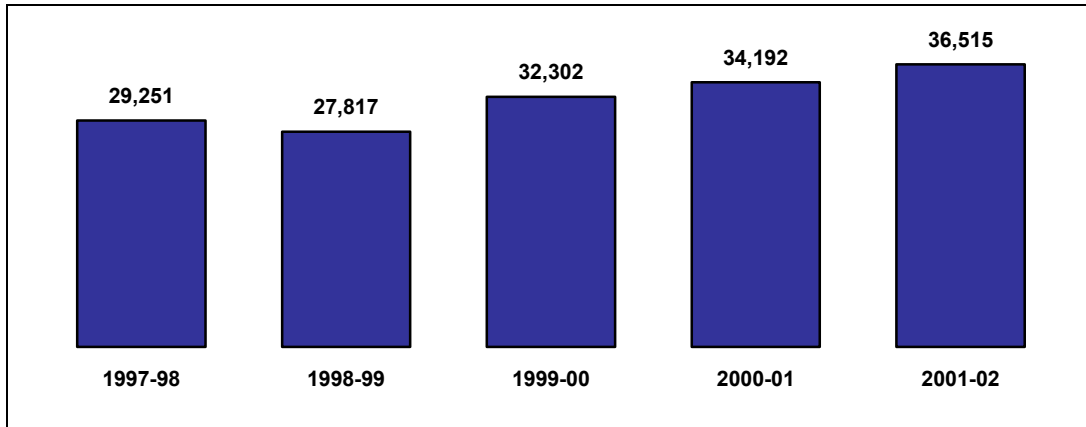
Exhibit 1-3
Collier County Operated 56 Schools during 2001-02

Type of School	Number	Type of School	Number
Elementary	22	Adult Education	1
Middle	8	Alternative Education	12
Senior High	5	Special Schools	2
Vocational Technical	1	Other Schools	3
Charter Schools	2		

Source: Florida Department of Education, Profiles of Florida School Districts, 2001-02.

With 36,515 students in 2001-02, the Collier County School District was the 18th largest of the state's 67 school districts. The student population growth has fluctuated between 1997-98 and 2001-02, for a total net increase of 25%, as shown in Exhibit 1-4. This growth in enrollment was much higher than the 8.9% increase in enrollment across the state.

**Exhibit 1-4
Enrollment Growth in Collier County Has Fluctuated Over the Past Five Years**



Source: Florida Department of Education, Profiles of Florida School Districts, 1997-98 through 2001-02.

The district expended \$226.8 million (general fund only) during the 2001-2002 fiscal year. It receives revenues from federal, state and local sources. Most of the revenue received from the state is generated through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). The FEFP takes into consideration a number of factors in distributing funding to Florida's 67 school districts, such as varying local property tax bases, education program costs, costs of living and costs for equivalent programs due to the sparsity and dispersion of the student population. This funding source, established by the Legislature, annually prescribes state revenues for education as well as the level of ad valorem taxes (property taxes) that can be levied by each school district in the state. It also includes some restricted funding provided through categorical programs, through which the Legislature funds specific programs such as instructional materials or student transportation. Exhibit 1-5 describes the district's revenue, expenditures and fund balances for the 2001-02 fiscal year.

Exhibit 1-5
District Funds Include Federal, State and Local Sources
and Expenditures and are Primarily Related to Instruction

Revenues and Expenditures	Total
Revenues	
Federal Direct	1,362,472
Federal Through State	75,633
State	39,916,505
Local	172,494,841
Total Revenues	213,849,451
Expenditures	
Instruction	139,980,366
Pupil Personnel Services	10,467,270
Instructional Media Services	3,310,350
Instruction and Curriculum Development Services	6,630,388
Instructional Staff Training	2,381,728
Board of Education	1,349,431
General Administration	1,678,002
School Administration	16,525,107
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	875,886
Fiscal Services	1,174,231
Food Services	--
Central Services	5,287,653
Pupil Transportation Services	11,719,106
Operation of Plant	17,242,762
Maintenance of Plant	2,626,664
Community Services	109,759
Fixed Capital Outlay:	
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	47,829
Other Capital Outlay	5,201,788
Debt Service:	
Principal	--
Interest and Fiscal Charges	--
Total Expenditures	226,608,320
Deficiency of Revenue Under Expenditures	(12,758,869)
Other Financing Sources(Uses):	
Proceeds from the sale of capital assets	16,193
Loss Recoveries	233,524
Transfers In	10,000,000
Transfers Out	--
Total financing sources (uses)	10,249,717
Fund Balance-beginning	8,831,414
Fund Balances, ending (June 30, 2002)	6,322,262

Source: Collier County School District Financial Statements, audited, for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2002.

Introduction

As Exhibit 1-6 illustrates, the district falls below the state average and all but one peer in all staffing ratios except guidance to students, where the district has the lowest ratio. Exhibit 1-7 illustrates the actual numbers of administrators, instructional personnel and support positions in the district.

Exhibit 1-6 Staffing Ratios Fall Below for All Comparisons

District	Staff Ratios					
	Administrators to Classroom Teachers	Administrators to Total Instructional Staff	Administrators to Total Staff	Classroom Teachers to Students ¹	Teacher Aides to Classroom Teachers	Guidance to Students
Lake	1: 17.29	1: 18.93	1: 28.09	1: 14.58	1: 77.82	1: 418.07
Lee	1: 13.14	1: 14.60	1: 27.19	1: 19.38	1: 4.78	1: 549.11
Manatee	1: 11.25	1: 12.56	1: 24.39	1: 17.55	1: 3.35	1: 449.49
Osceola	1: 15.76	1: 18.61	1: 36.83	1: 21.59	1: 2.80	1: 532.66
Pasco	1: 13.59	1: 15.30	1: 29.83	1: 17.44	1: 4.33	1: 416.34
Collier	1: 11.28	1: 12.94	1: 24.92	1: 17.06	1: 2.89	1: 320.20
State	1: 14.52	1: 16.26	1: 29.49	1: 18.01	1: 4.42	1: 452.03

¹ This is not the same as average classroom size. This ratio is calculated by Department of Education by numbers reported through the EE0-5 survey of salaries in districts. The classroom teacher ratio includes all staff paid under the instructional salary schedule and some of these positions may actually be administrative positions. The OPPAGA team is trying to produce more appropriate ratios at the time of this draft.

Source: Florida Department of Education, Statistical Brief: Staff in Florida's Public Schools Fall 2002, January 2003.

Exhibit 1-7 Collier County School District Employed 3,338 Staff in Year 2001-02

Full-Time Employees	Number	Percentage
Administrators	198	4.0%
Instructional	2,562	51.9%
Support	2,175	44.1%
Total	4,935	100.0%

Source: Florida Department of Education, Statistical Brief: Staff in Florida's Public Schools Fall 2002, January 2003.

The district faces a number of distinct challenges in meeting its primary goal of providing a quality, cost-effective education to the students living in Collier County. For example:

- four out of five school board members were newly elected in November 2002;
- there has been considerable controversy surrounding the superintendent position for the past five years with three superintendent searches, two of them unsuccessful;
- a new superintendent took office in May 2003;
- the district is managing a significant construction program in response to a steady growth in enrollment that is expected to continue in the future;
- there is a high percentage of migrant students; and
- the district has an economically diverse community with the outlying areas representing the more economically disadvantaged students in the district.

Many of these challenges, as well as innovative ways the district has found to address them, are discussed in further detail throughout this report.

2

Management Structures

Summary

The Collier County School District is using 11 of the 14 of the best practices in management structures. The district has up-to-date policies and procedures, uses legal services appropriately, has clear lines of authority, and periodically reviews and adjusts administrative staffing as needed. In addition, the district has assigned principals adequate authority, has good planning and budgeting practices, and appropriately works with parents and business leaders. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its management structures, the board should take measures to run its meetings more efficiently; enhance its training, especially in the area of finance, while securing Master Board certification; and conduct annual self-evaluations. In addition, the district should ensure that the board is informed of the fiscal impact of all decisions to improve oversight of fiscal resources.



As seen in Exhibit 2-1, the district has an opportunity to reduce costs in this area. Determining whether to take advantage of this opportunity is a district decision and should be based on many factors including district needs, public input and school board priorities. If the district implements the recommendation set out in Exhibit 2-1, it would be able to redirect \$837,965 over five years to other priorities, such as putting more money into the classroom or addressing deficiencies identified in this report.

Exhibit 2-1
Our Review Identified One Way in Which the District
Could Reduce Costs in the Area of Management Structures

Best Practice Number	Fiscal Impact					Total
	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Year 2006-07	Year 2007-08	
5 Eliminate the position of deputy superintendent	\$167,593	\$167,593	\$167,593	\$167,593	\$167,593	\$837,965

Background

The Collier County School District is headed by a superintendent who serves as the chief executive officer. The district's five board members are elected at-large, although they represent specific districts

Management Structures

within the county. Each member is elected for a four-year staggered term. Board elections are held in November.

The district has a new board, with all but one member having been newly elected in November 2002. The board chair is the most tenured member of the board, having served on the board for two and one-half years. Exhibit 2-2 shows the length of time board members have served and their experience.

Exhibit 2-2 Most Board Members Were Newly Elected in 2002

Board Member	District	Tenure	Experience
Linda Abbott Board Chair	4	Serving first term; Elected in 2000; Term expires November 2004	Has served on the board for 2 ½ years
Dick J. Bruce Board Vice-Chair	5	Elected for first term in 2002; Term expires November 2006	Newly elected
Patricia Carroll Member	1	Elected for first term in 2002; Term expires November 2006	Newly elected
Kathleen Curatolo Member	2	Elected for first term in 2002 to replace a retiring member; Term expires November 2004	Newly elected
Steven J. Donovan Member	3	Elected for first term in 2002; Term expires November 2006	Newly elected

Source: Collier County School District, May 2003.

The current superintendent was hired in April 2003 by a unanimous board vote. He began work on May 12, 2003. Previously the superintendent served as interim superintendent to the Palm Beach County School District for 18 months. Prior to this, he spent nearly 30 years in Montgomery County schools in Rockville, MD. The superintendent holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Elementary Education and an Ed.D. in Educational Administration and Supervision. The new superintendent has already initiated some of the recommended organizational changes made in this report.

The board negotiated a three-year contract, approved in April 2003 that contains the superintendent's goals for 2003-04 as shown in Exhibit 2-3. Most goals are measurable, and the superintendent will be evaluated against these objectives in 2004. The superintendent's contract does not contain a clause for incentive pay based on goal achievement.

Exhibit 2-3

The Superintendent's Contract Contains Performance Goals

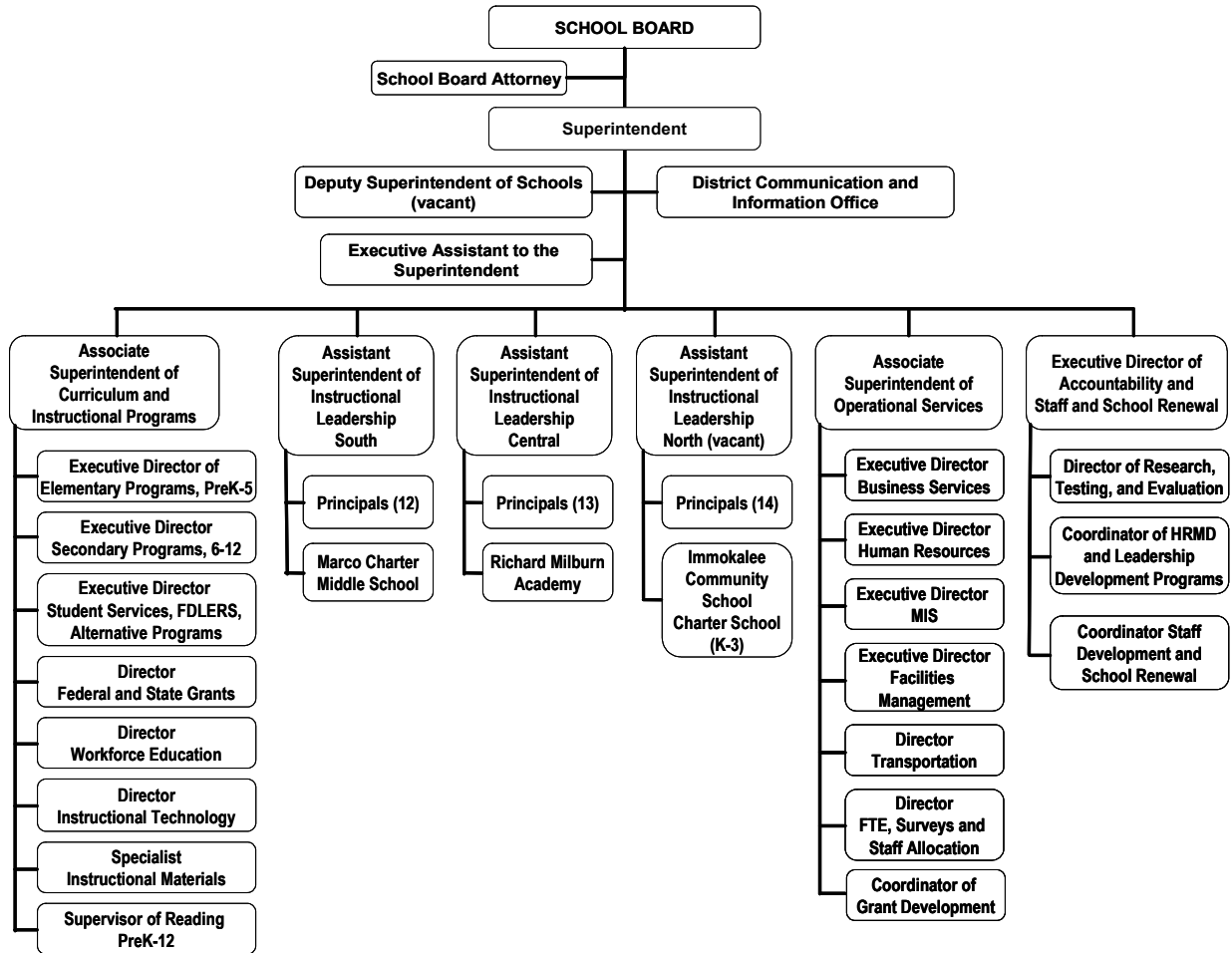
Superintendent Goals

- Increase the graduation rate by at least 1% and exceed Florida's rate;
- Increase by at least 3% the schools getting grades of A, B and C of the FCAT;
- Increase by at least 3% students scoring at level 3 or above in math on a scale of 1 to 5;
- Increase by at least 3% the number of students in kindergarten to second grade meeting target goals as measured by informal assessments;
- Increase by at least 2% students enrolled in advanced classes in middle school;
- Increase by at least 2% students enrolled in honors and advanced classes in high school;
- Increase by at least 3% students meeting state expectations in science in grades 5, 8 and 10.
- Increase by at least 3% students scoring at levels 3 and 4 on the state reading test;
- Increase by at least 3% students making one year's gains in the state reading;
- Increase by at least 3% students scoring 4 and above in the state writing test;
- Increase by at least 5 percentage points the percentage of the community responding positively as measured by the Gallup Poll of community perceptions toward education;
- Increase by at least 5 percentage points the percentage of stakeholders rating positively education as measured by the school advisory councils' climate survey;
- Implement at least 50% of the no-cost recommendations of the state audit;
- Maintain general fund reserves at 2% of the budget;
- Set contingency reserves of 1% of the budget;
- Have excellent financial audits;
- Show significant improvements in student activity fund audits;
- Increase by at least 3% the retention rate of instructional staff;
- Increase by at least 10% points the percentage of teachers training in reading/literacy instruction;
- Increase by at least 10% instructional staff using the Standard-Bearer lesson design qualities in their planning;
- Reduce by at least 10% incidents of students with verbal or physical abuse violations;
- Reduce incidents of inappropriate displays of affection among students and the use of profane or sexually oriented language;
- Reduce the incidents of antidiscrimination and harassment violations; and
- Train all district employees in professional practices policy.

Source: Collier County School District, May 2003.

The superintendent is the chief executive and administrative officer of the board and, as such, is responsible for organizing the district's administration. Exhibit 2-4 illustrates the district's administrative structure.

**Exhibit 2-4
The District’s Organizational Structure Is Hierarchical**



Source: Collier County School District, April 2003.

As this exhibit shows, the positions reporting directly to the superintendent include the following:

- deputy superintendent (currently vacant);
- executive assistant to the superintendent;
- district communication and information officer;
- associate superintendent for curriculum and instructional programs;
- area assistant superintendent – south;
- area assistant superintendent – central;
- area assistant superintendent – north (currently vacant);
- associate superintendent for operational services; and
- executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal.

The associate superintendent for curriculum and instructional programs is charged with overseeing the coordination, design, development, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs and services throughout the district. This position also oversees the instructional technology functions in the district.

Schools are both vertically and horizontally aligned, according to geographic location and feeder patterns. Each school reports directly to an assistant superintendents for the south, central, or north section of the county. In other words, the assistant superintendent in charge of a cluster oversees all the elementary, middle and high schools for that cluster. Principals within each cluster are evaluated by the assistant superintendent responsible for the cluster.

The schools are also assigned to a horizontal team so that similar issues and problems can be dealt with more efficiently. The assistant superintendent-north is the team leader for all high schools, the assistant superintendent-central is the team leader for all middle schools and the assistant superintendent-south is charged with leading the team of all elementary schools. The horizontal teams meet regularly so that policy issues and similar concerns can be addressed.

The associate superintendent for operational services oversees all non-instructional operations of the district including business services, human resources management information services, facilities management, transportation, grant development and FTE, surveys and staff allocations. Business services includes food services, purchasing, central services (print shop and warehouse), accounting, budget and payroll.

The superintendent's cabinet is composed of all associate and assistant superintendents, the executive director of accountability and staff and school renewal, the eight executive directors, the communications and information officer, the executive assistant to the superintendent and the board attorney. The cabinet meets every Tuesday and is responsible for developing and researching agenda items, monitoring and reviewing the district's strategic plan, developing a district budget and revising and developing board policies and administrative procedures.

As Exhibit 2-5 illustrates, the district's budget totaled \$718 million for 2002-03 for all funds. The operating fund budget of \$251 million and the capital projects fund budget of \$319 million account for the most significant expenditures of the district. The debt service fund, totaling to \$65 million, the special revenue fund of \$46 million and the internal service fund totaling \$38 million make up the remaining balance. Enrollment has significantly increased, averaging growth of almost 5% annually since 1997-98. As a result of this growth, the district is undertaking a significant construction program to house the increase in students. District staff estimates that these enrollment increases will continue for several years.

The district has many challenges facing its newly hired superintendent and relatively newly elected school board. The steady growth in enrollment and in the migrant population, combined with the uncertainty of comparable increases in state funding present a major challenge for the district. In addition, the district is not well prepared financially to meet these challenges due to low fund balances. Although new school construction is funded through the capital projects funding, the rigorous construction activities have placed a strain on the district's facilities employees. Finally, providing a quality education to the district's economically diverse student population, with a high percentage of migrant students, is another challenge for district employees.

Exhibit 2-5
The 2002-03 Budget for Collier County School District
Amounted to over \$718 Million for All Funds (\$ in Thousands) ¹

	General Fund	Debt Service Fund	Capital Projects Fund	Special Revenue Fund	Internal Service Fund	Total All Funds
Revenue						
Federal Sources	\$ 1,355	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 4,921	\$ 0	\$ 6,276
Federal Through State	0	0	0	28,012	0	28,012
State Sources	44,880	1,092	5,524	310	0	51,806
Local Sources	189,603	160	92,354	7,038	33,104	322,259
Total Sources	\$235,838	\$1,252	\$97,879	\$40,281	\$33,104	\$408,354
Transfers In	8,959	57,340	0	0	0	66,299
Non-revenue Sources	51	0	175,021	0	0	175,072
Fund Balance July 1, 2002	6,322	6,056	45,731	5,621	4,619	68,350
Total Revenues and Balances	\$251,170	\$64,649	\$318,631	\$45,902	\$37,723	\$718,075
Expenditures						
Instruction	\$152,061	\$0	\$0	\$16,476	\$0	\$168,537
Pupil Personnel Services	11,187	0	0	2,430	0	13,618
Instructional Media Services	3,721	0	0	1	0	3,723
Instructional and Curriculum Services	7,246	0	0	2,615	0	9,860
Instructional Staff Training	2,955	0	0	1,700	0	4,655
Board of Education	1,345	0	0	0	0	1,345
General Administration	2,034	0	0	632	0	2,667
School Administration	18,148	0	0	592	0	18,739
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	917	0	247,384	303	0	248,604
Fiscal Services	1,231	0	0	0	0	1,231
Food Services	0	0	0	14,476	0	14,476
Central Services	6,232	0	0	116	0	6,349
Pupil Transportation Services	12,864	0	0	1,093	0	13,957
Operation of Plant	20,570	0	0	124	0	20,694
Maintenance of Plant	2,582	0	0	17	0	2,598
Community Services	6	0	0	0	0	6
Debt Service/Other	0	51,508	1,764	0	31,743	85,015
Total Expenditures	\$243,100	\$51,508	\$249,149	\$40,576	\$31,743	\$616,075
Transfers Out	0	0	66,299			66,299
Fund Balance June 30, 2003	8,070	13,141	3,184	5,326	5,980	35,701
Total Expenditures, Transfers and Balances	\$251,170	\$64,649	\$318,631	\$45,902	\$37,723	\$718,075

¹ Totals may not add due to rounding.

Source: Collier County School District, May 2003.

Activities of particular interest

In 2003 the school board started an on-line newsletter, the *Collier Communicator*. The newsletter, available from the district's website, allows each school board member and the superintendent to address topics they deem important such as student performance, budgets, conflict resolution, and community involvement. The *Collier Communicator* also provides a recap of prior board meetings, presents agendas for upcoming board meetings, and provides important dates such as Town Hall meetings and other announcements.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Management Structures Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Board and Superintendent Roles and Responsibilities	1. The roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent have been clearly delineated and board members and the superintendent have policies to ensure that they have effective working relationships.	No	2-9
	2. The board and superintendent have procedures to ensure that board meetings are efficient and effective.	No	2-11
	3. The board and superintendent have established written policies and procedures that are routinely updated to ensure that they are relevant and complete.	Yes	2-13
	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.	Yes	2-15
Organization, Staffing and Resource Allocation	5. The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority that minimize administrative costs.	Yes	2-19
	6. The district periodically reviews its administrative staffing and makes changes to eliminate unnecessary positions and improve operating efficiency.	Yes	2-21
	7. The superintendent and school board exercise effective oversight of the district's financial resources.	No	2-22
	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.	Yes	2-23
Planning and Budgeting	9. The district has a multi-year strategic plan with annual goals and measurable objectives based on identified needs, projected enrollment and revenues.	Yes	2-24
	10. The district has a system to accurately project enrollment.	Yes	2-26
	11. The district links its financial plans and budgets to its annual priorities in the strategic plan and its goals and objectives; and district resources are focused towards achieving those goals and objectives.	Yes	2-27
	12. When necessary, the district considers options to increase revenue.	Yes	2-28
Community Involvement	13. The district actively involves parents and guardians in the district's decision making and activities.	Yes	2-29
	14. The district actively involves business partners and community organizations in the district's decision making and activities.	Yes	2-30

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice 1: Not Using

The roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent have been clearly delineated and board members and the superintendent have policies to ensure that they have effective working relationships. However, the review team noted deficiencies in the training received by new school board members and that the board does not conduct regular self-evaluations.

To be effective, school districts must have a constructive, trusting relationship between their school boards and superintendent. This relationship is jeopardized most often when the parties do not understand or fail to adhere to their distinct roles in the educational process. In this district, unlike other school districts in Florida that have elected superintendents, the superintendent is appointed by the school board. Districts should have mechanisms to maintain a distinct separation of roles and responsibilities between the school board and superintendent. The school board should be the policymaking entity in the district and the superintendent should have the primary responsibility for implementing these policies during the course of his daily administration of the district. School board members should not direct daily operations and should address operational concerns through the superintendent. The superintendent should not make broad, district wide policies without the approval of the board. A district may use both formal and informal mechanisms to ensure that each entity adheres to its proper roles and responsibilities. At a minimum, the district, regardless of size, should have policies that comply with state statutes regarding these roles and responsibilities.

The Collier County School District has several board policies that delineate the responsibilities of the board and the superintendent and direct employees on how to handle communications both within the district and between the district and the public. Board policy states that “All official business between the Board and the employees of the School District shall be through the Superintendent. In order to be informed and better able to perform his obligations, a board member shall always have the right to talk with, ask questions and engage in a free exchange of information with any employee of the School District on matters which are pertinent to such employment. A board member, however, shall not individually give any instructions or orders to any employee relative to his performance of his duties.”

However, the district is not using this best practice for two reasons. First, the new board members elected in November 2002 did not receive adequate training upon becoming board members. Shortly after they were elected, board members received a four-hour session that included a presentation by a Florida School Boards Association facilitator regarding sunshine laws and the role of the board. The orientation also included presentations by key district employees on topics such as a briefing on the upcoming organizational meeting and subsequent board meeting, an overview of the strategic plan, diversity awareness, 2002-03 budget overview, the Best Financial Management Practices Review, and the superintendent’s goals. The board attorney also made a brief presentation. In addition to the orientation, board members were informed of two-day training held by the Florida School Boards Association. The only board member to attend this training, however, was the board chair who has served on the board for two and one-half years.

In addition, the new board has not qualified as a master board and has delayed the necessary training to achieve its master board certification. In January 2003, the board voted to send a letter of intent to the Florida School Boards Association to obtain its master board certification. However, the motion that the board voted on contained a caveat that the board could cancel the training if they decided against it.

Management Structures

Training was scheduled to take place in April 2003; however, the board did not attend. The board is now scheduled to begin master board certification training in the fall of 2003.

As a newly elected board with no prior experience, additional training in board governance and policy-setting, management of finances, preparing and monitoring a budget and managing school board meetings is needed to help the board fully understand its role. Action Plan 2-1 outlines steps to assist the district in improving its operations and using this best practice.

Action Plan 2-1

We recommend that the board develop a training plan that satisfies the needs of individual board members and also qualifies towards master board certification.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Develop a training plan for each board member. The plans should be based on the member's prior experience and interests, and should also consider the requirements necessary to obtain master board certification.
	Step 2.	Develop a training calendar to ensure that each board member obtains the necessary training requirements in a timely manner.
	Step 3.	Monitor the progress toward achieving individual board member training plans and master board certification quarterly and develop contingency plans for any anticipated training deficiencies.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and the board	
Time Frame	June 2005	

The second reason that the board is not using this best practice is that it does not regularly conduct self-evaluations. Because the board does not regularly assess its own performance, it is difficult to determine what actions are necessary to meet district goals. Self-evaluations allow board members to review the status of district goal achievement in light of its own actions. For instance, should the board determine that the district is not meeting its priority goals, it should, as a collective board, look to its own actions to see if the board is providing the necessary resources to support the district in achieving these goals.

The board should develop procedures for conducting self-evaluations. The board has the resources to do this on its own, or it could seek assistance from an outside consultant. Should the board seek the assistance of an outside consultant, we estimate that the total cost would be \$1,010. This estimate includes the cost of a facilitator at \$500 per day plus travel expenses including meals of \$510 per day ($\$500 + \$510 = \$1,010$).¹

¹ This cost is based on estimates obtained from the Florida School Boards Association in May 2003. Costs for other consultants may differ.

Action Plan 2-2 outlines steps to assist the district in improving its operations and using this best practice.

Action Plan 2-2

We recommend that the district school board develop a process for conducting self-evaluations.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Develop a plan and timeline for conducting self-evaluations.
	Step 2.	Determine whether the board chooses to use an outside consultant for assistance. If an outside consultant is used, develop a budget for the process.
	Step 3.	Contact other Florida school districts to obtain examples of the framework used for conducting self-evaluations.
	Step 4.	Compile a list of best practices from other Florida districts.
	Step 5.	Develop a process for conducting board self-evaluations using the best practices.
	Step 6.	Annually implement the board self-evaluation process.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and the board	
Time Frame	March 2004	

Best Practice 2: Not Using

The superintendent has administrative procedures to ensure that board meetings are efficient and effective, yet some board practices result in lengthy and inefficient board meetings.

The primary goal of all school board meetings should be to come to a decision in a timely manner on the majority of policy issues presented during a particular meeting. To best meet this goal the school board and superintendent should have formal and informal mechanisms to ensure that board meetings run efficiently and effectively and to ensure all policy discussions and decisions are open and accessible to the public. Board meetings that consistently last longer than the time allotted is usually a telling sign that appropriate mechanisms are not in place, or are ineffective. Board members should not have to ask staff frequently for more information on agenda items, or ask for clarifications of the materials provided. In addition, board members and the superintendent should ensure that meetings are accessible and open to the public at large. For example, meetings should be located in large population concentrations at times that are not in conflict with the work hours of the majority of the public (e.g., board meetings should usually begin after 6:00 p.m.). If possible, board meetings should be broadcast live, or taped for later broadcast, on local public access television channels.

The Collier County School District takes several of these steps. School board meetings are open to the public. The meetings are generally held on the first Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. and the third Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. in the administrative center board room. All meeting times are publicized in the local newspaper, on the district's website and on the educational channel. The meetings are televised on the educational channel, as well as rebroadcast every Saturday at noon and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. Public forums or other public events are also carried live and in rebroadcast on the educational channel. In addition, all meeting agendas and the minutes from each meeting are published on the district's website. At least two times a year the board holds its meetings in the more remote locations of the county. In February of each year the board meeting is held at Everglades City School and in April at Immokalee High School. This process allows the residents of Everglades City and Immokalee to personally participate in the meetings.

The superintendent's cabinet reviews the agenda for each board meeting and the executive assistant to the superintendent is responsible for ensuring that staff submits agenda documentation timely so that board members have sufficient time to review their board packet prior to meetings. Board members receive

Management Structures

their packets the Friday before the next Thursday's board meeting, allowing adequate time to review the materials and contact district staff in the event they have any questions.

In spite of the open nature of the meetings and the efficient process of board meeting preparation, the district is not using this best practice for two reasons. First, board meetings are used to accomplish more than conducting the board's business. For instance, staff makes lengthy presentations to the board to explain issues or agenda items or to generally educate the board about critical issues. While this is a valuable process, it could be more efficiently accomplished through other venues such as committee meetings. Another item that takes valuable time is the numerous recognition ceremonies that take place during board meetings. Again, formal recognition by the board is important, but should be limited during public board meetings.

Some school districts use other effective methods to meet their governance structure. For example, some districts hold two meetings each month, one of which is a regular business meeting during which the board considers and votes on agenda items. The second monthly meeting is a committee of the whole, a work session that provides opportunities for planning, discussion of possible actions for future business meetings, detailed presentations and in-service trainings, and strategic reviews of issues facing the district. The work sessions also give board members an opportunity to listen to input and gather data critical to decision making, allowing them to be ready to make informed decisions at regular board business meetings. Since all board members are in the same meeting along with staff, this structure allows for open communication without redundancies. Board members can use committee of the whole meetings to resolve administrative and operative issues and clarify policy issues in advance of regular board meetings. Committee of the whole meetings, while open to the public, do not allow public input so that the board can focus on the issues being discussed. Action Plan 2-3 outlines steps to assist the district in improving its operations and using this best practice.

Action Plan 2-3

We recommend that the district hold one board business meeting and one Committee of the Whole meeting each month.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Revise the structure of current board meetings so that business meetings will be held one time per month.
	Step 2.	Develop a schedule of topics to be discussed at committee of the whole meetings monthly.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and the executive assistant to the superintendent	
Time Frame	January 2004	

A second reason that the district is not using this best practice is that the board does not effectively manage public input, which results in lengthy meetings. For instance, the regular board meeting held on December 12, 2002 lasted over seven hours and the meetings held January 30 and February 13, 2003 each lasted almost six hours. Although other recent meetings have not lasted this long, they often run three or four hours.

Board policy and meeting procedures allow for members of the public to question and/or comment on each agenda item. Policy further states that this right shall not be abused and that the board chair may control the input relative to length and pertinence of the discussion. Although members of the public are allotted five minutes for input, the board chair provides each member from a single organization an opportunity to address a topic individually rather than requiring that only one member from the organization speak on behalf of the other members. In addition, members of the public who have already addressed the board about a topic can speak on the same topic again later in the meeting. Review of board meeting tapes, for example, shows that during the February 13, 2003 meeting, the same members of

the public addressed the board multiple times. One individual addressed the board four different times during the same meeting on the same topic. In addition to poor management of the time allotted to members of the public and the number of times they are allowed to address and re-address the board, individual board members also engage in dialog with members of the public. Each of these practices result in lengthy meetings.

By establishing mechanisms to allow for extended public input such as town hall meetings and call-in shows on the education channel, and being stricter in receiving input during meetings, the district can improve the efficiency of its business board meetings. Town hall meetings and other forums can provide an opportunity for the public to provide extensive input to the board and superintendent. Public input at board business meetings can then be managed to allow for efficient conduct of board actions. Action Plan 2-4 outlines steps to assist the district in improving its operations and using this best practice.

Action Plan 2-4

We recommend that the board and the superintendent hold town hall meetings to allow for extensive public input and implement and enforce guidelines on public input during regular board business meetings.

Action Needed	Step 1. Establish a schedule of town hall meetings to be held at various school locations around the county. A meeting should be scheduled in each of the county's districts and the superintendent and the board member representing the district should attend. Step 2. Publicize the schedule of town hall meetings. Step 3. Hold town hall meetings five times annually or more often as issues arise.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, board members and the district communications and information officer
Time Frame	January 2004

Best Practice 3: Using

The board and superintendent have established written policies and procedures that are routinely updated by legal counsel to ensure that they are relevant and complete.

Up-to-date district wide procedures, when coupled with appropriate policies, ensure that activities are carried out in an efficient and effective manner. In addition, relevant and complete policies help ensure that districts are in compliance with federal and state laws and staff and students are treated equally and consistently when applying board policies. The larger the district or the more decentralized its administration, the more important the overarching set of extensive policies and procedures become. All districts should have, at minimum, written board policies that are consistent with the *Florida Statutes*. Most districts should also have detailed written policies pertaining to specific areas like pupil progression, transportation and services for ESE populations. Districts also should have procedures to ensure that these policies are implemented consistently within administrative units, grade levels and among schools. Finally, district wide policies and procedures should be readily accessible by employees, students and their guardians and the general public.

The Collier County School District maintains a policy manual that is organized as shown in Exhibit 2-6.

Exhibit 2-6
Collier County School District Maintains a Policy Manual

Section	Contents
A	Foundations and Basic Commitments
B	School Board Governance and Operations
C	General School Administration
D	Fiscal Management
E	Support Services
F	Facilities Development
G	Personnel
H	Negotiations
I	Instruction
J	Students
K	School-Community Relations
L	Education Agency Relations

Source: Collier County School District, May 2003.

The district has a policy committee comprised of all members of the superintendent’s cabinet excluding the principals and the superintendent. The committee is charged with ensuring that all district policies, rules and administrative procedures are updated and reflect current applicable laws and statutes. The executive assistant to the superintendent, as policy committee chair, is responsible for maintaining district policies, tracking changes in state laws and regulations and ensuring that policy updates are conducted timely. All members play a role in policy development and updates. The executive assistant to the superintendent keeps a list of all policies and as updates are needed, or as new policies need to be developed, assigns the primary responsibility for researching and drafting or revisiting a policy to a member of the team. The executive assistant to the superintendent also tracks changes in legislation that necessitate policy changes.

The cabinet, superintendent and attorney review all policies before they are taken to the school board and if necessary, the executive director of business services develops an economic impact statement based on input from the policy author. Board policy on policy adoption requires two readings for new or revised policies. The first reading is for information only and the board takes action at the second reading, which must be advertised 30 days in advance.

The district maintains a separate administrative bulletins manual that provides the detailed procedures that support district policies. Similar to the policy development and re-write process, the policy committee is responsible for updating the administrative bulletins.

The district’s policy manual is available in electronic format on the district’s website at www.collier.k12.fl.us. Although the electronic version of the manual is an efficient and effective way to provide access to district policies, few people we interviewed were aware that the policies were available in electronic format.

While the district is using this best practice, it could improve the availability of its board policies by notifying employees through bulletins and e-mails that this information is available on-line. The district could also include the link to the on-line policy on all paper copies of the manual. In addition, the district could more efficiently and effectively disseminate its administrative bulletins to district employees by making the bulletins available on-line as well. This will help to facilitate the update and dissemination of policies by reducing the number of paper policy manuals and administrative bulletins.

We recommend that the district notify employees of the availability of on-line board policies and place its administrative bulletins on its website for access by employees.

Best Practice 4: Using

The district routinely obtains legal services to advise it about policy and reduce the risk of lawsuits. However, the district could take additional steps to ensure that its legal costs are reasonable.

School boards should have appropriate, responsive legal counsel to address legal issues as they arise. Legal services should be comprehensive, providing input on district policies and personnel issues and advice to ensure that the district complies with federal and state legal requirements. Legal services should support the board, its individual members, the superintendent and district staff. In smaller districts, legal services are more likely to be contracted out, while the largest districts may have several in-house attorneys as well as contracted attorneys. As small districts grow in size, they should periodically evaluate whether hiring a full-time in-house attorney would be more cost-effective than contracting. Regardless of the district’s size, legal expenses (including hourly rates, retainer fees and total annual expenditures) should be evaluated for accuracy and appropriateness.

The Collier County School District contracts with an attorney for its legal services. The agreement between the attorney and the district calls for a retainer of \$270,000 paid by the district in exchange for unlimited routine attorney services outlined in the contract. This allows staff and board members to have ready access to the attorney for a fixed fee. Should other services such as litigation be necessary, the district pays the attorney an additional \$175 per hour. Exhibit 2-7 shows the services that are included in the retainer and those that are billed at an hourly rate.

Exhibit 2-7

Collier County School District Maintains an Agreement with an Outside Attorney

Retainer Services	Hourly Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at board meetings • Attendance at special board meetings • Attendance at weekly senior leadership team meetings • Correspondence with school board members • Correspondence with the superintendent and his/her designees • Providing general and routine legal services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litigation in state and federal court • Litigation in arbitration proceedings • Litigation in administrative hearings, including due process hearings • Employee grievance proceedings • Real estate acquisitions, easements and closings • Title insurance • Attendance at collective bargaining sessions • Workers Compensation proceedings • Out of county lobbying • Borrowing instruments, certificates of participation and bond issues

Source: Collier County School District, April 2003.

The current law firm has provided legal services to the district since 1992. In January 2003, the board voted to approve a new contract with the law firm, increasing the retainer from \$210,000 to \$270,000 annually and the hourly rate from \$160 to \$175. Prior to January 2003, the last time the contract with the law firm was renegotiated was in 1999. These contract renewals were not competitively bid, nor were payment adjustments compared to peer district or other government entity costs. Exhibit 2-8 shows the breakdown of legal costs by category for 2000-01 and 2001-02.

Exhibit 2-8

Total Legal Services Expenditures Have Fluctuated Over the Past Two Years Due to Some Exceptional Issues Faced by the District

Category	2000-01	2001-02
Retainer Fees	\$210,000	\$210,000
Real Estate Services	\$169,773	\$300,349
Labor/Employment Law	\$83,897	\$70,833
Litigation (other than ESE)	\$35,375	\$71,990
ESE Litigation	\$134,370	\$541,114
COP Financing	\$8,326	\$16,961
Billable Expenses	\$3,322	\$7,077
Other/Misc.	\$6,400	\$4,190
Totals	\$651,463	\$1,222,514

Source: Collier County School District, May 2003.

The district requires additional attorney services for specialty areas such as ESE and employment litigation and bond counsel. To help manage these services and fees, the board attorney assists the district in finding other attorneys and in negotiating contractual fees. The board attorney also reviews all outside attorney bills and fees before they are submitted to the district for payment.

At the January 30, 2003 board meeting, in addition to increasing the attorney fees, the board also voted to conduct a detailed analysis of legal fees. The board assigned a citizen's committee to research the issue by having each board member appoint one community member. The charge to this legal services committee was as follows:

"It is the desire of the Board that the Committee examine the extent and type of legal services required by the Board, evaluate alternatives for the provision of those services and, considering costs and value of service, recommend the best means of delivering those services.

Alternatives to be considered by the Committee are to include: contracted services; a complete in-house capability; and, a combination of in-house and contracted services. The Committee is also requested to recommend appropriate rates of compensation for the recommended alternative.

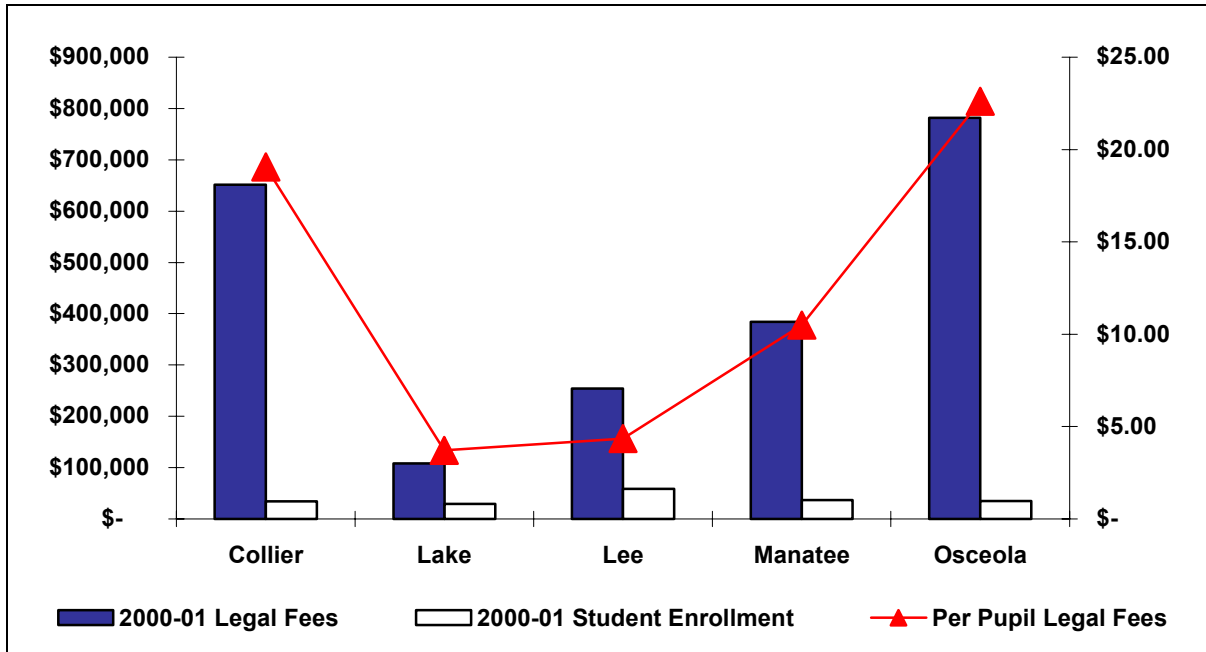
The Board requests the Committee complete its work and bring forth its recommendation not later than 5 June 2003."

The committee met several times and presented its findings to the board in June 2003. The committee recommended that the board use a combination of in-house and contracted legal services. The committee recommended that an in-house legal team be developed, consisting of one lead attorney, one junior attorney and one executive secretary. The committee felt that this structure would provide a cost savings to the district and would place the district in a better position in view of the anticipated growth of the district. The committee also recommended that the district continue to contract with outside attorneys for specialized legal services.

A comparison of Collier County School Board legal expenses with of data received from Lee, Manatee, Osceola, and Lake counties shows that the district has the second highest total legal expenses, second to Osceola County. When these costs are divided by student enrollment to account for size differences of

each district, Osceola (\$22.63 per pupil) and Collier (\$19.05 per pupil) counties still have the first and second ranking, respectively. The remaining districts that have provided peer information are Lake County (\$3.71), Lee County (\$4.35 per pupil) and Manatee County (\$10.50 per pupil). These comparisons are presented in Exhibit 2-9.

Exhibit 2-9
The District's Legal Expenditures Per Pupil Are High Compared to Its Peers



Source: Florida Department of Education statistics, 2000-01.

Although this comparison makes it appear that the district's legal fees are excessive, the district explains that due to a few particularly difficult legal challenges faced during 2000-01 and 2001-02, total legal costs for these two years are extraordinary. The district also points to its aggressive land acquisition program for building new schools as another reason for the recent high legal costs. Indeed, when considering the different types of legal services obtained by the district, real estate acquisition accounted for over 26% of total legal fees in 2000-01 and almost 25% in 2001-02.

In June 2003, the district conducted a survey of other Florida districts to help examine options for procuring legal services. The survey asked several questions regarding whether district contract for legal services, maintain in-house attorney staffs, or combinations of both. The survey results, presented in Exhibit 2-10, show a wide variety in the manner in which districts obtain their legal services as well as the total cost of legal services.

**Exhibit 2-10
Florida School Districts Use a Variety of Ways
to Procure Legal Services, and the Costs Vary**

	Alachua	Brevard	Escambia	Lake	Osceola
How are legal services provided?	Combination of in-house and contracted	Exclusively contracted services	Combination of in-house and contracted	Exclusively contracted services	Exclusively contracted services
In-house staff:	1 attorney 1 legal assistant	N/A	1 attorney 1 legal assistant	N/A	N/A
Annual staff costs	\$151,000	N/A	\$147,825	N/A	N/A
Total expenditures for contracted services	\$120,000	\$240,153 ¹	\$288,824	\$108,438	\$650,000
Total in-house and contracted	\$271,000	\$240,153	\$436,649	\$108,438	\$650,000 ²
	Manatee	Marion	Sarasota	Pinellas	
How are legal services provided?	Combination of in-house and contracted	Exclusively contracted services	Exclusively contracted services	Combination of in-house and contracted	
In-house staff	1 attorney 1 secretary	N/A	N/A	3 attorneys 2 legal assistants 1 paralegal 1 clerk	
Annual staff costs	\$160,000	N/A	N/A	\$545,998	
Total expenditures for contracted services	\$180,028	\$239,374	\$438,908	\$94,746 ³	
Total in-house and contracted	\$340,028	\$239,374	\$438,908		

¹ Does not include facilities, student service or workers' compensation.

² Contract provides for advising the school board, reviewing policy, providing an in-house attorney and handling all litigation with regard to the school district.

³ Budgeted amount. Amount does not include insurance defense which is handled by a third party administrator.

Source: Collier County School District survey of other Florida districts, June 2003.

Although the district is using this best practice, it could improve the process for obtaining legal services by conducting more regular comparisons of its attorney services with peer districts and other local government legal costs. Reviews should ensure that specific services (e.g. board attorney, real estate, or employee litigation) and their associated costs are comparable. Based on this information, the district can decide whether adjustments to its legal staffing or contracted arrangements are needed or whether new proposals for contracted legal services should be solicited. Together, these efforts will ensure that services meet district needs while remaining cost effective.

We recommend that the district compare the cost of its board attorney and other legal services to those of its peers and to other local government entities at least every three years, and use these findings to ensure that services meet district needs while being cost effective.

ORGANIZATION, STAFFING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Best Practice 5: Using

The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority that minimize administrative costs. However, the district could improve its efficiency by eliminating positions with low spans of control.

A school district's organizational structure should enable the effective and efficient delivery of support services to the schools, teachers and students. In general, school districts should organize their administration so that similar support services are grouped together and lines of authority are clear to staff and the general public. In addition, school districts should minimize administrative staff, especially at the district level. There is no one-size-fits-all district organizational structure, although there are several common administrative structures employed by school districts statewide. Smaller districts are more likely to have a simple hierarchical structure with all administrative units reporting directly to the superintendent and ultimately to the board. Larger districts may group their administrative units by distinct functions [i.e., school operations; instructional support services (curriculum, evaluation); business support services (finance, budgeting, MIS); operational support (food services, transportation, safety and security)]. Irrespective of organizational structure, staff and the general public should be able to clearly understand who is responsible for what in the district.

The Collier County School District's organizational structure has a superintendent, supported by two associate superintendents and three assistant superintendents. Schools are organized both vertically and horizontally and report to the assistant superintendents who are charged with evaluating principal performance. The organizational structure of the district is shown in Exhibit 2-4.

Exhibit 2-11 shows the spans of control for the district's top administrators. Span of control is defined as the number of employees directly reporting to an individual. Too large a span of control can mean that the position to which they report cannot provide adequate oversight and too low a span of control translates into operational inefficiencies. As this exhibit shows, there are several positions in the district that have relatively low spans of control, which might lead to the conclusion that some of these positions could be consolidated or eliminated.

**Exhibit 2-11
Many Leadership Positions in the District have Low Spans of Control**

Position	Number of Direct Reports
Superintendent	9
Deputy Superintendent	0
Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Programs	10
Associate Superintendent for Operational Services	7
Area Assistant Superintendent – North	15
Area Assistant Superintendent – Central	14
Area Assistant Superintendent – South	13
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent	0
District Communication and Information Officer	3
Executive Director – Management Information Services	5
Executive Director – Business Services	6
Executive Director for Accountability and Staff and School Renewal	4
Executive Director – Human Resources	5
Executive Director – Facilities Management	4
Executive Director – Secondary Programs	6
Executive Director – Elementary Programs	3
Executive Director – Student Services, FDLRS, Alternative Programs	4
Director – FTE, Surveys and Staff Allocations	4
Director – Workforce Education	2
Director – ESE	4
Director – Federal and State Grants	3
Director – Research, Testing and Evaluation	1
Director – ESOL ¹ and Multicultural/Foreign Language	1
Director – Instructional Technology	9
Director – Maintenance Operations	6
Director – Facilities Planning and Construction	9
Director – Code Enforcement	1
Director – Transportation	9
Director – Food Services	8
Director – Purchasing	5
Director – Risk Management	1
Director – Recruiting	1
Director – Staffing	3
Administrator of Career and Technical Education ²	0

¹ English for Students of Other Languages.

² Position falls on the director-level salary schedule.

Source: Collier County School District, March 2003.

Though the district is using this best practice, savings could be achieved by eliminating the position of deputy superintendent. The review team determined that this position could be eliminated without undue hardship on the district. This position was vacant between 1998 and May 2003. Because the district has shown that operations were not adversely affected by this position being vacant, the position should be eliminated.

The district could achieve an annual savings of \$167,593. This is calculated by taking the salary of the deputy superintendent position of \$137,240 and adding variable benefits of 17.65% and fixed benefits of \$6,130 ($[\$137,240 \times 1.1765] + \$6,130 = \$167,593$).

We recommend that the position of deputy superintendent be eliminated.

The district could achieve further efficiencies by increasing the span of control for some positions. This could be done in a variety of ways, including re-assignment of staff and combining and collapsing functional areas.

We recommend that the district review all positions listed in Exhibit 2-11 and work to increase the span of control for each position having four or fewer employees reporting to it.

Best Practice 6: Using

The district periodically reviews its administrative staffing and makes changes to eliminate unnecessary positions and improve operating efficiency. Although the district has administrative staffing ratios for several operational areas, some operational areas do not have staffing ratios.

Well-run school districts are lean administratively and maximize funds available to support their primary mission, educating students. To accomplish this, school district staffing should promote efficiency and effectiveness while minimizing administration, especially at the district level. Low administrative to instructional staff ratios generally indicate that resources are being concentrated in the classroom, the main objective of most school boards and the state. However, districts must balance the goal of minimizing administration with the fact that some support services provided at the district level are more cost-effective than multiple site-based staff.

The Collier County School District department of FTE, surveys and staff allocations is primarily responsible for developing and monitoring administrative staffing formulas.² The department is staffed with a manager of ESE FTE and allocations, an FTE specialist, a part-time ESOL (English for Student of Other Languages) compliance supervisor, an allocation specialist I, a part-time workforce development information systems supervisor and a secretary, all who report to the director of FTE, surveys and staff allocations. The department is responsible for forecasting student enrollment, FTE reporting to the state, projecting FTE counts and developing staffing formulas and allocating resources.

The process for determining staffing formulas begins with FTE projections for the upcoming school year. Staff members also consider program changes that may affect FTE projections and staffing needs. Beginning in September or October of each year, the staffing formula committee meets to discuss formulas and to obtain input from stakeholders. After the committee has established preliminary staffing formulas and received input from stakeholders, a final recommendation is presented to the board. This board presentation usually occurs in February.

The district has adopted staffing formulas for the facilities, transportation and food services functions. However, there are some departments that do not have formulas, such as the business services functions. Although the district is using this best practice, it could improve its operations by adopting staffing formulas for all administrative positions.

² Full-time equivalents (FTE) are measures of student counts that are used for a variety of purposes including obtaining state funding and allocating resources within the district. FTEs are weighted to ensure that staffing levels meet student needs.

We recommend that the district adopt administrative staffing formulas for all administrative departments.

Best Practice 7: Not Using

The superintendent and school board do not exercise effective oversight of the district’s financial resources.

To exercise effective oversight, the school board and superintendent must have a clear and up-to-date understanding of the financial condition of their district. To accomplish this, the superintendent and board members must understand the fiscal implications of their decisions, both short and long-term. In addition, if and when financial problems arise, the superintendent and school board must be able to react quickly and responsibly and in a manner that prevents significant disruption of school district operations. In general, financial reports and budget information should be clear and useful to board members and the general public. These documents should not require extensive explanation by district staff or the superintendent. Financial information should be updated and presented to the board on a regular basis and all agenda items that have an impact on the budget should include detailed explanations of these effects.

The Collier County School District holds at least two budget workshops beginning in April, with budget hearings held in August and September of each year. All workshops and hearings are open to the public. Information presented and discussed at the budget workshops includes the operating and capital budgets and detailed information of facilities, FTE projections, current school capacities, major capital plan projects and real estate acquisition plans. The administration also presents department staffing requirements, technology infrastructure needs and bus replacement needs. At one board meeting each month, the board is provided with financial statements and budget amendments. This information is provided in the consent agenda.

The district is not using this best practice for three reasons. First, the school board is not provided adequate financial information on a regular basis. All monthly financial reports are voted on in the consent agenda with no discussion or overview provided by staff. In addition, the board does not see cash flow forecasts or reports of investment activity. Considering the financial situation that the district is in and the anticipated cut-backs in state funding, one would expect the board to keep a close pulse on its financial situation. District staff told the review team that past boards have not wanted to hear presentations of the district’s financial information and requested that the reports be included in the consent agenda. Refer to Chapter 11, *Cost Controls*, for the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 2-5

We recommend that staff prepare and present fiscal implications for all actions considered by the board.

Action Needed	Step 1. Review all board action items to determine whether or not they have a fiscal impact. Step 2. Present detailed financial data to the board for all action items determined to have a fiscal impact. This should include not only the anticipated amount of the item, but how the proposed item affects the budget, from what fund the item will be paid and whether the item is a one-time expenditure or a recurring expenditure. Step 3. Consider all fiscal implications of board action items.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, executive director of business services and the board
Time Frame	January 2004

The second reason that the district is not using this best practice is related to its lack of school finance training. Board training in the management of fiscal resources will help the board to better manage the district's funds and will help to ensure that the district's fund balance is not used to finance recurring expenditures. Training of district finances can be obtained through a variety of mechanisms including mentoring from district staff, board workshops, and through classes or conferences. Refer to Best Practice 1 in this chapter, Action Plan 2-1 for the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

The third reason that the district is not using this best practice is that the school board does not always consider the full fiscal impact of its decisions. Past decisions that have adversely affected the district's financial situation include drawing down its fund balance to dangerously low levels. Some recurring expenditures are taken against fund balance. An example of this occurred in October 2002 when the board voted to increase salaries. Because the fiscal impact of this decision was not fully considered, it resulted in the over expending of grant budgets for 2002-03. Since grant budgets had already been submitted to and funded by the funding agencies, the shortfall had to be funded from the district's operations budget.

Action Plan 2-5 describes additional steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Best Practice 8: Using

The district has clearly assigned school principals the authority they need to effectively manage their schools while adhering to districtwide policies and procedures.

Principals should have the authority and ability to manage the day-to-day operations of their schools with minimal interference from the district office. At the same time, it is important that principals adhere to districtwide policies and procedures so that students are treated equally from school to school. Principals, as the top administrators in the schools, should have the ability to respond to most situations in their schools without first having to receive approval or acknowledgment from the district. Principals should be held accountable for the performance of their faculty and students, but should also have the authority to modify programs to improve this performance. To this end, principals should have discretion in the way they allocate their school funds that is consistent with the level of accountability required by the district. Principals must be aware of and adhere to districtwide policies and procedures, regardless of the level of "site-based management" used in the district. Districtwide policies and procedures ensure legal compliance and promote the equal treatment of students from school to school and among grade levels.

The Collier County School District's principals operate under a participatory leadership model. Principals are afforded the authority to operate their campuses as they deem necessary. To assist the principals the district has established systems to ensure equity for students at all schools through district-wide policies and procedures for items such as staffing, student advisory councils (SAC) and assessment. These provisions are intended to also provide flexibility for specific school or community needs.

Principals have the flexibility to use their resources as needed on their campus, but the funding and staffing allocations are such that not many principals alter the basic set-up of their schools. The review team found that, where needed, principals used the flexibility given to them to staff their campus to best suit their needs. For example, the staffing formulas used to allocate personnel resources to schools contain a staffing conversion table. This table assigns a ratio to each campus-based position. A school principal can then "trade" positions if he or she so chooses to better accomplish the goals established in school improvement plans. All staff trades, however, must be conducted in accordance with the district's staff trade guidelines.

The district has several mechanisms for holding school administrators accountable for adhering to district-wide policies and procedures. The most significant mechanism is the annual performance

appraisal. The appraisal form used to assess the performance of school principals, for example, is a two-part evaluation tool. The first section relates to instructional leadership and contains four areas of review: school improvement, staff development, instructional management and personnel management. Each of the four areas of review contain measures against which performance is judged. The second section of the principal annual performance appraisal relates to management and administrative performance. This section of the appraisal lists 20 performance areas for which the principal either meets or does not meet the measure.

In addition, each principal meets regularly with the area assistant superintendents over their cluster and the area assistant superintendent over their group. Area assistant superintendents visit each school in their cluster at least monthly and are well informed of the business and events happening at the schools.

PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Best Practice 9: Using

The district has a multi-year strategic plan with annual goals and measurable objectives based on identified needs, projected enrollment and revenues.

Strategic planning enables a district to identify its critical needs and establish strategies and reallocate resources to address these needs. To ensure that all critical needs are identified, the strategic planning process should include broad stakeholder input. The decisions made during the strategic planning process should be in writing and the resulting plan should guide both policymaking and program development. The strategic plan also should address both instructional and non-instructional programs and have reasonable goals and objectives that can be accomplished, in most cases, within available resources. The complexity and breadth of the strategic plan will vary based on the size of the district. All strategic plans should include an accountability and evaluation component or else the plan becomes ineffectual.

In 2000, the district adopted its first district educational improvement plan (DEIP). The plan was developed over a two-year period and integrated a broad base of input including the school board, superintendent, cabinet, and central and site-based administrators. In addition, the community participated in the development of the plan through a group called Focus on the Community Created by Us.

The DEIP, which contains 10 goals, including the eight goals established by the state of Florida and two additional goals, is a multi-year plan that the district updates annually. The additional goals are fiscal and resource responsibility and comprehensive planning and program accountability. The DEIP begins with six board priorities which are improving student achievement, literacy, communication, fiscal responsibility, conduct and staff recruitment, retention and professional development. The 10 goals of the DEIP are presented in Exhibit 2-12.

**Exhibit 2-12
The DEIP Includes Eight State Goals and Two Local Goals**

Goal	State/Local	Programs
Goal 1- Readiness to Start School Communities and schools collaborate to prepare children and families for children’s success in school.	State Goal	Pre-Kindergarten
Goal 2- Graduation Rate and Readiness for Postsecondary Education and Employment Students graduate and are prepared to enter the workforce and postsecondary education.	State Goal	Vocational Education
Goal 3- Student Performance Students pursue intellectual development consistent with their highest potential, are prepared to make well-reasoned, thoughtful and healthy lifelong decisions and demonstrate good character.	State Goal	Reading, Math, Advanced Placement, Honors, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Health, Foreign Languages, Music Education, Visual Arts
Goal 4- Learning Environment Schools and communities establish a learning environment based on validated principles of learning.	State Goal	Standard-Bearer Design, Middle School Study Committee Recommendations
Goal 5- School Safety and Environment Schools and communities provide an environment that is drug-free and protects students’ health, safety and civil rights.	State Goal	Nurses, Student Conduct, School Safety Task Force, After School Programs, Anti-discrimination, Harassment, Health/Safety/Fire Inspection
Goal 6- Teachers and Staff All staff members exhibit professionalism and exemplary character and hold high expectations for self, students, parents and colleagues.	State Goal	Teacher Performance, Professional Development, Professional Practices, Minority Recruitment, Automated Recruitment System, Substitute Teacher Recruitment
Goal 7- Adult Literacy Adults are literate and have the knowledge and skills needed to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.	State Goal	Literacy Completion
Goal 8- Family and Community Involvement Family and community members are actively involved as partners in achieving a quality educational system for all students.	State Goal	Family Involvement in Education, Community Involvement Liaison
Goal 9- Fiscal and Resource Responsibility Resources are used in an efficient and effective manner to provide quality education for all students.	Local Goal	General Fund Reserves, Annually Audits, OPPAGA Review Recommendations Implemented
Goal 10-Comprehensive Planning and Program Accountability The district implements systemic planning and accountability processes to ensure quality education for all students.	Local Goal	Systemic Planning Cycle, Evaluation, Capital Plan Projects, Technology Plan Initiatives, Standard-Bearer, Accountability Data Warehouse, District Policies

Source: Collier County School District, February 2003.

The district’s strategic plan includes goals, measurable objectives, action plans, and assessment strategies for each of the 10 goals. The action plans include specific strategies and activities and includes the person responsible for ensuring that they will be met. District administrators meet monthly to review the progress toward the goals. The board is provided a formal assessment of the DEIP every fall and an interim assessment during the summer.

The board holds a series of annual workshops to identify district priorities, most recently in December 2002. After the board has established their priorities, district staff develops their department and campus priorities and funding requests. During budget workshops held in June each year, the board reviews each priority along with its proposed funding requirements.

Best Practice 10: Using

The district has a system to accurately project enrollment.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment projections are used for many things in districts including budgeting and funding, zoning, estimates of facility requirements and staffing ratios. Because of the critical nature of FTE projections, school districts must have a system to make the most accurate student enrollment projections possible. Thus, districts must have trained staff and formal procedures for applying both the state projection methodologies and local corrective methodologies, which can be very complex and often require considerable technical expertise. At a minimum, the district must use the cohort survival methodology provided by the Florida Department of Education to establish its FTEs for the coming year. However, medium to large districts or districts with above average student growth rates should supplement the Department of Education models with additional projection methodologies. These additional methodologies should include in-depth demographic information not used in the Department of Education models. The information from each methodology should be reconciled to produce the actual FTE projection. Districts may choose to supplement the Department of Education model with information from local planning departments, state universities, or private demographers.

The Collier County School District department of FTE, surveys and staff allocations is responsible for making enrollment forecasts for reporting FTE counts to the state and projecting FTEs in order to provide for the internal allocation of resources between schools and among the categories of FTE. Several methods are used to make projections and forecasts, including software programs provided by the state of Florida and internally developed programs. The department of FTE, surveys and staff allocations has well documented processes for making projections and forecasts. District procedure FTE-2010 details the responsibilities, processes and procedures that are to be used in making forecasts.

The district uses multiple sources that track factors such as residential development and other demographic information. For instance, the transportation department uses a software system that can be used to track changes in patterns in school attendance zones. The facilities department obtains data from the county and other entities that help the district in predicting enrollment patterns. The district considers existing school populations, mobility, housing starts and other information to assist in projection of enrollment.

Exhibit 2-13 shows that total student projections by school are fairly accurate. The error rates for the most recent projections (2001-02) are close to the 2% overall error rate that is considered acceptable by the Department of Education. The projections for individual categories show more differences because the number of students in each category is comparatively small so that the difference between projected and actual enrollment results in a larger percentage variation. The district employs a variety of methods to alleviate any adverse effect of projection errors. Staffing and budget allocations are not fully distributed to schools at the beginning of the school year, but rather a portion is held back in case a school has growth less than expected. The district also maintains a pool of permanent substitute teachers that can be assigned to an area that needs additional resources. Should the teacher be needed on a permanent basis, they can then be permanently assigned.

**Exhibit 2-13
Total Student Projections by School Are Reasonably Accurate**

Program	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
2001-02			
Basic	2.49%	3.44%	-3.69%
ESE	-1.28%	5.97%	9.60%
LEP	12.03%	-5.43%	-7.47%
VOC	N/A	7.21%	-3.15%
Total	3.12%	3.34%	-2.02%
2000-01			
Basic	-0.70%	2.13%	-0.71%
ESE	11.94%	4.16%	8.74%
LEP	-0.32%	10.22%	10.28%
VOC	N/A	7.14%	-4.74%
Total	1.43%	3.35%	1.28%
1999-00			
Basic	6.26%	-3.48%	0.79%
ESE	-5.77%	-9.44%	5.60%
LEP	9.11%	23.27%	0.27%
VOC	N/A	2.60%	-16.61%
Total	4.09%	0.85%	-0.33%
1998-99			
Basic	2.24%	-2.28%	0.46%
ESE	-8.81%	6.10%	2.11%
LEP	11.54%	5.92%	14.82%
VOC	N/A	8.46%	9.71%
Total	06.60%	-0.11%	2.05%

Source: Collier County School District, April 2003.

Although the district is using this best practice, it could improve the FTE projection process by coordinating efforts among the various departments that play a role in the process. Interviews with employees from both the FTE department and facilities department indicate that each department completes its own projections and some efforts between departments are duplicated. In addition, a more formal communication effort between the two departments would serve to double check the other's work.

We recommend that the FTE department establish formal meetings with the facilities and transportation departments on a regular basis to coordinate data for making FTE projections.

Best Practice 11: Using

The district links its financial plans and budgets to its annual priorities in the strategic plan and its goals and objectives; and district resources are focused towards achieving those goals and objectives.

Like most other organizations, because school districts generally have seemingly unlimited demands for available funds, they must set budget priorities. Thus, a school district's financial decisions should reflect its priority goals and objectives. These goals and objectives (which should be part of a strategic plan) may either be explicitly stated in the budget or may be reflected in changes in allocations that are concurrent with the district's shifting priorities. For example, if improving reading scores is a priority

Management Structures

goal, then the district's budget should include resources that assist schools in pursuing this goal (e.g., hiring additional resource teachers or purchasing a new reading curriculum).

Collier County School District prioritizes its goals and objectives annually. On December 12, 2002 the board met to discuss its priorities and on January 30, 2003 voted to adopt the following priorities:

- student Achievement
- literacy
- communication
- fiscal Responsibility
- conduct
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development

The district reviews its DEIP annually and develops a DEIP funding request. The funding request, after review by district staff is presented to the board for approval. The DEIP funding request represents new programs or additions to the budget. Existing budget items are not formally reviewed in the prioritization process.

A review of the 2002-03 DEIP funding request shows that funding requests are broken down by goal and objective and categorized by either operating funds, grant revenues, or capital project funds. For the 2002-03 funding request, 85% of all requests were funded, representing the district's highest priority goals. For example, goal 3 (student performance) and goal 4 (learning environment) were 100%. Other district priorities such as goal 6 (teachers and staff) and goal 9 (fiscal and resource responsibility) did not have all funding requests approved, but had a significant percentage of requests funded—90% and 77%, respectively.

Best Practice 12: Using

When necessary, the district considers options to increase revenue.

A school district may find it necessary to consider raising additional revenue if it has done everything in its power to streamline processes and minimize costs and it still cannot meet critical student and/or staff needs without additional funds. In general, districts usually need to increase revenue in times of rapid growth or when demographics within the district change significantly. However, the ability to raise funds varies considerably among districts and is dependent on a district's ability to levy additional taxes (if not already at the maximum allowed by law) and their current debt load. There are several options available to school districts to increase revenues. These additional revenue sources may include property taxes, sales taxes, bond issues, impact fees, or grants in aid. Some revenue sources can be used only for operational expenses, while others can be used only for capital expenditures and still others can be used for both.

The district has contemplated a local option sales tax and a referendum for a local supplemental property tax to enhance revenues. However, because of the high property tax roll relative to student population, school taxes represent a significant portion of Collier County property taxes. The board has been hesitant to levy additional taxes on residents. The district has enhanced its general operating dollars by funding maintenance expenses with the capital outlay portion of property taxes.

In addition, the district has worked with the Board of County Commissioners to generate impact fees on residential growth. The district is one of 16 Florida school districts to assess impact fees. The estimate of impact fees for 2002-03 is \$10 million.

The district has also created a department responsible for writing grant proposals to enhance the funding it receives from local, state and federal grants. The department is responsible for writing grants, assisting other staff in writing grant proposals, as well as managing some of the grant funds once they are awarded. For the 2002-03 fiscal year, the board voted to add a grant writer position to expand these efforts. Exhibit 2-14 summarizes by fund the amount of grants awarded to the district for 2002-03.

Exhibit 2-14

The District’s Grant Department is Responsible for Obtaining Grant Funding

Fund	Fiscal Year 2002-03
420	\$18,275,576
421	2,607,756
423	1,385,072
424	2,401,377
100	1,193,427
Total Grant Revenue	\$25,863,208

Source: Collier County School District, February 2003.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Best Practice 13: Using

The district actively involves parents and guardians in the district’s decision making and activities.

To be successful in educating students, school districts must actively engage parents and guardians in the activities of the district and the individual schools. The greater the parental involvement, the better most schools perform. However, in order to be actively involved in the educational process, parents must be aware of and encouraged to participate in school activities and decision making processes that affect their children.

The Collier County School District uses a variety of tools to communicate with parents regarding its decision making. The district’s website provides key information that is continually updated, the times and locations of school board meetings are published on the district’s website and in the local newspaper, school board meeting minutes are available from the district’s website, and school board meetings are broadcast on the Education Channel. To ensure that parents, students and teachers are well informed about school policies, the district publishes and distributes a student code of conduct manual each year.

The district uses a variety of other communication tools to ensure that all parents have ample information about significant decisions, student achievement, and upcoming events, including:

- parent/teacher organizations
- student handbooks
- automatic dialer (parents receive recorded messages at their home telephone numbers)
- curricular nights
- family literacy nights
- memorandums of understanding (incident reports)
- orientation nights for programs such as kindergarten

Management Structures

- ESOL parent night
- advertisements in *Naples Daily News*
- broadcasts of board meetings and public forums on the district's education channel

The district holds public forums to inform and obtain input from parents. Examples include forums held regarding changing school attendance boundaries, teacher recruitment, and naming of schools. In March 2003, the district started a monthly electronic newsletter that is available on its website. Entitled the *Collier Communicator*, the newsletter contains information from the board, general district information, and district events.

Parents and community members are involved in school and district decision making through PTAs, PTOs and student advisory councils (SAC). Florida law requires that each school in a district establish a SAC to serve in an advisory capacity to the school principal and to assist in the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the school improvement plan that addresses budget, training, instructional materials, technology, staffing, student support services, and other matters of resource allocation. The office of accountability and staff and school renewal is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the SAC committees in the district. The office reviews the SAC membership composition of individual schools to ensure that it conforms to state requirements, compiles SAC composition reports for review and approval by the school board, and provides training and other assistance to the committees.

Although the district is using this best practice, specific communication between parents and teachers regarding student performance could be improved by requiring that parents be given an opportunity to meet with teachers at least twice annually. Currently, the means and methods by which this is accomplished vary from school to school. However, because teachers are not given the time to schedule parent conferences, children with more immediate needs are usually given priority.

We recommend that the board explore options to provide teachers two half-days per year and require that this time be used for teachers to schedule parent conferences.

Best Practice 14: Using

The district actively involves business partners and community organizations in the district's decision making and activities.

Business and community groups are able to provide not only financial assistance, but also in-kind services, mentoring and other support services that benefit students and their schools. Thus, school districts and individual schools should actively engage local and regional businesses and community groups so that these entities will participate in educational activities. Some of the major ways to involve businesses and community groups include direct contact and solicitation for services, participation in educational committees of service and business associations and encouraging business and community group leaders to participate in the SACs. Districts should also coordinate with these groups to create a fundraising foundation. These non-profit foundations can better leverage contributions and can often receive matching funds from the state or federal government for certain projects (i.e., the take stock in children scholarship program). Regardless of how business partners and community groups are approached, the district and schools should work to ensure that business and community leaders have an impact on school performance. This requires more than accepting money or services from these entities.

The Collier County School District maintains relationships with an education foundation and a community foundation to involve business partners and community organizations in its activities to

support education. The education foundation of Collier County was founded in 1990; its purpose to enhance learning for Collier County children. The education foundation is the primary catalyst for business support for Collier schools. While a few businesses work directly with individual schools, most activity is coordinated by the foundation. The foundation's board includes members of the school district as well as community and business members.

The community foundation was established in 1985 to increase and focus private philanthropy in the community. The community foundation provides grants and coordinates volunteer activities for the district. Through the two foundations, over 1,300 business and community partnerships have been formed, with over 5,000 volunteers logging 164,000 volunteer hours annually.

The community involvement function in the district is handled by two departments. The communication and information office, headed by the communication and information officer who reports to the superintendent, handles public relations and media issues and serves on the board of directors of the education foundation. A community involvement coordinator, who reports to the curriculum and instructional programs department, is responsible for coordinating the efforts of the business community and community organizations. The position's responsibilities are split equally between community involvement functions and curriculum and instructional programs functions. Both the education foundation and the community foundation work closely with the community involvement coordinator to ensure effective and efficient oversight of community resources.

To help coordinate volunteer efforts at the district's schools, volunteer coordinators organize the district's volunteer programs. The district also has partners in education volunteer contacts at each school to facilitate the effective use of volunteers and business/community partnerships. The district has 56 coordinators that ensure volunteer services at each school are organized and well publicized. Volunteers also monitor and coordinate support provided by the business community.

3 Performance Accountability Systems

Summary

The Collier County School District is using one of the three performance accountability best practices. The district publicly reports on the effectiveness of its major educational and operational programs. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its educational and operational programs, the district should ensure that all major educational and operational programs have measurable goals and objectives and implement a peer review process to monitor educational programs when full evaluations cannot be completed.

Background

The Collier County School District first developed and adopted a strategic plan, the District Educational Improvement Plan (DEIP), in March 2000. The plan includes the district's mission statement, beliefs, goals and strategies. The DEIP contains both a five-year objective and an annual objective for each goal. Many of the basic education program goals and objectives are included in the DEIP including Pre-K, vocational education, reading, math, science and social studies.

In October 2002, the district issued a status report on 2001-02 DEIP goals and objectives and is now operating under new DEIP goals and objectives that were updated for 2002-03. District administrators continually monitor progress toward the DEIP goals and objectives and update the board on the status of the DEIP twice annually.

The district created and maintains an accountability data warehouse to facilitate the monitoring of its performance. The accountability data warehouse stores individual student performance data, including FCAT and other assessment scores and results of classroom testing. Results can be viewed at various levels including at the individual student, classroom, grade, or school level. Restricted access is provided to district users so that they may view results without breaching individual student privacy. Users can also access disaggregated data for specific categories of students such as economically disadvantaged, ESOL, migrant, etc. The public has also been given limited access to the data warehouse through the district's website.

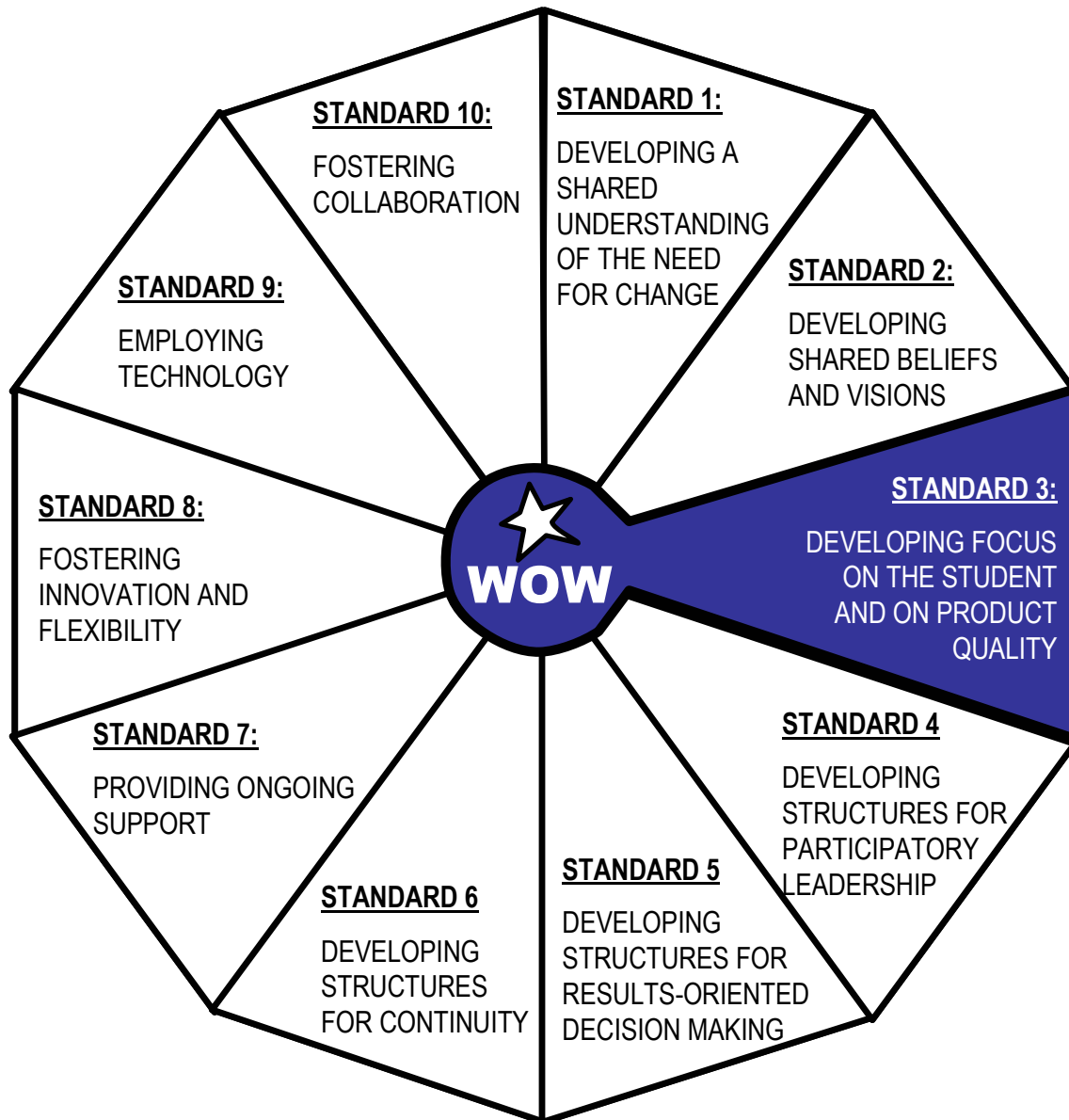
Activities of particular interest

The district uses the standard-bearer program as the basis for its DEIP. The district first joined the standard-bearer program in 2000. The program is sponsored by the Center for Leadership in School Reform, a national organization whose focus is on improving education. The center is a network of 33 school districts in six states including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

District employees attend annual standard-bearer training programs including the Superintendents Leadership Network and the Principals Academy Network.

The program is based on a set of 10 principals. As shown in Exhibit 3-1, the process provides a foundation for districts to help evaluate their operating and assessment strategies while addressing concerns and interests of all stakeholders. The intent is to build a cohesive organizational structure that supports and promotes innovation and continuous improvement in student achievement and the interactions between teachers and students.

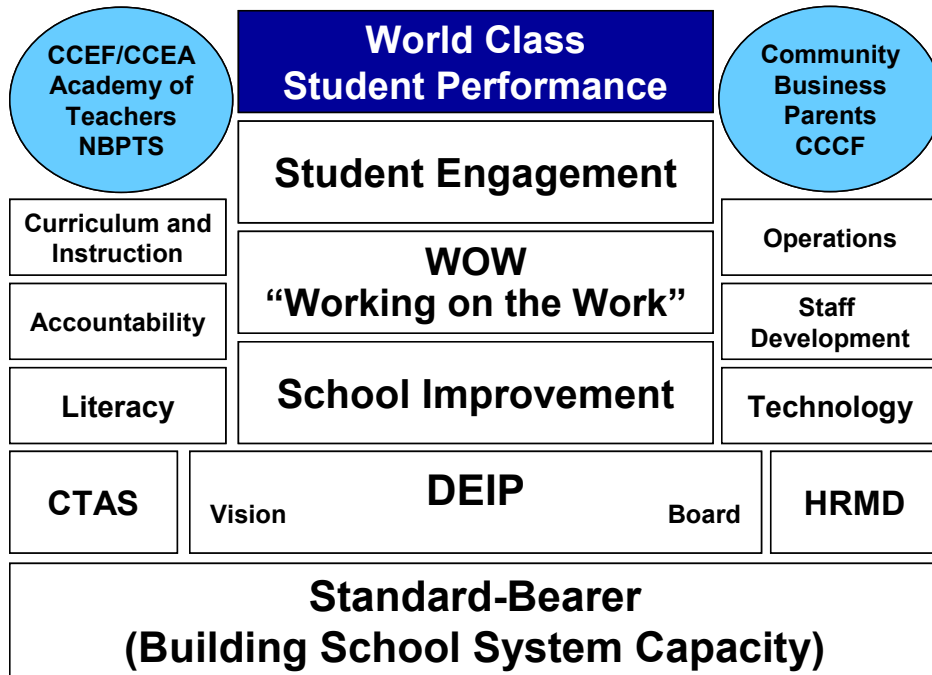
Exhibit 3-1
The Collier County School District Participates in the Standard-Bearer Program



Source: Collier County School District, February 2003.

The diagram presented in Exhibit 3-2 shows how the Standard-Bearer process provides the foundation for the district's DEIP.

Exhibit 3-2
The Standard-Bearer Process Provides a Foundations for the DEIP



Source: Collier County School District, February 2003.

The district has chosen to participate in the standard- bearer program to provide a systemic approach to school improvement. The program provides a reform model for change.

In September 2000, administration developed program evaluation standards, guidelines and procedures for measuring program outcomes. The guidelines were presented to the board and adopted in November 2000. The guidelines are a fairly detailed set of instructions as to how staff should evaluate programs. The guidelines address questions about the quality of program implementation, the effectiveness of the program and the value of the program to the district. The purpose of the guidelines is to provide the district with a systematic way of evaluating its programs.

The district has also developed an evaluation calendar. The calendar lists all the major programs in the district and provides a timeline for completing an evaluation.

Through the district’s accountability data warehouse, the district has the ability to compare its data to its peers and to state cumulative results. This information is available to a variety of individuals in a variety of formats, either on a class-wide basis, an individual student level, school level or subject level. For instance, a teacher is able to access information on the students in their classes, or students getting ready to enter their classes. A principal, on the other hand, has access to this same information, but on a broader scale. Principals’ access can be at the individual student level, class level, school level or subject level.

Recent modifications to the accountability data warehouse system have also provided limited access by the public through the district’s website. While access to individual student performance is protected, the public can obtain “group” data such as by grade, school or other classification of students such as ESOL, Gifted or ESE.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Performance Accountability Systems Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practices?	Page No.
Goals and Measurable Objectives	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 Basic Education (K-3, 3-8, 9-12), Exceptional Student Education, Vocational/Technical Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages Education, Facilities Construction, Facilities Maintenance, Transportation, Food Services and Safety and Security. ¹	No	3-5
	2. 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.	No	3-8
	3. 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.	Yes	3-11

¹ Each district should define those programs considered “major” within these two broad areas. At a minimum, they should include the programs listed. However, the district should have some defensible, logical criteria to identify major educational and operational programs. Criteria may include funding, number of children or full-time equivalents (FTEs) served or state or federal requirements.

GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Best Practice 1: Not Using

The district does not have clearly stated goals and measurable objectives that can be achieved within budget for some programs and departments.

Like other publicly funded entities, a school district should be held accountable for and provide information to parents and other taxpayers on the performance and cost of its major programs. To do this, school districts should have an effective accountability system that includes clearly stated goals and measurable objectives that provide performance expectations for their instructional and operational programs and mechanisms for measuring the district's progress in meeting these expectations. Objectives should include high-level outcome measures that board members and the public can use to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's programs. Objectives also should include lower level interim outcome or process measures that managers can use to administer programs effectively. To assess the progress of its programs toward achieving the desired results, school districts should establish standards for the progress they would like to obtain within available resources. Districts should also benchmark their performance data against past results or the results of other, comparable districts.

The Collier County School District's division of accountability and staff and school renewal plays an integral role in developing the DEIP by conducting training on the DEIP and the standard-bearer processes. This division is responsible for assessing the district's progress toward its goals and objectives, and for reporting the district's progress toward meeting its goals and objectives to the school board and public.

Each goal of the DEIP is assigned to a member of the superintendent's cabinet. The cabinet member is responsible for establishing measurable objectives for the goal, monitoring progress toward meeting the goal, establishing a budget for the goal, and periodic reporting on goal progress to the cabinet during its regular meetings.

The district is not using this best practice for two reasons. First, while the process for developing instructional goals and objectives involves training, review of goals and objectives, and status updates to the school board, the district does not have a formal accountability system for its operational programs. That is, establishment of operational goals and objectives is left up to the responsibility of individual department managers with no periodic review or update on the progress toward meeting the goals and objectives. The review team found that some operational areas have not established goals and objectives. The executive director of accountability and staff and school renewal told the review team that the individual operational departments were responsible for establishing and implementing their own accountability systems. While the review team found that many of the operational departments have systems to measure their progress toward meeting district goals, this is more a result of individual management style rather than an institutionalized process. In cases where the review team found operational functions to be measuring their progress toward meeting their goals and objectives, consistent formats were not used.

The operational functions of the district also have standards, although the degree to which these are well developed varies across the district. For instance, the facilities maintenance department uses staffing standards for its custodial staff and the food services department maintains standards for staffing its kitchens. However, the business services department has not established staffing standards.

Districts that use operational performance measures are able to achieve greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness because performance is monitored regularly and corrective action taken if necessary.

Exhibit 3-3 provides some examples of operational performance measures, and Action Plan 3-1 includes the steps needed to improve district operations and use this best practice.¹

Exhibit 3-3 **Example Performance Measures for Operational Functions**

Facilities Maintenance

Customer satisfaction with the quality of grounds work
Average cleaning/maintenance cost per square foot
Square feet maintained per facilities maintenance staff
Number of user complaints
Percent of work orders completed within X number of days
Percent of maintenance work completed on schedule
Percent of quality checks meeting standard
Average number of days to institute routine repairs
Estimated savings from energy conservation measures
Percent of emergency repairs completed within one day of notification
Average amount of time spent per work order
Average cost per maintenance request
Average facilities maintenance cost per square foot
Average maintenance and repair cost per square foot
Average supervisory cost per square foot

Facilities Construction

Average number of days for selection of design consultant from project assignment
Average number of days for selection of construction consultant from project assignment
Number of consultant engineer contracts administered
Number of in-house designs completed
Number of inspections completed
Number of construction/capital projects managed
Percent of inspection cost to project cost
Percent of design cost to project cost
Inspection cost per hour
Percent of capital projects completed within estimated time
Average number of hours required to provide preliminary planning review for capital improvement projects

Student Transportation

Number of accidents/100,000 miles
Number of preventable accidents/100,000 miles
Number of parent complaints per week
Percent of trips missed
Percent of trips on schedules
Cost per pupil trip
Percent of breakdowns
Number of buses arriving late

Food Services

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

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

¹ The Program-level accountability system should be developed at the program level and linked to the DEIP. The school board should determine which aspects of the program-level accountability system should be included in the DEIP.

Action Plan 3-1

We recommend that the district develop an accountability measurement system for all its operational functions and use performance data to inform management and to make policy decisions.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Assign the accountability and staff and school renewal division the responsibility and the oversight to assist operational directors with the development and monitoring of measurable goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 2. Conduct training for all operational department heads and managers on developing and monitoring measurable goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 3. Assign operational executive directors and directors the responsibility for identifying input and outcome measures and indicators of efficiency and effectiveness. Focus should be on desired results and outcomes, not just on activities. Each measure should be clearly defined and accountability and staff and school renewal staff must make sure that measures are adequate.</p> <p>Step 4. Assign operational executive directors and directors the responsibility of identifying how performance measures link to the budget and the measures in the strategic plan.</p> <p>Step 5. Assign program directors and supervisors the responsibility of reviewing program-level performance measures with staff of each major program to ensure that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet district expectations; and • Clearly and logically relate to those developed at various other district administrative levels such as those in school improvement plans and the strategic plan. <p>Step 6. For each performance measure, operational executive directors and directors should identify the data needed and provide the information below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will collect performance data and how often? What is the source of the data (e.g., state or district reports)? • In what format is the data needed? • How often should the data be collected? • Who (program staff, department head, assistant superintendent, superintendent, school board) will the data are reported to and how often? • How should the data be used? <p>Step 7. For each performance measure, the operational executive directors and directors should identify benchmarks the district should adopt as standards or expectations for performance to be achieved within the next budget cycle.</p> <p>Step 8. Present the proposed measures and standards to the superintendent and board for approval.</p> <p>Step 9. The superintendent should direct all schools and divisions to collect data on the measures.</p> <p>Step 10. Operational executive directors and directors should periodically evaluate the performance and cost-efficiency measures.</p> <p>Step 11. Operational executive directors and directors select a few critical performance and cost-efficiency measures that should be reported periodically to school board members, superintendent, parents and taxpayers to demonstrate how well the program is performing. The district could use communication resources such as TV broadcasting, brochures, Web Page and schools' bulletin boards.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal
Time Frame	February 2004

The second reason that the district is not fully using this best practice is that even though the district has many goals and objectives, they are not always measurable. Our review of the DEIP, planning documents, and discussion with district staff found that most, but not all, of the district's major programs have goals and objectives. In some cases, stated goals and objectives were not measurable. Of the 43

objectives listed in the DEIP, 15 were either not quantifiable or otherwise difficult to measure. For instance, the five-year objective for Objective 9.2 under Goal 9, Fiscal and Resource Responsibility, states the following:

In fiscal year 2004-05, the required annual audit of the Board's accounts and records will continue the excellent financial audits issued by either the Office of the Auditor General or another independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) firm. Student Activity Fund audits will be significantly improved by the end of the 2004-05 fiscal year. External reviews of our reported Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) shall reflect an error rate of less than one-quarter of one percent.

The phrases “excellent financial audits” and “significantly improved” are difficult to measure and are subject to interpretation. Whereas the objective for FTE audits to “reflect an error rate of less than one-quarter of one percent” can easily be measured. Action Plan 3-2 includes the steps needed to improve district operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 3-2

We recommend that Accountability and Staff and School Renewal Division review all major goals and objectives and ensure that all objectives are measurable.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Review all goals and objectives for major instructional and non-instructional programs and functions.
	Step 2.	Provide assistance and guidance to the department heads and managers needing help in developing measurable goals and objectives.
	Step 3.	Review the progress of developing measurable goals and objectives on a quarterly basis.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal	
Time Frame	February 2004	

Best Practice 2: Not Using

Although the district has evaluation standards and processes, it has not performed regular formal evaluations of its major educational and operational programs nor does it use the evaluation results to improve program performance and cost-efficiency.

School districts should periodically evaluate their operations to identify ways in which they can improve their efficiency and effectiveness and then use evaluation results to improve program performance either by implementing new strategies or by outsourcing. Districts should use performance data and other relevant information (such as the cost of a program or service, or the potential detrimental effect that poor program performance might have on students) to determine which programs to evaluate. The findings and recommendations resulting from these evaluations should be presented in writing to district administrators and, if needed, the school board and used to improve district operations. Districts should also have interim performance measures that assist in the daily administration of its programs.

To help the district conduct program evaluations, it has developed three tools. First, in 2000, the administration developed the program evaluation standards guidelines and procedures. The guidelines are a fairly detailed set of instructions describing how staff should evaluate programs. The guidelines address questions about the quality of program implementation, the effectiveness of the program and the value of the program to the district. The purpose of the guidelines is to provide the district with a systematic way of identifying and evaluating its programs.

The guidelines include an overview of the procedures, a rationale for program evaluation, evaluation criteria and include examples of the roles and responsibilities of district departments and individuals in the evaluation process. They also include several appendices outlining items such as program evaluation

standards, program profile report formats, an evaluation calendar, roles of evaluation participants and action plan formats.

The second tool used to help conduct program evaluations in the district is an evaluation calendar. The calendar, as shown in Exhibit 3-4 provides a timeline for evaluating major district programs.

**Exhibit 3-4
The Collier County School District Adopted a Five-Year Evaluation Calendar**

Programs and Initiatives	Evaluation Year				
	Fiscal Year				
	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Block Scheduling	X				
Autism/ESE	X				
Initiate Literacy Evaluation	X				
ESOL	X				
Literacy		X			
Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Testing/College Board Initiative		X			
Health/Physical Education		X			
Related Arts		X			
School Safety Program		X			
Summer School		X			
Specific Learning Disabilities/ESE			X		
Social Studies K-12			X		
Diversity Initiative			X		
High Stakes Testing (FCAT, Florida Writes)			X		
Staff Development			X		
Science K-12				X	
Technology				X	
Standard-Bearer School District Network 2000				X	
Mathematics K-12				X	
Speech/Language/ESE				X	
District Educational Improvement Plan					X
Gifted/ESE					X
Career and Technical Education					X
Alternative Programs					X
Guidance K-12 Curriculum					X

Source: Collier County School District, March 2003.

The third tool used to evaluate whether the district’s programs are meeting their goals and objectives is a DEIP status report. A review of the 2001-02 DEIP status report shows that the district reports on the status of each objective. The status report illustrates whether the objective is completed, whether progress is being made according to the timeline, whether progress is being made but not in accordance with the established timeline, or whether progress is not being made. Following this brief status for each objective, the report details the significant accomplishments made toward meeting the objective.

Even though the district has processes for conducting regular evaluations, it is not using this best practice because the accountability and staff and school renewal division has been without an evaluator position and therefore few evaluations have actually taken place. The evaluator position was frozen in 2000-01 due to budget cuts. The position was reinstated in 2002-03 and an evaluator hired in October 2002.

However, the evaluator resigned after four months and the position remains vacant. The evaluation calendar has not been implemented due to the vacancy of this position.

To make up for the lack of an evaluation process, the district has performed limited, but not comprehensive, assessments of some programs. In addition, some evaluations have been outsourced, but due to a lack of oversight, some of these evaluations have not proved useful to the district. For example, the district recently hired a consultant to evaluate its literacy program. The consultant’s work was not well performed and used inadequate data collection techniques to conduct the evaluation. As a result, the literacy evaluation has been of limited value to the district.

Review of board meeting minutes shows that the board frequently votes to implement or to continue programs without the benefit of evaluation results. Staff usually presents a program plan and provides highlights of the program but does not provide measured results. For example, in February 2002, the board voted to continue the district’s summer school program and heard a presentation on the ESOL plan. No quantifiable or measurable performance results were presented prior to the vote on summer school.

To bolster the evaluation process, especially if it cannot fund or has been unable to fill an evaluation position, some school districts use a “peer” review process using staff from the instructional area. Under a peer review system, staff from the instructional department gathers data and conducts program reviews. While these are not full-blown evaluations, they serve as useful indicators of the program’s effectiveness and can also be used to identify programs that require a formal evaluation. By using such a peer review, districts can conduct more reviews using existing resources. In Collier County School District, use of a peer review process would allow for some degree of program review regardless of the staffing issues in the evaluation function. Action Plan 3-3 includes the steps needed to improve district operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 3-3

We recommend that the district implement a peer review process to monitor instructional programs.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Assign the executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal the responsibility of establishing a peer review process.
	Step 2.	The executive director develops a process for conducting peer reviews and conducts training for instructional staff. The process should include the steps required for obtaining the necessary data from the accountability data warehouse system.
	Step 3.	The executive director and the associate superintendent for curriculum and instructional programs assign instructional staff the responsibility of monitoring and reviewing programs.
	Step 4.	The executive director develops a peer review calendar that complements the district’s evaluation calendar and allows peer review findings to guide or prioritize full evaluation efforts.
	Step 5.	The appropriate instructional staff conducts program reviews according to the review calendar.
	Step 6.	The executive director provides continuous oversight for the peer review process and reviews final program review reports.
	Step 7.	The executive director for presents peer reviews to the superintendent’s cabinet and to the school board as necessary.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal	
Time Frame	January 2004 and on-going	

There also is a lack of documented evaluation processes for operational programs. The review team found that although some individual managers evaluate their operational departments, it is often a reflection on the individual manager’s practices rather than district policy. For instance, the associate superintendent for operational services, who oversees the facilities construction, facilities maintenance,

food services, transportation and FTE functions, meets every six weeks with each major function for which he is responsible. A list of short-term goals is reviewed at each meeting and the associate superintendent documents whether the goals have been met. The short term goals are used to accomplish the long-range goals for these functions. The assessment results are also used to make corrections or adjustments to plans so that departmental goals can be accomplished. This evaluation practice reflects his management style and raises a concern that if this individual were to transfer or otherwise leave the position, the evaluation process would not continue. Alternatively, the business services department, for example, has no process for establishing goals and objectives and therefore for measuring its performance. Action Plan 3-4 includes the steps needed to improve district operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 3-4

We recommend that the district regularly evaluate operational programs against established objectives and goals and present the results to the board.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Develop processes and procedures that outline the regular review of operational objectives.
	Step 2.	Conduct training for all department heads and managers on the review process.
	Step 3.	Periodically compare district performance data to data from other, comparable districts or programs to determine whether the district could improve its operations.
	Step 4.	Based on the ongoing analysis described in Step 3 above, identify undesirable trends in performance and cost that need more in-depth evaluation.
	Step 5.	Conduct more in-depth evaluations to identify the cause and potential remedies to address trends identified in Step 4. Put the results of these in-depth evaluations in writing.
	Step 6.	At least annually, report performance related to high-level measures to the school board. Provide the written results of in-depth evaluations to the school board.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal	
Time Frame	February 2004 and on going.	

Best Practice 3: Using

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.

Without regular performance reports, school board members and the public may not be aware of the efficiency and effectiveness of the school district in meeting its major goals and objectives. Therefore, school districts should clearly report on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational and operational programs. School districts that can demonstrate their ability to manage their programs efficiently and effectively are likely to receive greater support than those who do not provide accountability information.

The Collier County School District superintendent is kept continually updated on the progress toward meeting district objectives. The superintendent’s cabinet meets weekly and the DEIP is discussed at length. Each member of the cabinet is responsible for overseeing one of the goals in the DEIP. These individuals are therefore well informed of what is happening (or not happening) in regards to meeting goals. The board is provided an annual progress update on the DEIP each fall as well as an interim update in the spring. Any other reports that are scheduled to be presented to the board are first reviewed by the cabinet.

At least twice annually, the board is given a formal DEIP status update. In addition to DEIP updates, other performance results such as FCAT scores and drop-out rates are also presented to the board.

The district provides opportunities for members of the public to obtain access to evaluation data such as FCAT scores. Some of these mechanisms include presentations at board meetings which are televised on the district's Education Channel, providing access to the data on the district's website and publishing the data in newsletters and in the local newspaper. However, the district does not issue evaluation summaries that include findings and recommendations.

The district periodically publishes the results of its progress in the newspaper. The information is relayed in a one-page summary advertisement that is paid for by community donations. The ad includes information on student achievement, program enhancement activities and technology initiatives. The 2002 ad was paid for by local sponsors.

The district has done a commendable job of providing opportunities for the community to have input into some decisions such as the recent superintendent search, the naming of schools and zoning issues. The review team, however, found that the district could improve communications regarding its performance and accountability to taxpayers, parents and other members of the public by providing a mechanism to obtain feedback and input from these groups. Some community members told the review team that they are confused about where the district stands regarding the district's performance and accountability. Allowing a forum for the community to express concerns and ask questions will help to clear up some of the confusion.

We recommend that the district hold informal town hall or other meetings that allow for two-way communications with the public regarding the district's performance and accountability.

4

Educational Service Delivery

Summary

The Collier County School District is using 10 of the 12 educational service delivery best practices. The district uses data to improve student performance, provides effective accelerated and workforce development programs, and ensures that schools use effective planning and evaluation processes. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its educational programs, the district should require individual schools to include in their improvement plans ways to increase the participation of students with disabilities in regular education environments and should assess the number of central office administrators.



As seen in Exhibit 4-1, the district has opportunities to increase revenues in the educational services delivery area. Determining whether to take advantage of these opportunities is a district decision and should be based on many factors including district needs, public input and school board priorities. If the district implements these recommendations, it would be able to redirect the funds to other priorities, such as putting more money into the classroom or addressing deficiencies identified in this report.

Exhibit 4-1
Our Review Identified Several Ways the District Could Reduce Costs and Increase Revenues in the Area of Educational Service Delivery

Best Practice Number	Fiscal Impact: Savings					Total
	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Year 2006-07	Year 2007-08	
2 Participate in the Medicaid Certified Match Program	\$546,998	\$546,998	\$546,998	\$546,998	\$546,998	\$2,734,990
8 Reallocate assistant principals/deans to meet SACS standards	1,642,349	1,642,349	1,642,349	1,642,349	1,642,349	8,211,745
8 Revisit district level staffing	1,176,998	1,176,998	1,176,998	1,176,998	1,176,998	5,884,990
Total	\$3,366,345	\$3,366,345	\$3,366,345	\$3,366,345	\$3,366,345	\$16,831,725

Background

The Collier County School District served 36,515 students during the 2001-02 school year with an ethnic breakdown of 53% white, non-Hispanic; 11% black, non-Hispanic; 33% Hispanic; 1% multiracial and less than 1% each Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan native. The district has 54 schools, including 22 PreK-5 schools, one PreK-12 school, eight middle schools, five high schools, one PreK learning center, two charter schools, one vocational/technical school and 14 alternative education sites. For Fiscal Year 2001-02, the operating costs in the district were \$5,761 per pupil, more than the state's average operating cost of \$5,180.

Between 1997-98 and 2001-02, the Collier County School District experienced dramatic student growth. Only two of Florida's 67 districts, Osceola and Flager, experienced a greater rate of growth than Collier during that three-year period. The percentage increase in the Collier County School District was second only to Osceola among its peer districts (Exhibit 4-2).

Exhibit 4-2

Student Demographics: Collier County School District, Peer Districts and State

District	Total Students	Percentage Increase, 1998-02	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) ⁺	Percentage Eligible for Free or Reduce Price Lunch ¹
Collier	38,104	23.8%	13%	44%
Lake	31,773	14.2%	3%	39%
Lee	63,148	15.3%	10%	43%
Manatee	39,106	14.8%	6%	36%
Osceola	40,482	34.4%	16%	47%
Pasco	54,957	19.3%	3%	44%
State	2,535,155	8.7%	8%	44%

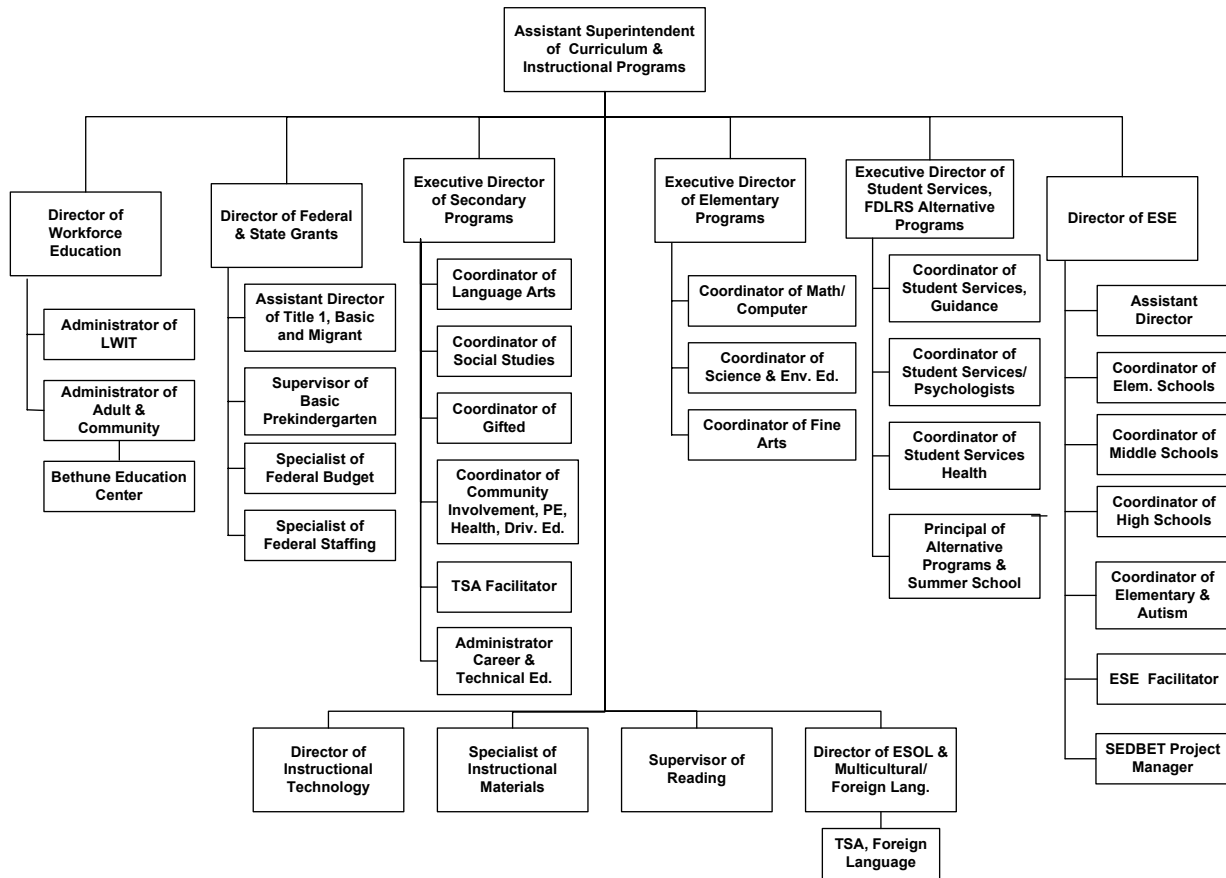
¹ The percentages listed reflect 2001-02 school year statistics.

Source: Florida Department of Education *Statistical Briefs Fall 2002* and *Profiles of Florida School Districts, 2001-02*.

The percentage of limited English proficient students in the Collier County School District is among the highest in the state. At the elementary level, only Dade (26.6%) and Osceola (18.4%) have a higher percent age than Collier (17.1%). At the middle school, the percentages in three counties, Osceola (12.8%), Dade (12.1%) and Orange (9.4%), were higher than the 8.9% in Collier.

The district's associate superintendent of curriculum and instructional programs supervises ten departments that provide instructional and support services to the district's schools. These services include elementary programs, PreK-5; secondary programs, 6-12; student services and alternative programs; workforce education; exceptional student education (ESE); federal and state grants; English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), multicultural education and foreign languages; instructional technology; instructional materials; and reading, PreK-12. As shown in Exhibit 4-3, ten administrators, including three executive directors, five directors and two supervisors, report directly to the associate superintendent.

**Exhibit 4-3
District-Level Educational Service Delivery Functions**



Source: Collier County School District.

The Collier County School District serves students through several programs including the K-12 basic education program, the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program, at-risk programs, accelerated programs, workforce education programs and student support services.

K-12 Basic Education. Basic education refers to a wide array of curriculum and instruction offered to students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. In 1996, the State Board of Education approved the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) for student achievement in basic education. These standards apply to seven subject areas each divided into four separate grade clusters (PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12). The grade division provides flexibility to school districts in designing curricula that are based on local needs. In language arts, mathematics, science and social studies, the SSS are further defined to include grade-level expectations and course specific information for students in grades 6-12. The grade level expectations are the basis for the Florida comprehensive assessment test (FCAT).

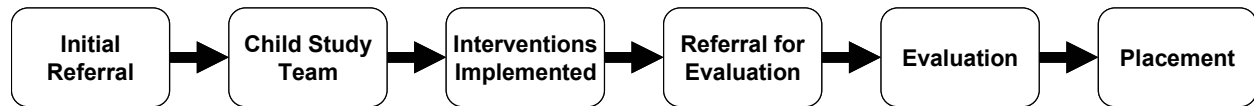
The purpose of the FCAT is to assess achievement of the SSS in reading, mathematics and writing. The FCAT also includes a norm-referenced test (NRT) which reports the performance of Florida students compared to students nationwide. Currently, students in grades 3 to 10 take the FCAT (SSS) and FCAT (NRT) reading and mathematics tests. Students in grades 4, 8 and 10 take the FCAT writing test.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE). Exceptional student education is designed for students who meet specific federal and state criteria. In Florida, an “exceptional student” is a student who is disabled or

gifted and is enrolled in (or eligible for enrollment in) a public school district. School districts must provide disabled and gifted students the opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education that will maximize their learning. Schools use a variety of strategies, such as modifying schedules, changing teachers, or varying instructional techniques to help ESE students meet their potential and succeed in the classroom. Districts identify students who are eligible for ESE programs and provide special education programs and related services to meet the individual needs of those students.

The percentage of Collier County School District students identified and served in the district's ESE program is comparable to the state and most of its peers. The district has about 3% of students in its gifted programs and 17% in its special education programs. Teachers, parents, or guidance counselors begin the ESE process by referring students for assessment. Child study teams (comprising the assistant principal, teachers and staffing specialist) initially screen students at the school level by reviewing the case, assessing the student and determining appropriate interventions to assist the student to succeed. School personnel then implement these interventions over the course of six to nine weeks. If the child study team finds that these attempts prove unsuccessful, the team refers the student to a school psychologist for evaluation. The results of this evaluation determine the student's ESE status. If the student requires ESE services, the child study team meets to decide the most appropriate placement for the student. Exhibit 4-4 illustrates this process.

**Exhibit 4-4
Child Study Team Referral Process**



Source: Developed by OPPAGA.

At-Risk Programs. The Collier County School District has several programs for students whose academic or social skills needs cannot be met through the general education curriculum. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Title I and alternative education programs offer these students an array of services to help them experience success and progress toward graduation. The district's ESOL program has been serving students from multicultural backgrounds since 1984. Student enrollment in the program has grown to 5,979 students in 2002, a 2,292% increase in the ESOL population in 18 years. There are about 4,000 ESOL students in the elementary schools, 1,014 in the middle schools, 950 in the high schools and 14 in alternative school programs. The ESOL population comprises 16% of the total student population in the district and two major languages (Spanish and Creole) account for 92% of the district's ESOL population. The Office of Multicultural Student Language Education in Tallahassee evaluates the ESOL program on a yearly basis to ensure that the program complies with the Department of Education's META consent requirements. The director of ESOL submits a written report that outlines the program's performance. Schools determine the ESOL instructional model that best meets their students' needs, thus the ESOL instructional delivery varies throughout the district. Monolingual and bilingual staff assists ESOL students and their parents.

Title I funds help avail ancillary support programs and services to populations of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunches and lack particular academic skills. The district uses Title I funds to provide a program to bring the lowest performing students in kindergarten through grade 2 to the average of their classes; pre-kindergarten programs to 475 at-risk students; after-school tutoring services to students on the Immokalee Indian Reservation; extensive support to migrant students who are likely not to meet graduation requirements; and books to second graders who participated in the "Summer Reading for Second Graders." The district has budgeted approximately \$320,603 of Title I and migrant funds for

professional development for teachers. At least 1% of the district's Title I allocation is reserved for parental involvement activities.

The district offers 14 different alternative education programs to meet the varied needs of at-risk students in the district. The programs are clustered under four rubrics: disciplinary programs, exceptional student education (a program for ESE students who have disciplinary problems in addition to their special needs), teenage parent programs and youth services programs. In 2001-02, nearly 4,234 students were served in the alternative education programs, including five programs that are administered and monitored with the Department of Juvenile Justice. The disciplinary and special education programs function to provide students with the academic and social skills to progress toward promotion. The teenage parent programs are designed to support pregnant adolescents or adolescent parents in earning their high school diploma and increase their knowledge and skills in health care, parenting and child growth and development. Childcare and transportation are provided for the students in this individualized education program; fathers are included in the definition of teenage parent and are encouraged to participate in the program.

Accelerated Programs. Collier County School District provides students several accelerated opportunities, including dual enrollment, advanced placement (AP), and a laureate program. While students may also take advanced courses through the Florida Virtual School, no students have taken advantage of this option.

Dual Enrollment Programs allow high school students to enroll in courses for which they can receive both high school and college credit. These courses can be academic courses that count toward an associate or baccalaureate degree or vocational courses that count toward meeting vocational certificate requirements. Currently the district has articulation agreements with Edison Community College located in Naples, Florida. Edison offers three dual enrollment options to students. A student may take a dual enrollment option for both high school and college credit, a vocational dual enrollment option that allows credit toward the high school diploma and a specific job preparation program, and a dual enrollment/early admissions option for college credit only. Courses may be offered at a district school, Edison Community College, or an appropriate off-campus location. The district also has articulation agreements with three universities: Florida Gulf Coast University located in Ft. Myers, Florida; the University of Central Florida located in Orlando, Florida; and the University of Florida located in Gainesville, Florida. These three universities offer two dual enrollment options to students. The first option is early admission in which eligible secondary students enroll on a full-time basis in courses creditable toward the high school diploma and the associate in arts/bachelors degree. The second option is enrollment in post-secondary courses creditable towards a vocational certificate or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

The advanced placement program allows high-achieving and self-motivated students in grades 11 and 12 to enroll in advanced courses of study and earn college credit and/or advanced placement credit while still enrolled in high school. To earn college credit, students must pass an AP exam with a certain score. AP exams are scored on a 0 to 5 scale with 0 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Most universities recognize a 3 as passing and give college credit for scores of 3 or above. The district has 28 AP courses listed in its course schedule (see Exhibit 4-5). One course, AP French Literature, is not offered at any high school in the district.

**Exhibit 4-5
Number of Advanced Placement Courses
Listed at the Collier County School District**

Subject Area	Number
Social Sciences	9
Science	4
Foreign Language	4
Mathematics	3
Art	3
English/LA	2
Computer Education	2
Music	1
Total	28

Source: Collier County School District High School Course Offerings, 2002-03.

The laureate program is a district wide initiative designed to offer an academically rigorous curriculum to high achieving students. Students who participate in the program can earn either a laureate diploma or a laureate certificate. A third level, the Laureate Scholar Program will be piloted in 2003-04. To earn a Laureate Diploma, students must complete six or more AP courses, the laureate certificate requires completion of five AP courses and the laureate scholar requires completion of three AP courses. Students participating in the laureate program have an opportunity to accumulate college credit during high school because of the large number of AP courses they are required to take to complete the program.

Workforce Education. The district's workforce education program includes secondary and postsecondary components. At the secondary level, the career and technical education (CTE) program provides students opportunities to enroll in courses that address the SCANS competencies and the Sunshine State Standards. Twenty-five CTE programs are offered at the high school level, and courses in family and consumer science, technology and business technology are offered at the middle school level.

The postsecondary workforce education program in the Collier County School District is composed of two vocational-technical centers, the Lorenzo Walker Institute of Technology (LWIT) and the Bethune Education Center, and the Adult and Community Education program. The purpose of LWIT is to provide job preparatory instruction through which students can attain job specific skills necessary to enter or continue in the workforce. Certificate programs are included in health sciences, computer and business technology, personal and human services, and industrial apprenticeship training.

The purpose of the adult community education program is to maximize the use of community resources by providing educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities such as adult ESOL programs, adult basic education preparation and citizenship classes, vocational preparatory instruction, general education development (GED) preparation and continuing workforce education courses. In this regard, the adult and community education program has initiated customized, apprenticeship programs focusing on identified skills and developed on a contract basis to meet the needs of an individual or group of businesses. Over 12,400 students were served in the Collier County School District workforce education programs in 2001-02.

Student Support Services. In the Collier County School District, the student services department provides psychological services, guidance and counseling services and health services. The objective of these student support services is to provide support outside of the classroom, which helps students to

overcome problems that could interfere with their academic success and to broaden their education experience. Further description of student support services appears later in this chapter.

Activities of particular interest

Some school districts have developed programs that are especially noteworthy and can serve as a model for other school districts to follow. In The Collier County School District, these include ESOL strategies and training manuals, the district data warehouse, and the district's participation in the standard bearer initiative through the Center for Leadership in School Reform (CLSR).

- ***ESOL Strategies and Training Manuals*** The director of ESOL and the district's ESOL contacts (teachers) gleaned research literature to develop a list of best practices in ESOL instruction (general and by content area). The director of ESOL and her staff have compared this list against the newly created list from the Florida Department of Education, and the district's list contains additional items not included on the state list. The director of ESOL and her staff have foreseen the need for supplemental materials to enhance the current ESOL training and have developed reference handbooks titled, *ESOL Reader for Administrators, Teachers and Tutors* and *Handbook for ESOL Tutors*. These handbooks are distributed to school personnel who need further information on ESOL service delivery or ESOL students. The director and her staff have also created an ESOL data entry manual to ensure that student data is reported in an accurate and timely manner.
- ***District Data Warehouse.*** The office of accountability and staff and school renewal has developed and maintains the data warehouse as a means of providing all staff with the data necessary to make appropriate educational decisions. The data warehouse was created to provide teachers an effective means of using data in the prescriptive and remedial instruction of students. The data warehouse helps teachers know more about students' demographic and achievement backgrounds; understand students' achievement strengths, weaknesses and gains; apply appropriate instruction; and analyze, monitor and evaluate student progress. All data relative to the academic records of individual students as well as subgroups of students such as ESOL, ESE and migrant students are easily accessible for use by administrators and teachers. The data are also used in the development and updating of the district educational improvement plan (DEIP) and the school improvement plans (SIP). Data can also be used to compare school and district information with that of other districts and the state. Examples of data available include historical enrollment information; attendance, promotion, dropout and graduation information; disciplinary information; class-size information; per-student expenditures; staff information; FCAT (SSS) reading, math and writing results by grade; and FCAT (NRT) reading and math data for grades 3-5.
- ***Standard-Bearer School District Network.*** The district is one of 33 districts nationally that is partnered with the center for leadership in school reform to form the standard bearer school district network. The goal of the network is to assist school districts in meeting standards that research indicates are effective in initiating and sustaining system-wide change. The standards focus on major system components such as student engagement and quality of content provided students, decision-making, leadership, on-going support, technology and collaboration. The Standard-Bearer framework addresses the school board's initiatives and is aligned with the goals in the DEIP.
- ***ESE L.I.F.E. Program.*** The learning independent functional employment (L.I.F.E.) program provides unique learning experiences and opportunities for students with disabilities. Real world experiences that cannot be duplicated in the classroom are provided within a secure and supported environment through business partnerships with The Naples Beach Hotel and Gold Club, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Rookery Bay, and the Stonebridge Country Club. The students develop the skills and motivation that will prepare them to be contributing members of society. L.I.F.E. partnerships are measured by each student's successful transition to a technical training program or competitive

employment. The L.I.F.E. Program was recently honored as one of Florida's best education business partnerships through the Florida Department of Education and the office of workforce education in cooperation with the Florida Chamber of Commerce.

- ***ESE "Sharing the Commitment"***. The ESE parent advisory, "Sharing the Commitment" has received accolades as a model parent, educator, community collaborative partnership by the Florida Department of Education and family network on disabilities. The advisory provides Saturday workshops open to all, trained parent liaisons that assist other parents of students with disabilities (PEERS), and committees to develop recommendations for program enhancements. The focus of the group is to create effective partnerships to enhance services to student with disabilities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Educational Service Delivery Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Effective and Efficient Instructional Programs	1. District administrators use both academic and nonacademic data to guide them in their decision-making about improving K-12 education programs.	Yes	4-10
	2. The district provides effective and efficient Exceptional Student Education programs for students with disabilities and students who are gifted.	No	4-20
	3. The district provides effective and efficient programs to meet the needs of at-risk students (including English for Speakers of Other Languages), Title I and alternative education).	Yes	4-36
	4. The district provides an appropriate range of accelerated programs (such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Dual Enrollment).	Yes	4-40
	5. The district provides effective and efficient workforce development programs (such as vocational-technical, adult basic education and adult high school programs).	Yes	4-48
	6. The district ensures that schools use effective planning and evaluation processes to improve student outcomes, including school improvement plans and other data driven processes such as the Sterling process.	Yes	4-51
	7. The district ensures effective progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 that maximizes student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards and prepares students for work and continued education.	Yes	4-54
	8. The district's organizational structure and staffing of educational programs minimizes administrative layers and processes.	No	4-55
Effective and Efficient Instructional Support	9. The district ensures that students and teachers have sufficient current textbooks and other instructional materials available to support instruction in core subjects and to meet the needs of teachers and students.	Yes	4-62
	10. The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction.	Yes	4-64
	11. The district utilizes instructional technology in the classroom to enhance curriculum and improve student achievement.	Yes	4-65
	12. The district provides necessary support services (guidance counseling, psychological, social work and health) to meet student needs and to ensure students are able to learn.	Yes	4-68

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Best Practice 1: Using

District administrators use both academic and nonacademic data to guide them in their decision-making about improving K-12 education programs.

Effective school districts use academic and nonacademic data to drive decisions related to their instructional programs and to improve the performance of all students. To meet this best practice, districts should collect, analyze and use data regularly to monitor the performance of its schools and subgroups of students, identify areas requiring intervention strategies and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies. In addition to performing well or showing steady improvement, an effective district uses academic and nonacademic data to establish district goals and priorities, target interventions and allocate resources.

The Collier County School District uses a variety of data to guide decision making relative to improving its education programs. The district's data warehouse provides staff with data necessary for making appropriate educational decisions. District and school-based personnel receive on-going training in the retrieval and analysis of data. All instructional personnel develop professional growth plans based on student achievement data relevant to their levels of responsibility. District-level administrators collaborate with site-based personnel in using relevant student achievement data to develop objectives in school improvement plans (SIP) and to plan appropriate staff development activities.

Student assessment data are disaggregated by racial/ethnic groups and instruction in reading, math and writing for use in developing school improvement activities, staff training and in selecting instructional programs and materials. District instructional departments provide support for teachers through the development of activities and provision of relevant training related to the instructional process and by assisting with the analysis and use of data to address identified needs of subgroup populations. Specifically, the data are used in making decisions relative to the differentiation of instruction, the assignment of students to courses, staff development needs of staff and modifications to the curriculum.

Personnel assigned to the curriculum and instructional programs division meet quarterly as the instructional curriculum council with discussions focused primarily on effective teaching strategies, professional development needs and plans and any curriculum planning related to modifications necessitated by best practice or state/federal legislation. Elementary teachers are provided opportunities to meet semi-annually, and secondary department chairpersons meet monthly with subject area coordinators.

Training needs are established through a review of student data, ongoing dialog with site-based administrators and teachers, review of the district educational improvement plan (DEIP), each SIP and the professional growth plans for instructional staff. Teachers-on-special assignment, such as literacy specialists, math/science specialists, and instructional technology specialists, work cooperatively with the supervisors and coordinators assigned to the division of curriculum and instructional programs to provide a large portion of the staff development training.

District employees also use non-academic data such as attendance, graduation and promotion rates, all of which are available on the district's data warehouse, when developing SIPs. An economically needy student report, generated by the food services department, is used to help redesign instructional programs

in schools with high concentrations of students in need of additional educational assistance. The report provides information relative to the school, grade levels served, number of economically needy students, total enrollment and percentage economically needy. In addition, performance assessments from numerous countywide art exhibits and community music performance highlight the artwork and musical contributions from all schools in the district. Examples of non-academic performance indicators used by the district include the following:

- all-county honor festival for secondary band, orchestra and choral students
- district competitions including spelling bees and oratorical and writing events
- mock trial program
- law fair in connection with Law Week
- laws of Life Program, a character education program conducted cooperatively with the City of Naples, the Collier Educational Foundation and other community groups.
- model United Nations Program
- annual science fair

Student Performance

In most district schools, the FCAT writing assessments have improved over the last three-year period at a rate equal to or better than that experienced statewide. As indicated by Exhibit 4-6, the mean scores on the grade 4 FCAT writing assessment improved at 19 of the district's 21 (90%) elementary schools and at a slightly higher level than that experienced statewide. Improvements on the grade 8 FCAT writing assessment occurred at 7 of 10 (70%) district middle schools and at approximately the same level as that statewide (Exhibit 4-7). As indicated by Exhibit 4-8, improvements on the grade 10 writing assessment occurred at 3 of 6 (50%) high schools but at a slightly higher rate than that statewide.

Exhibit 4-6
Change in Collier County School District Grade 4
FCAT Writing Assessment Mean Scores 2000-01 to 2002-03:
Elementary School, District and State (Percentage Scoring 3 or Above)

School	Combined Average 2000-01	Combined Average 2002-03	Change
Tommie Barfield	4.0 (95%)	4.1 (98%)	+0.1 (+3%)
Golden Gate	3.2 (73%)	3.3 (83%)	+0.1 (+7%)
Golden Terrace	3.1 (75%)	3.3 (80%)	+0.2 (+5%)
State	3.4 (83%)	3.6 (90%)	+0.2 (+7%)
Sea Gate	3.8 (97%)	4.1 (97%)	+0.3 (+0%)
Shadowlawn	3.0 (64%)	3.3 (81%)	+0.3 (+17%)
Highlands	3.1 (82%)	3.4 (89%)	+0.3 (+7%)
Lake Park	3.6 (88%)	3.9 (95%)	+0.3 (+7%)
Laurel Oak	3.4 (85%)	3.7 (92%)	+0.3 (+7%)
District	3.3 (80%)	3.6 (89%)	+0.3 (+9%)
Vineyards	3.7 (99%)	4.0 (95%)	+0.3 (-4%)
Corkscrew	3.2 (82%)	3.6 (92%)	+0.4 (+10%)
Big Cypress	3.2 (80%)	3.6 (92%)	+0.4 (+12%)
Naples Park	3.4 (85%)	3.8 (97%)	+0.4 (+12%)
Poinciana	3.3 (82%)	3.7 (95%)	+0.4 (+13%)
Village Oaks	2.9 (65%)	3.3 (82%)	+0.4 (+17%)
Manatee	2.6 (52%)	3.0 (71%)	+0.4 (+19%)
Pinecrest	2.7 (57%)	3.1 (82%)	+0.4 (+25%)
Avalon	2.8 (63%)	3.3 (88%)	+0.5 (+17%)
Pelican Marsh	3.5 (90%)	4.0 (99%)	+0.5 (+9%)
Lake Trafford	2.9 (67%)	3.5 (89%)	+0.6 (+22%)
Lely	3.6 (91%)	3.5 (87%)	-0.1 (-4%)
Everglades	3.0 (84%)	2.3 (40%)	-0.7 (-44%)

Source: The Collier County School District.

Exhibit 4-7
Change in Collier County School District Grade 8
FCAT Writing Assessment Mean Scores 2000-01 to 2002-03:
Middle School, District and State (Percentage Scoring 3 or Above)

School	Combined Average 2000-01	Combined Average 2002-03	Change
Manatee	3.4 (80%)	3.4 (82%)	+0.0 (+2%)
District	3.7 (89%)	3.9 (90%)	+0.2 (+1%)
Immokalee	3.2 (79%)	3.4 (81%)	+0.2 (+2%)
State	3.7 (87%)	3.9 (91%)	+0.2 (+4%)
Pine Ridge	4.0 (94%)	4.2 (94%)	+0.2 (0%)
East Naples	3.7 (90%)	4.0 (92%)	+0.3 (+2%)
Corkscrew	3.7 (92%)	4.1 (93%)	+0.4 (+1%)
Gulfview	3.6 (89%)	4.1 (93%)	+0.5 (+4%)
Marco Island Charter	3.8 (99%)	4.3 (99%)	+0.5 (0%)
Oakridge	4.1 (97%)	4.0 (95%)	-0.1 (-2%)
Golden Gate	3.7 (92%)	3.6 (85%)	-0.1 (-7%)
Everglades	3.6 (82%)	3.3 (79%)	-0.3 (-3%)

Source: The Collier County School District.

Exhibit 4-8
Change in Collier County School District Grade 10
FCAT Writing Assessment Mean Scores 2000-01 to 2002-03:
High School, District and State (Percentage Scoring 3 or Above)

School	Combined Average 2000-2001	Combined Average 2002-03	Change
District	3.8 (88%)	3.8 (89%)	+0.0 (+1%)
Lely	3.7 (83%)	3.7 (88%)	+0.0 (+5%)
State	3.8 (88%)	3.8 (88%)	+0.0 (0%)
Barron Collier	4.0 (91%)	4.1 (95%)	+0.1 (+4%)
Everglades	3.3 (79%)	3.4 (77%)	+0.1 (-2%)
Gulf Coast	3.9 (91%)	4.0 (95%)	-0.1 (+4%)
Naples	3.8 (88%)	3.7 (86%)	-0.1 (-2%)
Immokalee	3.5 (83%)	3.3 (76%)	-0.2 (-7%)

Source: The Collier County School District.

Scale scores ranging from 100 to 500 are used to report FCAT results. A range of scale scores are associated with achievement levels from 1 to 5 with level 1 being the lowest and level 5 being the highest. Level 1 or level 2 scores indicates that the student demonstrated limited or little success with the content of the Sunshine State Standards (SSS). Level 3 indicates that the student has had partial success with the SSS content but that the student's performance is inconsistent and generally less successful relative to the most challenging questions. Level 4 achievement indicates the student answered most of the questions correctly and had some success with the most challenging questions. A student scoring at level 5 answered most of the test questions correctly including the most challenging. To graduate, students in grade 10 must achieve a minimum scale score of 300 on both the FCAT reading and math tests.

Exhibit 4-9 provides the scale scores associated with achievement levels 3, 4 and 5 by grade for reading. Exhibit 4-10 provides the same information for mathematics.

Exhibit 4-9
FCAT Achievement Levels 3-5: 2002-03

Grade	Reading		
	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	284-331	332-393	394-500
4	299-338	339-385	386-500
5	286-330	331-383	384-500
6	296-338	339-386	387-500
7	300-343	344-388	389-500
8	310-349	350-393	394-500
9	322-353	354-381	382-500
10	327-354	355-371	372-500

Source: Florida Department of Education, *Understanding FCAT Reports 2003*.

**Exhibit 4-10
FCAT Achievement Levels 3-5: 2002-03**

Mathematics			
Grade	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	294-345	346-397	398-500
4	296-346	347-393	394-500
5	326-354	355-394	395-500
6	315-353	354-390	391-500
7	306-343	344-378	379-500
8	310-346	347-370	371-500
9	296-331	332-366	367-500
10	315-330	340-374	375-500

Source: Florida Department of Education, *Understanding FCAT Reports 2003*.

Between 2000-01 and 2002-03, the district's FCAT mean scale scores in reading increased in grades 3, 4 and 8 and decreased in grades 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 (see Exhibit 4-11). During the same period, district mean scale scores in mathematics increased in grades 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9 and decreased in grades 7 and 10. There was no change in the scores at grade 8 (see Exhibit 4-12).

**Exhibit 4-11
District and State FCAT Mean Scale Scores:
Grades 3-10 2000-01 and 2002-03**

Reading			
Grade	District/State	2000-01	2002-03
3	District	290	291
	State	289	298
4	District	298	301
	State	298	305
5	District	288	287
	State	282	290
6	District	300	294
	State	292	295
7	District	298	297
	State	292	297
8	District	299	300
	State	295	301
9	District	288	287
	State	286	291
10	District	311	302
	State	304	302

Source: Florida Department of Education, *Understanding FCAT Reports 2003*.

Exhibit 4-12
District and State FCAT Mean Scale Scores:
Grades 3-10: 2000-01 and 2002-03

Mathematics			
Grade	District/State	2000-01	2002-03
3	District	295	305
	State	291	308
4	District	290	297
	State	286	298
5	District	318	320
	State	314	320
6	District	298	306
	State	291	302
7	District	304	300
	State	290	296
8	District	313	313
	State	308	310
9	District	294	299
	State	284	293
10	District	334	328
	State	323	320

Source: Florida Department of Education, *Understanding FCAT Reports 2003*.

Between 2000-01 and 2002-03, varying degrees of growth in student performance at grades 3-5 occurred at district elementary schools as measured by mean scores on the FCAT reading and mathematics tests. As indicated in Exhibit 4-13, eight of 21 schools (38%) experienced growth in student performance in reading at grade 3, there was a decline in reading mean scores at 10 schools (48%), and at three schools there was no change. At grade 4, 11 schools (52%) experienced an increase in student performance, seven schools experienced a decline in student performance and there was no growth at two schools. Eleven schools (52%) at grade 5 registered an increase in student growth, nine schools (43%) experienced a decline and at one school student performance neither increased nor decreased. An increase in student performance occurred district wide in grades 3 and 4 and declined in grade 5. Improvement in student performance statewide exceeded those at Collier County School District at all three grades.

In mathematics (see Exhibit 4-14) student performance at grade 3 increased at 13 of 21 schools (62%) and decreased at 10 schools (48%). There was no change in student performance at three schools. At grade 4, student performance increased at 16 schools (76%) and declined at four schools (19%). At grade 5, there was improvement in student performance at 11 schools (52%) and a decline at eight schools (38%). While there was improvement in student performance in mathematics at the district level at all three grades, the change was less than that experienced statewide.

Exhibit 4-13
2000-01 to 2002-03 Increase (Decrease) in Reading Assessment Mean Scale
Scores at Grades 3, 4 and 5: Collier County School District Elementary Schools

School	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Avalon	0	0	6
Big Cypress	13	7	11
Corkscrew	12	2	4
Everglades	0	Missing	9
Golden Gate	(8)	(6)	(10)
Golden Terrace	(17)	(4)	(7)
Highlands	(14)	23	(1)
Lake Park	21	0	(7)
Lake Trafford	0	21	20
Laurel Oak	19	7	8
Lely	(14)	(6)	14
Manatee	4	(4)	(15)
Naples Park	(14)	(3)	0
Pelican Marsh	26	20	(1)
Pinecrest	14	(7)	(14)
Poinciana	(2)	11	(5)
Sea Gate	(8)	4	1
Shadowlawn	7	(2)	(1)
Tommie Barfield	(3)	8	5
Village Oaks	(20)	13	3
Vineyards	(8)	3	17
District	1	3	(1)
State	9	7	8

Source: The Collier County School District.

Exhibit 4-14**2000-01 to 2002-03 Increase (Decrease) in Mathematics Assessment Mean Scale Scores at Grades 3, 4 and 5: Collier County School District Elementary Schools**

School	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Avalon	(11)	(18)	7
Big Cypress	32	18	19
Corkscrew	18	12	9
Everglades	16	Missing	(81)
Golden Gate	(1)	(9)	9
Golden Terrace	4	(4)	(13)
Highlands	1	22	(11)
Lake Park	33	15	9
Lake Trafford	0	34	22
Laurel Oak	24	12	18
Lely	3	2	18
Manatee	(5)	4	(9)
Naples Park	(9)	(4)	12
Pelican Marsh	41	20	3
Pinecrest	(11)	2	(23)
Poinciana	6	17	5
Sea Gate	2	11	6
Shadowlawn	7	3	22
Tommie Barfield	6	4	(1)
Village Oaks	0	13	(10)
Vineyards	0	13	(10)
District	10	7	2
State	17	12	6

Source: The Collier County School District.

In reading at the secondary level, student performance increased at three schools (30%) at grades 6 and 8, four schools (40%) at grade 7, one school (10%) at grade 9 and no schools at grade 10. Declines occurred at all schools in all other grades except at one school in grade 7 and three at grade 8 which experienced neither an increase nor a decline in student performance (see Exhibits 4-15 and 4-16).

Exhibit 4-15**2000-01 to 2002-03 Increase (Decrease) in Reading Assessment Mean Scale Scores at Grades 6, 7 and 8: Collier County School District Middle Schools**

School	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Corkscrew	(7)	0	5
East Naples	1	6	0
Everglades	(37)	20	0
Golden Gate	(22)	(11)	0
Gulfview	(5)	(1)	(1)
Immokalee	(7)	(3)	(7)
Manatee	(4)	2	(3)
Oakridge	(18)	(3)	8
Pine Ridge	7	4	(7)
Marco Island Charter	8	(7)	14
District	(6)	(1)	1
State	3	5	6

Source: The Collier County School District.

Exhibit 4-16
2000-01 to 2002-03 Increase (Decrease) in Grades 9 and 10
Reading Assessment Mean Scale Scores and 2002-03 Grade 10
Pass Rate: Collier County School District High Schools

School	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 10 Pass Rate
Barron Collier	(6)	(10)	79
Everglades	(1)	(8)	33
Gulf Coast	(6)	(4)	65
Immokalee	(3)	(19)	29
Lely	7	(14)	52
Naples	(7)	(15)	57
District	(1)	(12)	59
State	5	(2)	58

Source: The Collier County School District.

Student performance in mathematics increased in seven schools (70%) at grade 6, six schools (60%) at grade 7, four schools (40%) at grades 8 and 9 and two schools (20%) at grade 10. As at the elementary level, the increases in student performance in Collier County School District secondary schools were less than that statewide and the declines greater (see Exhibits 4-17 and 4-18).

Exhibit 4-17
2000-01 to 2002-03 Increase (Decrease) in Mathematics Assessment Mean
Scale Scores at Grades 6, 7 and 8: Collier County School District Middle Schools

School	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Corkscrew	9	3	15
East Naples	6	4	(4)
Everglades	0	12	(7)
Golden Gate	(1)	(8)	(7)
Gulfview	7	5	(3)
Immokalee	8	2	4
Manatee	7	1	(2)
Oakridge	(6)	(6)	5
Pine Ridge	7	(10)	(10)
Marco Island Charter	8	(12)	8
District	8	(4)	0
State	11	6	2

Source: The Collier County School District.

Exhibit 4-18
2000-01 to 2002-03 Increase (Decrease) in Grades 9 and 10
Mathematics Assessment Mean Scale Scores and 2002-03
Grade 10 Pass Rate: Collier County School District High Schools

School	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 10 Pass Rate
Barron Collier	(4)	(3)	92
Everglades	31	1	67
Gulf Coast	(5)	1	86
Immokalee	7	(7)	63
Lely	9	(9)	73
Naples	6	(6)	78
District	5	(5)	80
State	9	(3)	73

Source: The Collier County School District.

Among the content areas of reading, mathematics and writing as assessed by FCAT, student performance in the Collier County School District has improved the least in reading. Between 2000-01 and 2001-02, the reading assessment mean scale scores showed improvement in eight of the district's 21 elementary schools at grades 3 and 11 schools at grades 4 and 5 (see Exhibit 4-13). At the district's middle schools, three schools showed improvement at grade 6, five at grade 7 and three at grade 8 (see Exhibit 4-15). At the high school level, the mean scale scores decreased in all but one school at grade 9 and in all schools at grade 10 (see Exhibit 4-16). In addition, the 10th grade pass rate for 2001-02 was less than 60% in four of the district's six high schools.

Literacy Initiatives

The Collier County School District has made a considerable effort to improve the reading performance of its students. In 1997-98, the district developed a literacy plan, secured several literacy grants, and included literacy objectives in school improvement plans. Planning began on the use of the balanced approach to reading based on its support in the reading research and its alignment with the district's philosophy of reading instruction. Six literary specialists were hired in 1998-99, funded equally through local and grant funding. A variety of training was initiated, and curriculum documents in all subjects were revised to ensure correlation with the SSS and reading and writing connections to other subject areas. During the following year, the number of literary specialists was expanded, additional training conducted and an informal reading inventory purchased for all elementary schools in grades 3-5. In 2000-01, literacy was made the primary focus of the student performance goal in the DEIC. The number of literary specialists was expanded to eight (three from local funds and five from external funding), training continued, the Intensive Reading program offered at all middle schools.

Nine literacy specialists (one additional from external funds) served all district schools during 2001-02 with two assigned full-time to two middle schools. All elementary administrators and program specialists received training in how to support teachers in implementing the reading delivery model, and the shared reading and guided reading components of the model were implemented at all elementary schools. Literacy specialists conducted additional training for teachers in grades 3-5, and an instructional targets document was published and provided to all teachers.

Efforts have been increased during 2002-03. The district is developing a comprehensive literacy plan under the direction of the Suncoast Area Center of Educational Enhancement, a DOE funded agency. Elementary literacy instructional guides have been realigned with the state's *Just Read, Florida* initiative.

Curricula for the middle school developmental and intensive reading courses have been developed and initiated, and teachers trained in the use of the reading guides and new reading programs. A reading system was purchased for selected high school sites. The number of literacy specialists was reduced to six due to funding constraints although additional reading resource teachers were allocated to low performing schools with Title I funds. A reading coaches model grant was secured that provided ten coaches for grades 3-8 at specific sites. A variety of training for teachers and administrators continues; demonstration classroom teachers are being provided support through monthly training meetings; and the district held its first reading symposium for parents, teachers and community members.

Beginning in 1997-98, the position of coordinator of reading was filled for two years, and a supervisor of literacy was hired in early 2000. In 2000-01, the positions of supervisor of literacy and coordinator of language arts were combined, and the position of coordinator of reading remained frozen until 2002-03. A supervisor of reading was employed in October 2002, but resigned in March 2003. A search was conducted following the March resignation and the position filled in June.

Although the district is using this best practice, there is one area which, if initiated, would contribute to the improvement of the board-established priority for student improvement--reading. The district should ensure that the funding to support its adopted balanced literacy program, its approach to the improvement of reading, is equitable among all the schools in the county. At the elementary level, resource rooms have been established to house the collection of reading materials to support the program. However, the amount and source of funds used to support the resource rooms varies among the district's elementary schools. Funds expended for the purchase of resource room materials during each of the past three years range from approximately \$6,000 to \$100,000. The sources for materials at those schools include some combination of PTO grants, Title I funds, private/foundation donations, book fair, school improvement funds, the location budget and district reading and science adoptions. One school with expenditures over the past three years of approximately \$60,000 has a collection of 2,300 titles while the collections in other schools number fewer than 1,000 titles.

One specification of the Florida reading program states that for a reading program to be considered effective, reading materials must be aligned with student reading levels, must be comprehensive, and must contain a wide assortment of diverse text. Failure to provide materials that meet that specification due either to a lack of commitment to the program or an inability to make the necessary funds available could result in the district's failure to meet the board-approved initiative to implement "the literacy curriculum and reading intervention to ensure that all students can read to learn...."

We recommend that the division of curriculum and instructional programs complete the inventory of resource room materials and funding sources and develop a proposal for ensuring that all schools have equal access to materials to support the balanced literacy program.

Best Practice 2: Not Using

The district is not providing effective and efficient Exceptional Student Education programs for students with disabilities and students who are gifted.

Under federal and state law, school districts must provide appropriate services designed to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities and students who are gifted. To meet this best practice, school districts should identify and place students who require Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services in a timely manner and ensure access of minority students to the gifted program. To increase student success, districts should promote parent involvement and ensure that teachers receive adequate support and training. Districts should also periodically assess the needs and progress of ESE students and make adjustments as needed to ensure that students perform to their capacity.

The Collier County School District's ESE program has several notable strengths, primarily in its services for students with disabilities. Its commendable practices include the alignment of ESE curriculum with the Sunshine State Standards and with each student's individualized education plan (IEP). This creates a unified process that directly links planning and instruction. The district's timely assessment of students with disabilities results in a more efficient provision of services, as well as maximum state and federal funding. The district has an increasingly active and effective organization for providing support to families of students with disabilities.

However, the district can improve and meet this best practice standard by developing additional strategies to increase the participation of students with disabilities in regular classrooms, continuing its efforts to reduce the overrepresentation of black students in the educable mentally handicapped category, filing for Medicaid reimbursement in the certified match program, and exploring the use "severity aides" for students with handicaps. In addition, for gifted students, the district should modify its plan for identifying low income and minority students as gifted, develop a standard procedure for teachers to document how they differentiate the curriculum for gifted students, and involve the director of exceptional student education in the evaluation of the coordinator of gifted services. Because of differences in the ESE programs for students with disabilities and gifted students, this chapter will discuss them separately.

Special Education Services for Students with Disabilities

Policies and Procedures

The Collier County School District has clearly articulated policies and procedures supporting the district's consistency with state and federal laws regarding all steps in the special education process: identification, assessment, IEP (Individual Education Plan) development, coordination of services and transitioning students. To ensure consistent adherence to its policies and procedures, the district has an ESE specialist on each campus. This position is designed to facilitate eligibility staffing, guide IEP development, and ensure compliance with federal and state guidelines. The district recently implemented a new web-based IEP system, which is intended to ensure a seamless system of service delivery. The ESE Department provides a wide range of staff development opportunities for general and ESE staff. The topics include instructional techniques, technology services and legal requirements.

The Collier County School District also has a very thorough review process in place for monitoring each student's IEP to assure adherence to required procedures and to ensure that all required services are being delivered. Procedural checks by ESE administrative staff are documented on several forms, including an assignment sheet to indicate who will be completing the monitoring, the *IEP Documentation Form* that tracks the number of IEPs checked for compliance and an *IEP Quick Compliance Checklist* that lists common areas of concern for staff to check. Each individual IEP is reviewed after an IEP meeting has been held. Campuses are notified of any mistakes or omissions, which must then be corrected. The ESE supervisory staff also conducts monthly checks to determine whether there is a match between the schedules of itinerant personnel, like occupational and speech therapists and students' IEPs and schedules, which are in the TERMS software database. This allows them to verify that students are receiving required services from providers not based on individual campuses. The review team was very impressed with the thoroughness of the IEP review process in the district.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires districts to provide a full continuum of services through its varied service delivery models. This continuum is intended to offer options so that each student's individual needs can be met. Collier County School District has implemented several models of instruction, including:

- co-teaching (general and special education teachers in the same classroom);

Educational Service Delivery

- consultation and support;
- content mastery and learning labs;
- resource or small group instruction;
- self-contained classrooms; and
- hospital/homebound services.

Comparisons with peer districts indicate that the Collier County School District identifies about the same percentage of students as disabled and as gifted as its five peer districts. Over-identification of students with disabilities is a concern of the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). As Exhibit 4-19 shows, the percentage of Collier County School District students with disabilities (15%) is the same as two peers and lower than three peer districts.

Exhibit 4-19

Collier County School District and Peer Districts Percentage of Students Disabled and Gifted in December 2002

District	Pre-K-Population	Percentage Disabled	Percentage Gifted
Collier	38,104	15%	4%
Lake	31,773	17%	2%
Lee	63,148	15%	6%
Manatee	39,106	19%	4%
Osceola	40,482	15%	<1%
Pasco	54,957	19%	3%

Source: Florida Department of Education, LEA Profiles, 2003.

Placement

The Collier County School District serves most of its students with disabilities in environments with their non-disabled peers. Exhibit 4-20 presents data that shows that Collier County School District serves 62% of its students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers for at least 80% of their school week. This is higher than the state (48%) and peer districts. This pattern of service in the “least restrictive environment” is required in the IDEA. Several schools in the district have implemented an inclusionary service delivery model, including Shadowlawn, Osceola and Calusa Park elementary schools and Immokalee and Manatee middle schools, which have a federally supported co-teaching project.

Exhibit 4-20

Placement of Students with Disabilities in Regular Education Classes

County	Percentage of Students with Disabilities in Regular Classes		
	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Collier	62%	62%	62%
Lake	54%	55%	55%
Lee	45%	47%	49%
Manatee	59%	60%	61%
Osceola	52%	48%	48%
Pasco	60%	59%	56%
State	48%	48%	48%

Source: Florida Department of Education, LEA Profiles, 2003.

Despite its overall progress at serving students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, the district's efforts at placement of students in the EMH (educable mentally handicapped) category have not been as successful. The Florida Department of Education reports each district's separate class placement for students identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH). While the district generally places students with disabilities in less restrictive environments than its peers and the state, its record on placing EMH students is not good. The Collier County School District serves 83% of its EMH students in separate classes, which is 21 percentage points higher than the separate class placement rate of EMH students statewide and 33 percentage points higher than Osceola, which places only 50% of its EMH students in restrictive, separate classes. Of the state and its peers, only Collier County is increasing, rather than decreasing the percentage of EMH students in separate classes. The ESE Director said this statistic contributed to the state's decision to place Collier County School District in a pool with other districts for a possible focused monitoring. (See Exhibit 4-21).

Exhibit 4-21
Placement of EMH Students in Separate Classes

County	Percentage EMH Students in Separate Classes		
	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Collier	81%	81%	83%
Lake	81%	77%	75%
Lee	88%	87%	87%
Manatee	74%	69%	69%
Osceola	40%	52%	50%
Pasco	67%	64%	62%
State	61%	62%	61%

Source: Florida Department of Education, LEA Profiles, 2003.

To remediate this situation, the Department of Education has required the Collier County School District to develop a *Continuous Improvement/Self Assessment Monitoring Plan*. The plan was recently amended to include a review of placement data by campus and by grade level, so specific campuses can be targeted for intervention. In January 2003, the ESE department began to pair the top five campuses for inclusive placement of EMH students with the bottom five campuses. The campuses will share strategies, model inclusive programs, and review progress toward improving the percentage of separate class placement. The ESE department also provides on-going staff development for teachers and administrators related to instructional techniques and service delivery models. Because this placement issue is one indicator that puts the district into a pool for a focused monitoring and because the placement data indicate a failure to serve EMH students in the mainstream, the district should require campuses to increase the number of students in regular class setting through improved school improvement plans.

The district does a good job keeping ESE students in school, with a low percentage of students with disabilities served in out-of-school suspensions or expelled. However, the district's percentage of students with disabilities served in in-school suspension settings (21%) is significantly higher than the state average of 13% and higher than that of all peer districts. The percentage of students with disabilities who served in-school suspensions was almost twice that of students without disabilities. Because the rate of this type of placement is 8% higher than that of the state, the district should be collecting and disaggregating data campus-by-campus data and/or sorting infractions by category. The complete data are shown in Exhibit 4-22.

**Exhibit 4-22
In-School Suspension Rates for Students with and without Disabilities for 2001-02**

County	In-School Suspensions	
	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
Collier	21%	11%
Lake	5%	3%
Lee	15%	8%
Manatee	10%	7%
Osceola	8%	3%
Pasco	19%	10%
State	13%	8%

Source: Florida Department of Education, LEA Profiles, 2003.

This placement issue should also be addressed in the campus plans, since individual campus administrators are responsible for these placements. Action Plan 4-1 outlines actions to the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 4-1

We recommend that the district require individual campuses to include additional specific strategies in their school improvement plans that focus on increasing the participation of students with disabilities in regular education environments.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Review current data on placement and in-school suspension for students with disabilities on a campus-by-campus basis. Develop specific targets for each campus to increase the time students with disabilities spend in regular education. Specifically address (a) increasing the percentage of EMH students in regular education settings and (b) reducing the rate of in-school suspension of students with disabilities.</p> <p>Step 2. Incorporate the targets into individual school improvement plans.</p> <p>Step 3. Develop a staff development plan that provides strategies for regular education administrators and teachers.</p> <p>Step 4. Provide additional staff development according to the plan.</p> <p>Step 5. Evaluate each school's progress at the end of 2003-04.</p> <p>Step 6. Evaluate overall progress of the district at the end of 2003-04.</p> <p>Step 7. Revise school improvement plans and set targets for the 2004-05 school year.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Associate superintendent of curriculum and instructional services, director of exceptional student education and director of staff development
Time Frame	June 2004

Exhibit 4-23 shows that the district has a proportionate representation of white and minority in special education.

**Exhibit 4-23
Student Membership by Racial/Ethnic Category as Reported in October 2002**

Racial/Ethnic Category	All Students	Students with Disabilities	Gifted Students
White	51%	50%	81%
Black	11%	14%	3%
Hispanic	34%	34%	12%
Asian/Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	2%
Am Indian/Alaskan Nat.	<1%	<1%	<1%
Multiracial	2%	1%	1%

Source: Florida Department of Education, LEA Profiles, 2003.

Over Identification of Minority Students

The district’s *Continuous Improvement-Self Assessment Plan* also addresses their over-identification of black students in the EMH category as well as the under-identification of minority students in gifted education. The over-identification of black students as EMH is a statewide issue: in Florida, 24% of all students are black and 53% of EMH students are black. In Collier County School District, 11% of all students are black and 36% of EMH students are black. The district’s plan to reduce the over-identification problem for students with disabilities includes some improvement strategies and goals, but it should include more specific timelines and more responsibility for campus principals. Since the district has a commitment to site-based decision making, each campus should be required to provide disaggregated data by their campus and include strategies in their Campus Improvement Plans to address this issue. Action Plan 4-2 outlines actions to the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice

Action Plan 4-2

We recommend that the district continue its efforts to reduce the over-representation of black students in the EMH category.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Review the existing <i>Continuous Monitoring and Improvement Plan</i> submitted to the state.
	Step 2.	Disaggregate referral data by campus and identify campuses with higher than the district average of referrals of Black students in this category.
	Step 3.	Analyze data to determine age of referral, specific learning problems (i.e., reading) and gender.
	Step 4.	Modify the existing plan to include specific pre-referral strategies for campuses with the highest rates of referral.
	Step 5.	Train campus staff members on effective instructional techniques, modifications and accommodations.
	Step 6.	Evaluate data and review progress at the end of the 2003-04 school year.
Who Is Responsible	Exceptional student education director	
Time Frame	June 2004	

Timeliness of Assessments

The Collier County School District does an excellent job completing its initial special education assessments quickly and with a high eligibility rate. A multi-disciplinary team evaluates students who are referred by the child study team after parent consent for evaluation has been obtained. The current average number of days from consent to completion of evaluation is 41 days. The district’s coordinator of psychological services monitors progress in completing assessments. The summary information indicates that about 11% of referrals do not qualify for services (71 of 675). This is well below the 25% recommended benchmark. Collier County School District has only 20 psychologists, so instead of the psychologists conducting all of the assessments, curriculum specialists, program specialists and deans of instruction perform much of the academic testing in the evaluation. This is an appropriate procedure and the Student Services Department has provided necessary training related to the assessment instruments. Because of these procedures and close oversight by the Office of Student Services, fewer than 20 initial referrals from the 2001-02 school year were not completed by the end of the school year. ESE teachers on each campus perform academic testing for re-evaluations, which is another procedure that minimizes the number of referrals that are not completed in a timely manner.

Participation in Medicaid

The Collier County School District participates in the Medicaid administrative claiming program and receives reimbursement for administrative services. Both the ESE department and the department of student services have requested for several years that the district file for Medicaid reimbursement under the Medicaid certified school match program. However, the district has not chosen to participate in this program, which would very likely result in significant revenue for the district. The Medicaid certified school match program (commonly called “fee for service”) allows school districts to receive Medicaid reimbursement for nursing, speech/language therapy, behavioral services, occupational therapy, physical therapy and transportation services provided to Medicaid-eligible students who qualify under IDEA, Part B or C. The state provides technical services to districts that wish to participate in this program. Collier County School District is a certified Medicaid provider and already has Medicaid provider numbers.

The shared services network, which provides technical assistance to Florida districts that wish to participate in the certified school match program, has recently completed a worksheet that districts can use to estimate their potential revenue from the school match program. The worksheet, which is available online, requires districts to input relevant data and then computes potential revenue based on the number of ESE (exceptional student education) students with disabilities, the percentage of students who are Medicaid eligible and the number of services provided in specific categories. The worksheet also provides reimbursement rates for the services. By completing worksheet 1, a district can estimate its revenue for all but transportation services. A separate worksheet, which includes the transportation rate for each county in the state, can be used to estimate additional revenue from transportation reimbursement. The website information for the Collier County School District is based on the Florida Department of Education survey completed in fall 2001. At that time, the Collier County School District had 5,618 ESE students and 22.5% of its student population was Medicaid eligible. Updated information from the district’s data warehouse indicates increases in both the total number of ESE special education students and low-income students, so any estimates of Medicaid reimbursement revenue should be adjusted upward based on these more current data.

The district’s director of exceptional student education and executive director of student services have completed the worksheet, *Florida Medicaid Certified School Match Program Potential Annual Reimbursement*. Based on the most current enrollment data available, they have included all relevant information necessary to estimate reimbursement for services in these areas:

- speech therapy
- physical therapy
- occupational therapy
- behavioral services
- nursing
- medication administration
- other related services

Based on this worksheet, the estimated Medicaid reimbursement for the district would be \$602,081 per year. This estimate assumes that claims for reimbursement for all eligible services would be filed, that all providers meet qualifications and that rates of reimbursement remain the same. It also assumes that the district has accurately estimated the number of services in correct increments. Offsetting the over \$600,000 in Medicaid revenue would be expenses related to the program. These expenses would likely include personnel costs for a clerk or clerks who would enter the required information for each claim and validate students’ eligibility. The other significant cost would be the cost for actually filing the claims.

While it is possible to file the Medicaid claims internally, most districts contract with an accounting firm or other Medicaid service provider, who charges a percentage or a flat amount per claim filed. The Collier County School District should explore the potential revenue versus costs and then, if entering the program is determined to be profitable, the executive director of business services can begin to work with exceptional student education and student support services to set up the framework for entering the program as soon as possible. If the district proceeds, the two departments would eventually need to hire staff, solicit bids for claim filing and begin to file quarterly claims, if they choose this option. Since the revenue generated in this program is for reimbursement of services, not for any administrative functions, the ESE and Student Support Services departments have been told that the revenue will flow back to their programs, which is appropriate. The review team estimates that the district chooses to file for Medicaid reimbursement, additional revenue would amount to \$546,998. This estimate is based on the above information provided by the district. This estimate is calculated by taking the additional gross revenue of \$602,081 less expenses of hiring a claims clerk (estimated to be \$31,000 including benefits) and the cost of filing the claims (4% of the reimbursement amount, based on quotes received from a claims administrator), for total estimated revenue of \$546,998 ($\$602,081 - \$31,000 - [602,081 \times 4\%] = \$546,998$). Action Plan 4-3 outlines actions to the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice

Action Plan 4-3

We recommend that the district begin to file for Medicaid reimbursement in the Certified Match Program.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	After completing the transportation and services worksheets, request bids from accounting or other firms with experience filing Medicaid claims.
	Step 2.	Conduct a needs analysis to determine how many, if any, additional staff will be required for claim filing.
	Step 3.	Conduct a cost-benefit study to ensure the profitability of participation in the program and to estimate revenue after expenses.
	Step 4.	Train staff in documentation procedures.
	Step 5.	Assign a team to visit other districts to gather information related to filing procedures.
	Step 6.	Work with the budget director to begin the process.
	Step 7.	File quarterly.
Who Is Responsible	Director of exceptional student education and executive director of student services.	
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing	

The Collier County School District has been filing for reimbursement in the administrative claiming program since 1998 and to date has received approximately \$3.99 million. Recently the firm that had been filing for administrative claiming reimbursement for the Collier County School District and several other Florida districts, ceased this type of service in Florida. Because of the firm’s sudden departure, the district had to do its own sampling and filing for the first quarter of the year. This process has been profitable and the district should continue it.

Correlation of the Curriculum with the Sunshine State Standards

For students with disabilities, the Collier County School District used a team of ESE and general educators to correlate the Sunshine State Standards with the goals and objectives from the internet IEP development software. This team has written a manual that provides a side-by-side correlation of the over 10,000 goals and benchmarks in the district’s objective bank so that ESE staff can access, edit and write appropriate IEPs. Each campus IEP team determines accommodations and modifications for each

student and training relevant to those accommodations and modifications has been provided to all ESE staff.

Support for Teacher and Administrators

The Collier County School District employs both ESE specialists and behavior specialists whose responsibilities focus on supporting teachers and students for both academic and behavioral issues. The ESE department also provides staff development training for general and special educators as well as classroom assistants and tracks the training by number and job descriptions of participants. The training includes a variety of topics, including an emphasis on increasing ESE students' access to the general curriculum. Copies of materials related to accommodations and modifications are provided to all teachers. The ESE department has revised the job description for ESE assistants and is piloting a program that requires 60 hours of district approved in-service training within three years of the date of hire, 30 hours of which must be completed within the first year of service. In addition, assistants must complete Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training within 6 months of the date of hire and prior to their involvement in crisis intervention procedures. Including training hours in the job description is an effective way of guaranteeing consistency of competencies.

The district has implemented initiatives that go beyond state and federal mandates. These include:

- A collaborative program called “arts for all” that is grant funded and focuses on including students with disabilities in arts activities.
- A training program for bus drivers that focuses on positive behavior intervention and safety.
- Staff development and “hands on” training for teachers who work with students who have severe disabilities and require augmentative or alternative communication devices.

Parent Involvement

The district maintains an ESE website and has evidence of parent satisfaction from a parent satisfaction survey completed in May 2002. After receiving the parent services component of its federal entitlement and discretionary grant for the 2000-01 school year, the district's ESE department, through a steering committee, enlarged the scope and changed the focus of its advisory group. The group now includes parents, teachers, administrators, a representative from higher education and community members. The group, called “Sharing the Commitment: Educators, Parents and Community” is more structured and now has a calendar of activities that include training; the development of information brochures in English, Spanish and Creole; dissemination of federal, state and local information; and the provision of consultants to parents. There have been a variety of topics presented in training sessions and the district has records of the number of participants. Additional activities have included providing information manuals to parents and completing a survey of parents to ascertain their level of satisfaction with ESE services.

The district's *PEER* (parent-educator exceptional resource) program connects parents with ESE teachers and the team then provides support and information to other parents in the community. The teacher member of the PEER team supports the parent, disseminates information to SAC committees on campuses, participates in Share the Commitment meetings and must complete 20 hours of paid training. The district has procedures to track participation in the program. The peer brochures provide contact information in three languages. Workshops are also advertised in local newspapers, fliers and school newsletters and postcards are mailed and disseminated at IEP meetings. Parents are also provided with funds to pay mileage and meals during attendance at training and informational meetings throughout the state. In addition, more than one hundred parents participated in trainings with teachers and other district staff members related to communication, behavior and participation in the arts.

In July 2002, the district sent a confidential survey to parents to determine their level of satisfaction with the special education services their children received. The survey responses indicated parents' overwhelming satisfaction. Of the 852 respondents, only 62 (7%) described their child's services as poor. Parents were also satisfied with the related services their children receive (719 or 84% described them as outstanding, excellent, or good average). About 41% (347) indicated that they had not received any information regarding the Share the Commitment group. The district should consider requesting demographic information from parents so that the ESE department can determine whether they are meeting the needs of all students. It should also be constructed with a Likert response format (e.g. rating from 1-5) so that the ESE department can quantify results and compare them year-to-year, by campus and by grade level. Another strategy the ESE department could use to get feedback from parents is to provide a pre-paid post card to parents at IEP meetings. Parents could fill out the card anonymously and place it in a secure box on the campus or drop it in a mailbox later.

Student Performance

In the last three years, the participation of Collier County School District students with disabilities in FCAT testing has increased in five of six grade/subject areas. This is consistent with the participation rate statewide, which has increased in all six areas. The district's participation rate decreased only in grade 4 reading. All increases were small. In 2000-01, the district's FCAT participation rate for students with disabilities in reading testing was lower than about half the peer districts and the state at two of the three grade levels. The district's participation rate for students with disabilities in math was lower than the state and most peers at grade 10 but higher than the state and most peers at grade 8. For grade 4 math, the district's participation rate was similar to its peers and the state. Exhibits 4-24 and 4-25 show the FCAT participation rates for students in math and in reading.

**Exhibit 4-24
Students with Disabilities Participation Rate
in Statewide Reading Assessments for 2001-02**

County	FCAT Participation		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Collier	83%	83%	61%
Lake	75%	73%	55%
Lee	82%	73%	62%
Manatee	90%	79%	61%
Osceola	88%	88%	63%
Pasco	91%	75%	58%
State	88%	80%	62%

Source: Florida Department of Education, LEA Profiles, 2003.

**Exhibit 4-25
Students with Disabilities Participation Rate in Statewide Math Assessments for 2001-02**

County	FCAT Participation		
	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10
Collier	88%	84%	61%
Lake	77%	73%	54%
Lee	85%	73%	60%
Manatee	90%	78%	59%
Osceola	87%	86%	63%
Pasco	91%	76%	57%
State	88%	80%	62%

Source: Florida Department of Education, LEA Profiles, 2003.

The Collier County School District’s percentage of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma and the dropout rate for students with disabilities were about the same as their peers and the state. Exhibit 4-26 shows that the percentage of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma in 2001-02 was 51%, which is slightly higher than the state rate of 48% and higher than all peer districts except one. The dropout rate for students with disabilities in the Collier County School District is 5%, lower than three peer districts, higher than one peer district, and the same as one peer district and the statewide dropout rate of 5%. The district has a written a *Continuous Improvement /Self-Assessment Monitoring Plan* to increase the number of ESE students graduating from high school. The ESE department has disaggregated the dropout data by school, gender, disability, ethnicity, grade and month of dropping out. The interventions included in the improvement plan include identifying potential dropouts at the middle school level, providing additional vocational education classes, expanding PAES, a vocational program in middle schools, and increasing communication between the student tracking liaison and the transition specialist. The improvement plan targets middle school students and could be improved if specific subpopulations (Hispanic, 9th and 10th graders, LD students, EMH students and males) were considered individually. The district should consider including specific dropout prevention strategies for students with disabilities in their school improvement plans.

**Exhibit 4-26
Standard Diploma Graduation Rate for Students
with Disabilities from 1998-99 through 2000-01**

County	Percentage of Students With Disabilities Graduating with a Standard Diploma		
	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Collier	58%	47%	51%
Lake	58%	44%	49%
Lee	45%	44%	49%
Manatee	39%	45%	39%
Osceola	36%	40%	35%
Pasco	69%	53%	52%
State	56%	51%	48%

Source: Florida Department of Education, LEA Profiles, 2003.

The district applied for and received grant funds to provide targeted assistance to 12th grade students with disabilities who need to pass the FCAT to graduate with a standard diploma in June 2003. Districts were required to submit an application detailing how many students they wanted to target and design strategies for remediation in reading and math. The Collier County School District identified 58 students for whom they received approximately \$58,000. Strategies will include tutoring and a one to two week FCAT preparation class in June. The district has several diploma options for students with disabilities, each with specific graduation requirement related to the Sunshine State Standards, ESE performance standards, courses, and GPA and IEP documentation. Diploma options are written to meet the needs of all students with disabilities, regardless of their disability category.

The scaled scores on the FCAT math and FCAT reading of students with disabilities are higher than those of most peer districts at most grade levels. To monitor students’ progress, administrators can access the data warehouse and examine individual student performance. Scores on the FCAT by subject and grade level indicate that students with disabilities perform below general education students, who perform below gifted students. Except for the 10th grade math FCAT, fewer than 30% of students with disabilities achieve a level 3 at any grade level for reading or math. The Florida Department of Education ranks districts within their peer enrollment group by the percentage of students at level 2 or higher at each grade level in both reading and math. Within its peer enrollment group, which consists of 14 counties, the

Collier County School District varies in rank, scoring the best on the 10th grade math test. (See Exhibit 4-27).

Exhibit 4-27
Average Scaled Scores of ESE Students Taking the FCAT for 2000-01

District	FCAT Reading			FCAT Math		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10
Collier						
Students with disabilities	244	241	266	269	259	290
General Education students	306	305	314	324	321	338
Gifted students	387	375	384	384	378	403
Lake						
Students with disabilities	259	238	256	272	252	274
General education students	313	306	307	328	316	321
Gifted students	385	383	375	388	377	380
Lee						
Students with disabilities	242	239	254	253	248	270
General education students	305	299	312	322	311	328
Gifted students	359	353	—	373	361	—
Manatee						
Students with disabilities	263	244	241	268	258	259
General education students	313	308	312	328	323	329
Gifted students	375	366	367	388	374	375
Osceola						
Students with disabilities	231	232	261	239	244	282
General education students	290	292	300	302	305	318
Gifted students	371	381	373	381	375	395
Pasco						
Students with disabilities	248	253	270	263	264	289
General education students	306	306	310	319	315	324
Gifted students	368	373	364	389	373	377

Source: Florida Department of Education, LEA Profiles, 2002.

The district uses three tests from the approved state list for alternative assessments. Three hundred seventy students with disabilities, or less than 1%, were provided with alternative assessments. This information is used to determine present levels of performance for IEPs as well as provide a baseline to monitor student progress. Collier County School District's IEP system includes a program that creates a progress report. The goals on the progress report match the student's IEP goals in each subject area and the card provides evaluation information based on the student's progress. Progress is measured at the end of regular report card periods.

Services

The district has two personnel issues related to services for special education students that warrant further study and perhaps revised procedural guidelines. When compared to many other districts in Florida, the Collier County School District has a high number of one-to-one instructional assistants ("severity aides"). While one-to-one assistance may be warranted for students who require a high level of support, the presence of such aides is sometimes detrimental to students' progress, especially their inclusion into activities with non-disabled peers. The district has recently revised its planning forms for campus

principals and IEP team members to ensure that all possible instructional arrangements are considered and that all staff is used efficiently.

The second issue is the provision of extended school year services (ESY) during short vacation periods. Discussions with Florida Department of Education staff indicated that the issue of recoupment of skills should always be considered when assessing the need for ESY. That is, if a student is likely to recoup skills in a short time, he or she should not require ESY. Moreover, students should participate in a wide range of activities with families and in the community. Students' interests may not be best served by non-stop instruction that fails to allow them to engage in typical community and family activities. The intent of the IDEA was not to provide around the clock placement and the Rowley standard, upheld in numerous legal opinions, does not require that districts provide the "best possible" services. Action Plan 4-4 outlines actions to the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice

Action Plan 4-4

We recommend that the district explore the assignment and use of "severity aides" to determine the benefits of such positions and work the Florida Department of Education to clarify its position regarding extended school year services.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Review data for Collier and other districts regarding assignment of severity aides as well as provision of extended school year services.
	Step 2.	Provide staff development for campus principals and teachers regarding both issues.
	Step 3.	Evaluate current research regarding possible benefits/drawbacks to one-to-one services as well as constant schedule of programming.
	Step 4.	Work with Florida Department of Education staff to clarify responsibilities as well as "best practice" in the two areas.
	Step 5.	Establish on-going information sessions with families to clarify understanding of these issues in terms of legal requirements and best interests of students.
Who Is Responsible	Director of exceptional student education	
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing	

Gifted Education

The district identifies and serves students who are gifted in grades K through 12. The Collier County School District offers services to students identified as gifted through its CHALLENGE program. Elementary schools provide full time services for identified students in grades 3-5 and part-time resource programs for identified students in grades K-5. Elementary programs are multidisciplinary. Identified middle school students are served in separate full-time gifted programs in the four content areas of language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. At the high school level, identified students are served using a collaborative-consultation model. A consultant teacher provides services on at least monthly basis to students, faculty and parents. The consultant teacher is a resource for information related to the needs and characteristics of gifted students, instructional methods and techniques and academic support.

Identification of Students as Gifted

The district under identifies minority and low-income students as gifted. Student membership in the CHALLENGE program does not approximate the demographics of the district. An earlier exhibit, 4-23, illustrated that students identified as gifted are predominately white. Exhibit 4-28 below illustrates that most gifted students are not LEP and not on free/reduced lunch. While 22% of district students are low income, only 9% of gifted students are low income. About 18% of the district's students are LEP but only 1% of gifted students are LEP. This is comparable to the state and peers.

Exhibit 4-28**Low Income and Gifted Students from October 2002 Survey Data**

County	Percentage of All Students and All Gifted Students on Free/Reduced Lunch Students		Percentage of All Students and All Gifted Students Who are Limited English Proficient (LEP)	
	All Students	Gifted Students	All Students	Gifted Students
Collier	22%	9%	18%	1%
Lake	40%	11%	4%	<1%
Lee	46%	29%	13%	3%
Manatee	40%	18%	9%	<1%
Osceola	51%	23%	25%	3%
Pasco	45%	19%	4%	<1%
State	44%	20%	12%	3%

Source: Florida Department of Education, LEA Profiles, 2003.

The district recognizes this disproportion in student membership in their gifted program and has written a plan to increase the identification of students from low income and minority backgrounds. Florida statutes specifies criteria for eligibility for gifted programs. In most cases, the identification of gifted students must be based on three criteria: need for a special program, a majority of characteristics of gifted students according to a standard scale or checklist, and superior intellectual development as measured by an intelligent quotient of two standard deviations or more above the mean on an individually administered standardized test of intelligence. The statutes further state that the Florida Department of Education can approve a district plan for increasing the participation of students from an under-represented group (i.e., limited English proficient or from a low socio-economic status family). The Collier County School District developed and submitted such a plan, called “Plan B”, to the Florida Department of Education for approval.

While FDOE has approved this plan, it could be improved in the following ways:

- First, the FCAT NRT in mathematics and reading are used as two criteria. Students from low-income backgrounds often do not have the same experiential learning as other students and do not score as high on achievement tests. Achievement tests are measures of what a student knows, not necessarily potential.
- Second, the district uses classroom performance in reading and math. These two criteria are also achievement based. The same argument made above applies here. In fact, of nine criteria almost half are achievement based. At least two of the achievement criteria should be dropped.
- Third, the team was told that consideration of the standard error of measurement for the intelligence test was not consistent. Because all tests contain error, the standard error of measurement should be considered when determining a student’s score.
- Fourth, the district does consider performance measures, but gives them limited weight on the matrix. A student only receives one point out of a possible four for each performance criteria. Performance criteria include observations, checklists, works samples and anecdotal records. Specifically the plan states: “...there are opportunities for the team to indicate evidence of leadership, motivation and creativity in the *Additional Factor* column of the GATR-Matrix for additional points.” It is not clear if all students will have performance criteria taken into consideration or if further evidence is supplied for only some students. Consistent procedures need to be developed concerning the submission and scoring of performance measures.
- Finally, the district uses a matrix to aggregate data. This approach is flawed because cut off scores are set and then weights are applied to these cutoffs. For example, a student scoring between 115 and

119 on an intelligence test receives a weight of two and a student scoring a 125 or higher receives a weight of four. These weights are summed. To be eligible for the gifted program using Plan B a student must earn a weighted score of 22 or above. This system can have the effect of placing the focus on a number rather than taking a case study approach where one can examine students' strengths and weaknesses.

Recently, the district revised Plan B and has plans to submit it to the Florida Department of Education for approval. Several of the points raised above are addressed in the Plan B draft. Action Plan 4-5 outlines actions to the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice

Action Plan 4-5

We recommend that the district modify its Plan B for identifying low income and minority students as gifted.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Use the existing CHALLENGE Program Task Force to review the current Plan B, focusing specifically on the points raised in this report.
	Step 2.	Modify Plan B to focus less on achievement and more on best performance of students.
	Step 3.	Resubmit Plan B to the Florida Department of Education for approval.
	Step 4.	Implement Plan B during the 2004-05 school year.
	Step 5.	Establish annual evaluation procedures to ensure Plan B is having the intended outcomes of increasing the number of identified low income and minority students as gifted.
	Step 6.	Revise Plan B as needed.
Who Is Responsible	Director of exceptional student education, coordinator of gifted services and executive director/instructional services 6-12	
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing	

The Collier County School District also addresses disproportion in student membership in the gifted program in its *Continuous Improvement/Self Assessment Monitoring Plan*. The plan for this indicator describes five improvement strategies that focus on collecting survey information about the attitudes and beliefs of central administration staff, teachers, building level administrators, support personnel and School Advisory Committee members toward gifted education. The results are intended to direct training. As a result, is doubtful that the plan will have its intended outcome of increasing potentially gifted students from diverse backgrounds (e.g., low income, culturally and linguistically diverse).

Recently, the district has decided not to implement these five proposed improvement strategies. Instead, the district plans to continue effective practices and implement new practices that are successful in identifying low income and culturally diverse students as gifted. These practices include sending all elementary schools a printout of students who score at the 80th percentile rank or higher and providing professional training in the characteristics of gifted students. Additional practices to be implemented include forming a multidisciplinary committee of faculty members at each school who will be trained in the screening process of gifted students and expanding the nomination phase of the identification process. The district should formally rewrite its *Continuous Improvement/Self Assessment Monitoring Plan* and include specific improvement strategies and benchmarks. Action Plan 4-6 outlines actions to the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice

Action Plan 4-6

We recommend that the district formally rewrite its Continuous Improvement/Self Assessment Monitoring Plan for indicator for disproportionate representation of student membership in programs for the gifted.

Action Needed	Step 1. Develop new improvement strategies designed to increase the disproportionate representation of student membership in programs for the gifted with input from the CHALLENGE task force and other stakeholders. Step 2. Write a new Continuous Improvement/Self Monitoring Plan for this indicator. Step 3. Collect yearly data on the number of students identified for the gifted program and disaggregate by the following subgroups: minority, low income, ESOL, and twice exceptional. Step 4. Track the data to determine if the plan's benchmarks are being met. Revise the plan as needed. Step 5. Use the results for planning purposes and staff development.
Who Is Responsible	Director of exceptional student education , coordinator of gifted services
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing

Curriculum

The CHALLENGE program’s curriculum is based on differentiating the general education curriculum and meeting the goals of gifted students’ Educational Plan (EP). Differentiation means that the curriculum should be accelerated, enriched and extended. To accelerate the curriculum a teacher must pretest a student in the content. If pretest results show that the student has mastered the content, the teacher should move him or her to the next content level. Teachers of gifted students in the district accomplish this in part through the strategy of curriculum compacting. Acceleration can be across grade levels—a student is moved from one grade level to the next—or within a grade—a student is moved more quickly through the grade level curriculum. To enrich the curriculum a teacher allows a student to study an area that is related to the existing content, but goes beyond the general education curriculum. To extend the curriculum, a teacher teaches the content at a higher level of sophistication using teaching techniques such as Socratic dialogue, problem-based learning, and creative problem solving. Most teachers of gifted students in Collier County School District are effective at differentiating the general education curriculum. However, there is inconsistency among teachers and schools in the degree to which curriculum differentiation is documented. The Collier County School District should develop a set of standard procedures for all teachers of gifted to show the degree of differentiation and the degree to which they are meeting EP goals. Action Plan 4-7 outlines actions to the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 4-7

We recommend that the district develop a set of standard procedures for teachers to document the methods used to differentiate the curriculum and to document how they meet the goals of Educational Plans

Action Needed	Step 1. Use the existing CHALLENGE Program Task Force to develop a set of standard procedures for teachers of gifted students to use to document differentiation. Step 2. Train teachers to use the new procedures. Step 3. Incorporate the degree to which teachers use the new procedures in their teacher evaluations.
Who Is Responsible	Director of exceptional student education, coordinator of gifted services and executive director/instructional services 6-12
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing

Best Practice 3: Using

The district provides effective and efficient programs to meet the needs of at-risk students including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), Title I, and alternative education.¹

Students at risk for failing or falling behind grade level often have significant barriers to learning and, therefore, need various specialized services and programs to address these barriers and to be academically successful. School districts should have programs in place to meet the diverse needs of these students, especially those students who need academic and/or social skills interventions to assist them in performing well. To meet this best practice, school districts should periodically assess the academic and social needs of their students and use this information to identify or develop programs to meet those needs. To increase student success, districts should promote parent involvement and provide teachers adequate training and support. Districts should also periodically assess the progress of at-risk students and adjust programs as needed to ensure that students perform to their capacity.

Planning and Organization

The Collier County School District is using this best practice through a variety of programs that provide at-risk youth with effective and efficient practices to meet their unique needs. These programs were carefully designed after site-based consideration and analysis and the district continues to assess the programs' and their students' progress. The district implements an ESOL plan that clearly outlines the procedures for identifying, assessing, placing, monitoring and exiting all students. The plan also delineates the assignments/duties of persons or committees responsible for its implementation. The director of ESOL, multicultural and foreign language programs meets regularly with ESOL contacts, teachers and counselors to ensure consistency in the schools. Through Title I funds, the district operates Head Start, Target Assistance, Migrant STAY (Strive to Achieve Yearly) and ARP (Acquire Reading Power) programs, which mandate their own criteria for student eligibility. The district has full school pre-kindergarten programs for about 475 at-risk four year-olds. Most of these programs are Head Start funded, which enforce federal eligibility requirements. The plan to identify students for alternative education programs is consistent with the Florida State Board of Education rules. The mandates 6A-6.051 – 6A6.05292 (Special Programs I, Supp. 99-3) are lengthy and detailed, but nonetheless an admissions committee acts as a filter to ensure that the programs comply with the law when a student is identified for a program. The admissions committee, composed of the principal of alternative schools, the coordinator of dropout prevention and one middle and high school principal, gather to review students' application for a program.

Needs Assessment and Evaluation

The district's plan for developing and implementing programs for at-risk students is supported by an analysis of student needs. The ESOL program experiences frequent evaluations to ensure state and federal compliance, which unfailingly report data on their students' academic achievement. This report inherently apprises state and district officials of the ESOL program's strengths and weaknesses so that the district can create supplemental programs to remedy its weak areas. School advisory council members analyze student academic (BVAT and FCAT scores and grades) and background (e.g., migrant family, ESOL status) data to develop Title I programs that meet the needs of their students. Schools administer surveys to the students (and their parents) to assess and adapt the programs. The growth of alternative school placements (e.g., Renaissance, Enhanced Assist Programs) has occurred because of the need to serve students who were not succeeding in the regular education program. Academic data on target

¹ These are students who need academic and/or social skills interventions to assist them to perform to their capacity.

populations were analyzed and specific programs were created to meet their unique needs. The district requires a yearly year-end report on the alternative schools that addresses general evaluation measures, but more importantly seeks to substantiate that the program is fulfilling a need for at-risk students and that the students are acquiring the skills they need to return to their home schools or have the credits needed to earn the standard high school diploma.

The district ensures that teachers of at-risk students provide instruction designed to meet identified needs and periodically assess student progress towards meeting those needs. ESOL students are assessed (with the BVAT and Stanford) within 10 days of school admission. Teachers then utilize the results of these tests to determine the students' literacy and academic proficiency, appropriate placement and individualized instruction. Students are evaluated for exit after 20 months of placement in the ESOL program or sooner if the ESOL teacher, classroom teacher, or student's parents recommend that the ESOL Committee review a student's progress for exit.

Teacher Training

All teachers must have ESOL training that addresses how to teach ESOL, develop curriculum and materials for ESOL students and conduct assessment. These in-service trainings outline goals to ensure that teachers provide instruction to meet the identified needs of ESOL students and periodically assess their progress. In-service trainings are also provided with Title I funds. The Title I staff at each school determines their needs and then recommends in-service trainings to complement the personnel support who provide on-site clinical and in-class modeling. The in-service trainings provide teachers with instruction proven to meet the needs of their at-risk youth.

The district provides teachers of at-risk students with adequate support and training to assist them to meet the needs of their students. Teachers receive 18, 60, or 300 clock hours of ESOL instruction, which varies according to their teaching position. ESOL school-based resource teachers (teacher on special assignment (TSA)) support teachers in delivering comprehensive instruction by modeling instruction, providing coaching and team teaching. The district also provides each school with an ESOL curriculum guide, which directs teachers through instructional elements such as language acquisition, methods to engage/involve parents and best instructional and assessment practices in ESOL delivery. Title I funds are budgeted for professional development for teachers. The district and individual schools plan for professional development based on student data collected from the previous year. Funds are also used to hire six reading coaches to work with at-risk students and train the teachers how to deliver effective reading instruction. Title I also funds part-time ARP literacy specialists at each elementary school who model instruction in the classroom, teach individual and small groups of students and organize literacy-based workshops. Alternative education teachers outline their in-service training activities as part of the district's master in-service training plan and receive professional development in topics that can assist them to meet the needs of their students.

Placement and Exit

The district's process for identifying, placing and removing students from at-risk programs is timely using appropriate indicators and, at a minimum, compares favorably to state averages and peer districts. After the initial assessment of an ESOL student, the assessment continues at the end of each year that a student has been in ESOL and again at 20 months after placement. ESOL teachers, tutors, contacts and teachers on special assignment monitor the students closely and can recommend to the ESOL committee that the student be exited from a program. The state's 2001 average for the length of time that students are placed in ESOL programs is 3.09 years; the district's average was 2.49. Students in the Title I *Acquire Reading Power* (ARP) are assessed at the beginning, middle and end of the year to determine their performance in relation to other children in the school, district and state. ARP teachers work with classroom teachers to

ensure that students are in the appropriate reading level. Students can exit from the various reading services when the classroom and ARP teacher have enough evidence to support that the student no longer needs the services. The district has also established criteria for the identification, placement and removal of students into disciplinary programs. Court-affiliated sites monitor this process because students generally have detention or other sentences to fulfill. The assistant superintendent or the admissions committees at each school can refer a student to the disciplinary programs. Students that meet the criteria for specific programs can be placed within five days, but most are placed the following school day. The length of stay varies per program and the document, *Alternative School Programs*, outlines when students are eligible to exit from the program.

Support

The district ensures that teachers of at-risk students assist regular classroom teachers to develop and/or implement strategies for helping at-risk students become more successful academically and socially. The district developed strategies to be used by all teachers of ESOL students. Teachers learn about these strategies in their ESOL professional development and must document the strategies in their lesson plans. ESOL contacts and TSAs routinely model instruction for teachers, coach them, or team-teach with them depending on the regular classroom teachers' needs. Title I affords the district the opportunity to fund ARP literacy specialists who coordinate resources and services to the classroom teachers. The specialists work closely with the teachers to deliver effective teaching and assessment strategies. The specialist also supports the classroom teacher in informing the parents about their child's reading proficiency and home practices to facilitate reading fluency. Alternative education teachers generally provide assistance and strategies to regular education teachers during the transition meetings (associated with transitioning a student back to his/her home school). A transition education/performance plan is completed for each student whereby regular education teachers (and parents) are provided reentry and career goals and strategies to enhance the student's achievement potential.

Parent Involvement

The district maintains a focus on parental involvement for at-risk students, including periodic conferences, parent training and formal solicitation of satisfaction feedback. Every school improvement plan (SIP) outlines strategies for how to solicit parent involvement and teach parents about best practices in child rearing. Moreover, all schools distribute student handbooks that explain opportunities for parent involvement and the process for arranging conferences. Community-wide parent training and community out-reach events also occur regularly. These activities help fulfill goal eight of the district educational improvement plan: "Family and community involvement (where) members are actively involved as partners in achieving a quality educational system for all students." The district educational improvement plan is disseminated to all schools ensuring that district personnel and parents know the involvement needs assessment, its evidence in the district and action plans and timelines to meet the goal. The ESOL plan specifies that a parent advisory council (PAC) will be elected every three years. The PAC meets quarterly (or more often if the need arises) where members actively engage in recommending how the ESOL program and plan can become more effective and efficient. All Title I schools allocate one% of their funds for parent involvement. Parents decide how the funds will be used to increase parent involvement at their child's school. Each year the school advisory council of the alternative school sites conducts a needs assessment survey of parents. The results are then reported and addressed in the school improvement plan. The survey asks parents to rate the program in terms of school/parent community relations; quality of the instructional program; support for student learning; and school/climate/environment for learning.

Evaluation

District administrators evaluate the success of at-risk instruction and programs using student achievement and other appropriate performance measures and benchmarks. The ESOL program submits a yearly report to the Florida office of multicultural student language education. These reports account for student achievement, demographic and program data. Each school is required to self-assess/monitor the success of their ESOL instruction by completing a district-developed document titled *ESOL Student Program Self-Assessment Study Checklist*. The checklist asks the school to answer questions (and provide supporting documentation) correlated to student achievement in eight categories: program information; assessment; alternative assessment; META Consent Decree; equal access; categorical programs; integrated curriculum; and translation. The ESOL office collects these self-assessments and analyzes the results to underscore recurring challenges to rectify and successful strategies to duplicate at other sites. Title I funded programs to name a few – are evaluated yearly. These evaluations provide a holistic view of student achievement and school readiness of at-risk youth. At the end of each year, a report on the achievement of students attending each alternative education site is presented to the school board. District administrators review the report and determine the sites' effectiveness.

Performance

Students enrolled in at-risk programs perform well on relevant academic and non-academic assessments. In addition to the standard assessments (BVAT, Stanford, Woodcock-Munoz) of ESOL students, teachers also evaluate the achievement and proficiency of ESOL students using the same measures used for mainstream students. Students who have been in ESOL programs for less than a year are eligible for exemption from statewide criterion-referenced tests. An overview of the FCAT (reading, math) scores for ESOL students in the district finds that the data is comparable to the ESOL student scores of the state. The district's ESOL students have higher GPAs, lower absenteeism rates, and lower retention rates than ESOL students in Collier's peer districts. The drop-out rate among ESOL students in the district is higher than the state average but lower than two peers, (Lee and Pasco) and the graduation rate is comparable to the state and lower than three peers (Lake, Lee, and Pasco). (See Exhibit 4-29). An overview of the assessment data for students in Title I funded programs seem to suggest that the participants made strides in acquiring the skills to transition to independence in their schools. Although student performance is mixed, more students make gains in academic assessments (WRAT, STAR tests). A comparison of the students' FCAT scores to the district averages is difficult to gauge because some of the sites are temporary placements so the students take the FCAT at their home school.

Exhibit 4-29 Comparison of Student Performance Indicators

Factor	Drop Out Rate	Graduation Rate	Exit from Program	Retention Rate	Attendance Rates (Absent 11-20 days)	Average HS GPA
Collier	4.4%	65.4%	2.49 years	4.3%	19.2%	2.7
Lake	4.4%	66.6%	3.06 years	5.8%	20.2%	2.5
Lee	5.0%	65.8%	3.46 years	4.6%	23.1%	2.5
Manatee	4.2%	63.6%	3.16 years	7.0%	21.7%	2.4
Osceola	4.2%	57.7%	2.12 years	8.2%	23.7%	2.5
Pasco	4.7%	68.4%	3.58 years	5.4%	22.3%	2.4
State	3.6%	64.4%	3.09 years	6.5%	20.3%	2.5

Source: 2000/2001 ESOL Annual Status Report on the Implementation of the Consent Decree in the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), et al. v. State Board of Education, et al., 1990, Collier County School District, Osceola County School District, Pasco County School District.

Best Practice 4: Using

The district provides an appropriate range of accelerated programs (such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Dual Enrollment).

Highly motivated and academically talented high school students need educational challenges and opportunities to accelerate their learning and meet their academic potential. To meet the needs of these students, districts should provide an appropriate number and type of accelerated programs, such as advanced placement, dual enrollment and International Baccalaureate. Districts should periodically assess the needs of their highly motivated and academically talented high school students and use this information to identify and develop accelerated programs to meet those needs. Districts should ensure that accelerated programs are made accessible to all eligible students and that teachers, parents and students are aware of such opportunities. To increase student success, districts should ensure that teachers receive adequate support and training. Districts should also take advantage of incentives and technical assistance offered through the Florida Department of Education and the College Board.

The district has several good components to its accelerated program options. These are discussed in the beginning of this section. The district, however, could improve in its use of this best practice by:

- ensuring equal access among its high schools to AP courses,
- placing more low-income and minority students in accelerated programs, and
- offering an International Baccalaureate Program.

Noteworthy Accomplishments

The district regularly assesses the academic needs of its students. The Collier County School District gives a number of districtwide tests and uses the results to plan for additional accelerated programs and to place students in accelerated program options. Achievement tests are given to all students in grades 8 through 11. The scores from these achievement tests (e.g., PSAT) assist guidance counselors in identifying students with high potential who might otherwise not be identified and who could benefit from accelerated programs. The Collier County School District also uses AP exam results to guide it in making recommendations for additional AP courses that should be offered in the district.

Students and parents receive most of their information about accelerated programs through the guidance counselors. Additional information about AP offerings is presented at all high school orientations. High school guidance staff, assistant principals for curriculum and instruction, teachers on special assignment for gifted, and departmental teacher representatives travel to middle schools to participate in vertical articulation meetings and to provide information about accelerated programs and course offerings.

The number and mean scores of AP exams have increased. The mean score for all AP exams in 2001-02 was 3.15 (see Exhibit 4-30), an increase from 1996 when the mean AP exam score was 2.69. Of 1,402 AP exams taken, students scored a 3 or better on 952 or 68% of them. The number of AP exams taken has also increased, as has the number of AP exam takers and AP participation rates. In 1996, the number of AP exams taken was 580 and in 2002 was 1402. The number of AP exam takers was 334 in 1996 and 873 in 2002. Participation rates, calculated by dividing the total number of students who took at least one AP exam by the total number of students graduating with a standard diploma, was .35 in 1996 and .51 in 2002.

Exhibit 4-30**Number of Students Scoring at Each Level on AP Exams,
Number of Exams Taken, Number and Percentage of Students
Scoring a 3+ on the AP Exam and Mean AP Exam Score for Each AP Course, 2001-02**

Course	Number Scoring at Each Level					Number of Exams ¹	Number Scoring 3+	Percentage Scoring 3+	Mean Score
	1	2	3	4	5				
Art Studio Drawing	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	100	3.00
Art-2D Studio Design	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2.00
Biology	18	26	24	30	19	117	73	62	3.05
Calculus AB	12	18	25	8	2	65	35	54	2.54
Calculus BC	-	6	13	6	22	47	41	87	3.94
Chemistry	-	1	4	11	7	23	22	96	4.04
Computer Science AB	6	2	7	2	5	22	14	64	2.91
Computer Science	12	5	5	15	11	48	31	65	3.17
Economics Macro	1	1	-	2	-	4	2	50	2.75
Economics Micro	17	34	29	14	3	97	46	47	2.51
Eng Lang/ Comp	4	51	71	39	16	181	126	70	3.07
Eng Lit/Comp	9	23	41	23	15	111	79	71	3.11
Environmental Science	29	11	27	28	8	103	63	61	2.76
European History	9	12	22	6	4	53	32	60	2.70
French Language	1	1	1	3	2	8	6	75	3.50
Gov/Politics: Compare	-	-	1	1	-	2	2	100	3.50
Gov/Politics US	11	55	32	7	2	107	41	38	2.38
Human Geography	-	3	1	3	1	8	5	63	3.25
Music Theory	1	3	3	1	-	8	4	50	2.50
Physics B	6	6	22	12	8	54	42	78	3.19
Physics C: Electrical	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2.00
Physics C: Mechanical	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	100	5.00
Psychology	4	10	17	12	16	59	45	76	3.44
Spanish Language	1	2	15	29	85	132	129	98	4.48
Statistics	1	-	3	-	-	4	3	75	2.50
US History	2	25	19	29	22	97	70	72	3.45
World History	-	9	25	7	7	48	39	81	3.25
All Tests	144	306	408	288	256	1402	952	68	3.15

¹ 873 students took 1402 exams.

Source: Data Warehouse, Director of Testing and Evaluation.

The number of Collier County School District students taking dual enrollment courses has also increased. In 1999, 261 students took dual enrollment classes; this number increased to 492 in 2002. Most of these students do very well. In 2002, 96.3% of students taking dual enrollment courses received a grade of C or above. Of these, 84.7% were either a grade of A or B. (See Exhibit 4-31).

**Exhibit 4-31
Number and Percentage of Students Completing
Dual Enrollment Courses with an A, B, C, D, or F, 1999-2002**

	Year							
	1999		2000		2001		2002	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A	99	37.9%	201	46.2%	201	47.3%	249	50.6%
B	119	45.6%	174	40.0%	134	31.5%	168	34.1%
C	39	14.9%	44	10.1%	59	13.9%	55	11.2%
D	2	0.8%	10	2.3%	22	5.2%	12	2.4%
F	2	0.8%	5	1.1%	9	2.1%	6	1.3%

Source: Data Warehouse, Director of Testing and Evaluation.

The district offers an academically rigorous program called the laureate program to its students. In addition to other requirements, such as community service, a student must complete at least six AP courses to earn a laureate diploma. A second option, the laureate certificate, requires the completion of five AP courses. The chart below illustrates the number and percentage- of students (based on the number diplomas awarded) graduating with a laureate diploma or certificate for the last four years. The percentage of laureate diplomas and certificates awarded is increasing. (See Exhibit 4-32).

**Exhibit 4-32
Number and Percentage of Students Receiving
Laureate Diplomas and Certificates in Collier County School District**

Recognition	1999		2000		2001		2002		2003	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Laureate Diploma or Certificates	13	1%	29	2%	21	1%	47	3%	79	4%

Source: Data Warehouse, Director of Testing and Evaluation.

Opportunity for Improvement

Although the Collier County School District is using this best practice, it could enhance its AP and Dual Enrollment programs if it would:

- provide equal access to AP courses among its high schools,
- obtain better ethnic and SES representation in its accelerated program options, and
- consider an IB program.

Disparity among High Schools and Number of Low-Income and Minority Students Participating in Accelerated Programs

There is disparity in the types of accelerated programs offered and the number of students participating in accelerated programs by ethnic representation and among the district’s high schools. Exhibit 4-33 illustrates that not all high schools offer the full range of AP courses available in the Collier County School District course catalog. While four of the five high schools offer 20 or more AP courses, Immokalee High School offers only six.

Exhibit 4-33
Advanced Placement Courses Offered at
Each High School in the Collier County School District

Name of Course	School				
	LHS	BCHS	NHS	IHS	GCHS
Social Sciences					
AP American History	X	X	X		X
AP World History			X		X
AP American Government	X	X	X		X
AP Microeconomics		X	X		X
AP Macroeconomics	X	X			X
AP European History	X	X	X		X
AP Comparative Government and Politics	X	X			X
AP Human Geography		X			X
AP Psychology	X	X	X		X
TOTAL	6	8	6	0	9
Science					
AP Biology	X	X	X	X	X
AP Environmental Science	X	X	X	X	
AP Physics	X	XX	X		X
AP Chemistry	X	X	X		X
TOTAL	4	5	4	2	3
Foreign Language					
AP French Language		X	X		
AP French Literature					
AP Spanish Language	X	X	X	X	X
AP Spanish Literature	X		X		
TOTAL	2	2	3	1	1
Mathematics					
AP Calculus AB	X	X	X		X
AP Calculus BC	X	X	X		X
AP Statistics	X		X		
TOTAL	3	2	3	0	2
Art					
AP Studio Art-Drawing Portfolio		X	X	X	
AP Two Dimensional Design Portfolio					X
AP Three-Dimensional Design Portfolio					X
TOTAL	0	1	1	1	2
English					
AP English: Language and Composition	X	X	X	X	X
AP English: Literature and Composition	X	X	X	X	X
TOTAL	2	2	2	2	2
Computer Education					
AP Computer Science A	X	X	X		X
AP Computer Science AB	X	X	X		X
TOTAL	2	2	2	0	2
Music					
AP Music Theory	X	X			X
TOTAL	1	1	0	0	1
GRAND TOTAL	20	23	21	6	22

Legend: LHS=Lely High School; BCHS=Barron Collier High School; NHS=Naples High School; IHS=Immokalee High School; GCHS=Gulf Coast High School.

Source: Collier County School District.

In addition, there are differences among high schools in the number of students enrolled in dual enrollment courses. As Exhibit 4-34 illustrates, students who take dual enrollment courses attend either Naples High School or Barron Collier High School. As this exhibit further illustrates, in 2002 no students at Immokalee High School enrolled in a dual enrollment course. In large part, this occurs as a result of transportation problems. Geographically, the community of Immokalee is about an hour's drive from both Naples (location of Edison Community College) and Ft. Myers (location of Florida Gulf Coast University). The district is attempting to place qualified teachers who could teach dual enrollment courses on site at Immokalee High School. To teach a dual enrollment course, teachers must have a master's degree plus 18 hours in the content area of the course.

**Exhibit 4-34
Number and Percentage of Students Who Enrolled
in Dual Enrollment Courses by High School, 1999-2002**

School	1999		2000		2001		2002	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Everglades	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.5%
Naples	81	64%	74	34%	87	45%	76	38%
Lely	10	8%	101	47%	55	28%	94	47%
Immokalee	0	0%	11	5%	16	8%	0	0%
Barron Collier	35	28%	27	13%	32	16%	21	10%
Gulf Coast	0	0%	3	1%	5	3%	10	5%
District	126		216		195		202	

Source: Data Warehouse, Director of Testing and Evaluation.

While participation rates on AP exams are increasing, there is disparity in ethnic representation and among high schools on this indicator. Exhibit 4-35 illustrates that the participation rate in AP exams for black students is far lower than for Hispanic and white students.

**Exhibit 4-35
Participation Rate in AP Exams by Ethnicity
for Collier County School District, 2002**

Ethnicity	Participation Rate
Black	12%
Hispanic	41%
White	58%

Source: Data Warehouse, Director of Testing and Evaluation.

Exhibit 4-36 illustrates that Naples High School has the highest mean AP exam score and Immokalee High School has the lowest. The AP exam participation rate at Barron Collier High School is higher than any other high school and Immokalee High School has the lowest participation rate.

Exhibit 4-36
Mean Score on AP Exams and Participation Rates
in AP Exams by High School, 2001-02

School	Mean Score	Participation Rate
Barron Collier HS	3.03	73%
Lely HS	2.90	53%
Naples HS	3.56	51%
Gulf Coast HS	3.22	45%
Immokalee HS	2.39	20%
District	3.15	.51

Source: Data Warehouse, Director of Testing and Evaluation.

Teachers are also eligible for a \$50 bonus in A, B, or C schools and a \$500 bonus for D and F schools for each student scoring a 3 or higher. Exhibit 4-37 illustrates the number of teachers and the total amount of bonuses received by Collier County Public School teachers in each high school for 2001-02. As this exhibit shows teachers in Immokalee High School receive the fewest bonuses.

Exhibit 4-37
Number of Teachers and Total Amount of Bonuses
Received at Each High School, 2001-02

School	Number of Teachers	Total Amount of Bonuses
Barron Collier HS	15	\$16,200
Gulf Coast HS	17	\$10,800
Immokalee HS	4	\$4,000
Lely HS	14	\$6,700
Naples HS	19	\$12,950
Total	68	\$47,650

Source: Collier County School District.

As discussed earlier, the Laureate Program currently offers two options, a Diploma or Certificate. To earn a Laureate Diploma, students must complete at least six AP classes and to earn a Laureate Certificate, students must complete at least five AP classes. Additional requirements include 75 hours of community service, the completion of a 4,000 to 6,000 word Laureate Essay and participation in at least two school-based demonstrations of excellence per year.

Immokalee High School students did not have the opportunity to participate in the Laureate Program until 2002-03 because there were an inadequate number of AP courses offered at this campus. In fact, no AP courses were offered at IHS until 2000-01. The number of AP classes offered at Immokalee High School in 2000-01 through 2002-03 is shown in Exhibit 4-38.

Exhibit 4-38

Number of AP Classes Offered at Immokalee High School, 2001 Through 2003

Course	Number of Classes		
	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
AP English Language	X		X
AP Biology	X	X	X
AP English Literature		X	
AP Calculus AB		X	
AP Spanish Language		X	X
AP Studio Art 2D			X
Total	2	4	4

Source: Collier County School District.

Exhibit 4-39 illustrates the number of students who took AP exams at Immokalee from 2001 through 2003.

Exhibit 4-39

Number of Students Taking AP Exams at Immokalee High School, 2001 Through 2003

Year	Number of Students Taking Exams
2000-01	48
2001-02	60
2002-03	65

Source: Collier County School District.

As these two exhibits illustrate, the number of AP courses and number of AP exam test takers is increasing at IHS. The Collier County School District is aware of the need to increase the representation of its minority students and students from Immokalee High School in accelerated programs. Three initiatives are addressing these needs.

First, the district participates in the advancement via individual determination (AVID) program. Students who participate in AVID enroll in a college preparatory sequence and in an elective section where they receive academic and motivational support to succeed. AVID targets middle school students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are performing at an average ability level, but who have high potential. Ninety-eight students from Immokalee and Golden Gate Middle Schools participate in AVID. Plans are to expand the program to Immokalee and Naples High Schools during the 2003-04 school year. Part of the funding to support AVID is offset by the College Board (i.e., training costs for new teachers and registration fee for new schools); the district uses local money to fund the balance of the program. During 2002-03, the AVID budget was \$15,000. The majority of the budget will pay the travel expenses of new teachers to AVID for participation in professional and technical training during the summer of 2003.

Second, the district will pilot a laureate scholar program which requires completion of three AP courses in at least two areas, at Immokalee High School. Other requirements are the same as the Laureate Diploma and Certificate programs. The board approved this initiative in the fall of 2002. Immokalee High School will begin the pilot program in 2003-04.

Third, students who attend Immokalee High School will be able to access AP courses through the Florida Virtual School in 2003-04. The Florida Virtual School allows students to not physically meet as a group but to access coursework over the Internet, using email, fax machines and telephones to communicate with teachers and other students.

While the district should be commended for these initiatives, at least one additional initiative should be considered. Because students cannot participate in the AVID program until grade 6, the district needs to begin the identification of students with potential in the early elementary grades. The district has recently developed a plan to host a program for gifted students at all elementary schools. This will assist district personnel in becoming more aware of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who have potential.

We recommend that the district fully develop an initiative designed to identify and serve elementary students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who have high potential.

The second area in which the Collier County School District could improve its accelerated programs is in its course offerings. The district does not offer an International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. District personnel investigated the possibility of offering an International Baccalaureate program five years ago but decided against it because of cost and lack of resources. Instead, the district offers an AP based program, the laureate program. Requirements for the laureate program were discussed earlier in this section. To ensure that colleges understand the rigor of this program, the district has created a video about the laureate program that is sent to colleges. In addition, a letter about the program is included with each laureate program graduate's application to college. The College Board has asked the district to present the laureate program at a conference this summer.

While the laureate program is a good program, the International Baccalaureate Program and the laureate program have some differences in course content requirements. The IB curriculum requires students to complete IB courses in two languages (English and French), one social science, one science, one mathematics and one other subject such as computer science. Students are also required to take a theory of knowledge course, complete a 4,000-word research essay and complete at least 200 hours of creative, active and service endeavors during grades 11 and 12. To graduate with an IB diploma, students must pass comprehensive tests in each field of study—teachers at other schools in the international community grade these tests. Many colleges give special consideration during admissions to students with IB diplomas and students who have an IB diploma qualify for Florida Bright Futures scholarships. Florida also provides additional funding to districts based on the number of students scoring a 4 or higher on IB subject exams and for students completing IB diplomas. This same weighted funding is not available for the laureate program, although additional weighted funding is available to districts based on the number of students who pass AP exams with a score of 3 or higher. Costs to the district for an IB program would include an initial nonrefundable fee and an annual fee. Other costs include IB exam fees, instructional materials costs and teacher training. It is estimated by the Florida Department of Education that an initial IB program would cost \$30,000 the first year, while the budget for the Laureate Program is \$38,424. The district should investigate the possibility of hosting at least one IB program.

We recommend that the district investigate the possibility of offering an International Baccalaureate Program at a site with high minority enrollment.

The third area in which the Collier County School District could improve its accelerated program offerings is in the area of federal funding. The district does not take full advantage of federal funding to support its accelerated programs. For example, the district does not apply for AP exam rebates for low-

income students and the district has not applied for federal grants to encourage low income and minority students' participation in AP and other accelerated programs. If the district found ways to obtain extra funding for its accelerated programs, an International Baccalaureate Program would be more affordable.

The Collier County School District pays 100% of all AP exams for its students. For 2002-03, AP exams cost Collier County School District \$140,000. While paying for AP exams is a good way of encouraging students from low economic backgrounds to take exams, in the Collier County School District the majority of AP exams are taken at schools that serve students that are more affluent. In addition, the Executive Director of Secondary Programs informed the consultant that the district does not apply for funding for the College Board to offset AP exam costs for its low-income students. The College Board provides a \$22 fee reduction (\$72 is full fee) for students with financial need. The district should develop a sliding scale fee based on family income to charge for AP exams and should apply for an AP fee reduction for its low income students. Because colleges and universities give college credit to students who score high on an AP exam (typically a score of 3 or better), parents already have a good incentive for paying for the exams.

The Collier County School District also does not have a federal grant designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The district did apply for the federal gaining early awareness and readiness for undergraduate programs (GEAR UP) grant in 1999 and will apply again in 2003. GEAR UP is a discretionary grant program that provides five-year grants to states and partnerships to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. Funds can also be used to provide college scholarships to low-income students. GEAR UP grants are designed to serve and accelerate the academic achievement of cohorts of students through their high school graduation. Before reapplying, the district needs to form a partnership. The partnership should consist of at least one college or university, at least one low-income middle school and at least two other partners (such as community organizations, businesses, religious groups, student organizations, State or local education agencies and parent groups). Additional information may be obtained from the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov/gearup/index.html>.

We recommend that district seek grants and other sources of revenue to increase funding for accelerated programs.

Best Practice 5: Using

The district provides effective and efficient workforce development programs (such as vocational-technical, adult basic education and adult high school programs).

Students who do not plan to attend college immediately after high school need to enhance their ability to be economically self-sufficient. Many of these students benefit greatly from workforce development programs, such as career and technical education, which help them to attain the skills they will need to become or remain employed. These programs are designed to provide training to meet local and state workforce needs and to help Florida compete in a global economy by building a broadly based, highly skilled, more productive workforce. The programs also provide a broad variety of services including literacy training, English language skills and/or attainment of high school diploma for adults who need these skills to enter the labor market. Districts should have workforce development programs in place that meet the needs of business and industry in their areas, including high skills/high wages occupations as well as occupations that are in critical demand by the community. Districts should periodically assess workforce development program offerings to ensure that needed programs and newly emerging occupations are addressed. Districts should also provide adult basic education programs that reach all sectors of the population and meet the needs of students at all literacy levels. To assess student success

and improve programs, districts should monitor changes in performance funding, student completion and job placement.

For secondary programs, the Collier County School District's office of career and technical education (CTE) gathers information about employment training needs and the effectiveness of training programs in a variety of ways. The office is a member of the local economic development council that, together with the local area Chamber of Commerce, assisted in the placement of over 400 secondary students in various career-shadowing experiences in 2001-02 and over 500 students in 2002-03. Local business information is obtained through various academy advisory councils including teaching, law and criminal justice, and architecture, construction and engineering at Lely High School, accounting and finance at Barron Collier High School, wellness and architecture and engineering at Naples High School, and sports and entertainment at Gulf Coast High School. Members of the councils provide input into curriculum, work-based experiences and funding assistance for any needs identified by the academies.

The CTE office coordinates the Collier County teacher externship program. The program provides opportunities for subject area teachers to spend paid two-week internships at job-related sites where they learn the latest industry standards leading to classroom projects that integrate current job skills, communication methods and technologies.

At the post-secondary level, the office of workforce education gathers information through business advisory councils with memberships representing over 90 area businesses. Advisory councils are in the areas of automotive, aviation, business technology, computer technology, cosmetology, culinary arts, dental assisting, early childhood education and electrical. The office also gathers information by working closely with apprenticeship organizations for electricians, masons, steelworkers and carpenters. Information also comes from interactions with area business organizations such as the economic development council (EDC) and the Immokalee Empowerment Alliance. Workforce education staff participates in EDC roundtables and serves on boards and subcommittees of organizations like the Alliance for Education and the Region 24 Coordinating Council as a means of sharing information and needs with area businesses and industries.

The CTE administrator serves on the first jobs/first wages workforce development board council and actively participates on several of its committees and subcommittees whose purpose is to promote successful entry into the workforce. The First Jobs/First Wages committee works with the southwest Florida tech prep consortium designed to assist youth in finding career experiences and eventual jobs. Workforce education personnel work with the workforce development board through participation on various subcommittees including the high skill/high wage and finance committees. The district's career and family center occupies office space and assists with operation of the one-stop center in Immokalee. The one-stop center provides career assessment support for the Bethune Education Center, the Immokalee occupational training site for the district's workforce education. In addition, district representatives serve on the board of directors of the education center of southwest Florida whose mission is to initiate and support strategies that facilitate and develop programs aimed at reducing dependency, encouraging personal growth and providing economic benefits to individuals, businesses and others in the area.

The CTE office works cooperatively with the southwest Florida tech prep consortium in the development of articulation agreements which currently exist between Collier County School District and Florida Gulf Coast University, the University of Central Florida, Edison Community College, International College, and Johnson and Wales University. As a result of the articulation agreements, enrollment has increased in the Collier County School District career academies and tech prep classes. Between 1999-2000 and 2001-02, enrollment in the career academies increased from 929 to 1,335 (44%) while enrollment in tech-prep students increased from 3,027 to 4,709 (56%).

Information on the latest curriculum, equipment and instructional delivery methods being used throughout the state and nation is obtained through CTE staff attendance at state and regional meetings. At the local level, the CTE office communicates on an ongoing basis with district administrators and content area teachers in an effort to remain current regarding student interests, teacher certifications, and the costs of maintaining current or proposed programs. Based on current year course enrollments, CTE generates FTE projections and, cooperatively with the individual schools, determines future CTE programs and, if necessary, programs or classes to be eliminated due to low enrollment, funding priorities, changes in industry standards, etc. At the post-secondary level, several courses have been eliminated or restructured due of low completion rates (language literacy, cosmetology and computer electronics) or high maintenance costs (plumbing and heating and air conditioning) such as equipment replacement. The result has been varying enrollments but generally higher completion rates. For example, language literacy had an enrollment in 1997-98 of 4,098 but a completion rate of only 7%. The lowest enrollment occurred the following year after restructuring although the completion rate increased to 16%. However, since 1998-99, enrollment and the completion rate increased steadily to 4,104 and 20%, respectively, in 2001-02.

The CTE office uses the Florida Education Training and Placement Information program (FETPIP) follow-up outcomes to determine percentage of program completers currently in the workforce or continuing with their education. Between 1998 and 2000, the district's overall placement rate has increased from 48% in 1997-98 to 82% in 1999-2000. The Perkins *Measure 3SI Report* for completers for 1998-99 indicates that Collier County School District had a completion rate of over 83% for all secondary students. The percentages for subgroups ranged from 75% for single parents and disadvantaged to 100% for limited English proficient and 93% for disabled.

During 2001-02, 9,732 students including 4,785 middle school and 4,390 high school students were enrolled in one or more CTE courses. This unduplicated student count represents an increase from the previous year's total of 6% (9,175 to 9,732) and of a decline of less than 1% at the middle school (4,785 to 4,779) and an increase of 13% (4,390 to 4,962) at the high school. Occupational completion points (OCP) achieved during 2001-02 increased over 25% over 2000-01. The OCPs achieved by content area in 2000-01 and 2001-02 are indicated in Exhibit 4-40.

Exhibit 4-40

Occupational Completion Points by Content Area: 2000-01 and 2001-02

Content Area	OCPs Achieved 2000-2001	OCPs Achieved 2001-02	Increase (Decrease)
Agriculture	3	13	333.3%
Business Technology Education	437	883	102.1%
Diversified Education	5	3	(66.6%)
Family/Consumer Science	1,046	1,048	0.2%
Industrial Education	146	141	(3.4%)
Marketing Education	74	60	(18.9%)
Public Service	0	5	500.0%
Total	1,711	2,153	25.8%

Source: The Collier County School District.

The DOE workforce education and outcome information services/workforce development information system (WEOIS/WDIS) cross window data comparison reports provides information relative to the performance of Collier County School District vocational and technical students. Vocational certificates awarded between 1999-2000 and 2001-02 indicate attainment of technical skill proficiencies. Between

1999-2000 and 2001-02, the number of certificates increased from 275 to 525, or over 90%. The number of students attaining high school diplomas or GED certificates increased from 182 in 1999-2000 to 334 in 2001-02, or approximately 84%. The total number of program completers, number employed and number continuing their education increased from 887 in 1999-2000 to 2,234.

Best Practice 6: Using

The district ensures that schools use effective planning and evaluation processes to improve student outcomes, including school improvement plans and other data driven processes such as the Sterling process.

High-performing districts and schools use effective processes to assess and improve student outcomes. Florida law requires that each district school have a school improvement plan (SIP) that establishes the school's specific goals, objectives and strategies to meet the educational needs of their students. Districts should ensure that all schools effectively plan and evaluate programs and strategies to improve student outcomes. Districts should ensure that each school's improvement plan addresses the needs of major subgroups of students (regular, ESE, ESOL, Title I, etc.) and incorporates and integrates to the extent possible other school-level improvement planning processes (Title I, technology, school improvement, Sterling, etc.). To increase effectiveness of the school improvement process, districts should provide training for school improvement teams that includes using academic and non-academic data to identify areas needing improvement, developing measurable objectives and evaluating progress in meeting objectives. Districts also should oversee the school improvement planning process and provide additional assistance to schools that do not make adequate progress.

All schools in the Collier County School District have an SIP with annual performance measures that are aligned to the DEIP and to the Sunshine State Standards and goals of the state. Both planning documents outline the needs and activities for improvement and address how the district or school will address those needs through 2006-07. Each year, annual goals and objectives are aligned with projections for improvement within the ten goal areas, and each SIP is linked to these same goals. The district and school planning documents are designed to reflect all state and federal requirements and, therefore, address all areas required for planning and reporting across program areas such as Title I, safety and security, technology, etc. In addition, the DEIP and each SIP have accountability components that include assignment of responsibilities for each goal, action plans with specific timelines and evaluation of each activity. All plans are available on-line at the district's Web site.

The curriculum and instructional programs division and the office of accountability work cooperatively with schools in the planning and evaluation aimed at improving student performance. Curriculum and instructional programs division employees serve in support roles on school advisory councils (SAC). The Office of Accountability conducts internal program evaluations following a board-approved cycle. After the Florida A+ Plan School grades data are received in June, program areas in need of improvement are addressed and priority improvement plans are developed and integrated into the schools SIP for the subsequent school year.

Using FCAT state assessment results in reading, writing and math, the state groups schools with similar test score performance characteristics. Based on these groupings, schools receive a "grade" of A, B, C, D or F with "A" representing the highest performing schools and "F" those schools with the lowest performance. Grading is based on a total of 600 points with 300 points assigned to the student achievement score, 200 points to the annual learning gains of the individual students and 100 points to the improvement of the lowest performing students. Schools grades are assigned based on the total points assigned each school as well as whether adequate progress was made by the lowest 25% of students in reading and math and the FCAT participation rate of eligible students. Exhibit 4-41 provides the grading criteria for 2001-02.

**Exhibit 4-41
2001-02 School Grading Criteria**

School Grade	Points	Other Criteria
A	410 or more	Meets adequate progress and gains for the lowest groups; at least 95 percentage tested.
B	380 or more	Meets adequate progress for the lowest groups; at least 90 percentage tested.
C	320 or more	Meets adequate progress for the lowest groups; at least 90 percentage tested.
D	280 or more	At least 90 percentage tested.
F	Less than 280	Or less than 90 percentage tested.

Source: Florida Department of Education, *Grading Florida Public Schools 2001-2002*.

The grades for Collier County School District schools for 1999-2000 through 2002-03 are provided in Exhibit 4-42. The percentage of Collier County School District schools receiving each grade is indicated in Exhibit 4-43.

**Exhibit 4-42
2002-03 Grades for Collier County School District Schools**

Grade	Number of Schools 1999-2000	Number of Schools 2000-01	Number of Schools 2001-02	Number of Schools 2002-03
A	7	10	14	17
B	1	2	4	5
C	16	13	7	8
D	8	8	6	4
F	0	0	2	0
Total	32	33	33	34

Source: The Collier County School District.

**Exhibit 4-43
2002-03 Percentage of Grades for Collier County School District Schools**

Grade	Percentage of Schools 1999-2000	Percentage of Schools 2000-01	Percentage of Schools 2001-02	Percentage of Schools 2002-03
A	21.9%	30.3%	42.4%	50.0%
B	3.1%	6.1%	12.1%	14.7%
C	50.0%	39.4%	21.2%	23.5%
D	25.0%	24.2%	18.2%	11.8%
F	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: The Collier County School District.

Schools not making adequate progress are required to prepare intensive intervention plans in accordance with a state-mandated format. Although the district had no identified “F” schools in 1999-2000 or 2000-01, assistance was provided the eight schools receiving a “D” grade during those two years in keeping with the staff-recommended “collaborative approach to support and assist D and F Schools” approved by the Board of Trustees in October 1999. The approach provided for district employees to work collaboratively with the school-based staff in performing such functions as tutoring individual

students, working with groups of students on FCAT strategies and researching effective schools with similar demographics. In addition, district assistance includes the following:

- providing each classroom teacher with individual student data including test results and non-academic information,
- implementing class-size reduction in first and second grades in identified D or F schools,
- providing support on a priority basis from the district's literacy specialists, and
- implementing specified instructional programs in all D and F schools.

In October 2002, the Board approved intensive intervention plans for Immokalee High School and Pinecrest Elementary School. As required by state legislation, monthly reports have been filed with Florida DOE that indicate the activities implemented as of the date of each report. Those reports are available on-line at the DOE's Web site.

The Collier County School District provides training focusing on school improvement efforts and the analysis of data needed to support those efforts. Training is designed and conducted for staff, school advisory council members, parents and volunteers and is provided throughout the school year. Planning for the training activities is the responsibility of the office of accountability. The division of curriculum and instructional programs provides support in areas such as the development of instructional strategies, specific content curriculum, modeling and coaching and the analysis of student performance data.

The district provides monitoring and support for each school's SIP implementation plan through the office of accountability and support teams with assigned staff from the division of curriculum and Instructional Programs. The support teams provide assistance with classroom observations, team teaching, coaching and modeling and lesson design and delivery during weekly visits throughout the school year. Content area teachers receive support from curriculum coordinators. Demonstration classrooms provide teachers the opportunity to observe other teachers and to learn new instructional delivery methods.

The district has initiated a process for the development of SIPs that integrates all federal, state, and local plan requirements in an effort to avoid duplication of resources and maximize the use of staff time. Five-year and focused annual plans are developed with targeted goals, objectives and expected outcomes. The budget planning process is linked to the development of the DEIP and the SIPs and provides the support necessary for implementation. The process is linked to the district's data warehouse resulting in a more efficient retrieval of information and the use of data for decision making. Goals and objectives in the SIPs focus on objective measures with ongoing monitoring included in the process. The descriptors and expected outcomes address student gains, content area improvements, grade level expectations and linkages to the Sunshine State Standards. All activities lead to a measurable outcome or product, and timelines are used to measure the level of attainment or completion.

The data warehouse collects and uploads all types of data as soon as it is entered. Staff has been trained to enter individual student data on a daily basis if needed. Data that can be entered at the school level includes student assessment measures, attendance, and informal assessments as well as writing samples. The data can be sorted by strand or concept skill and measured against established benchmarks. If a student's score is not within an acceptable range, the teacher is alerted to the need for additional teaching. A calendar and timeline ensure that the office of accountability periodically reviews school-based planning and evaluation efforts and analyzes the results.

One of the annual objectives contained under goal 10 of the 2000-05 district education improvement plan required the development and approval of standards against which programs and major initiatives of the

district could be evaluated. The program evaluation standards and guidelines were developed by the office of accountability and staff and school renewal and presented to the board in September 2000.

The guidelines were developed to provide the district with information concerning the quality of program implementation, the effectiveness of program and the value of the program to the district. Their purpose was to provide decision-makers with information gained from a systematic evaluation of programs necessary to continue, modify or terminate district programs

From a list of more than 80 potential programs, the office of accountability and staff and school renewal developed a five-year evaluation calendar that contained 25 programs or initiatives to be evaluated. However, due to the failure to fill and retain staff positions in the office of accountability and staff and school renewal, evaluations will be completed on only four of the 15 programs scheduled through 2002-03.

Best Practice 7: Using

The district ensures effective progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 that maximizes student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards and prepares students for work and continued education.

In 1996, the State Board of Education adopted the Sunshine State Standards as content expectations for K-12 students in Florida. Since that time, the standards have been refined and expanded to include grade level expectations and represent the academic expectations for Florida students by grade level and subject. Florida districts and schools should have modified their instructional programs and aligned curriculum to include the standards to ensure that students master necessary skills and will be able to perform at the next grade level. Thus, districts must have a clear, comprehensive, easy to follow student progression plan that meets state requirements and incorporates the Sunshine State Standards. The plan should be specific, informing teachers and school administrators of factors to consider in deciding whether to promote or retain a student. The plan should also specify the steps schools should take to ensure that retained students either receive intensive remedial assistance or are placed in a program different from what the student received the previous year. To ensure that students progress as expected from kindergarten through grade 12 and are prepared for work and continued education, districts should have and use strategies that facilitate smooth transitions from one school level to the next. Districts should also periodically assess how well their students progress and use this information to make adjustments as needed.

The Collier County School District is using this best practice, as its curricular framework is consistent with the Florida Sunshine State Standards. The Sunshine State Standards are central to all of the curriculum guides and drive teachers' daily instruction. In fact, some of the guides include the Florida Department of Education's course descriptions within the guides and a statement to support their alignment with the educational framework. The standards are addressed in additional contexts. A review of a sample of school improvement plans (SIP) suggests that school advisory committees strongly consider the Sunshine State Standards. Moreover, teachers are instructed to indicate the Sunshine State Standard on their daily lesson plans. During the formal teacher evaluation, a principal must document how teachers (through conversation, portfolio, observation, or other) addressed the Sunshine State Standards in their instructional delivery.

To ensure that teachers maximize students' mastery of the Sunshine State Standards, they learn innovative and effective teaching strategies in professional development workshops. The district has designated three full days for professional development where teachers learn research-based teaching practices, information about new mandates (i.e., No Child Left Behind), or practical ideas for managing data, grades, reports, or students behaviors. Teachers complete the CTAS Professional Growth Plan

yearly and indicate their specific agenda to increase their students' FCAT scores. School improvement plans frequently address how teachers will receive professional development training in best practices. Schools regularly have their own professional development to address the needs of their student population. The school advisory council at each school will outline the strategies of the action plans in the school improvement plans (SIP) to implement in the upcoming year. As a standard practice, the SIP will include professional development so that the teachers learn innovative and effective teaching strategies to meet the specific needs of the student body.

The Collier County School District ensures a policy of student progression from one grade to another upon proficiency in the academic areas. In the district, the department of student services updates and revises the student progression plan as needed to reflect changes in Florida laws or district policies and procedures. The student progression plan is dynamic and any adaptations to the plan are contingent upon school board approval. This comprehensive document clearly delineates the specific levels of performance on statewide and local assessments that students must satisfy to progress to the next grade level. The plan is divided into elementary, middle and high school and addresses the following in each of the academic programs: (1) The constitution of the instruction program; (2) The promotion, assignment and placement standard; (3) general procedures; (4) enrollment and assignment of transfer students; (5) interim progress report; and (5) grading scale.

Not only do teachers adhere to the student progression plan, they regularly assess their students so that there is enough data to support the development of academic improvement plans; interim reports and report cards. These communicate to parents whether their child is making satisfactory progress in the academic areas and if there is a need to reinforce developmental/academic skills at home. Every school improvement plan has a parent involvement component, which describes how the schools will create educational and social opportunities to increase parental knowledge about the classroom, the school, and the school district. In addition to the AIP and report cards, schools send parents general letters of information about district expectations and a student/parent handbook that outlines the school and parent communication process.

Lastly, the district has effective strategies to facilitate a smooth transition of students from elementary to middle and middle to high schools. Each year the middle and high school assistant principals for curriculum and instruction gather to work on the transition plans by feeder zones. Almost every meeting devotes time to the middle school articulation/timeline. By mid December, the high schools are planning visits and open house/orientation with the feeder middle schools. The assistant principals then collaborate with high school counselors to coordinate student scheduling, student placement and so forth. Transitioning grade levels visit their new school in the spring semester and parents are invited to attend an orientation at the new school. Teachers from transitioning grade levels meet with teachers from the feeder school to recommend appropriate academic placements for students with special or ESOL needs. The district creates a transition calendar each year and provides the elementary and middle school principals the schedule outlining activities and tasks regarding the registration process and orientation of the rising sixth graders. The district also contacts the local newspapers and media representatives to advertise this information.

Best Practice 8: Not Using

The district could do more to minimize unnecessary administrative layers.

School districts that operate efficiently meet the needs of their teachers and students with minimal administrative layers and staff. To meet this best practice, school districts should have a central office organizational structure that ensures adequate administrative oversight of education programs, adequate curriculum and instructional support for teachers and adequate support to enable schools to identify their

needs and evaluate their effectiveness. In addition, districts should ensure that individual school staffing levels are sufficient to meet the needs of students and are comparable across schools in the district.

The Collier County School District's organizational structure for its educational programs has reasonable lines of authority. However, a range of eight to twelve employees is commonly considered acceptable for effective day-to-day supervision. As shown in Exhibit 4-44, several positions have fewer reports.

Exhibit 4-44

Direct Reports: Division of Curriculum and Instructional Programs

Position	Direct Reports
Associate Superintendent	10
Director, Exceptional Student Education	7
Executive Director, Secondary	6
Executive Director, Student Services, FDLRS and Alternative Programs	4
Executive Director, Elementary	3
Director, Federal and State Grants	3
Director, Workforce Education	2
Director, ESOL and Multicultural/Foreign Language	1
Director, Instructional Tech/Media Services	0
Supervisor, Reading	0
Specialist, Instructional Materials	0

Source: The Collier County School District.

The district should assess whether certain positions reporting to the associate superintendent would be more appropriately be assigned to other division administrators. For example, the instructional materials specialist might more logically report to the Director of Instructional Technology/Media Services and the Director of Instructional Technology/Media Services and the Supervisor of Reading might report to the Executive Director, Elementary Programs. Such changes would reduce the associate superintendent's direct reports from 10 to 7 and provide that office with additional time to dedicate to major instructional issues facing the district.

We recommend that the district reduce the span of control of the associate superintendent of curriculum and instructional programs by reassigning some of the associate superintendent's direct reports to other positions in the division.

Providing direct assistance to teachers and other school employees is a district priority. One way this has been accomplished is through the assignment of teachers on special assignment (TSA), individuals paid on the district's instructional salary schedule but with district-wide, multiple school, or special program responsibilities. TSAs are generally supported with local operating funds, capital funds or federal or state grant programs and function as staff development trainers or providers of instructional support for teachers or students, and most assignments are in technology, literacy, ESOL, science, math or foreign language. In April 2002, there were 35.1 FTE district level and 51.2 site-based TSAs. The majority of TSA positions are provided through grant or other external funds.

School-based staffing is the responsibility of the district staffing formula committee. Chaired by the director of FTE, surveys and staff allocations, the committee meets during the fall semester. A variety of reports are prepared to assist with the allocation process. Examples of documents used in the development of allocations for 2002-03 include the following:

- *Tentative School Staffing Allocations, 2001-02*
- *Class Enrollment Report, Second Semester-2001/2002*
- *Class Enrollment Report, First Semester-2002/2003*
- *Elementary, Middle and High School Class Size Analysis Report*
- Multiple drafts of school staff allocations by level

Comparisons with districts of equal size and growth patterns are used to develop recommendations regarding changes to the district’s staffing formulas and resource allocations each year. Sources of information used by the district include DOE *LEA Profiles*, data from DOE *EEO-5 Reports*, Education Research Service *School Staffing Ratios*, staffing allocations guidelines from other districts such as Brevard County’s *Historical Analysis of School-Level and District-Level Staffing*. After consideration by the superintendent’s senior leadership team, recommended changes are submitted to the board in February or March. Upon approval, a staffing formula booklet is produced which contains all personnel allocations for schools. Allocations for school-based administrative staff—principals, assistant principals and deans—are indicated in Exhibit 4-45 by level.

**Exhibit 4-45
2001-02 Collier County School District Personnel Allocations by Level**

Position	Allocation Per Student	Staffing
<i>Elementary</i>		
Principal	Per school	1.0
Assistant Principal	1,000+	1.0
Dean	700+	1.0
<i>Middle School</i>		
Principal	Per school	1.0
Assistant Principal	Per school	1.0
Dean	Per school	1.0
	850-999	1.5
	1,000-1,149	2.0
	1,150-1,299	2.5
	1,300+	3.0
<i>High School</i>		
Principal	Per school	1.0
Assistant Principal	Per school	2.0
Dean	1,450-1,649	1.0
	1,650-1,849	1.5
	1,850-2,049	2.0
	2,050-2,249	2.5
	2,250+	3.0

Source: The Collier County School District, “Staffing Formula 2001-02, March 2001.”

When compared to staffing ratios of peer districts, the Collier County School District has the second highest principals-to-students ratio (1:952.6), the highest assistant principals-to-students ratio (1:1,732.0) and the lowest deans-to-students ratio (1:793.8). When compared to the state, the district’s principal-to-student ratio is higher than the state’s and the assistant principal-to-student and dean-to-student ratios are lower. Student enrollment and the number of principals, assistant principals and deans are provided in Exhibit 4-46. Staff-to-student ratios for those three positions are provided in Exhibit 4-47.

**Exhibit 4-46
Student Enrollment and Numbers of Principals,
Assistant Principals and Deans: Collier, Peer Districts and State**

District	Student Enrollment	Principals	Assistant Principals	Deans
Collier	38,104	40	22	48
Lake	31,773	40	39	25
Lee	63,148	70	75	26
Manatee	39,108	70	75	23
Osceola	40,482	35	47	1
Pasco	54,957	65	83	10
State	2,539,932	2,816	3,681	621

Source: Florida DOE, "Staff in Florida's Public Schools Fall 2002."

**Exhibit 4-47
Staff to Student Ratios: Principals, Assistant Principals
and Deans: Collier, Peer Districts and State**

District	Staff to Student Ratios			
	Principals	Assistant Principals	Deans	Assistant Principals and Deans
Collier	1: 952.6	1: 1,732.0	1: 793.8	1: 544.9
Lake	1: 794.3	1: 814.7	1: 1,270.9	1: 495.8
Lee	1: 902.1	1: 842.0	1: 3,007.0	1: 657.8
Manatee	1: 558.7	1: 521.4	1: 1,700.3	1: 399.0
Osceola	1: 1,156.6	1: 861.3	1: 40,481	1:843.4
Pasco	1: 845.5	1: 662.1	1: 5,495.7	1: 590.9
State	1: 902.0	1: 690.0	1: 4,090.1	1: 590.4

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Although no universal standard exists to determine the appropriate number of school level administrators, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) establishes minimums that can be used as a guide in school based staffing. SACS accredits public and private educational institutions from the pre-kindergarten through the university levels in 11 states in the southeastern United States and Latin America. SACS is one of six regional accrediting organizations recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Accreditation standards developed by SACS provide member institutions a means for performing comprehensive self-evaluations in planning for improvement and for providing the public assurance of overall educational quality. Standard 6, Human Resources, outlines the minimum personnel requirements that are expected to support student learning and implement the administrative functions of the school. The requirements for the positions of principal, assistant principal and dean for the elementary, middle school and high school levels by enrollment ranges are provided in Exhibit 4-48.

Exhibit 4-48**SACS Minimum Personnel Requirements for Principal, Assistant Principal and Dean by Level and Enrollment**

Position	Enrollment Range						
Elementary School							
	1-263	264-439	440-659	660-879	880-1099	1100-1319	1320+
Principal	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Assistant/Dean	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0
Middle School							
	1-249	250-499	500-749	750-999	1000-1249	1250-1499	1500+
Principal	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	*
Assistant/Dean	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	*
High School							
	1-249	250-499	500-749	750-999	1000-1249	1250-1499	1500+
Principal	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	*
Assistant/Dean	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	*

* One full-time equivalent staff member as needed for each additional 250 students over 1,500. Guidance counselors and library or media specialists are included in the total.

Source: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, "Accreditation Standards Checklists."

Based on enrollments as of May 2003, the Collier County School District exceeds SACS's minimum personnel requirements for assistant principals and deans. The district employs 31 assistant principals or deans, above the SACS minimum. Given the large number of positions beyond the minimum, the district should assess how these employees are used. Depending on the results of this analysis, the district may wish to reduce or reallocate these administrators. The district average salary for deans is \$52,979.² If the district were to eliminate these positions, it could save \$1,642,349 (31 x \$52,979) per year, for a total of \$8.2 million over a five year period. Another way to address the additional staffing would be to reallocate these administrators to new schools as they open so as to bring the district as a whole more in line with SACS minimum standards.

Exhibit 4-49**School-Based Administrative Personnel:
SACS Standard and Collier County School District Allocations**

Position	Minimum Personnel Units per SACS Standard	Personnel Units Allocated by District	Units in Excess of SACS Minimum
Principal	35.0	35.0	0.0
Assistant Principal/Dean	37.5	68.5	31.0
Total	72.5	103.5	31.5

Source: The Collier County School District and SACS "Accreditation Standards Checklists."

The Collier County School District is one of the fastest growing districts in Florida. Between 1998 and 2002, student membership increased 23.8%, the third highest of Florida's 67 districts. The district projects that the growth will continue with enrollment increasing 15.1%, or approximately 5,760 students, for the five-year period 2002-03 to 2006-07. Additional staff will be needed if the district is to "support student learning and implement the administrative functions of the school" as proposed by SACS.

² The average salary of assistant principals is \$62,032. We used the lower salary to provide a conservative savings estimate.

We recommend the district use SACS standards to review its allocation formula for school-based administrative staffing and reallocate staff in the most efficient manner possible.

No staffing formulas or resource allocations exist for central staff positions. Staffing for those positions must be recommended annually through DEIP budget resource requests to the district’s senior leadership team and any approved items are included as part of the budget recommendations presented to the board. Positions requested by the division of curriculum and instructional programs for 2002-03 but not approved and the costs associated with each are provided in Exhibit 4-50

**Exhibit 4-50
2002-03 Positions Requested but Not Funded: Curriculum and Instructional Programs**

Position	Number	Requested Amount
Reading Resource Teacher	6	\$330,000
Curriculum and Instruction Specialist	1	45,683
Reading Coordinator, PreK-12	1	98,770
Instructional Facilitators	5	300,000
Textbook Data Entry Clerk	1	31,735
ESOL Reading Teacher	1	55,000
Title I/Grants Instructional Strategist	1	50,000
Behavior Paraprofessionals	5	116,960
Audiologist	1	54,000
Middle School Intensive Reading Staff	3.35	180,900
Literacy Specialist	1	60,000
Total	25.35	\$1,323,048

Source: The Collier County School District.

In fall 2002, Collier County School District employed 51 administrators, 34 consultants and supervisors, and 3 community education coordinators for a total of 88 district-level administrative staff. These figures indicate that the district has significantly more administrators per student than its peers or the statewide average, as shown in Exhibits 4-51 and 4-52.

**Exhibit 4-51
Full-Time District-Level Administrative Staff Fall 2002:
Collier County School District, Peer Districts and State**

District	Student Enrollment	Administrators	Consultants and Supervisors	Community Education Coordinators
Collier	38,104	51	34	3
Lake	31,773	15	7	0
Lee	63,148	68	13	1
Manatee	39,108	49	13	0
Osceola	40,482	32	4	0
Pasco	54,957	52	22	0
State	2,539,932	2,112	444	40

Source: Florida DOE, “Staff in Florida’s Public Schools Fall 2002.”

**Exhibit 4-52
District-Level Administrators-to-Students Ratio Fall 2002:
Collier County School District, Peer Districts and State**

District	Administrators	Consultants and Supervisors	Community Education Coordinators	Total
Collier	1: 747.1	1: 1,120.7	1: 12,701.3	1: 433.0
Lake	1: 2,118.2	1: 4,539.0	0	1: 1,444.2
Lee	1: 928.6	1: 4,857.5	1: 63,148.0	1: 770.1
Manatee	1: 798.1	1: 3,008.3	0	1: 630.8
Osceola	1: 1,265.1	1: 10,120.5	0	1:1,124.5
Pasco	1: 1,056.9	1: 2,498.0	0	1: 742.7
State	1: 1,202.6	1: 5,720.6	1: 63,498.3	1: 978.4

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

The district staffing committee is currently considering a recommendation to develop district-level staffing formulas similar to those that exist for school-based staffing allocations. Development of such formulas would provide the opportunity to review and establish allocation standards more consistent with those used by peer districts while allowing for effective planning for programs and school-based support and reducing the time required of staff to prepare annual requests.

Of the peer districts, Manatee and Osceola are closest in student enrollment to Collier. Manatee has more central office staff than Osceola, with 49 administrators, 13 consultants and supervisors and 0 community education coordinators. If Collier were to reduce district-level administrators to even the level of Manatee (a reduction of 26 positions), the district could recognize significant cost savings of \$1,176,998 per year, or \$5,884,990 over five years.³ Action Plan 4-8 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 4-8

We recommend that the district develop staffing formulas for the central office.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Review professional standards and those used by peer districts for allocating staff to the central office.
	Step 2.	Determine staffing levels that would be most appropriate for the Collier County School District's central administration.
	Step 3.	Adopt central office staffing formulas.
	Step 4.	Revise central office staffing using the formulas.
	Step 5.	Revisit the appropriateness of the staffing decisions after they have been implemented and revise the formulas if necessary.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent	
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing	

³ The savings, based on average annual salary of each category of administrator, is derived from 2 less administrators (2 x \$82,843 per year = \$165,686) plus 21 less consultants and supervisors (21 x \$38,465 per year = \$807,765) plus 3 less community education coordinators (3 x \$67,849 per year = \$203,547).

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Best Practice 9: Using

The district ensures that students and teachers have sufficient current textbooks and other instructional materials available to support instruction in core subjects and to meet the needs of teachers and students.

To meet the needs of teachers and students, school districts should ensure that all schools have sufficient numbers of current, state-adopted textbooks and other instructional materials available to support instruction in core subjects. Districts should solicit input from teachers when selecting textbooks and other instructional materials. To increase availability of textbooks, districts should seek to purchase, maintain and dispose of textbooks in a cost-effective manner. Districts should collect monies from students who have damaged or lost textbooks and use these monies to offset materials costs or to purchase additional materials.

The Collier County School District procedures manual states that in July through March, the instructional materials office receives information from the Florida Department of Education (DOE) regarding instructional materials submitted for adoption. The office notifies the appropriate subject area coordinator in accordance with the district's School Board Policy, at which time meeting dates are set. The instructional materials specialist provides materials and training to the textbook committee. By April, each textbook committee makes a recommendation for adoption. The instructional materials office submits the final recommendation to the associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction for approval. The Collier County School District uses the DOE's *Florida Adoption Cycle for Adoption Years 2000-01 through 2012-13* to monitor when new adoptions must be made.

During the 2000 Florida Legislature session, the statutes relating to instructional materials were amended. Changes to §233.34(2) (a) were made to ensure that district's make instructional materials purchases within two years of the effective date of the adoption cycle. The DOE's adoption cycle indicates that for 2001-02, textbooks in the subject area of reading were to be adopted. According to documentation and interviews with the instructional materials specialist and clerk, the Collier County School District has followed this adoption cycle.

The Collier County School District uses class sets in the core subject area of social studies and for art, music, health and physical education (high school level). In other core subject areas, each student has his or her own textbook. In most cases, each elementary student has a textbook for home use and an extra class set is kept in the classroom so that students do not have to carry books back and forth to school. This is in accordance to Florida law that states that districts must provide all students with adequate instructional materials. Adequate instructional materials means a sufficient number of textbooks or other sets of materials so that instruction can be provided to students in the core courses of mathematics, language arts, social studies, science, reading and literature. Florida statutes recognize that a sufficient number can be a class set, particularly at the elementary level.

The Collier County School District has implemented a new electronic textbook inventory/ordering program, whereby schools can track inventory and make purchases on the district's system network. This system allows schools to make purchases conveniently and as soon as needed. A school submits an electronic purchase order on the system to the instructional materials specialist who approves the purchase only if it is in the school's textbook fund. The instructional materials specialist provides training for schools in the use of this system in March of each year. The system also allows each school

to print its inventory for verification purposes. Because the central administration does all the ordering, the Collier County School District is able to take advantage of bulk order discounts and is able to obtain free textbooks with large orders. Often the extra textbooks are used for class sets.

The district materials selection committee consists of a minimum of three persons: one lay person and a minimum of two district teachers currently teaching the course under review. Committees are typically larger than this; three person committees are used only where there are limited selections for a course offered. Further, committees operate under the direction of the district's subject area coordinator or supervisor. The entire committee is provided a brief (20 minutes) presentation about the evaluation process.

Each textbook committee uses an evaluation form to help make the adoption selection. Each adoption is rated on a 1-5 Likert scale using a subject area designed evaluation form. For example, the AP physics text adoption was rated in the areas of content (e.g., the content aligns with state standards), presentation (e.g., material is presented in logical sequence), instructional design (e.g., problem solving is encouraged) and classroom use (e.g., the labs are designed and explained well for both teacher and student). For the reading adoption, multiple titles were available, and every teacher at each school evaluated and made recommendations for adoption based on the instructional needs at that campus.

Only instructional materials that have been off district adoption for at least two years may be eligible for declared surplus. About 75% of books are given to students and their parents. The rest are used by teachers to develop supplemental activities or given to private schools or third world countries.

The district does not have a policy that allows it to sell books. The specialist is working on implementing this policy. Three companies are visiting the Collier County School District to discuss the possibility of selling books. The specialist estimates that it will take one year to implement the policy and procedures to begin selling surplus books.

We recommend the district implement procedures to enable the district to sell surplus books.

Section 1007.42, *Florida Statutes*, provides that costs associated with damaged or lost instructional materials are the responsibility of each student and his or her parent or guardian. The district's school board policy states that if a student loses or damages a text, he or she will be issued a textbook for use in the classroom *only* if the cost of the text is remitted by the student. However, the district does not have a clear policy it uses to communicate the contents of *Florida Statutes* 1006.42 to parents. Each individual school has a handbook with textbook care responsibility and it is at the discretion of individual principals the manner in which to communicate this to students and parents.

In a memorandum regarding lost and damaged textbook funds to the executive director of business services dated 1/13/2003, the associate superintendent for curriculum and instructional programs stated that the total dollar amount for the 2001-02 school year for lost and damaged book remittances was \$27,379.34. It was further stated that there would not be a specific additional allocation for that amount during fiscal year 2001-02, but that the district contributes a much greater amount each year to textbook purchases above the state's categorical allocation. The district could not supply the number of lost and damaged books by campus.

The district needs to improve its inventory process to maximize the collection of money due to lost or damaged instructional materials.

We recommend the district improve its inventory process for tracking the number of lost or damaged instructional materials.

Best Practice 10: Using

The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction.

To meet this best practice, school districts should have sufficient school library/media center resources to support instruction. Library materials and equipment should be up-to-date and centers should operate during hours that meet the needs of students. To maximize the availability of library materials, the district should have and regularly use procedures to reduce library and media costs, such as coordinating orders across schools to take advantage of bulk rate discounts.

Media centers in the Collier County School District are well equipped with technology and all computers are networked and have internet access. The hardware standards for the media centers for computers are 15 computers at the elementary level, 35 at the middle school level, and 65 at the high school level. Many schools do not meet these standards, but it is important to note that according to the district's technology plan, these hardware standards are provided solely as general planning guidelines. Media configurations are based on specific technology needs to support the given instructional programs. Some schools have opted to have fewer computers available in the media center and place more in lab configurations. Nine elementary schools meet the minimum hardware standards and 14 do not, two middle schools meet the standards and six do not, and none of the high schools meet the standards. The majority of schools not meeting the standards are close to meeting them.

Circulations in media centers are more than adequate. The standard for book to student ratio is 10:1. All schools exceed this ratio. According to the district's policy, purchases for the media center are made using the following criteria: the school's curriculum, the needs of the students, importance of the subject matter, accuracy and authoritativeness of the content, the quality of writing and production, the reputation of the author, and the format. In addition, media specialists indicated that they use their professional journals, such as the *School Library Journal*, to help them make purchasing decisions. Weeding of materials is also based on several criteria: condition of materials, duplication of seldom-used materials, inaccuracy of information, inappropriate reading or interest level, lack of circulation of nonstandard materials within a five-year span and super cession of serial materials. While the Collier County School District does not use a formal process to determine teacher and student satisfaction with available resources, media specialists told the consultant that they regularly meet with the faculty and discuss the media centers' circulation and additional needs of the teachers.

Most media centers in The Collier County School District provided the average age of books in the areas of computers, science and technology. The range for the average age of books on computers is 1982 to 1998, for science is 1978 to 1997 and for technology is 1981 to 1998. Because most schools' ranges were closer to the most current average, an average of the average was calculated. For computer books, the average is 1992, for science books, the average is 1989 and for technology books, the average is 1990. It appears that the district's collection is too old since the average age for computer books is 11 years old, the average age for science books 14 years old, and the average ages for technology books is 13 years old.

We recommend the district focus its replacement money on outdated books and materials.

Middle school and high school media centers generally open between 7:00 to 8:00 am and close between 3:00 to 4:00 pm. Contract hours at the high school level are 7:20-2:40, but because the Collier County School District staffs high school centers with two media specialists, the media specialists stagger their

hours so the media center can stay open longer. At the elementary schools, there is only one media specialist and sometimes one media assistant so staggering the hours of the centers is not an option.

Generally, elementary media centers are open from 7:30-8:00 am through 3:00-4:00 pm. All but three elementary schools keep the media center open during hours of operation to all students. The three elementary schools have the media center closed to all but one group of students at certain times throughout the day. Pinecrest Elementary School also opens its media center from 6:00 to 7:30 pm for family literacy night.

Although the district is using this best practice, it could improve the coordination among its media centers in one area. The district does not take full advantage of bulk purchasing. While some bulk ordering occurs for equipment and online resources, the purchasing of books is rarely done in bulk unless the books are purchased at the district level (e.g., Sunshine state readers). School-based technology committees identify instructional and administrative hardware and software requirements at their schools, including any necessary equipment replacement or upgrade. The media centers are included in this evaluation process. The schools have prioritized needs requests that are submitted to the district. The district then buys this equipment through a bid process and, whenever possible, buys in bulk. Online resources such as *World Book* and *Grolier Encyclopedia* are always purchased in bulk.

We recommend the district coordinate more bulk ordering of books and materials across the media centers.

Best Practice 11: Using

The district utilizes instructional technology in the classroom to enhance curriculum and improve student achievement.

Technology has the potential to enhance curriculum and instruction, help improve student achievement and assist students in attaining basic computer skills needed for the 21st century. Whenever possible, districts should use technology to support classroom learning. For instance, districts should offer a variety of courseware focused on helping students achieve grade level academic benchmarks as well as common basic software packages. To increase student success, districts should ensure that all students have opportunities to use computer software while in school. Districts should also periodically obtain feedback from teachers and principals related to the usefulness and adequacy of instructional technology and use this information when selecting future materials.

The Collier County School District has written and approved a district technology plan for providing instructional technology development in the district for school years 2002 through 2006. According to background presented in the plan, implementation of technology in the Collier County School District began in 1993-1994 with the installation of a local area network. The emphases for the first several years were to bring the schools in the district up to the standard in terms of the numbers of computers, to establish a district training lab, to establish a wide area network, which enabled all administrators to use the email system and to network all computers in the district. In 1999-2000, the first board-adopted technology plan was implemented with a change in focus. This change is to distribute instructional technology based on a needs assessment completed by each school in October. With the new technology plan, more focus is also on interfacing technology with content to create engaged learning. The plan is comprehensive and dynamic.

In addition, district technology standards for students and teachers have been developed and are being implemented. Standards were developed for grades K through 2, grades 3 through 5, grades 6 through 8 and grades 9 through 12. Six standards and objectives are incorporated for each level. The standards are

comprehensive and include basic computer operations and concepts; social, ethical and human issues; technology productivity tools; technology communication tools; technology research tools and technology problem solving/decision making tools. Each standard includes several objectives. For example, students are expected to locate and launch software by grade 2, add sounds and recorded voice by grade 4, include graphics by grades 6 through 8 and use devices such as VCR, scanner, digital camera, CD-writer by grades 9 through 12. The technology standards incorporate the majority of the goal 3 standards of Florida Department of Education's, *A System of School Improvement and Accountability* and are aligned to the international society for technology in education. The student standards are evaluated using a technology standards rubric developed by the district. The standards are being implemented at all levels. Exhibit 4-53 illustrates the six standards and a sample objective at each level.

Exhibit 4-53
Example Objectives for Each Student Technology Standard by Grade Level

Standard	Grade Level			
	K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
Basic Computer Operations and Concepts	Print with assistance	Use left and right mouse functions	Use Taskbar appropriately	Use devices such as VCR, scanner, digital camera, CD-writer
Social, Ethical and Human Issues	Use Internet appropriately	Understand consequences of misuse of technology	Use the Internet appropriately, including proper citing of resources	Understand the ethical implications of plagiarism and avoid its use
Technology Productivity Tools	Add sound/recorded voice	Produce a 3-5 page multimedia presentation independently	Include graphics and sounds/recorded voice in projects as appropriate	Use integrated office package and tools
Technology Communication Tools	Collaborate with others using communication tools such as e-mail and video conferencing	Utilize grade appropriate programs to support mastery of Sunshine State Standards	Create presentations and/or web publications	Use technology for organization and management of time, data, money
Technology Research Tools	Gather information through online resources such as websites and encyclopedias	Create graphs (Data Wonder-SFAW, Excel, etc.) to communicate information.	Gather information using electronic card catalog	Choose appropriate tools and technology resources to complete specific tasks
Technology Problem Solving/Decision Making Tools	Use calculators to solve real world problems	Apply criteria to determine the accuracy of the information source.	Analyze the legitimacy and authenticity of Internet reference sources	Use and apply information from graphs and charts

Source: Collier County School District Technology Plan.

As this exhibit illustrates, the six standards encompass both using technology to conduct research and incorporating technology to complete assignments. In addition, the director of instructional technology schedules quarterly meetings with appropriate staff to plan and to examine the degree to which implementation of the standards is occurring.

Most elementary schools have instructional resource teachers who teach students technology lessons linked to the standards. In middle schools, the standards are taught through the business technology education class and the technology education class. At the high school level, the standards are taught through a course called *Career Research and Decision Making*, which is a one-semester course taught in conjunction with critical thinking. One problem at the middle and high school level is access to

computers. Until this issue is resolved, it is more difficult to implement the standards at the secondary level.

Another feature of the district’s instructional technology department is a recently implemented position called instructional technology specialists. These specialists assist their schools in implementing and integrating technology into the content areas. The specialists’ job description includes these general responsibilities:

1. Researches the latest technology to identify how it can be utilized in the classroom to facilitate teaching and learning.
2. Provides training to instructional staff in the use of appropriate instructional technologies to facilitate teaching and student learning.
3. Acts as a liaison between the schools and the Instructional Technology Department.

The specialists provide training to teachers on an as needed basis. For example, if a small group of teachers wanted additional training on using Excel, the specialists would provide the training.

Districts in Florida receive entitlement money through 2002 NCLB: EETT “Enhancing Education through Technology,” Part I. The Collier County School District applied for and received two discretionary grants under this same program, Part II. Exhibit 4-54 illustrates that The Collier County School District received more EETT grant money than all of its peers. In fact, it was one of only seven districts in Florida that received this much money, receiving funds for both grants it wrote.

Exhibit 4-54

Number of Competitive NCLB: EETT Grants Proposals Submitted, Amount Requested and Number and Amount Funded, the Collier County School District and its Peers, 2003

District	Proposals Submitted	Amount Requested	Proposals Funded	Amount Funded
Collier	2	\$600,000	2	\$600,000
Lake	1	\$310,753	0	\$0
Lee	0	\$0	0	\$0
Manatee	2	\$599,700	1	\$300,000
Osceola	2	\$599,998	1	\$299,998
Pasco	1	\$259,853	0	\$0

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Although the district is using this best practice, it could improve instructional technology in one area. The Collier County School District planned a formal evaluation of instructional technology during the 2002-03 school year. The evaluation was postponed because of a resignation in the department of testing and evaluation.

We recommend that The Collier County School District evaluate selected components of its instructional technology program.

Best Practice 12: Using

The district provides necessary support services (guidance counseling, psychological, social work and health) to meet student needs and to ensure students are able to learn.

To be successful learners, students often need a variety of non-academic services to meet their health, social and emotional needs, which if left unattended may present significant barriers to their ability to learn. Districts should ensure that schools offer sufficient support services, such as counseling and social work to help maintain the overall well being of students. An effective district periodically reviews and assesses its support services plan and uses this information to make adjustments as needed to help resolve barriers to student learning.

The Collier County School District's department of student services program has several notable strengths. Two of these are the recent reorganization of nursing services that brings all school-based nursing services, including those for ESE students, under one umbrella to provide more comprehensive care for students and the timely assessment of students with disabilities, which is accomplished through close monitoring, flexible planning and creative approaches to academic assessment.

The district has processes to regularly analyze and evaluate student needs in guidance, psychological services and health services. The district's guidance and counseling services are provided according to a guidance plan that defines the roles of counselors and includes a curriculum based on Florida's *School Counselor and Guidance Framework*. The guidance plan was developed in cooperation with Florida Gulf Coast University's Graduate School of Education Department and modeled after the Florida student development program and the American School Counselor Association framework. The guidance plan defines the role of counselors (coordination, counseling, consultation and curriculum). Campuses submitted annotated curriculum matrices to the district for review and were given the option to customize the matrix for their individual schools. District staff met with school counselors at their school sites to review and discuss school initiatives, priorities and the delivery of support services. District staff is currently revising the curriculum matrix in response to recent changes to the Florida School Counseling and Guidance Framework and will include information provided on the annotated matrices that each school submitted.

The school health services program is a collaborative effort between Collier County School District, Collier County Health Department and Naples Community Hospital Healthcare System and involves students, parents, school personnel, health department personnel and other community partners. The program employs an annual school health services report with concurrent biennial school health services plan to determine critical health needs and supportive interventions for students. The district conducts school health surveys, completes a quality improvement report, and conducts inspections of campus health rooms. Recently, the district completed a reorganization of its service delivery model, to include ESE nurses in the overall health services system. This action should streamline services, ensure an adequate pool of employees to provide health coverage and possibly reduce costs related to substitutes and relief nurses.

The Collier County School District provides psychological services with 20 school psychologists and one coordinator of psychological services. Psychologists are assigned by area of specialization including pre-school, elementary, secondary and alternative education. Assignment of psychologists to campuses is based on grade level, overall population, number of initial psychological evaluations, number of ESE students and types of ESE programs, and the specialty area of the psychologist. The psychological services department tracks evaluations by school and considers specific categories, including the number of new evaluations, reevaluations, pre-K evaluations and gifted evaluations. The range of assessments performed on each campus varies, from 1 or 2 on some campuses to 27 and 28 on other campuses. Duties of the psychologists include serving on multi-disciplinary teams on individual campuses, evaluating

students for ESE programs or Section 504 accommodation plans, consulting with teachers and parents, participating in ESE staffing and assisting in the development of individual education plans. The district provides in-service trainings to teachers are presented including such areas as attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, bilingual pre-referral activities, cognitive processing, autism, child abuse reporting, crisis recognition and response, violent threat assessment and compliance with Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. The student services department reviews the number of referrals at the end of each school year and that data is used for the assignment of school psychologists for the next school year. Student enrollment is also analyzed and allocation of psychology staff is partially determined by this data. Based on the increase in the Hispanic population, two new bilingual Spanish-speaking school psychologists have been added to the staff.

In one area, social work services, the district should explore provision of services and allocation of resources. The coordinator of psychological services currently has a 216-day contract rather than a 250-day contract, even though some of the psychologists are on extended contracts in order to ensure timely evaluations. The coordinator of psychological services should be available to supervise the employees who work during the summer and the district should explore the option of extending the contract for this position to 250 days, which would cost approximately \$10,798, including salary and benefits.

We recommend that the district explore the option of extending the contract of the coordinator of psychological services from 216 days to 250 days.

The district uses staffing formulas for each area of student services and was able to demonstrate that its ratios are lower than the state average. Exhibit 4-55 shows the staffing formula the Collier County School District uses for school counselors.

**Exhibit 4-55
Staffing Criteria for School Counselors**

School Level	Student Enrollment	Counselors Assigned
Elementary	0-749	1.0
	750-999	1.5
	1000-above	2.0
Middle	Per school	1.5
	600-899	2.0
	900-1199	2.5
	1200-1500	3.0
High	Per school	3.0
	1350-1749	4.0
	1750-2149	5.0
	2150-2549	6.0

Source: The Collier County School District Department of Student Services.

The ratio of students per counselor in Collier County School District is 317:1, although the coordinator of guidance indicated that the actual ratio is somewhat higher because other job classifications such as behavior specialists were included in the calculation. The Collier County School District ranks nineteenth in the state in terms of population but eleventh in student to counselor ratio. The student to counselor ratio in Florida is 448:1. The district reported that the American School Counselor Association recommends a 450:1 ratio. Of the district's counselors, four are bilingual. With the increasing demands

of standardized and state testing, the district added assistant principals for curriculum at the middle school level. The major responsibilities for these new positions include the master schedule and standardized testing coordination, both of which were previously assigned to middle school counselors.

According to district guidelines, student population is the only variable considered when assigning guidance counselors. This method does not take into account the demographic characteristics of each campus and does not “weight” a campus’s needs. For example, a campus with a high number of ESE students, LEP students, or low-income students does not receive consideration for additional counseling services. The executive director of student services and the coordinator of guidance said there are several factors the district could consider in support of a differential staffing formula. These include the following:

1. FCAT scores, especially now that scores at some grade levels could result in high rates of student retention. Estimates in the district are that about 15% of third grade population would not progress and would need to receive student progression counseling.
2. Mobility rate in the district of approximately 30%, which affects the workload for registration and scheduling.
3. Total number of ESE students and counselor time spent in IEP meetings.
4. Total number of ESOL students and counselor time spent in ESOL meetings.

We recommend the district consider using these factors to develop a weighted formula for allocating counselors to schools.

The district subscribes to the National School Nurses Association’s nurse-to-student staffing ratios of 1:750 for health rooms. Critical health services are delivered by a mix of RNs and LPNs in the local high schools daily and almost exclusively by RNs in most elementary and middle schools at least two to three days per week. The school district has a goal of one nurse in every school by the year 2005 but, at this time, RNs are only full time at the high schools and some middle schools. The student services department has requested additional positions based on need, including high numbers of ESE students who require medical services.

The current district staffing formula for school psychologists is:

Per 50 Pre-K ESE Students	0.5
Per 2,376 K-12 FTE	1.0

On a national level, the National Association of School Psychologists recommends a 1000:1 ratio. In Collier County School District, the K-12 ratio is 2376:1. However, the department has completed most of its evaluations within timelines and has few pending evaluations from one school year to the next (See ESE, Section 2). Additional staff is hired during the summer to eliminate any backlogs of pending referrals. The district submits an allocation adjust request for additional psychologist positions and uses logs and an internal monitoring process to determine total evaluations and types of evaluations at each campus. Even though Florida has declared a critical shortage of school psychologists, the Collier County School District does not participate in a paid psychology intern program as many counties in the state do. Since all school psychology interns have advanced degrees, it seems unreasonable and counterproductive for the district to refuse to pay them. Many districts recognize that supporting the interns during their internship may result in a larger pool of well-qualified applicants for psychologist positions. The review team is aware of an internship program in the School District of Hillsborough County and the coordinator

of psychological services indicated that Osceola County School District also implements such a program. The district should explore inclusion of paid psychology interns during their internship program.

The Collier County School District regularly evaluates the effectiveness of their student support services and uses the results to make improvements. The coordinator of guidance and counseling meets with counselors annually at their school sites and visits with the principal if available. Areas for discussions include delivery of the guidance curriculum, use of the BE COOL (K-8), school demographics, and best practices. As part of the three-year implementation plan for the school board-adopted guidance program (1999-2002), each school submitted an annotated guidance curriculum matrix to the district. Beginning with the 2002-03 school year, counselors include the matrix in their Collier teacher assessment system (CTAS) portfolio for their personnel evaluation. The collected matrices will be used as reference for the upcoming revision of the matrix to reflect the new addition of the Florida counseling framework.

The health services program is using several tools to evaluate the delivery of its services, including a school health visit information sheet, which is a survey designed to gather information regarding concerns and accomplishments. In addition, the district's current *School Health Services Plan and Report* contains data and a plan that must be completed annually by each district in the state. The indicators for measuring performance included in the plan are measurable and the strategies are very specific in most cases. The district conducts interim updates of progress toward meeting goals in the plan. In addition, the district education improvement plan includes a subsection related to student services, including health services.

During the 2001-02 school year the school psychology staff completed 2,178 total evaluations (pre-k, new ESE, three-year ESE re-evaluation and gifted). There were 75 pre-K evaluations completed that were initiated by FDLRS Child Find, indicating coordination between the district and FDLRS. Three psychologists were employed during the summer to complete these evaluations and allow students to begin the school year with immediate access to ESE services. At the end of the year, fewer than 20 referrals were pending district wide. Schools are regularly surveyed regarding students pending evaluation and assistance is targeted to schools with 10 or more students ready for evaluation. This process has resulted in timely evaluations and very few evaluations carried over to the next year.

The student services department has implemented the following psychological services programs in response to need:

- *Crisis response teams* – Teams of psychologists respond to school based tragedies involving death of students, family members, or staff. During the 2002-03 school year, the crisis teams were used 14 times at six different schools.
- *Violent threat assessment* – Based on a recommendation in the FBI 2000 School Shooter Report, the district initiated a violent threat assessment program. A team of doctoral and masters level psychologists respond when a threat is deemed potentially serious by an assistant superintendent. The team interviews the student, their peers, teachers and family and issues a report regarding the suspected level of threat. During the 2002-03 school year, 40 violent threat assessments were completed. Most were found to be low-level threats.

The one area of student support not provided at a significant level in Collier County School District is social work services. Although social worker positions are under consideration as a fourth counselor position at most of the district's high schools, the district now has only one half-time social work position paid for by FDLRS. A variety of needs are typically met by school social workers. Since the district's population of low income and minority students is increasing, in addition to its large geographic area, Collier County most likely has many such needs. There are several schools in the district in which several risk factors converge and which are not performing well academically. These schools have a high

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percentage of low-income students, minority students and limited English proficient (LEP) students, as well as many migrant students.

It is likely that several interrelated factors may combine to create a critical need for social work positions. Factors that support the need for social work positions include the following.

- The high number of home visits, which are currently made by three attendance assistants, two in Naples and one in Immokalee.
- The high number of in-school suspensions of ESE students for disciplinary infractions. (See Section 2, ESE).
- The insufficiency of community-based social services, especially comprehensive “wraparound” services that serve high-risk families.
- The lack of a strong community program for homeless students.
- Rapid student population growth, about 6% from 2000-01 to 2001-02, especially growth in the number of low income and minority students.

There is a comprehensive body of educational research that has identified and validated correlates of effective schools. This literature stresses the importance of the concept of *Learning for All*. Among the specific correlates that could be positively impacted by contributions of social workers are a climate of high expectations for success, the opportunity to learn and student time on task, a safe and orderly environment and home-school relations. Responsibilities of school social workers should be directly linked to these correlates.

A variety of websites, including <http://bin.lps.org/manila/socialwork/SIM-Family%Specialist.pdf> detail responsibilities for social workers related to improving performance of students. These responsibilities include the following.

- Identify personal or family problems and help individuals or families obtain the needed social services, financial assistance, education, or job training if these affect students’ school performance.
- Counsel children whose social problems hamper their ability to learn. Consult with parents, teachers and other school personnel to help students adjust to school life.
- Aid parents with child-rearing problems and children with social and emotional adjustment problems. Investigate home conditions to protect children from harmful environments.
- Take legal actions on child abuse and advise foster and adoptive parents.

The district should explore the costs and benefits of possible social work positions to determine if (a) a clear link between student achievement and social work services can be established and (b) revenue from Medicaid or other cost savings can be found to support social work positions.

We recommend that the district collect, analyze and report data related to student achievement and student needs for support services to determine if social work positions in the district are warranted.

5 Administrative and Instructional Technology

Summary

The Collier County School District is using seven of the nine administrative and instructional technology best practices. The district acquires technology that will best meet its instructional and administrative needs. It delivers training on these technologies and has appropriate written policies for how technology is to be used. Its infrastructure maximizes network performance. The district uses technology to improve communication and general controls for access and security have been established. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its administrative and instructional technology, the district should create measurable goals and tasks for its technology plan using input from a technology committee that has broad stakeholders, expand the technology needs assessment process to all areas, create accountability and better performance measures for its technical support services, and improve the cost-effectiveness of technology acquisitions with comprehensive cost/benefit analyses.

Background

Instructional and administrative technology is an important component of school district operations. Technology affects student performance by enabling students to access and analyze information, solve problems, collaborate with others and effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas. Teachers use technology as a tool to assist in administrative duties, provide curriculum support and prepare students for life after graduation. Administrators and district employees use technology to provide timely information to effectively manage the district's resources and make informed decisions.

The instructional and administrative technology resources in the district serve 22 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, 5 high schools, the district office and 3 education centers. The district has provided a wide variety of technology resources throughout the district and has established an infrastructure to support networking and telecommunications.

Computer and audio-visual equipment, projection systems, televisions and digital cameras are available to employees at every school. Each classroom (excluding computer labs) has, on average, 3.3 computers. Intranet and Internet data is routed between sites, such as schools and administrative buildings, using 46 T1 Frame Relay circuits. All district wide area network (WAN) Internet traffic passes through a single DS-3 Frame Relay circuit. Most sites have a single T1 providing 1 Mega Byte Per Second (MBP) of bandwidth for WAN and Internet data. The only exceptions are four high schools in the district that have two T1 connections and one elementary school that has a 15MBP wireless connection to the district WAN. The district utilizes the E-rate program to subsidize the cost of Internet access for the schools and administrative centers.¹

¹ See [E-rate](#) for further information on E-rate reimbursement amounts.

Internet content is filtered in compliance with federal regulations. Firewall hardware protects the WAN from external interference. The district uses a network operating system to ensure logins are secure for all district servers and databases. All students and teachers in the district are assigned unique login identification so that they may access the district network. Neither students nor teachers can access any district WAN services, including the Internet, without logging onto the network with their personal identification and password. Login access to district databases requires administrative approval and is monitored by the department responsible for the data. The district has standardized the local area network (LAN) and WAN infrastructure, thereby paving the way for future bandwidth improvements as fiber and/or wireless technologies replace the current T1 connections between sites. The district has high end servers at every site and has effectively reduced the total number of servers and, therefore, the potential points of failure. Use of clustered and Storage Area Network (SAN) technologies have further reduced the number of points of failure within the district WAN.

The Collier County School District also provides systems that support administrative functions. The district uses a software application called Total Educational Resource Management System, or TERMS, for human resources/payroll, finance, facilities and student processing.² The human resources/payroll module provides functionalities for applicant tracking, benefits administration, employee demographics, payroll, position control, salary and benefits projections, staff development and Florida Department of Education (FDOE) data reporting. The finance module of the application provides functionalities for general ledger, purchasing, accounts payable, budgeting and FDOE data reporting. The facilities module provides functionalities for the district's warehouse and fixed assets. The student application provides functionalities for student demographics, student admissions and enrollment, student attendance, student health records, student schedules, student grades and transcripts, student discipline, student special programs such as exceptional student education and English for speakers of other languages, and full-time equivalent (FTE) processing. In addition to the resource management software, the district uses a commercially developed transportation management software package to manage bus routing and a locally developed system to manage food service revenues.

The administrative systems described above reside on the district's servers, mainframe, or midrange computers centrally located within the district computer center. District staff provides user support via a central help desk and conducts user training for administrative software. The district's operations staff mans the district's computer center and performs administrative data processing functions. The district's programming staff maintains the resource management software to ensure compliance with Florida and federal Department of Education requirements as well as district needs. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003, district expenditures for technology totaled \$10,789,814, which is approximately 1.5% of the district's total budget. Over the last three years, the district used public school technology funds, E-rate reimbursement and state and federal grants to fund approximately 17.8% of its technology expenditures. The district uses other sources of funds such as local funding, capital outlay funds and general revenue to cover additional technology expenditures. The majority of the district's technology expenditures are for hardware acquisitions. Exhibit 5-2 shows the district's technology funding sources and expenditures for Fiscal Years 2000-01 through 2002-03. As shown in Exhibit 5-1, the district spent more on technology (\$286 per student) in Fiscal Year 2002-03 than the funds it received specifically for technology (\$222 per student).

² Total Educational Resource Management System (TERMS) is a commercially available resource management software package. OPPAGA's disclosure of the product's name should not be construed as an endorsement of the product.

**Exhibit 5-1
The Collier County School District Technology Funding Sources and Expenditures**

	Fiscal Year		
	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Technology Funding			
Public School Technology Funds	\$879,395	\$915,034	\$963,197
E-rate Reimbursement	\$462,254	\$600,130	\$604,248
State/Federal Grants	\$600,000	\$0	\$746,000
Other Funding Sources ¹	\$6,321,650	\$6,656,916	\$6,051,931
Total Funding	\$8,263,299	\$8,172,080	\$8,365,376
Technology Expenditures			
Contracted Services – Technology	\$5,525	\$24,081	\$110,257
Hardware Acquisitions	\$5,119,601	\$6,318,285	\$5,473,431
Software Licensing	\$1,403,904	\$495,783	\$626,530
Salaries and Benefits	\$2,456,918	\$3,093,237	\$3,333,000
Technology Training	\$210,000	\$124,180	\$104,872
Communication and Technology	\$628,665	\$816,177	\$821,777
Parts, Supplies and Repairs	\$339,282	\$529,160	\$319,947
Total Expenditures	\$10,163,895	\$11,400,903	\$10,789,814
FTEs	33,871	36,008	37,714
Funding per FTE	\$244	\$227	\$222
Expenditures per FTE	\$300	\$317	\$286

¹ Other sources include capital outlay, general revenue and local funds.
Source: Collier County School District, May 2003.

Over the last three years, the district has received state and federal funds for technology from three sources: public school technology funds, the technology literacy challenge fund and E-rate reimbursement.^{3,4} During this period, the public school technology fund was the only technology funding distributed based exclusively on the number of FTE students served. However, the United States Department of Education replaced the technology literacy challenge funds with the enhancing education through technology (EETT) initiative, which resulted in additional funds being awarded based on FTE students.⁵ Florida’s share of the federal EETT funds is \$27 million. FDOE awarded half of available EETT funds based on each district’s FTE students. The district received \$146,225 for Fiscal Year 2002-03. The remainder of the EETT funds was competitively awarded by FDOE. The district is proactive in applying for grants. As a result, state and federal grants funding contributed approximately 21.4% of the district’s technology expenditures in Fiscal Year 2002-03.

The district’s success in receiving grants has both positive and negative consequences. Although the district has been able to purchase a wide variety of technology resources with grant funds, training and technical support may be required to maintain or replace older technology long after the grant money has run out. Because the district cannot depend on competitive grant awards, it must continually apply for

³ The Florida Department of Education’s Bureau of Educational Technology recommends that districts expend public school technology funds in accordance with the district’s educational technology plan. These funds are also referred to as education technology allocation. See [Public School Technology Funds](#) for more information.

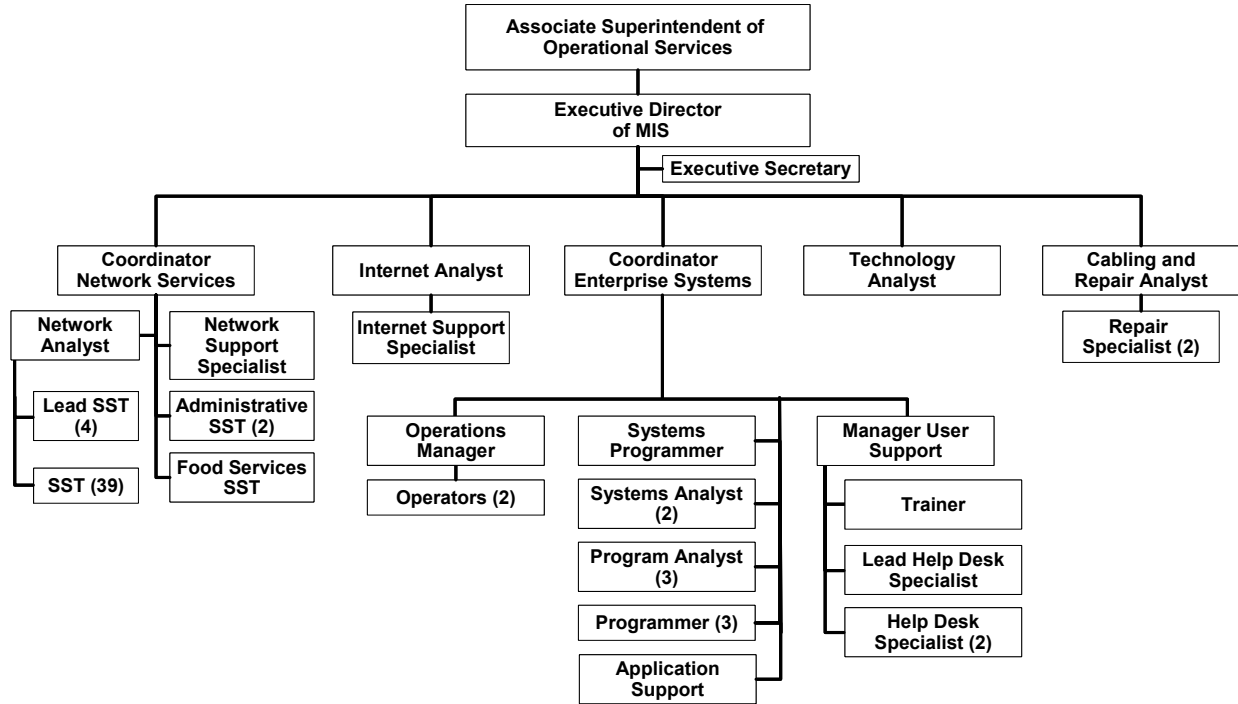
⁴ Recipients of technology literacy challenge funds were selected for funding through a competitive process (see [Technology Literacy Challenge Funds](#)). These federal funds are no longer available, having been replaced with other opportunities through the [No Child Left Behind Act – Enhancing Education Through Technology](#).

⁵ See [Enhancing Education Through Technology \(EETT\)](#) for more information.

new grants which can be time consuming and not always successful, or find alternative funding sources to keep its inventory up-to-date.

The district organizational structure separates the responsibility for instructional and administrative technology. Currently, the district's executive director of the department of management information systems (MIS) oversees all hardware, operating system, network and enterprise systems software related responsibilities, while the director of the department of instructional technology oversees instructional software and training issues. Exhibit 5-2 presents the organization structure for MIS.

**Exhibit 5-2
Organizational Structure of the Department of Management Information Systems**



Source: Collier County School District, February 2003.

Onsite system support technicians (SST) solve the vast array of technical support problems that require the presence of a trained computer technician. SSTs install new hardware, perform upgrades on personal computers, move computer equipment, maintain local area networks and assist with maintaining the district's wide area network data connections. All schools in the district have at least one SST. The four largest high schools, with more than 2,000 students, have two SSTs. Alternative educational programs are assigned an SST one or more days per week, depending on their relative size. The two main administrative buildings also have onsite SSTs.

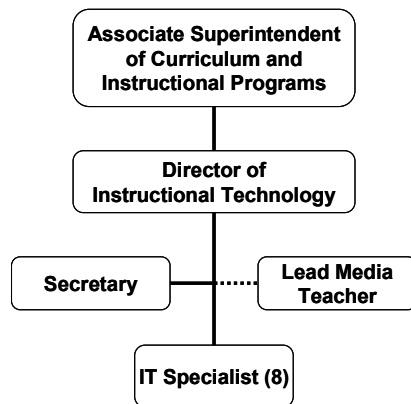
Most technical problems are submitted either by phone to the user support help desk or by an MIS work-order accessible through the intranet. The district expects most user problems to be resolved at the time of first contact with the help desk. SSTs attempt to acknowledge the receipt of an MIS work-order within 24 hours, with final resolution no later than 72 hours after the initial report. Employees can track their MIS work orders online.

The district has hardware repair technicians who perform repair and cabling functions for the district. The district is reimbursed for repairs made on PCs that are under the original equipment manufacturer warranty.

In addition to having at least one system support technician, each school also has a building technology coordinator (BTC), who is responsible for assisting SSTs to prioritize the school's work orders. The BTCs are school-based and report directly to the school administrator. They are certificated educators who have extensive experience on integrating technology into the curriculum. The BTCs' knowledge of the educational system enables them to effectively prioritize work orders when time may not allow for all tasks to be completed within a short timeframe.

Instructional technology specialists provide training to teachers related to instructional and classroom management software and oversee the integration of technology into the curriculum. The BTCs may also assist with technical problem solving, particularly when problems relate to instructional software or peripherals unique to the instructional environment of their school. Exhibit 5-3 presents the organization structure of the department of instructional technology.

**Exhibit 5-3
Organizational Structure of the
Department of Instructional Technology**



Source: Collier County School District, February 2003.

Activities of particular interest

The district has developed technology proficiency standards for students at different grade levels, teachers and administrative staff.

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The district has subscriptions to two online technical training services that provide up to 900 technical training courses, including technical certification courses, at no cost to district's technical and non-technical staff.

The district is using a network appliance technology to monitor, limit, or block Internet traffic based on the type of data found within the data packet. The appliance limits or blocks the data packets associated with non-educational Internet resources such as Internet games and MP3 music files regardless of the site from which they are downloaded.

The district schools dispose of older computers through the "Computer Power for Kids" program. This program enables the district to surplus computers that no longer meet the district's software or hardware standards to children from low income families.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Administrative and Instructional Technology Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Technology Planning	1. The district has a comprehensive technology plan that provides direction for administrative and instructional technology decision making.	No	5-8
Cost-Effective Technology Acquisition	2. The district acquires technology in a cost-effective manner that will best meet its instructional and administrative needs.	Yes	5-11
Technology Professional Development	3. District and school-based staff receive professional development training for all technologies used in the district.	Yes	5-13
Technical Support	4. The district provides timely and cost-effective technical support that enables educators and district staff to successfully implement technology in the workplace.	No	5-14
Infrastructure and Network Communication	5. The district maintains a dependable, standards-based infrastructure employing strategies that cost-effectively maximize network and Internet access and performance.	Yes	5-18
	6. The district uses technology to improve communication.	Yes	5-19
	7. The district has written policies that apply safe, ethical and appropriate use practices that comply with legal and professional standards.	Yes	5-20
Information Management and Delivery	8. 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.	Yes	5-21
	9. The information needs of administrative and instructional personnel are met by applying appropriate project management techniques to define, schedule, track and evaluate purchasing, developing and the timing of delivering IT products and services requested.	Yes	5-22

TECHNOLOGY PLANNING

Best Practice 1: Not Using

The district has a board approved technology plan that provides direction for administrative and instructional technology decision making; however, not all tasks in the plan are measurable and the district has not solicited and used broad stakeholder input in developing the plan.

Planning is the key to a well-implemented, well-delivered technology system. Effective planning helps ensure that district technology meets the instructional needs of students and teachers and the administrative needs of decision makers, including administrators, teachers and non-instructional personnel. An effective planning process identifies the technology needs of users, develops strategies to acquire needed technology in a cost-effective manner and identifies available funds required for acquisitions. To ensure that all critical needs are identified, the planning process should include a broad range of stakeholder input. The decisions made during the planning process should be in writing and the resulting plan should guide technology-related policymaking and acquisitions. While the complexity of the technology plan will vary based on the size of the district, it should include a mission statement and reasonable, measurable goals and objectives that can be accomplished, in most cases, with available resources. The district's budget also should reflect the financial commitment to major technology initiatives included in the technology plan. In addition, the planning process should include follow-up procedures that allow decision makers to assess the benefits of the district's investments in technology and abandon or modify failed strategies in favor of more successful ones. District plans should state who is responsible for implementing and updating the technology plan.

The Collier County School District has a board approved technology plan that addresses both administrative and instructional technology. The district technology plan is compatible with state reporting requirements. Both the MIS and instructional technology departments have worked together to obtain grants such as E-rate and the technology literacy challenge fund. The primary responsibility for the writing and updating of the technology plan falls to the technology analyst within the MIS department. The technology analyst works with the director of instructional technology and the executive director of MIS to coordinate the writing and updating of the plan. The technology plan addresses subjects such as professional development for technology users, information management and delivery, infrastructure and network communication, cost effective acquisition and technical support needs of users. The district conducts an annual assessment to identify district and school-level software and peripheral needs. The district sends needs assessment forms to each school at the beginning of each year's budgeting process. The needs assessment consists of two components: the technology resource list and the software/peripheral priority survey. The district uses the technology resource list to compile its technology inventory. The reports compile data such as the number of computers, printers and other peripherals, as well as the age of the equipment. The software/peripheral priority survey allows the schools to identify and communicate their software and peripheral priorities. The most recent year's top five items were:

1. projectors;
2. document cameras;
3. black and white laser printers;
4. digital cameras; and
5. reading software.

However, the district is not using this best practice for three reasons. First, the district does not solicit and use broad stakeholder input in developing the technology plan. The district establishes the technology needs of individual schools and departments each year by using a narrowly focused needs assessment process. Most stakeholders have no venue to explain their technology needs to other stakeholders. After collecting the data, the technology steering committee makes all of the decisions regarding what is to be included in the technology plan. The planning process is not interactive. The technology analyst and directors of instructional technology and MIS put the technology plan together and the final plan is approved by the technology steering committee.

Exhibit 5-4 lists each of the technology committees and their members. In addition to these committees, each school in the district has a school-based technology committee.

**Exhibit 5-4
Technology Committees of Collier County School District**

Committee Name	Membership
Technology Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction Programs • Associate Superintendent of Operational Services • Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Leadership, North • Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Leadership, Central • Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Leadership, South • Executive Director of MIS • Executive Director of Accountability and Staff and School Renewal • Executive Director of Business Services • Executive Director of Facilities Management • Director of Instructional Technology • Technology analyst, MIS
Technology Advisory Committee (TAC)	The TAC was not convened during the 2002-03 school year. Membership and meetings will be established after the arrival of the new executive director of MIS. ¹
MIS Advisory Committee	Technology Advisers from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infinetwork • Katz Computer • Fischer International Software Corporation • Allen Systems • EMS Collier • Network Coordinator • Technology analyst, MIS
Instructional Support Subcommittee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology analyst, MIS • Director of Instructional Technology • Director of Diversity and ESOL • Coordinators of Related Arts, Health/Physical Education, Social Studies, Math, ESE, Foreign Languages, Science, English, Career & Technical Education and Gifted • Instructional Technology Specialists (8)
Retrofit Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology analyst, MIS • Executive Director of Facilities Management • Supervisor of Specialty Trades • Principals (2) • High School Dean • Director of Instructional Technology

¹ The district has a new executive director of MIS as of May 1st, 2003.

Source: Collier County School District, May 2003.

None of the district’s technology committees represents all stakeholders. As a result, the district’s technology plan cannot address the global needs of each stakeholder group. Action Plan 5-1 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 5-1

We recommend that the district establish a technology planning committee consisting of principals, teachers, administrative staff, technical staff parents and community members that develops and oversees the implementation of the technology plan.

Action Needed	Step 1. Identify members, functions and meeting frequency of the new committee. Step 2. Inform associate superintendent of operational services of members, functions and meeting frequency of the new committee for approval. Step 3. Upon approval, inform members and district regarding the new committee. Step 4. Conduct quarterly meetings.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of MIS
Time Frame	November 2003

The second reason the district is not using this best practice is because several tasks in the technology plan are not measurable, are not tied to a specific cost nor have specific timelines for implementation. The district technology plan has 10 goals, which all include several tasks. However, the district does not have a tool to measure whether it has achieved its goals. Further, some of the tasks are too broad to measure. Tasks, in order to be effective, should be specific and provide a roadmap toward achieving the overall goal. In addition, each task should be tied to a specific result so that it can be effectively evaluated upon completion. An example of a measurable task for administrative and instructional professional development is: “By 2004, 60% of the district administrative personnel will be at or above the administrative proficiency standard.”

The district’s technology budget is in its technology plan; however, the technology budget does not identify the major technology initiatives in the same manner that the initiatives are explained in the technology plan. During the annual assessment process, departments provide the technology steering committee with the costs associated with their needs, however this information is not reflected in the technology plan. Without assigning specific dollars to each task, the district cannot quantify the cost to accomplish any given goal.

The district technology plan does not tie tasks to a specific timeline. Instead, the timelines are broadly separated into the previous year (2001-02), the current year (2002-03) and the next three years (2003-2006). Without specific timelines the district cannot determine if it is on schedule in achieving its goals until the plan period ends. With specific timelines, the district will be able to assess its progress and make necessary changes to tasks that fall behind schedule without waiting for the end of the plan period. Action Plan 5-2 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 5-2

We recommend that the district revise and develop goals and tasks for the district’s technology plan that are measurable and assign a specific cost and timeline to each task.

Action Needed	Step 1. Establish guidelines regarding writing measurable tasks and goals for the technology plan. Step 2. Establish guidelines regarding the fiscal impact and timeline of the technology plan tasks. Step 3. Revise tasks and goals of the technology plan based on new guidelines. Step 4. Review and approve revised tasks and goals.
Who Is Responsible	Technology steering committee
Time Frame	January 2004

Third, the district’s needs assessment process is for software and peripherals only. Schools provide their software and peripheral requirements for the next budget year to MIS. This process does not address the school’s technology professional development needs, network and infrastructure needs and technical support needs. The district has requested that schools put their technology-related issues and needs into

the needs assessment process rather than the school improvement plans. However, there is no procedure to ensure that the technology plan addresses all of the schools' technology needs since the information provided in the needs assessment is so limited in scope. For the needs assessment process to be effectively substituted for the school improvement plan regarding technology, it must identify the major technology needs such as network and infrastructure, technical support and professional development of each school. Action Plan 5-3 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 5-3

We recommend that the needs assessment process include network infrastructure, technical support and professional development components in addition to a software and hardware assessment.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Establish guidelines to incorporate all pertinent data into the needs assessment process.
	Step 2.	Review and approve the new needs assessment components.
	Step 3.	Notify schools and departments regarding the new needs assessment components.
	Step 4.	Ensure the district uses the new broad needs assessment process for the next assessment cycle.
Who Is Responsible	MIS director	
Time Frame	January 2004	

COST-EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION

Best Practice 2: Using

The district acquires technology that will best meet its instructional and administrative needs; however, the district can improve its cost effectiveness by applying cost/benefit methodology.

Districts can reduce and better anticipate technology-related expenses and avoid downtime by developing acquisition strategies that consider not only the initial purchase price, but also the cost of fully implementing and supporting the systems. Implementation and support cost considerations should include professional development requirements, training, standardization of equipment, system interoperability, technical support and disposal costs. In addition, districts should base technology acquisitions on need and ensure that technology resources are equitably distributed throughout the district.

The Collier County School District has an annual needs assessment process in which schools and departments actively participate. Most major technology acquisitions are identified based through this process. The district's technology evaluation process consists of conducting a needs assessment and piloting technology before deploying district wide. The needs assessment provides data on the instructional software and peripheral needs of the district. The technology steering committee makes decisions on which instructional software or peripheral to pilot based on the needs assessment. After a pilot has been completed, the district evaluates the results and decides to either deploy the technology district wide or move on to other technology products. The needs assessment process is mostly utilized in school-based technology decisions. The needs assessment process and the retrofit committee help ensure that the technology resources are equitably distributed to schools within the district.

The MIS department researches and pilots a variety of technologies such as wireless WAN and SAN servers to reduce cost and/or improve performance. The district provides opportunities for district and school personnel to preview, evaluate and recommend acquisition of technology strategies, instructional materials and software. The district's project documents indicated that the administrative users attended

Administrative and Instructional Technology

several vendor meetings and presentations and made trips to other school districts to see the application in use before the district made the decision on which business application software to purchase.

The district purchases computer hardware by piggybacking on a contract from a larger district to get lower prices. The technology budget is handled by the MIS and instructional technology departments, and most of the technology purchases are negotiated by the central office. However, the schools get some technology monies through grants and funds from the district's parent-teacher organization, and through a technology allotment. Interviews with school administrators indicate that the central office assists schools with technology-related purchases using those funds. The district equitably distributes technology resources in terms of hardware, software, technical support and infrastructure to schools within the district.

Although the district is using this best practice, there are three areas in which it could improve. First, the district makes most major technology-related purchases without a written comprehensive cost/benefit analysis. A comprehensive cost/benefit analysis should at least contain the following factors:

- capital costs;
- recurring costs;
- non-recurring costs;
- intangible costs;
- costs associated with not implementing a technology initiative;
- tangible benefits; and
- intangible benefits.

On the administrative side, the district's newly selected business application software may be the most affordable application, but it will not eliminate many of the manual processes such as blanket purchase order tracking or additional applications used by the district in their daily activities, such as the district's automated course enrollment application. It will require staff to spend a considerable amount of time and resources to customize the new system to integrate the additional applications. Manual processing activities and the time required customizing the new system is a drain of district resources in terms of both time and money.

On the instructional side, the district has acquired videoconferencing technology to deliver instruction and to eliminate time consuming and costly meetings between the district and schools throughout the district. However, the videoconferencing technology is not being used as intended since the district does not have enough Internet bandwidth. As a result, the videoconferencing is slow and ineffective. The district has plans to increase its bandwidth to accommodate the growing need for videoconferencing. District resources should have been spent on a different technology until the district bandwidth could accommodate an effective implementation of this technology.

School principals stated that the district offers schools instructional applications to use. Although these applications meet the instructional needs of the schools, they are difficult to implement because their school hardware or infrastructure often is not suitable. For example, the district acquired an instructional application for the secondary intensive reading program. The implementation of the product requires a small lab in the reading classroom along with headphones and microphones. The secondary schools could not provide the required hardware in the middle of the year when allocations had already been determined, purchased and set up. As a result, they were unable to fully implement the application.

Although a selected instructional application may be the most affordable application in its field, the district should look beyond just the cost of the application. It is important to consider the usage and maintenance of the application across intended schools and ensure it will provide the desired outcome.

We recommend that the district conduct a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis on all technology-related projects.

Second, although the purchasing department has procedures to ensure that the MIS and instructional technology departments approve all technology, they are not in writing, are not well communicated and are not always followed. As a result, MIS staff may be asked to support a software or hardware that the department does not have any expertise in, or that may be incompatible with the district's systems. In both cases the cost of support dramatically increases. The district should strive to communicate the procedures more clearly so that all key departments are aware of the proper purchasing process. This includes network services and instructional technology.

Third, the district does not have detailed written hardware standards. Instead, personnel from the departments of network services, instructional technology, MIS and purchasing work together with their sole source computer vendor to determine the base system to be purchased throughout the year. The district specifies separate configurations for student, teacher and administrative systems that are built from the base configuration. However, these configurations and the sole source vendor information are not published in the technology plan or the district's website. As a result, not all schools and departments are aware of this information.

We recommend that the district revise and publish its hardware standards in the technology plan and its website.

TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Best Practice 3: Using

District and school-based staff receive professional development training for technologies used in the district; however, the district does not have an evaluation or assessment process for the administrative staff against the district administrative technology proficiency standards.

Professional development is essential to ensuring that district employees maximize their use of existing technology. However, given the potentially wide range of knowledge and abilities among its staff, it is essential that districts identify the employees and specific areas in which employees are in the greatest need of training and then use this information to focus professional development efforts. To accomplish this, districts must define the level of competency to be mastered, clearly state the training requirements and develop strategies to provide the needed training. These strategies include traditional classroom, one-on-one computer lab instruction, web-based instruction, electronic bulletin boards, videotapes and other self-directed, technology-based methods. In evaluating the effectiveness of training, districts should strive to go beyond issues such as whether participants liked the professional development opportunity and should focus on the intended outcomes and skills to be mastered. Assessing the effectiveness of training is important to plan and budget for future training initiatives.

The Collier County School District's technology plan has technology proficiency standards for students, teachers, administrators and support staff. The technology proficiency standards for teachers are outlined in the Collier teacher assessment system (CTAS) document. CTAS has been designed to provide criteria and guidelines for assessing and improving the qualifications and performance of educators. The professional level of technology usage is 1 of 12 accomplished practices of CTAS. The district expects all educators to be in the professional level in all 12 practices within two years. The Department of Instructional Technology provides a variety of training in terms of time, location and delivery mode for educators to obtain technology training in the professional level. Interviews with teachers and a review of training materials indicate that the instructional technology department goes beyond teaching educators

how to use various features of a particular software package. The department is involved with teachers on developing instructional materials to incorporate technology. Technology training is based on feedback from central office and school-based staff. The Department of instructional technology relies on schools to determine their technology training needs based on their school improvement plans. The district has recently conducted an online technology training evaluation survey for educators. This survey will help the district determine the technology training levels of its educators compared to its standards and will allow them to develop and implement more targeted training based on the needs of its educators. The district provides funds for technology training. The public school technology funds from the state are used to fund the department of instructional technology that manages most of the technology training.

On the administrative side, the trainer from the MIS department provides training on the student and business applications consisting of 17 components including attendance, discipline, grade reporting and other information relevant to district services and the Florida Department of Education. Training is provided throughout the year and is available to instructional, non-instructional and administrative staff in schools and special program offices. In addition, the trainer from the MIS department and the instructors from the instructional technology department provide technology training such as email, office application and general computer usage to administrative and non-instructional staff.

Although the district is using this best practice, there is one area in which it could improve. The district does not have an ongoing process to evaluate district administrative staff against the technology proficiency standards. The district technology plan has two separate standards for administrative staff technology proficiency. One standard addresses school-based administrators for principals, assistant principals, deans and activity coordinators, while the other deals with district administrators. However, there is no performance evaluation tool that allows the district to evaluate the percentage of administrators that meet the standards. Evaluating district administrative staff against the technology proficiency standards will help the district determine the level of proficiency among its school-based and central office administrators. Based on evaluation results, the district can develop targeted training to address staff in most need of additional training. The evaluation process must be ongoing and updated based on the changing needs of the district technology landscape. The district could also improve on professional development is the instructional evaluation process. Although the district has recently conducted a technology training evaluation survey, this was the first survey since 1999. The district will receive much greater benefit if it conducts this evaluation survey on a regular basis.

We recommend that the district develop an administrative technology training evaluation survey. The district should annually administer and update the administrative and instructional technology training evaluation surveys.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Best Practice 4: Not Using

The district does not provide timely and cost-effective technical support that enables educators and district staff to successfully implement technology in the workplace.

Timely, helpful technical support can be a determining factor in whether technology is used or abandoned, decisions are made in a timely manner and essential district services are maintained or interrupted. Districts should provide responsive technical support to all users. Instructional personnel should provide media-rich curricula and non-instructional personnel should conduct administrative tasks without technical interruptions. Areas of technical support include email support, intranet/Internet access, software application support, web development and computer hardware installation and maintenance. Providing technical support can be accomplished in a variety of ways, including providing a trained non-instructional technology support person or providing a technology facilitator in each school; managing a central help desk at the district; implementing a work order tracking system; and contracting for regional

or vendor support services. In addition, districts can minimize the cost of supporting out-of-warranty equipment by establishing replacement guidelines that specify a time frame for when technologies should be recycled or replaced.

The Collier County School District provides technical support to all schools and district offices in the areas of network infrastructure, office software, hardware and enterprise system software. The district provides technical support for all aspects of the network infrastructure including WAN/LAN connectivity, Internet servers, file servers and all person computers and printers connected to the network. Schools and sites are provided with technical support for problems related to commonly used software and district wide instructional software. Application support needs can be addressed to the user support help desk, the onsite system support technicians (SST) or the building technology coordinator (BTC).

The district's technology budget includes line items for technical support and training. The district has recently implemented a significant change related to its technical support. In 2000, the district cancelled its hardware support and repair contract with its vendor because of dissatisfaction with the quality and cost of the service. Instead, the district created its own repair department. Interviews with users indicate that the repair service time has improved and the district is recovering some costs from the hardware manufacturer for providing the warranty repair work on its behalf.

Technical support responsibilities are appropriately assigned to specific personnel at both the district and school level. The MIS director is ultimately responsible for technical support within the district. Overall WAN management is the responsibility of the coordinator of network services. The SSTs maintain the local area network (LAN), and computer and printer hardware at each school. Support for enterprise system software is the direct responsibility of the coordinator of enterprise systems. End user support for the enterprise systems software is provided by the User Support Help Desk. The instructional technology department supports software that affects instruction as well as teacher management tools.

The district shares the resolution of support issues among technical support staff through a number of venues. All district SSTs meet bi-weekly to discuss common problems, define solutions and receive any training that might be related to system maintenance. Email correspondence is a common way that SSTs disseminate solutions to hardware and networking problems common to their sites. Lead SSTs meet weekly with the network analyst to discuss pertinent issues and share solutions to problems in the field.

However, the district is not using this best practice for four reasons. First, it does not have a multi-level service standard that allows better prioritization of work orders. Currently, the responsibility for prioritization is given to school-based BTCs, who may or may not properly prioritize work orders. Principals identified several incidents where the schools' computer labs did not function for days. For example, Immokalee Middle School students had to be transported to Immokalee High School for FCAT simulation tests because the Immokalee Middle School computer lab was out of service. Instructional computer labs should be given priority over other technical issues and should be resolved at the earliest service level available. In addition to instructional computer labs, network services and servers should have priority over single computer issues or new installations. Action Plan 5-4 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 5-4

We recommend that the district improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its technical support service by creating a multi-level service standard.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Identify service standards based on input from principals, building technology coordinators, and department heads.
	Step 2.	Provide the new service standards to technology steering committee for approval.
	Step 3.	Upon approval publish and communicate the new service standards to all district staff.
	Step 4.	Review and update service standards based on the changing needs of the district.
Who Is Responsible	Coordinator of network services	
Time Frame	February 2004	

Second, the district does not have an equipment replacement policy that specifies a time frame for technologies to be recycled or replaced. As a result, the district may have to support large numbers of out-of-warranty computers that may be unable to run the district’s essential applications due to its age. For example, some student testing applications require the use of more modern computers, which are not available on some schools. According to the district technology plan, computers and other technology will be replaced only when required by program or operational needs. Based on the latest needs assessment results, the district has decided to replace all Pentium 1 computers. However, it still does not have a specific time frame for the next replacement cycle. Action Plan 5-5 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 5-5

We recommend that the district improve efficiency and effectiveness of its technical support service by creating an equipment replacement policy.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Create minimum standards for existing equipment based on the applications, warranty, maintenance, and support costs.
	Step 2.	Compare the district’s equipment inventory with the new minimum standard.
	Step 3.	Identify the equipment that needs to be replaced.
	Step 4.	Develop a multi-year replacement policy based on the number of units that need to be replaced.
	Step 5.	Update the minimum equipment standards and the replacement policy based on the application and support cost changes.
Who Is Responsible	MIS director	
Time Frame	February 2004	

Third, the MIS department does not communicate and meet regularly with principals regarding schools’ technical support needs. SSTs are located in schools and departments but they report to the Network Analyst in the MIS department, not to the principal or department head. Interviews with principals indicated that this reporting structure causes problems with personnel issues such as attendance, sick leave and excessive personal phone usage. In addition, some principals raised questions about whether they or their BTC could gain access to the work order system so they can better monitor the activities of their SST. When the review team followed up on this issue, the district stated that BTC and principal access to the work order system is not only technically possible, but several of them already have access to it. However, the fact that some principals are not aware of this clearly indicates the lack of communication between the network analyst and the users. Currently, the network analyst does not meet regularly with principals and department heads to get feedback on SSTs’ performance on technical and non-technical issues. Action Plan 5-6 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 5-6

We recommend that the district give Building Training Coordinators (BTCs) and principals access to work order information and meet with principals regularly regarding technical support issues.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Identify the work order reporting and access needs based on input from principals and building technology coordinators.
	Step 2.	Develop appropriate reports and user accounts to meet the work order information needs of the principals and building technology coordinators.
	Step 3.	Notify all principals and building technology coordinators regarding access to reports and information.
	Step 4.	Schedule regular meetings with school principals to discuss technical support issues.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director, MIS	
Time Frame	October 2003	

Fourth, the district technical support service is not consistent throughout the district. The SST position is an entry-level technician job and the requirements in the job description do not include technical experience or technical certification. As a result, the quality of service varies greatly from one SST to another. The district has a bimonthly face-to-face training for all SSTs; however, due to the limited time and large number of SSTs attending, the training is limited and cannot be customized based on each individual SST’s needs. The district subscribes to two web-based services that provide more than 800 different types of technical courses including industry-wide recognized certifications. These courses are available at no charge to district technical staff including all SSTs. These online courses have administrative functions, which allow district managers to monitor training activities such as the number of training courses taken, or the successful completion of a course. Action Plan 5-7 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 5-7

We recommend that the district provide customized technical training to system support technicians and include the completion of the training program part of the annual evaluation process for system support technicians.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Identify training program based on the skill level of each system support technician.
	Step 2.	Inform system support technicians of training program and evaluation process.
	Step 3.	Monitor and evaluate training program results on system support technicians’ yearly evaluation.
Who Is Responsible	Network analyst	
Time Frame	January 2004	

Although it was not a factor in determining whether the district is using this best practice, the district should revise its work order system to more validly measure timeliness of technical support. According to district support standards, SSTs should acknowledge the receipt of a work order within 24 hours and resolve it no later than 72 hours after the initial report. The district currently uses data on the total number of resolved work orders and the total number of work orders resolved exceeding the 72-hour service level. Exhibit 5-5 shows that 33% of total resolved work orders took longer than 72 hours to be resolved. However, the data does not differentiate between service work orders and work orders that are waiting for parts. This can erroneously skew the data since delays related to parts is beyond the control of the district and should be tracked separately from service delays.

**Exhibit 5-5
Work Order Report Time Frame 2/1/2003-4/1/2003**

Region	Total Resolved Work Orders	Total Work Order Resolution Took More Than Three Days	Percentage Of Late Resolved Work Orders Over Total Work Orders
Northeast	825	206	25%
Northwest	971	370	38%
Southeast	1052	390	37%
Southwest	1263	372	29%
All district schools	4111	1338	33%

Source: Collier County Public Schools MIS network services work orders, February 1, 2003 to April 1, 2003.

In revising its work order system, the district should also establish a method to measure the performance of individual SSTs and lead SSTs. The current system only allows the district to review the work orders by site, but not by SST. This presents a problem when an SST changes location from one school year to another and because most high schools have two SSTs. Therefore, it is not possible to capture the performance history for a particular SST so that the district can evaluate his/her performance when the current work order system generates reports by site only. Also, lead SSTs are not assigned to individual schools; rather their primary responsibility is to help a group of SSTs with complex technical problems. In addition, lead SSTs perform network and server related support that a regular SST cannot perform. This current structure leaves their work performance unmonitored through the work order system because the majority of work orders are assigned to regular SSTs. A revision of the work order system to allow the district to monitor work performance would make lead SSTs more accountable.

We recommend that the district revise its work order system to more validly measure timeliness of technical support and establish a method within that system to measure the performance of individual system support technicians and lead system support technicians.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND NETWORK COMMUNICATION

Best Practice 5: Using

The district maintains a dependable, standards-based infrastructure employing strategies that cost-effectively maximize network and Internet access and performance.

A district's success in meeting the demands for information depends largely on the ability of its infrastructure to receive and transmit data for effective communication and resource sharing. Thus, districts should have a district wide infrastructure that provides communication, data transmission, resource sharing and Internet capabilities in a cost-effective manner. The district's network should be fully operational and consistently available to users. To help ensure network dependability, the district should protect its network from viruses and have speed and access standards for district network resources. Network access and dependability is crucial for meeting the information needs of students, teachers, administrators and non-instructional personnel.

The Collier County School District has developed written speed and access standards for the district's network resources. All schools have at least one T1 connection to the district hub, providing 1Mbps access to the district WAN and the Internet. The LAN data speed standard adopted for the district is Gigabit Ethernet. The district has upgraded 12 schools to this standard and has scheduled the remainder of the upgrades over the course of 2003.

The district has virus protection software and procedures for file servers, email servers and personal computers. File server and computer directories are scanned and protected with antivirus software. All email coming from or going to the Internet is opened and attachments are scanned for potential viruses. Procedures guard against email attacks that can overwhelm the processing capacity of the email server to the point of failure. Because the district uses the enterprise version of the antivirus software, all maintenance and upgrades are done from one central location, therefore, end-users are not responsible for updating and upgrading their computers' antivirus software.

The district has a standard network operating system for all its servers. Benefits include a single source for training and support of server and network technologies, consistent user identification and directory services across the district and ease of user identification management across enterprise wide systems including business and student information applications, instructional software, email and fileserver login.

Interviews with district staff indicate that the district has taken all possible measures to provide an uninterrupted network service to its users. Most network outages occur due to the problems with the district's network bandwidth provider. Some end-users also stated that from time to time they experience network outages because the central office is located in an area where heavy lightning occurs.

Although the district is using this best practice, there is one area in which it could improve. The district has had network outages from time to time but does not track network outages through the work order system. Recording network outages, reasons, durations and solutions in the work order system will enable the district to have more accurate long-term data regarding network outages and help technicians identify equipment or locations that are failing more than others.

We recommend that the district record its network outages through the work order system.

Best Practice 6: Using

The district uses technology to improve communication.

Technology has revolutionized communications, providing tools to disseminate large amounts of information to a wide audience. Email, websites and teleconferencing are examples of technologies that enhance communication within and beyond school boundaries. Whenever possible, districts should use web technologies, such as Internet and intranet sites and email to improve and enhance communications. Using email can expedite communication between and among colleagues without having to wait for a meeting to discuss important issues, saving time and travel. Posting information on websites, such as policies, announcements and calendars, improves access to important information district wide and decreases the expense associated with sending hardcopy updates. Voice, email and website technologies can facilitate communication with parents by providing information regarding the expectation, progress and well-being of their children, as well as providing general information about specific programs and course offerings.

The Collier County School District uses web technologies to host information on the Internet and on the district intranet to facilitate communications between groups such as schools, districts, the state, parents and the community. In addition to its normal use, the district uses its website to post policies and plans such as the district policy, board meeting agendas and minutes, member contact information, the district educational improvement plan and school improvement plans.

The district frequently uses email technologies to enhance communications between schools, the district and the state. In addition to email, the district has videoconferencing capabilities that eliminate costly meetings between the district and schools located throughout the district. However, due to the network bandwidth limitations the district is not using this technology to its full extent.

The district is either using or planning to use the following Internet-based tools and programs to improve communication:

- a web based data warehousing system that allows principals and teachers to access its functionality through the intranet;
- an intranet work order system used for communicating and tracking end-user support problems;
- an instructional reading program accessible by students from their homes through the Internet; and
- a network tool that will allow the district staff to securely access their files from anywhere on the Internet.

Best Practice 7: Using

The district has written policies that apply safe, ethical and appropriate use practices that comply with legal and professional standards.

While technological innovations have provided districts with numerous opportunities to improve communication and increase efficiency and productivity, it can be inappropriately used causing potential harm to students and exposing districts to lawsuits. Thus, districts must develop effective strategies and comprehensive guidelines for the appropriate use of technology. Safe use of online resources is important to everyone. The federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requires districts using E-rate funds to protect students from harmful online content. Because the infringement of copyright has legal ramifications, districts must provide guidelines for employees and others to comply with copyright laws.

The Collier County School District has written policies that apply safe, ethical and appropriate use practices that comply with legal and professional standards. The school board approved the "electronic communications use policy" (ECUP) in November 1999. This policy defines standards for safe, ethical and appropriate use of technology for students and employees of the district. The district provided schools with the ECUP to communicate appropriate uses of technology including the districts' computers, Internet, intranet, email software and technology-based systems. Some schools put this information into their student handbooks. Others requested that students and parents sign that they have read the handbook. In 2002, the district reviewed the process and decided to make the signing of the handbook a standard policy; however this decision has not been completely implemented yet.

The district implemented a policy titled "copyright protection" in August 1984 regarding use of digital materials such as software. Media specialists and BTCs are responsible for providing and educating users regarding ECUP and copyright protection policy. In addition, they work with the Internet analyst on Internet filtering issues.

The district has installed hardware that filters all incoming Internet traffic. The hardware denies searches to pre-selected words within Internet search engines, halts access to inappropriate newsgroups and blocks access to specific communication ports that are frequently used for non-academic purposes.

The MIS department uses a special network appliance to ensure that instruction related Internet traffic takes priority on the district's network lines. Since the speed of the Internet is a very crucial part of effective technology usage in schools and extra Internet bandwidth is costly, analyzing and utilizing the existing bandwidth to its fullest capability for instructional purposes is a good practice.

The MIS department is planning to implement an application, which is part of their network operating system that will give list all installed software inventory of all the computers in the district. As a result, the MIS department can identify and remove any unauthorized or illegal software from user computers.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

Best Practice 8: Using

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.

Districts are becoming increasingly dependent on information systems to manage their operations. These systems are typically used to track student information and financial management. For example, the Florida Department of Education requires student data to be submitted electronically. Because student data is used for assessment and funding, it is important that controls are in place for the district to secure access and to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the data. Districts should have processes in place that ensure they are following typical electronic data processing practices and have controls to promote the proper functioning of all information systems.

The Collier County School District's MIS department has written procedures and manuals such as a standard operation procedures manual, a disaster recovery plan and written network size and speed standards.

The MIS department data and services are audited annually by the Florida Auditor General. In 2002, the auditors recommended that the MIS department increase the daily backup cycle to thirty days. In response, the MIS department has implemented a five-week daily backup cycle. The report noted no other findings of material weakness.

Due to its size, the district has opted to assign functions that require high security clearance, like software library maintenance and granting end user access, to the same staff member. In order to ensure that appropriate controls and audits are in place, the district developed a procedure whereby the security officer must obtain signatures from the systems analyst, MIS coordinator or MIS director prior to migrating the software into production libraries.

The district has card-accessed entry to their administration building. Card access is also required to enter the computer room. The district has a firewall that protects its network and servers. The district uses a network operating system that requires each individual to enter his or her username and password to access the district network. Having a standard network operating system helps the district in the auditing and security of its systems.

The MIS department has a standard operating procedure pertaining to the release of confidential and sensitive data. A review of the procedure and interviews with staff indicate that the district has controls in place regarding access and distribution of confidential and sensitive data.

The MIS department maintains a written list of all independent databases in the district, including:

- *Home education database:* Used and monitored by student services. Data is not imported into district's central database and is backed up by the MIS department.
- *Edulog system:* Used by the transportation department. The MIS department extracts data from its central database daily and updates the Edulog data everyday. If the Edulog data becomes corrupt for any reason, the MIS department can refresh the entire database from its central computer system.
- *Manatee Accounting System:* Used by schools. Data is audited annually by an external audit firm.
- *PCS Food Service System:* Used by the food services department. The MIS department posts only free/reduced lunch status and household information into the district's centralized database.
- *Excelsior Grade Book:* Used by the schools. Data is refreshed daily from the district's central database by the MIS department. No attendance data is captured from this software. Only the

student's grading period grade is posted into the district's student database. Posted grades are reviewed by district staff prior to printing on the students' report cards.

- *Follet Library System*: Used by school libraries. Data is imported into Follet from the student database by the MIS department. No data from Follet system is posted into the district's central database.
- *Data warehouse system*: Used by schools. Data is extracted from the district's central database and imported into the data warehouse by the MIS department.

The district has executed appropriate agreements with the providers and appropriate control procedures have been established. The district's largest outside transactions take place with the bank that processes its payroll. The district has appropriate agreements in place with this vendor.

Although the district is using this best practice, there is one area in which it could improve. The district's main computer room has a water-based sprinkler system. If an event accidentally triggers the sprinkler system in the building, the district's vital hardware equipment and data that has not been backed up may incur heavy damage or permanent loss. To replace equipment or repair the damage will cost the district a considerable amount of time and money.

We recommend that the district make provisions to protect the equipment in its computer room from possible water damage from its sprinkler system.

Best Practice 9: Using

The information needs of administrative and instructional personnel are met by applying appropriate project management techniques to define, schedule, track and evaluate the implementation of requested IT products and services.

Because districts depend heavily on data from information systems to make informed decisions, this data must be accessible when needed and presented in useful report formats. To ensure the information needs of teachers and administrators are being met, districts should use common project management techniques to schedule, prioritize and provide users with a projected timeline when developing reports and applications. Districts should have procedures in place to gauge user satisfaction with information systems and services. Districts then should analyze alternatives to identify the most cost-effective method of responding to these needs.

The Collier County School District follows proper project management methodology. The project plan document contains project description, project scope, participating vendors, staff roles and responsibilities, major milestones, project schedule and current status and issues. The district has written procedures to test and implement changes to district business and student applications. Requests for modifications are submitted to the MIS department by the user. Once the MIS department has completed the request, the user is required to sign the service request form as an indication of his or her approval as to whether the work was completed as requested. On a bimonthly basis, the district holds project review meetings, which are facilitated by the associate superintendent of operational services. The MIS director, instructional technology director, coordinator of enterprise systems and technology analyst attend this meeting. This team reviews and discusses the status of each open project. The goal of the meeting is to ensure the projects are completed on time, schedules and priorities are adjusted as required and pending issues are resolved in a timely manner.

The MIS department provides a list of reports for both student and business systems. In addition to these reports, the MIS department programmers and system analysts work with users to customize additional reports to meet their needs. Interviews with district staff indicated that the MIS department responds to the users' data and reporting-related requests in a timely manner.

The district has procedures to gauge user satisfaction, including surveying the user community, meeting with district and school-based administrative staff, participating in committees and collecting and analyzing statistics from its work order system. The MIS department has provided documentation on three different surveys: the MIS training survey, the help desk user satisfaction survey and the MIS Intranet survey. MIS uses these resources to determine the level of user satisfaction, identify areas of weakness and improve the level of service. Available survey results and user interviews indicated that users are generally satisfied with the information they receive from the MIS department.

Although the district is using this best practice, there is one area in which it could improve how it identifies alternative methods of delivering IT products and services. If the district were to incorporate a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis in the process, it would ensure that the alternatives met the district's financial constraints.

The following are some of the alternative methods that have been implemented or are scheduled to be piloted by the district; a written cost/benefit analysis was not completed for any of these initiatives with the exception of the printer comparison project.

- *Imaging*: The district is using imaging on student information report distribution. Instead of printing and sending physical copies of reports to each school, schools can access these reports on the computer screen with the help of imaging.
- *Printer Comparison*: The district has done a printer comparison to determine what model and type of printer would be most appropriate in terms of print quality, network connectivity and per sheet cost.
- *Remote file access*: The district will be piloting a new network service that allows users to securely access their files from anywhere on the Internet.
- *Thin Client*: The thin client is a computing device connected to powerful servers where applications and data are stored and processed. The cost of hardware and software for a thin client computer is less than a personal computer. The thin client technology will also reduce software licensing and network administration costs.

The district will be able to make more informed decisions on identifying cost-effective ways to deliver technology products and services by incorporating comprehensive cost/benefit analyses in the process.

We recommend that the district use a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis on all technology-related projects.

6 Personnel Systems and Benefits

Summary

The Collier County School District is using 6 of the 11 personnel systems and benefits best practices. The district recruits and hires sufficient personnel to fill vacant positions and provides staff development. Its evaluation system rewards excellent performance and removes employees of concern. The district's employee benefits program is particularly notable. The district has identified illness trends and implemented wellness programs to address the illnesses prior to expensive medical treatments. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its personnel systems and benefits program, the district should implement recruiting and retention strategies; evaluate the working environment and develop plans to address major areas of employee dissatisfaction; monitor employee absenteeism and create strategies to reduce absenteeism among workers; increase the quality of workers' compensation claims data, purchase aggregate workers' compensation stop-loss coverage, and analyze and report claims information and trends to the superintendent and the board on a regular basis; and institute performance measures for the human resource department.



As seen in Exhibit 6-1, the district has an opportunity to reduce personnel costs. Determining whether to take advantage of this opportunity is a district decision and should be based on many factors including district needs, public input and school board priorities. If the district implements this recommendation, it would be able to redirect the funds to other priorities, such as putting more money into the classroom or addressing deficiencies identified in this report.

Exhibit 6-1

Our Review Identified Changes in the Administration of Workers' Compensation Claims as One Way the District Could Reduce Cost and Protect District Assets

Best Practice Number	Fiscal Impact					Total
	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Year 2006-07	Year 2007-08	
8 Reestablish a third party administrator for the workers' compensation plan.	\$149,985	\$216,645	\$243,309	\$269,973	\$296,637	\$1,176,549

Background

The Collier County School District employed 4,935 full-time persons during school year 2001-02, of whom approximately 52% were instructional personnel. (See Exhibit 6-2).

The district’s human resource department is primarily responsible for all recruiting and hiring activities, collective bargaining, benefits and compensation plans, risk management and workers’ compensation, background checks and misconduct investigations, certification, personnel records, orientation and evaluation procedures. The human resource department has 30 full-time positions assigned to human resource functions. The two full-time administrative center receptionists also report to the human resource department (See Exhibit 6-3). Other aspects of personnel are managed through other departments as noted below.

- The district’s instructional staff development programs are the primary responsibility of the office of accountability and staff and school renewal which has four full-time positions dedicated to coordinating and providing instructional in-service programs. (See Exhibit 6-4). Non-instructional staff development programs are the responsibility of the individual department heads.
- Staff allocations are completed through the office of FTE, surveys and staff allocations, which has one full-time administrative position dedicated to staff allocations.
- The English for speakers of other languages and foreign languages department has responsibility for diversity issues.

The district does not have a separate human resource budget.

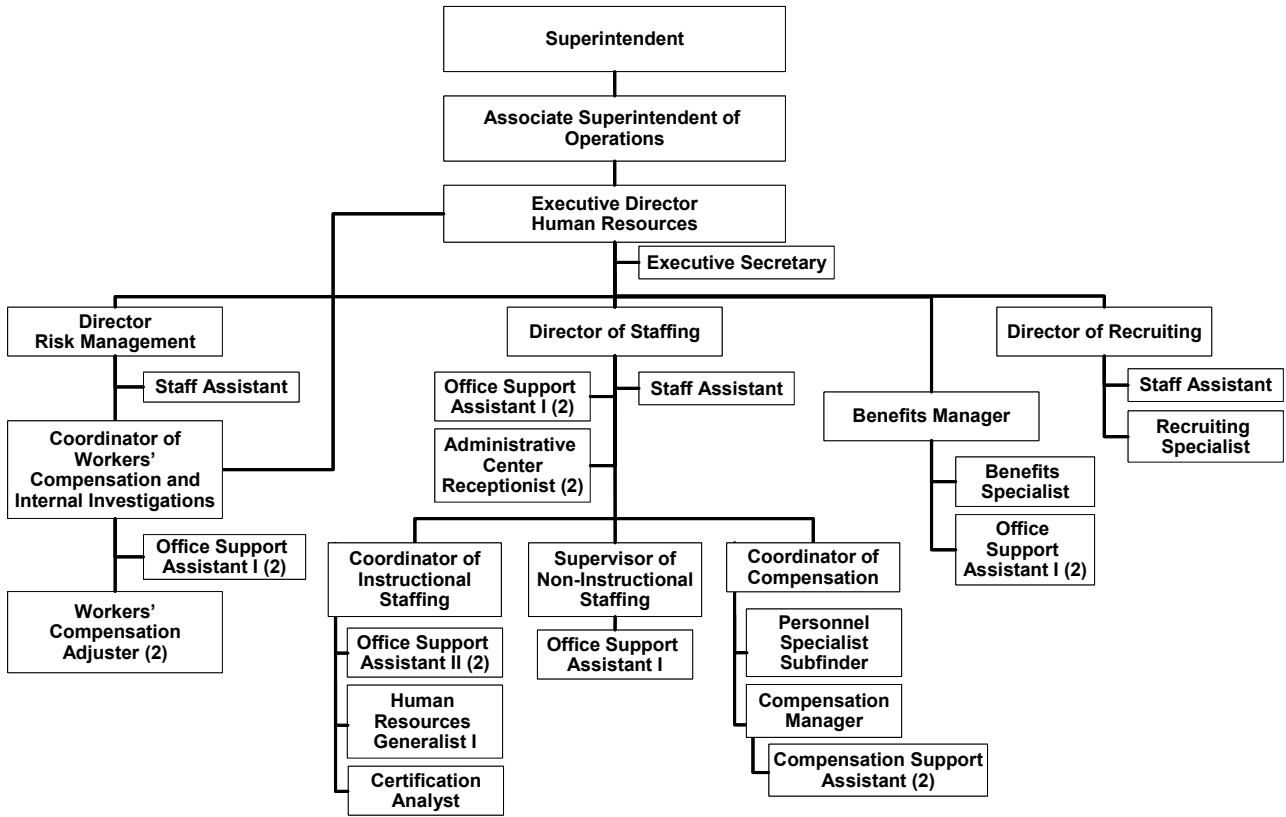
The Collier County Education Association represents the district’s teachers in collective bargaining; approximately 77% of eligible instructional personnel are members. The Collier County Association of Educational Office and Classroom Assistant Personnel represents secretarial, clerical and classroom assistant personnel in collective bargaining; approximately 43% of eligible clerical and classroom assistants are members. And the Collier Support Personnel-National Education Association represents most non-managerial transportation, custodial and maintenance employees; approximately 41% of eligible transportation, custodial and maintenance employees are members.

**Exhibit 6-2
During 2001-02, Collier County School District Employed 4,935 Persons**

Categories of Employees		Numbers of Employees
Administrative Employees	District Level	51
	School Level	147
	Total Administrative	198
Instructional Employees	Elementary	989
	Secondary	862
	Exceptional Student	353
	Other Teachers	30
	Other Instructional Staff	328
	Total Instructional	2,562
Non-Instructional Employees	Professional	151
	Non-Professional	2,024
	Total Non-Instructional	2,175
Total Employees		4,935

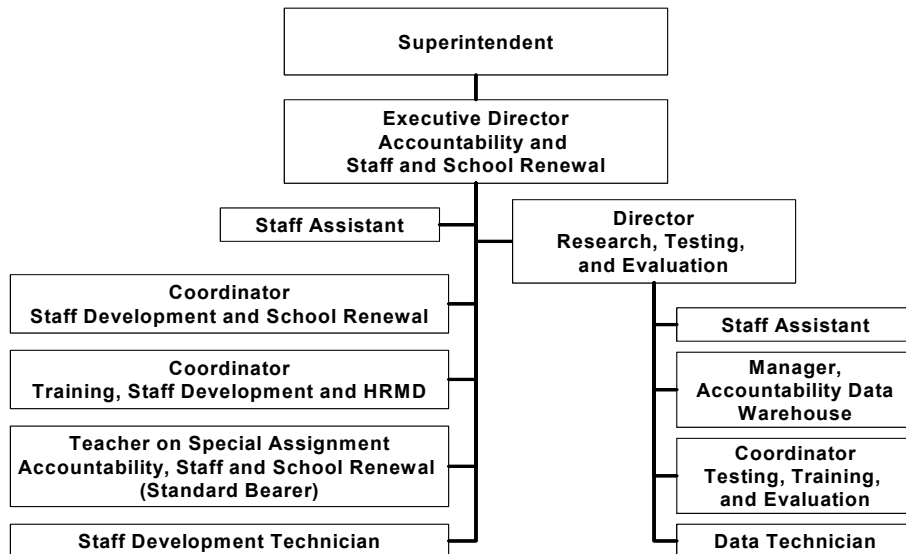
Source: Florida Department of Education, Statistical Brief: Staff in Florida’s Public Schools Fall 2002, January 2003.

Exhibit 6-3
Human resource department Organizational Chart



Source: Collier County School District, Department of Human Resources, Revised May 2003.

Exhibit 6-4
Office of Accountability and Staff and School Renewal



Source: Interviews with Office of Accountability and Staff and School Renewal, May 2003.

Activities of particular interest

The district has undertaken a number of initiatives in its risk management and employee benefit functions to protect the district against catastrophic loss and contain costs in an environment of escalating health care costs and risk.

The district has an employee benefits committee that includes members from the three employee unions and administrative staff. This helps build acceptance among the collective bargaining units when they understand the costs involved in securing employee benefits. In addition, this committee monitors the district's benefit plan to ensure that the district is providing adequate protection to its employees at a reasonable cost. The district also conducts employee focus groups to provide employees with an opportunity to express what they like or dislike about the current plan and what enhancements they would like to see. It provides the benefits committee with specific plan design information to include in the plan that will best address employees' major needs and concerns.

In an attempt to reduce the cost of its self-insured health insurance plan, the district initiated a number of programs in 2002-03. Since this is the first year these plans have been in operation, a cost-savings analysis has not been completed. However, the district anticipates it will bring its health costs down by 30%. Some of the implemented programs include:

- Smart choice, a disease management program, was initiated to identify the most frequently reported diagnoses among its employee population. The smart choice program works with the employee to try to manage the disease before high cost medical intervention is required. In response to the diagnoses study, the district included an employee assistance program to deal with stress-related illness, a prevalent diagnosis in the district.
- The district implemented treatment pathways for specific conditions. For example, the following is a specified treatment pathway for back injuries:
 - conservative self-care for one week;
 - physical therapy limited to nine treatments for three weeks and then must be reevaluated for continued treatment or testing;
 - an MRI is considered after five weeks;
 - limit epidural pain medication to three treatments.
- The district instituted a three-tiered pharmacy plan that requires the usage of generic medications, when available, to bring down the escalating cost of pharmaceutical drugs. The district estimates that it will save \$500,000 annually through this program simply by requiring employees to use generic drugs when available.
- The district is a member of the Collier County health consortium. The consortium is composed of five Collier County employers (Collier County school district, Collier County government, Naples Community Hospital, Collier County Sheriff's Office and the City of Naples) that have pooled their buying power in an attempt to control the escalating cost of providing health insurance coverage to their employees and their dependents. The consortium was able to negotiate an eight percent reduction in the local network provider, Community Health Partners (CHP), fee schedule. By pooling their "buying power", the consortium has been able to reduce its costs.

The district operates a benefits fair for its employees. At that time, the district provides employees with the opportunity to participate in total cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure screenings.

Risk management has become a critical area of concern given the increased hostility around the world and potential for a terrorist attack. Homeland security officials have warned that soft targets, such as schools, are particularly at risk. To address this enhanced risk the director of risk management and the safety manager worked with Collier County officials to prepare a terrorism preparedness plan. This cooperative effort between district and county officials ensure that all parties understand their individual responsibilities as they relate to the entire process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Personnel Systems and Benefits Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Human Resource Management	1. The district efficiently and effectively recruits and hires qualified instructional and non-instructional personnel.	Yes	6-6
	2. To the extent possible given factors outside the district's control, the district works to maintain a reasonably stable work force and a satisfying work environment by addressing factors that contribute to increased turnover or low employee morale.	No	6-9
	3. The district provides a comprehensive staff development program to improve student achievement and to achieve and maintain high levels of productivity and employee performance among non-instructional, instructional and administrative employees.	Yes	6-13
	4. The district's system for formally evaluating employees improves and rewards excellent performance and productivity and identifies and addresses performance that does not meet the district's expectations for the employee.	Yes	6-15
	5. 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.	Yes	6-16
	6. The district has efficient and cost-effective systems for managing absenteeism and the use of substitute teachers and other substitute personnel.	No	6-17
	7. The district maintains personnel records in an efficient and readily accessible manner.	No	6-21
	8. The district uses cost-containment practices for its workers' compensation program.	No	6-23
	9. The district uses cost-containment practices for its employee benefits programs, including health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, disability insurance and retirement.	Yes	6-33
	10. The district's human resource program is managed effectively and efficiently.	No	6-34
	11. For classes of employees that are unionized, the district maintains an effective collective bargaining process.	Yes	6-36

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Best Practice 1: Using

The district efficiently and effectively recruits and hires instructional and non-instructional personnel, but could improve its processes to increase the number of critical need area and minority applicants and to ensure that all personnel are qualified for the jobs they hold.

Well-run school districts are lean administratively and maximize funds available to support their primary mission: educating students. This requires districts to make the most effective use of funds allocated for administrative services, such as personnel. Thus, school districts should maintain efficient and effective processes for recruiting potential employees, reviewing applications for employment and hiring new employees. These processes should not be unreasonably burdensome to the applicant or to the principals and department heads that must review applications and make hiring recommendations. School districts should maintain clearly defined position descriptions for all positions within the district and establish recruiting practices that generate a sufficient number of qualified applicants to fill vacant positions in a timely manner. In those areas in which the district has historically experienced a shortage of qualified applicants, the district should have developed and implemented both short and long term strategies to remedy these shortages, including making comparisons of entry level salaries and other key factors related to recruitment.

The Collier County School District recruits sufficient applicants to fill open positions. The district has conducted salary comparisons and evaluates the number of vacancies and new hires to ensure they are recruiting an adequate number of applicants to fill most open positions. Collier County School District teacher salaries compare favorably with peer districts. (See Exhibit 6-5.) For non-instructional positions, the district has performed ongoing studies and recommended salary adjustments to remain competitive.

Exhibit 6-5

Collier Teacher Salaries Compare Favorably With Peer Districts (Teacher Salary Ranked by Experience Step, Bachelor’s Degree for 2001-02)

District	First	Fifth	Tenth	Fifteenth	Maximum	Average
Collier	\$ 30,015	\$ 34,334	\$ 39,731	\$ 46,533	\$ 50,897	\$ 37,973
Lake	\$ 28,550	\$ 29,080	\$ 30,617	\$ 34,810	\$ 44,695	\$ 32,925
Lee	\$ 30,015	\$ 34,935	\$ 41,085	\$ 48,045	\$ 49,545	\$ 36,440
Manatee	\$ 27,758	\$ 29,780	\$ 35,564	\$ 41,007	\$ 46,217	\$ 34,248
Osceola	\$ 28,450	\$ 28,850	\$ 31,500	\$ 35,950	\$ 47,000	\$ 32,423
Pasco	\$ 29,100	\$ 29,700	\$ 30,900	\$ 46,300	\$ 46,300	\$ 33,079

Source: FSLRS Data files 2001-02 and Florida DOE Average Teacher Salaries by Degree Level, 2001-02.

The district has moved to increase efficiency in the application and recruiting process by recently implementing an online application system that allows applicants for instructional and administrative positions to apply online. When the system is fully operational, principals and other administrators will be able to review applications from their desktops, eliminating the need to have applicant files sent from the main administration building, and the need for administrators to travel to the main administration building to review applicant files.

In addition, the district maintains a vacancy list that is available both on the internet and in the main administration building and a vacancy hotline that potential applicants can call to receive information about openings. The district uses a variety of avenues to recruit bus drivers, a position typically hard to fill. Aside from newspaper advertisements for bus drivers the district also uses school signs, signs at

administrative buildings, signs on buses and other district vehicles, *The School Page* supplement to the *Naples Daily News*, flyers to parents and school lunch menus to advertise the need for bus drivers.

The Collier County School District should implement more strategies to attract a larger number of critical need area recruits. Although Collier County School District has implemented some aggressive and inventive ways to reach potential bus driver candidates, the district has not implemented enough programs to increase the number of applicants in critical need teaching areas or minority applicants. The district has drafted but has not implemented a large number of recruitment and retention strategies. The *Teacher Recruitment/Retention Plan, 2002-03* identified barriers to recruiting, including candidates that do not want to relocate to the Naples area and salaries that are not competitive with other districts/states (although the district is competitive with peer districts it is not competitive with larger urban districts such as Miami-Dade).

Incentives offered by other districts/states include relocation bonuses; advance pay (\$2,400) to assist with moving expenses; stipends paid to ESOL and ESE teachers; bank loans to assist with moving expenses; paying meal and hotel expenses for candidates participating in the local recruitment fair; and contracts offered during the junior year of college.

Other strategies found in *2001-02 New Initiatives* (for recruiting) include offering \$1,200 signing bonuses (limited to 10 bonuses) to minority teachers in non-critical need subject areas, providing financial assistance to teachers pursuing advanced degrees, changing the health insurance benefits policy to reduce the 120-day waiting period for benefits and modification of district imposed certification requirements for critical need areas.¹ Costs for each of these initiatives, except the reduction of the benefits waiting period, were included in the report. Of these initiatives, the bonuses were approved and paid during the 2001-02 school year. The bonuses were also approved, but not funded, for the 2002-03 school year. Although loans were not approved by the board, the district was able to contact local merchants and rental agencies and secure discounts for new teachers to reduce moving expenses.

The “grow our own” program is another recruitment and retention tool the human resource department is developing. The program is designed to encourage current employees and students to pursue teaching careers. One of the strategies is to pay the costs for obtaining a bachelor’s degree for a small number of paraprofessionals in exchange for five years of teaching service. This program received approval, but not the requested funding. However, the district has been able to arrange a deferred tuition program that allows instructional assistants to complete additional educational requirements.² This program should be reviewed for possible expansion in order to meet some of the goals of the “grow our own” program.

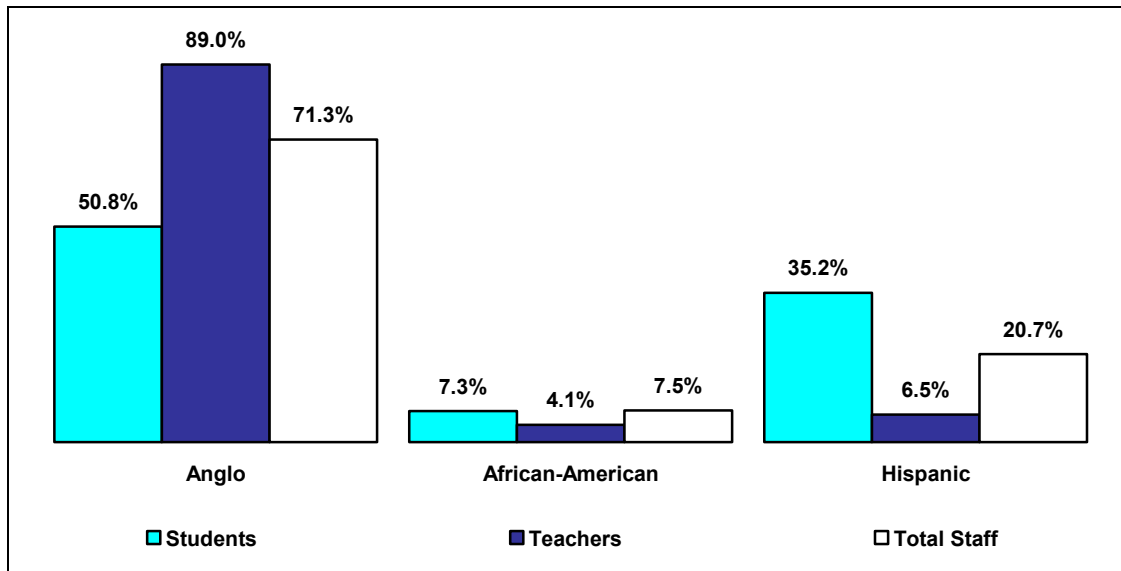
We recommend that the district implement low-cost recruiting strategies for critical need areas and identify alternative funding sources for medium to high cost critical need area recruitment strategies. Cost/benefit analyses should be presented to the board in addition to funding requests. The results of approved strategies, including cost analyses, should be presented to the board at least annually.

The Collier County School District has implemented strategies to increase minority teachers in the district. The district is experiencing a large disparity between the percentage of minority staff members and the percentage of minority students. A diverse teaching staff is generally accepted as good for students. Minority teachers serve as cultural translators and role models for minority students and provide all students with contact to different cultures and philosophies. There are 38.2% more white teachers than white students and 28.7% fewer Hispanic teachers than Hispanic students. (See Exhibit 6-6.) In addition, the majority of the student population is male (51.6%) and the staff population (both teachers and total staff) is overwhelmingly female (75%).

¹ Critical need subject areas received signing bonuses when this document was written.

² See Best Practice 3 on staff development for details of this program.

Exhibit 6-6
The Percent of Hispanic Teachers is lower Than the Percent of Hispanic Students



Source: Collier County School District, March 2003.

The district created a district diversity plan for 2002-03.³ The plan includes goals related to diversity training for staff members and character education and diversity awareness programs for students. The district is implementing many of these objectives, including internet and website marketing, participating in the great Florida teach-in, the local teacher recruitment fair and the teacher transfer fair. These strategies represent low or no cost strategies for the district.

We recommend the district investigate and identify additional strategies for recruiting and retaining minority teachers. The district should contact other Florida school districts with successful minority recruiting problems to discuss which strategies work. Cost/benefit analyses should be presented to the board in addition to funding requests. The results of approved strategies, including cost analyses, should be presented to the board at least annually.

The district's hiring process does not ensure that all new hires are fingerprinted prior to reporting to work. The district should recruit and retain qualified employees and assure that employees are not dangerous to students. It is essential that the district know that new employees are safe prior to allowing them to have contact with students. The district's hiring procedure requires that hiring supervisors contact two references prior to recommending personnel for employment, assuring that at least a preliminary background check has been completed prior to recommendation for hire. However, the district's procedure for fingerprinting does not ensure that all new hires have been completely investigated and cleared prior to reporting to work.

All applications include a criminal record questionnaire that must be completed and signed. The questionnaire informs applicants that fingerprints will be run through local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and that all sealed and expunged records will be included in this check. If the form is not completed and signed, the application will not be processed. Fingerprinting occurs after applicants

³ The former Director of Diversity and Recruiting was promoted to executive assistant to the superintendent in 2002. The district decided to move diversity functions to the ESOL and Foreign Languages Department, which is part of the instructional team. The remaining position focuses on recruiting' a decision that was based, in part, on the perceived need for emphasis on all instructional and recruiting needs of the district.

have been selected, usually during the orientation process. The results from fingerprint checks, guaranteed in 72 hours, are usually returned within 24 hours.

The fingerprinting procedure requires that all employees/new hires be fingerprinted prior to receiving their first paycheck, but not prior to reporting to work. Since employees are paid bi-weekly, this procedure allows new hires to work for up to two weeks prior to being fingerprinted. During the summer of 2002, the number of new hires made fingerprinting during orientation difficult and often subsequent appointments were necessary. New online screening contributed to this problem since the system was new and staff had not had the opportunity to become completely familiar with the new system. During these peak hiring periods, fingerprinting may not be timely, thereby creating the possibility that employees with unacceptable criminal records could come into contact with students.

We recommend that the district modify procedures and require that new hires complete fingerprinting be cleared by investigations as a condition of reporting to work.

Job descriptions are not always updated to reflect changes in duties and sometimes are not completed for new positions until after the position has been advertised and filled. Another way the district could improve its hiring process is by requiring that job descriptions are created or updated prior to positions being posted and filled. Job descriptions allow both the employee and the employer to understand the requirements of the position enhance hiring. The process of updating job requirements for positions allows a reevaluation of the level of education, knowledge, experience and skills necessary to perform the functions as well as defining the functions themselves. Knowing the requirements makes it easier to advertise the position and to determine which applicants meet these qualifications.

The district does not have a formal procedure to ensure that job descriptions are updated, maintained and completed prior to the posting of a new position and or a schedule for regularly updating job descriptions. Our review that some job descriptions were outdated and others had not been developed. For example, job descriptions for the director of recruiting and recruiting specialist positions were not available.

The district has modified the personnel action form to ask if the job description for the position has been reviewed. While this step will help ensure that new positions are not filled without job descriptions, it does not address the changes in duties that normally occur over the course of time. The new process also does not give the district an adequate method to address global changes that may be needed, such as the addition of physical requirements to all job descriptions for Americans with Disabilities Act purposes.

We recommend the district create a schedule for reviewing job descriptions to capture job duty changes. Each job description should be reviewed at least once every three years, even if there is no turnover in the position, to ensure that the description remains current.

Best Practice 2: Not Using

The district does not maintain a reasonably stable workforce, does not have a systematic and planned approach to reduce turnover, and does not have a program to gauge employee morale.

A stable workforce reduces costs, particularly those associated with recruiting and training of new employees minimizes the disruption of essential district services and allows management to focus on improving the quality of services provided. Each school district should be able to demonstrate that it has created a working environment for its employees that enhances worker satisfaction and minimizes employee turnover due to factors within the control of the district. A district can effectively manage employee turnover in a number of ways. For instance, it should maintain data on turnover rates for major classes of employees and on approaching retirements and should be taking steps to remedy factors that are adversely affecting this working environment. The district also should conduct exit interviews with

Personal Systems and Benefits

instructional personnel who separate from the district and provide the data from those interviews to the state Department of Education. In addition, the district should maintain clear and effective channels of communication with its employees.

The Collier County School District has completed salary studies to ensure internal equity, developed performance pay programs for building level administrators and teachers, and has several methods of communicating to employees. Salary, rewards and communication are key factors of employee satisfaction. Equitable compensation is an important element to ensure employee retention.

The district has created and implemented performance pay programs for teachers and administrators. Teacher pay has been linked to performance and student achievement through the negotiated assessment process. The district and the union negotiate salary on an annual basis but have not negotiated pay raises linked directly to individual performance. Performance pay plans exist for both teachers and principals; however, these are incentive plans only. The performance pay plan for teachers is voluntary and teachers who wish to participate must apply according to a memorandum of understanding negotiated between the teachers' union and the school board. The amount available for performance pay is not subject to negotiation but is determined by statute.⁴ According to the performance pay plans, receipt of performance pay is dependent upon student achievement. (See Exhibit 6-7). The district also offers supplements or additional pay to teachers working in remote areas and with advanced degrees. The performance pay plan for building level administrators that is mandatory and based on student achievement for the assigned campus.

⁴ §230.23 (5) (c). *F.S.*

**Exhibit 6-7
The District Requires Specific Learning Gains for Teachers to Receive Incentive Pay**

Grade Level/ Assignment	Method for Evaluating Gains	Student Gains Requirements to be Eligible for Performance Pay
Grades 3-10	FCAT	75% of assigned students demonstrate learning gains 90% of lower quartile students demonstrate learning gains
Science and Social Studies Teachers Grades 6-10	FCAT Reading	75% of assigned students demonstrate learning gains 90% of lower quartile students demonstrate learning gains
Grades Pre-K through 2	Research based and approved pre/post assessment of learning gains in Literacy	75% of assigned students must demonstrate learning gains
Grades 11-12	Research based and approved pre/post assessment instrument relevant to subject taught	75% of assigned students must demonstrate learning gains
ESE/ESOL	Approved departmental pre/post instrument	75% of assigned students must demonstrate learning gains
Related Arts or Vocational Teachers, Guidance Counselors, Program Specialists, Media Specialists	Research based and approved pre/post assessment used above	90% of targeted students will demonstrate learning gains ¹

¹ 25 selected students in the lowest quartile in either reading/writing or math; students may not be chosen by more than one instructor.

Source: Memorandum of Agreement: Performance Pay; September 19, 2002.

The district commissioned a consulting firm to conduct a job analysis and salary study for positions included in the support personnel and instructional and office assistant bargaining units. The study also included confidential secretary and technical/specialist positions. The study recommended making salary adjustments for several of the positions. The district was prepared to make the adjustments to ensure equity, but the support personnel union decided to negotiate salary adjustments different from the study recommendations. Since the district salaries are competitive and the district has worked to maintain internal equity, identifying what other factors are causing separations becomes extremely important.

Despite the district’s efforts at pay equity and performance incentives, it is not using this best practice. The district has a high turnover rate, yet fails to evaluate the reasons for this problem. Further, the district does not regularly solicit feedback from its employees to determine job satisfaction.

Collier County School District does not routinely analyze employee turnover data and develop strategies to reduce turnover. The human resources department does not track traditional turnover statistics, such as turnover rates by position, years of experience and location. However, Florida Department of Education summary reports on teacher separations do provide turnover rates, reasons for separation and future employment plans for all districts in Florida. The district’s teacher turnover rate for 2001-02 was 8.6%.

**Exhibit 6-8
Collier County School District Had a Teacher Turnover Rate of 8.6 Percent for 2001-02**

District	2001-02	Salary	Reason for Separation			Future Employment Plans			
			Family/ Personal	Retired	Benefits	Other Teaching	Other Ed.	Outside Ed.	None or Unknown
Collier	8.6%	3.0%	50.0%	14.3%	1.2%	13.5%	2.3%	4.1%	80.1%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

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The district completes exit interview forms for each separating instructional employee, tracks the results and fulfills Department of Education reporting requirements. The district identified health benefits, teachers feeling overwhelmed with paperwork, and increased retirements as major reasons for separations. In contrast, Department of Education data indicates family/personal reasons are high, while salary and benefits were not identified as significant problems. The district also has a low incidence of retirements. Only 1.2% of teachers separating cited inadequate benefits as the reason. It is also notable that 80% of the teachers did not note any future employment plans. This could indicate that people are dissatisfied and willing to quit without having somewhere else to go, which is a serious morale problem, or this may simply indicate that departing teachers were unwilling to share future employment plans with the district.

The district does not evaluate the turnover data provided to the Department of Education to determine trends, nor does the district summarize or analyze the separation data tracked on classes of employees other than instructional staff. More in-depth analysis helps identify additional issues that may be driving instructional staff to leave. Analysis of administrative and non-instructional separation information would help identify the retention barriers in those populations. Action Plan 6-1 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-1

We recommend that the district collect, analyze and report turnover data for all employee groups and use the results to identify and address trends and issues related to turnover and employee morale.

Action Needed:	Step 1.	Review and strengthen the current exit interview process by ensuring that all employees complete exit interview forms, including all non-instructional and administrative employees.
	Step 2.	Review the exit interview form to ensure that reasons for leaving are varied enough to provide the district with meaningful feedback and determine which additional criteria the district wants to monitor, for example, location, length of employment and other similar criteria.
	Step 3.	Determine the critical turnover information that should be presented in the employee turnover report.
	Step 4.	Draft a report format with narrative analyses and present to the superintendent for approval. The report should allow both a short-term and historical look at key criteria.
	Step 5.	Review the reports semi-annually for teachers and administrators and quarterly for non-instructional personnel.
	Step 6.	Prepare annual turnover reports on all classes of personnel to identify turnover trends and present them to senior leadership and the board.
	Step 7.	Develop strategies to address the identified turnover trends.
	Step 8.	Determine costs associated with the strategies and compare to the benefits of reducing turnover, including the lowered turnover costs.
	Step 9.	Present the strategies and cost analyses to the superintendent and board for approval.
	Step 10.	Implement the approved strategies.
	Step 11.	Review the strategies and develop progress reports for presentation to the superintendent and the board.

Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources
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Time Frame	August 2004
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Best Practice 3: Using

The district provides a comprehensive staff development program to improve student achievement and maintain high levels of performance and productivity among instructional and administrative employees; however, more comprehensive training evaluations, spending guidelines, and additional focus on non-instructional employees are needed.

Training ensures that school district employees understand the scope of their responsibilities and performance expectations and helps them update skills and knowledge necessary to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. Thus, a school district should provide a comprehensive professional development program that includes orientation, mentoring and job-related training for both instructional and non-instructional employees. The district's training plans should be based on periodic training needs assessments. The training should be designed to improve student achievement and maintain high levels of productivity and performance among employees. The district should have a leadership training program that prepares future principals.

The Collier County School District has a decentralized approach to staff development. The food service, maintenance, and transportation departments each provide training activities for their employees. The office of accountability and staff and school renewal focuses on training activities for instructional and building level administrator personnel and centrally manages and coordinates district wide training for instructional and administrative personnel. The office of accountability and staff and school renewal also oversees the new teacher induction program, the training component of the human resource management development program and the completion of the human resource manual. The department coordinates the other instructional and administrative training activities and often relies on other departments, such as curriculum and instruction and human resources to provide trainers and content for many of the programs.

The master in-service plan in conjunction with course offerings detailed in the handy electronic registration online (HERO) system and district educational improvement plan goals constitute a district wide training program for instructional personnel.⁵ The district uses surveys and student achievement data to assess the need for training programs and keeps the programs focused on state requirements for instructional training programs that include subject content, teaching methods, technology, assessment and data analysis, classroom management and school safety. Individual training records are maintained through the office of accountability and staff and school renewal. The office ensures that training records are transferred from the online system to the district's official recordkeeping database.

The staff development office assists teachers in obtaining national certification and preparing for administrative positions. The district is also active in the national board of professional teaching standards program.⁶ The district advertises national board on its television station and through flyers and emails. The teachers' union president said the district is very supportive of the national board program and that almost any request made with regard to the program is granted. The district works collaboratively with the unions to help teachers attain this certification. The union and district provide facilities, and the district has purchased the equipment necessary to prepare national board submissions. The district pays a supplement to the teacher serving as the coordinator of national board certified teachers, and currently has 48 approved national board teachers and 60 national board candidates.

⁵ HERO is an internet based application where the district houses its catalog of professional development courses and the schedule for these courses. Employees access the system to register for courses.

⁶ National Board of Professional Teaching Standards is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization governed by a 63-member board of directors, the majority of whom are classroom teachers. The mission is to advance the quality of teaching and learning by: 1) maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, 2) providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards, and 3) advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

The district operates two programs to prepare administrators for assignment as principal of a school: the aspiring administrators program and the preparing new principals program (PNP). The aspiring administrators program is a one-year program designed to prepare instructional personnel to become assistant principals or deans. The PNP is a two-year program designed to prepare assistant principals and deans to become principals and successful completion in the program leads to a level II educational leadership certification. The level II certification is a requirement of the principal job description. Thirty-six of the 40 principals have completed PNP, two have applications in process, and one was a certified administrator from another state.

Collaboration among district departments for professional development can be seen in the programs developed for Title I instructional assistants and serves as an example of a district wide, non-instructional training initiative that is not confined to a single department such as transportation or food services.⁷ The office of accountability and staff and school renewal, the human resource department and the director of Title I have worked together to secure training opportunities and ease the financial burden on those instructional assistants affected by the increased educational requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act.⁸ The district has arranged for deferred billing of tuition with a local community college in addition to providing tuition reimbursement. There are also book loan programs, arrangements to hold classes in the Immokalee area, where the majority of affected instructional assistants work, and information on a grant program to help cover other costs of attaining the required education. The district currently has 90 paraprofessionals approved for the prepayment program and had 62 students enrolled with the local community college for the spring 2003 semester and had loaned out 123 textbooks.

Although the district is using this best practice there are areas where it could improve.

The Collier County School District's evaluations of training activities are not results-oriented. The district does not complete evaluations of major training initiatives that rely primarily on student achievement data and incorporate cost analysis, which are cornerstones of training evaluations as defined by the best financial management practices indicators. While the district does ask training participants to fill out forms at the end of training sessions, it does not conduct subsequent evaluations to determine whether the actual effectiveness or savings that result.

We recommend that the office of accountability and staff and school renewal evaluate major training initiatives using higher level methods than end of course surveys to determine their effectiveness and conduct cost analysis of training activities at least once every two years to ensure the district is receiving a positive return on investment.

The district does not have written policies, procedures or guidelines for how training funding is obtained or how it should be used. The district does not have written procedures or guidelines regarding the types of training courses or the frequency with which they can be requested. The costs of conference attendance, consultant trainers and training package are allocated to department budgets. No policy or procedure that specifically addresses the use of district funds for these types of activities exists, and the district relies on the regular budget process to control these costs. For example, both the food service and transportation departments have training programs for their employees that are funded out of their respective budgets. The food service department identified a need to increase the reading levels of food service workers so that they could qualify for promotion, and the director of food service identified an existing adult education program run through the district that would test workers reading ability and assist them in enrolling in classes to improve reading skills, at no charge to the

⁷ Title I is the nation's largest federal education program and serves remedial education programs to poor and disadvantaged children in nearly every school district in the country.

⁸ The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is the newly revised version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the central federal law in pre-collegiate education. The act requires that by the end 2005-06 school year all school paraprofessionals hired with Title I money must have completed at least two years of college, obtained an associate's degree or higher, or passed an evaluation to demonstrate knowledge and teaching ability.

employee. The transportation department provides driver training for the school buses and also has six certified CDL drivers who can administer CDL driver training and requires at least 40 hours of training for all new drivers. All transportation specific training activities are paid for out of the transportation department's budget.

We recommend that the district create written guidelines for training expenditures including the types of training courses that may be requested and how often they may be requested in addition to costs of conference travel, consultant trainers and pre-packaged training.

The district has not created mentoring programs for non-instructional employees similar to those for instructional employees. Unlike the instructional staff, the district does not have or require mentoring programs for new non-instructional personnel. According to the new teacher induction program handbook, the district's induction program is based on the educator accomplished practices which provides a support and information system for new teachers to foster self assessment and reflection; to improve instructional practice; to model professionalism; to participate in professional growth opportunities; and to become familiar with district and state initiatives. The handbook details the required training for the program and the roles and responsibilities of the new teacher, the peer teacher and the principal or designee. The district has an extensive list of peer teachers that have completed required clinical, or mentor, training hours. The district also makes use of national board certified teachers to provide mentoring and coaching to new teachers and to teachers pursuing national board certification. The preparing new principals program also has a peer team component that provides mentoring and coaching to participants.

Similar, formalized mentoring programs do not exist for non-instructional employees although some informal mentoring may be occurring among non-instructional personnel. The district has not explored the benefits or costs of supplying such a program for its non-instructional employees. Mentoring provides career support and direction to new employees and provides mentors with the opportunity to serve as a role model and share their knowledge of the job and the organization.

We recommend the district explore the costs and benefits of providing a mentoring program for non-instructional employees.

Best Practice 4: Using

The district's system for formally evaluating employees improves and rewards excellent performance and productivity and identifies and addresses performance that does not meet the district's expectations for the employee.

Performance appraisals are an essential tool to be used by a school district to improve the quality of services delivered. By evaluating its employees, a district can determine the extent to which each employee is meeting performance expectations and identify ways in which individual and organizational performance can be improved. Each school district should have a system for formally evaluating the performance of its instructional and non-instructional employees. The system should include components that provide for the improvement and growth of employee performance, that reward excellent performance and that identify those areas of performance that do not meet the district's expectations for the employee. The evaluation of district administrators should be made after feedback has been solicited and received from non-administrative personnel and from parents.

The Collier County School District's performance evaluation systems are documented and available to employees from a variety of sources. The district's web site, collective bargaining agreements and selected policies all detail the need for appraisals. The Collier teacher assessment system (CTAS) and HRMD detail the criteria by which instructional and administrative personnel, respectively, will be evaluated. CTAS requires instructional personnel to submit portfolios demonstrating their grasp of the

practices on an annual basis. CTAS also allows for administrators to conduct classroom observations. Creation of the CTAS was a collaborative effort between the district and the union.

Exhibit 6-9

The Collier Teacher Assessment System uses 12 Educator Accomplished Practices

-
- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ▪ Assessment | ▪ Human Development and Learning |
| ▪ Communication | ▪ Knowledge of Subject Matter |
| ▪ Continuous Improvement | ▪ Learning Environments |
| ▪ Critical Thinking | ▪ Planning |
| ▪ Diversity | ▪ Role of Teacher |
| ▪ Ethics | ▪ Technology |
-

Source: Collier Teacher Assessment System, August 2000.

The review team examined unsatisfactory evaluations for each class of employee and the subsequent follow-up paperwork and found that employees are clearly informed when their performance does not meet expectations.

While Collier County School District is using this best practice, it could benefit from routine feedback from parents, teachers and other staff on administrator performance. The district does not routinely solicit feedback from parents, teachers and non-instructional staff for use in administrator evaluations. Principals indicated that they felt that when parental feedback was included in an evaluation it was almost always negative. Their perception was that the fewer calls an associate superintendent gets on a principal the better. No calls indicate that the principal is doing well. Some school improvement plans include climate surveys and building level administrators and associate superintendents may use this information, but the surveys are not specifically targeted to gain feedback on an administrator’s performance and the groups targeted vary from year to year. A more systematic approach that includes feedback from the building level administrators primary “customers”—campus staff and parents—would provide more valid, reliable and consistent information to those who evaluate building level administrators.

We recommend that the district develop a system to obtain feedback from parents and staff for use in building level administrator evaluations that includes a provision for a non-administrative employee at each site to collect and return any feedback instruments.

Best Practice 5: Using

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.

District employees are in a position of trust with the potential to influence children in both positive and negative ways. To minimize the potential for negative influence on the children within a district, each school district should establish policies and procedures that address issues related to inappropriate conduct or behavior by employees as well as employees who repeatedly do not meet the district’s performance expectations. The district should follow these policies and procedures in such a manner that unsatisfactory employee behavior or performance is effectively dealt with so that these employees do not have an adverse effect on students or upon the school environment. District administrators should receive training and district level support in dealing with poorly performing employees. When it is necessary for a district to terminate an employee, then those termination decisions should be defensible in judicial review.

The Collier County School District has established performance and conduct criteria for each class of employee. It uses the evaluation and investigative processes to address poor performing employees and

those engaged in misconduct. Principals indicated that for the most part these processes work, especially the investigative process. The school board has established policies that allow the immediate removal of an employee who may be potentially harmful to students. The district has adopted the code of ethics of professional conduct of the education profession for instructional and administrative personnel developed by the Florida Department of Education's Florida Education Standards Commission. Currently the district is working with the Collier Support Personnel (CSP) union and the Collier County Association of Educational Office and Classroom Assistant Personnel (CCAEOCAP) union to develop a similar code of conduct for non-instructional personnel. The board has adopted a zero tolerance policy for discriminatory and harassing misconduct by personnel and students.⁹

In addition to other grounds for dismissal, the district also monitors teacher conduct that would violate those offenses specified in Florida statutes that prohibit employment in a Florida school district. The district stated "The Office of the Internal Investigator is routinely in communication with the Collier County Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement agencies to identify employees who have criminal arrests or other charges filed against them." This office also monitors the police beat in the *Naples Daily News* to identify district employees who have been arrested or charged with criminal offenses. The CSP and CCAEOCAP contracts also identify unacceptable employee behavior. The district provided selected examples of performance related correspondence that supports poorly performing employees are notified and dealt with in accordance with CTAS, collective bargaining agreements and the employee discipline policy.

Although the district is using this best practice, it could better document investigation procedures. According to investigators, the accused receives a copy of the report upon the completion of an investigation, even if it is in the form of an informal paragraph to the executive director of human resources. However a union official disagreed that accused teachers are always notified at the conclusion of no cause investigations. When this issue was brought to the attention of human resource department senior leadership, the department indicated they would contact the union president to address any of these outstanding issues. In April 2003, the district began researching guidelines used by other Florida school districts for misconduct investigations and has started to develop their own investigative guidelines.

We recommend the human resource department finalize and implement written guidelines for employee misconduct investigations, including notification of the accused of the outcome of the investigation.

Best Practice 6: Not Using

The district does not have a system for managing absenteeism and fails to train substitute teachers and other substitute personnel.

Excessive employee absenteeism can reduce district productivity; disrupt the continuity of classroom instruction and, when such absences require the district to use substitutes, increase costs. Thus, each school district should monitor rates of absenteeism and the costs associated with the use of substitutes for instructional and non-instructional personnel. It should have a sufficient number of substitute teachers to cover absenteeism peaks and should have efficient processes for the notification of absences and the placement of substitutes. It also should provide orientation and training to substitutes and should provide special assistance (coaching, guidance and oversight) to substitutes for extended teacher absences. A district should have policies that either encourage high attendance or discourage excessive absenteeism.

⁹ The policy states in part, "...it is impermissible for any employee and/or student to discriminate against any other employee and/or student for any reason such as, without limitation, on the basis of one's race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national origin and/or marital status. This shall include wrongfully segregating, classifying, limiting, treating differently, hiring, firing and evaluating any employee and/or student on the basis of the referenced categories...the Board to prohibit[s]...sexual harassment of and sexual misconduct toward any employee and/or student whether such misconduct involves employee to-employee, employee-to-student, student-to-student, student-to-employee misconduct as well as misconduct involving employees or students and persons not employed by the District."

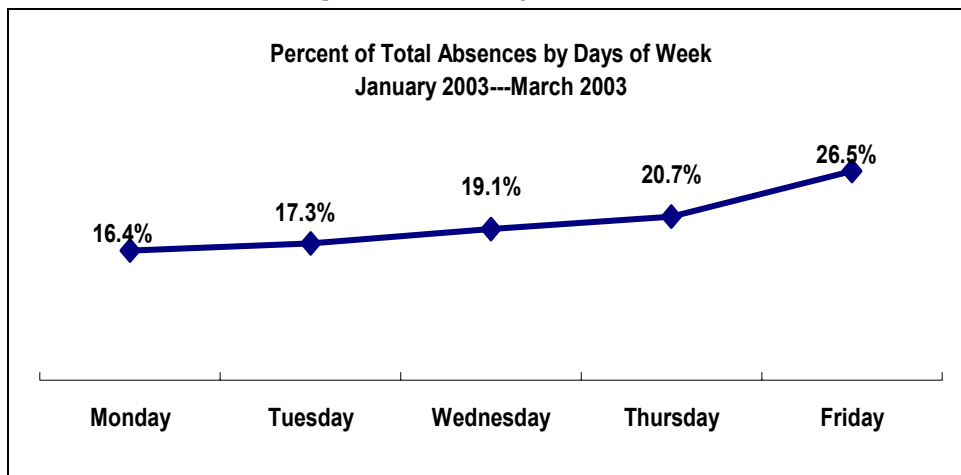
The Collier County School District uses an automated, Internet based, substitute-calling system. The substitute system provides the district an efficient means of identifying and notifying substitute personnel. The system has the capability to run reports on the number of absences and the number of absences filled by substitutes in a variety of ways. The district has clearly defined procedures for reporting absences and/or obtaining substitutes through the substitute system and also has a policy regarding the reporting of absences for employees who are not covered by the system. Currently the substitute system only handles the absences of instructional personnel and instructional assistants. The system is not utilized for food service workers or school bus drivers.

However, the district is not using this practice for several reasons. The district does not have policies designed to discourage excessive employee absenteeism and has limited incentives to encourage high attendance. The district has not defined excessive absenteeism, absenteeism is not being monitored at the district level, and substitute teachers, even long-term substitutes, receive little if any training after the required initial orientation session.

Absenteeism is not being monitored at the district level in order to identify trends and create measures to control these trends and incentives to help minimize absenteeism. The district relies on each building, site, and non-instructional administrator to monitor absenteeism of their employees and create strategies to deal with them. This decentralized approach works well in the transportation department, which offers perfect attendance pins, preferred parking spaces, and gift certificates to award attendance. However, principals participating in a focus group indicated that absenteeism is a problem, as is the district's "if they have the days they can take them" attitude, and they would like to see more attendance incentives instituted.

Reports provided by the district's substitute system for instructional personnel and instructional assistants district wide show a gradual increase in absences as the week progresses and revealed that more absences are reported on Friday than any other day of the week. (See Exhibit 6-10.)

Exhibit 6-10
The Percentage of Absences for Teachers and Assistants was Highest on Fridays



Source: Days of Week Absence Analysis for Instructional Personnel and for Non-instructional personnel, January 1, 2003 through March 31, 2003.

Additional reports showing the percentage of absences filled by substitutes, also known as a fill rate, supports the principals' contention that absenteeism is a problem. The reports on instructional positions and instructional assistant positions absences showed fill rates of 92% for January 2003, 91% for February 2003 and 94% for March 2003. Staff indicated that this data may not be completely accurate since the procedures for the use of system are not always followed. For example, schools fill positions

prior to the absence date and do not enter the absence into the system. The substitute system is not currently tied to the payroll system so the practice of not entering absences and filled absences does not affect substitute paychecks.

The district has some limited attendance incentives in place. For instance, it has a sick leave buyout policy for unused sick leave days for district employees as provided by statutes. All instructional, food service, transportation and school-based non-instructional personnel are eligible for the sick leave buyout program. The program requires employees to maintain at least 20 days of sick leave after the buyout and allows employees to sell up to 20 days back to the district annually. Payment rates are 50% of the daily rate for each day requested if the employee has less than 13 years of service in the Collier County School District and 80% of the daily rate for each day requested if the employee has 13 or more years of service with the district.

The district also offers terminal pay to employees. Employees with 10 to 12 years of experience in the Collier County School District can receive 50% of their daily rate of pay at the time of termination for each day of eligible sick leave. Employees with 13 years or more of experience with the district will receive 100% of their daily rate of pay at termination for each eligible sick day. District wide incentives to reduce absenteeism, beyond the sick leave buyout and terminal pay policies, do not exist. Action Plan 6-2 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-2

We recommend the district develop district wide incentives designed to reduce absenteeism for all classes of employees, especially for teachers.

Action Needed:	Step 1. Collect absenteeism data for different types of positions throughout the district. Step 2. Analyze the data to determine absenteeism trends for the different classes of employees. Step 3. Contact peers and other Florida districts to determine which absenteeism reducing incentives they use for different classes of employees and which incentives work best. Step 4. Determine the effectiveness of current incentives. Step 5. Devise district wide incentives to reduce absenteeism for the different classes of employees. Step 6. Determine cost/benefit of the different incentive plans. Step 7. Identify funding sources necessary to implement the incentives. Step 8. Submit the proposed incentives to the superintendent and board for approval. Step 9. Implement the incentives. Step 10. Continue to track and analyze absenteeism data to determine the effectiveness of the incentives. Step 11. Eliminate incentives that are not working.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources
Time Frame	August 2005

The Collier County School District does not define excessive absenteeism. Even though all appraisal instruments have absenteeism as criteria upon which employees are evaluated, definitions are not provided and the district relies on individual site managers to monitor the absenteeism of the site and determine how to rate employees in this regard. The director of transportation reviews dispatch logs on a daily basis to get a sense of the number of bus drivers who are out, but only calculates absences at the end of the year. The director of food services monitors absenteeism by using substitute reports. The non-instructional directors and the executive director of human resources indicated that if employees have the days, they are allowed to take them. Employees are eligible to receive 10 to 12 days of sick leave per year, which is allowed to accumulate without limit. Neither board policy nor the collective bargaining agreements define “excessive” absenteeism or address abuses of leave. Action Plan 6-3 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-3

We recommend the district define excessive absenteeism and enact an excessive absenteeism policy to address potential abuses of sick leave benefits.

Action Needed:	Step 1.	Contact peer and other Florida school districts and request copies of excessive absenteeism policies.
	Step 2.	Draft an excessive absenteeism policy that meets the unique needs of the district.
	Step 3.	Submit the excessive absenteeism policy to the superintendent and board for approval. Notify the appropriate union of any proposed changes.
	Step 4.	Communicate the policy to all employees.
	Step 5.	Train administrators and supervisors on how to implement and enforce the policy.
	Step 6.	Implement and enforce the excessive absenteeism policy.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources	
Time Frame	January 2004	

The district provides minimal follow-up training to substitutes. As with other employees, continuous training for substitutes is necessary to keep them current with district policies, educational objectives and job requirements. However, training for substitutes is in the Collier County School District limited. The district requires new instructional substitutes to attend an initial 16-hour orientation training session. The orientation covers the following topics:

- employment procedures
- code of ethics
- professional ethics
- managerial duties
- teaching duties
- questioning techniques
- ways to enforce classroom management
- typical problems of substitute teaching
- helpful hints for success and sanity
- avoiding negligence
- safety regulations, and
- activities and substitute report forms

In addition, the binder provides copies of the district’s sexual misconduct policy and other helpful handouts. This orientation is essential to familiarizing new substitutes to the expectations of the district along with procedures, paperwork and critical classroom management skills. However, additional training is rarely offered and classroom management training is only rescheduled “if warranted.”

For longer-term substitutes, the lack of training opportunities can be more pronounced, since they are in the classroom for longer periods of time presenting lessons. These substitutes generally work in the classroom for longer than one week and are most often used to cover the classes of contract teachers who are on approved leave for medical or personal reasons. Principals place department chairs with long-term substitutes to ensure that the substitutes are prepared for assignments and have access to guidance and support. Additional support to long-term substitutes is provided on a campus-by-campus basis without district wide guidelines or procedures. Action Plan 6-4 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-4

We recommend the district offer additional training to substitute teachers and develop guidelines for schools regarding the additional training and support resources presented to long-term substitutes.

Action Needed:	Step 1. Modify the substitute orientation program to create a refresher course for substitute teachers and substitute instructional assistants. Step 2. Make open spaces in in-service courses available to substitute teachers at no cost. Step 3. Require substitute teachers to attend the refresher course once every two years to remain active. Step 4. Solicit feedback from long term substitutes, teachers, team leaders and building level administrators on what additional training and support is needed for long-term substitutes. Step 5. Work with the Office of Accountability and Staff and School Renewal to identify training opportunities and procedures for long-term substitutes. Step 6. Compile the feedback and use this feedback to develop draft guidelines on what additional training and support should be provided. Step 7. Present the guidelines to building level administrators and selected teachers to determine the feasibility of the guidelines. Step 8. Revise the guidelines based on the feedback provided by the administrators and teachers. Step 9. Present the guidelines the superintendent for approval. Step 10. Communicate the guidelines to building level administrators, teachers and potential long-term substitutes. Step 11. Implement the guidelines.
Who Is Responsible	Coordinator of compensation, substitute personnel specialist and director of staffing
Time Frame	August 2005

Best Practice 7: Not Using

The district does not maintain personnel records in an efficient and readily accessible manner.

School district personnel files hold essential information on all district employees, which must be maintained in a manner that protects the employees while serving the needs of the district. Each school district should maintain its personnel records in an efficient, readily accessible and timely manner. When it is more cost efficient to do so, districts should implement automated record-keeping systems that facilitate the ready exchange of personnel information with school sites and other departments. When feasible and cost effective, the district should explore options that would delegate certain data entry responsibilities to school site personnel, so long as this does not compromise the security of those records.

The Collier County School District is not using this best practice because the human resources department has not created and enforced adequate procedures to ensure that hard copy personnel records are updated and that all relevant information is readily accessible.

The Collier County School District has experienced a significant filing backlog for personnel record information. In April 2003, the Collier County School District had a backlog of personnel file items in excess of 2,000 sheets of paper. The review team reviewed 20 files and found that many did not include current evaluations or contracts and some files did not have these items in the confidential folder. Only 3 of the 20 files reviewed were complete and up-to-date. All three of these files were for new hires. Only 5 of the files contained current evaluation forms and only 3 of the 12 files that should have had contracts contained current contracts.

February 2003 and April 2003 observations of the file room showed stacks of documents waiting to be filed. The documents to be filed were not separated according to type of document for prioritized filing, but some stacks were sorted alphabetically in preparation for filing. The coordinator of instructional

staffing said that all performance related correspondence, excluding evaluations, was filed immediately upon receipt of the documentation, to ensure that this portion of the file was up-to-date. During interviews in February, the director of staffing said that there had been a filing backlog since she joined the department and characterized the filing backlog as permanent. The director of staffing also said that the human resources department had repeatedly requested a clerk position for the file room and been denied; overtime for existing staff was also denied. Clerical staff were supposed to take turns in the file room to help keep up with filing and the district provided a sign up sheet that required 13 clerical staff to spend two hours per week in the file room. Of the 13 employees, only 6 had signed up for two hours of filing. Based on the backlog observed, the system was not working.

Since the April 2003 site visit, the backlog in the filing room has been eliminated. The executive director of human resources said the former backlog was an aberration caused by the necessity of stopping filing operations in summer 2002 in preparation for the move to the new administrative center. The inaccessibility of the files for a period of time and the additional workload caused by the move did not allow the department the time necessary to address the filing backlog until early May 2003.

The human resource department has created new filing procedures. These procedures, dated May 19, 2003, assign oversight responsibility for the file room to the executive secretary to the executive director of human resources. The new procedures require filing to be done on a daily basis and a schedule for support staff to work in the file room is included.

The procedures also establish an order of priority for documents to be filed and places highest priority on disciplinary matters followed by performance evaluations, changes of assignment/pay and all other items. The procedures include quality control measures such as file reviews for each file pulled by staff members and random samplings of files to be done on a quarterly basis. The document contains deadlines for purging fingerprint, background check and EEO information in addition to records retention requirements and procedures for making employee files inactive.

These new rules were not evaluated during this review. The former rules regarding filing were disregarded and not enforced. They failed to reduce the backlog that existed from February to April. The new filing rules need to be tested over time to ensure that they address the outstanding problems noted by the director of staffing and the executive director of human resources. Action Plan 6-5 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-5

We recommend the district closely monitor filing and assess cost and time of manual filing.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Continue implementation of new filing plan.
	Step 2.	Monitor filing under new procedures.
	Step 3.	Assess compliance with rules requiring filing be done daily.
	Step 4.	Assess time and cost of manually filing records.
	Step 5.	Report to district administrators quarterly on effectiveness of new plan, employee time and cost of manual filing.
Who Is Responsible	Director of staffing and executive director of human resources	
Time Frame	August 2005	

The district has not adequately explored alternatives to paper records. The district does not use automated records systems with regard to personnel files. All files, whether active or inactive, are stored in hard copy format in the file room in human resources. The district is using an application software program to scan applications and applicant files to make them available online to hiring supervisors and other district personnel; however, hardcopies of the applications are still being kept in the human resource department. The district does not have a system for identifying and archiving old records or for purging files of information no longer required and determined to need a separate file. For example, the records review showed that some personnel records still contained fingerprint and FDLE

information even though this information should no longer be kept in the file.¹⁰ The district has scheduled to purge this information from personnel files in the summer of 2003. Action Plan 6-6 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-6

We recommend the human resource department explore the available alternatives for imaging personnel files as a long range solution to personnel file management.

Action Needed:	Step 1.	Discuss software and hardware needs for an electronic filing system for personnel records with the management information services (MIS) Department.
	Step 2.	Determine what resources (equipment, software, personnel) would be necessary to complete the transition in house.
	Step 3.	Prepare a cost estimate of completing the project in-house based on the identified resources, in coordination with the MIS department.
	Step 4.	Explore outsourcing and equipment sharing alternatives.
	Step 5.	Prepare a cost estimate of the alternatives.
	Step 6.	Prepare a comparison of the costs of completing the project in-house and the costs of the alternatives.
	Step 7.	Present the comparison to senior management for feedback.
Who Is Responsible	Director of staffing and executive director of human resources	
Time Frame	August 2005	

Best Practice 8: Not Using

The district does not effectively use cost containment practices for its workers’ compensation program.

When left uncontrolled, worker’s compensation claims can represent a significant expense to school districts and, thus, should be effectively managed to minimize their frequency and costs. A district can do this in a number of ways. For instance, a district should conduct routine evaluation of the claims and expenses. The district also should have an active safety inspection program and should develop correction actions such as physical plant repair or employee training based upon information gained from past workers’ compensation claims. In addition, the district should implement cost containment steps to limit workers compensation expenses, such as a light duty program that enables injured employees to return to work as soon as they are able.

The Collier County School District workers’ compensation plan is currently self-insured and self-administered. A self-insured plan requires the district pay the medical and indemnity costs incurred through worker related injuries and illnesses. It is extremely important that the district monitor the costs of its self-insured plan. Any cash shortfalls must be taken away from the classroom to fund the plan. In early 2003, the district had to increase the workers’ compensation budget by \$685,000 to cover the anticipated claim payments and settlements through the end of the fiscal year.

The district had settled a number of cases that, although they caused a cash flow issue for the year, will cause the district to pay less in the long run. The director of risk management feels that the by settling these claims the district will save money rather than having to pay out high indemnity benefits. The district has stop loss coverage for claims in excess of \$350,000 per occurrence. However, under its current self administered plan it has not been able to carve out aggregate stop loss coverage for its workers’ compensation plan.¹¹ This means that the district is liable for up to \$350,000 per employee that files a workers’ compensation claim in a given year.

¹⁰ Although this information was filed with the main personnel file, the fingerprint and FDLE information was located in the confidential section of the file, in a sealed envelope.

¹¹ Aggregate stop-loss coverage limits the district’s overall annual cost for a self-funded plan. It provides a ceiling on the dollar amount of eligible expenses for which the district is liable in a given year.

Although the district has attempted to implement cost-containment practices through its managed care plan and a light duty program, it has not been successful in reducing the number of claims. In 2001-02, there was an 8.6% increase over the prior year in the number of reported workers' compensation claims filed by district employees. Over the past five years, the numbers of reported claims have increased by 49.5%. The total staff count increased by only 29.5% during the same period.

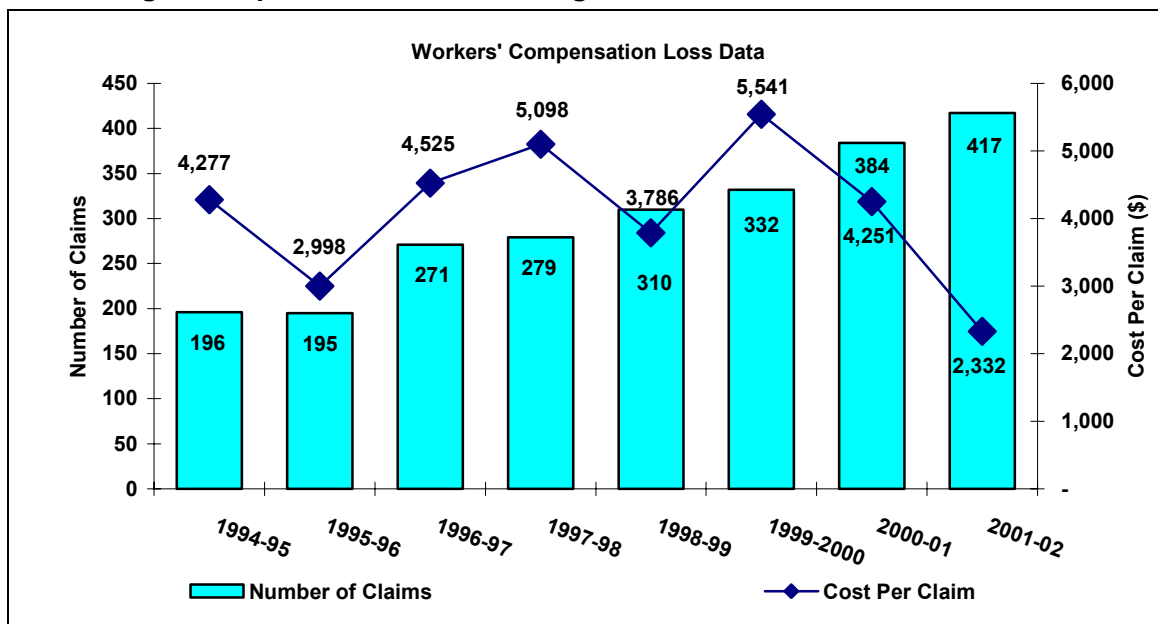
When discussing the increase in reported claims with the director of risk management, the review team was told that this was related to the fact that the district encourages its employees to report any and all injuries. The district is growing and it would be expected that the number of claims would increase with growth. However, the fact that the number of claims has increased at a much higher rate than the overall growth in district staff is a cause for concern.

Given the significant increase in reported claims, one would expect the average cost per claim to decrease because the aggregate pool has increased. For example, if the district paid out \$1 million in claims to 1,000 employees, the average cost per claim would be \$1,000. If the same aggregate amount was paid to 1,495 employees, an increase of 49.5%, the average cost per claim would fall to \$669. Although the average cost per claim in this example decreased, on the surface a positive outcome, this decrease could be masking a rise in the number of claims related to hazardous work conditions, particular worker classification, or frivolous claims and abusing the workers' compensation program.

The district's experience modifier is 1.15. An experience modifier is calculated based on an employer's actual losses as compared with the expected losses for businesses with similar job classifications and payrolls. An experience modifier that is greater than 1.0 indicates that the losses are higher than expected.

According to the executive director of business services, although the cost per claim has fallen, the actuarial reserve has remained at a steady level. The actuarial reserve is the amount of money that represents the district's liability to pay outstanding claims. This money must be held on reserve by the district to pay off all existing claims. The fact that the district's liability has not been reduced is evidence that the increasing number of claims is an issue that should be addressed by the district. (See Exhibit 6-11.)

Exhibit 6-11
Summary of Aggregated Claim Activity Shows the Number of Claims Is Increasing While the Average Cost per Claim Is Decreasing



Source: Collier County School District, Risk Management Department, June 30, 2002.

Discussions with adjusters and the risk management director indicate that district workers and local law firms are savvy about filing workers compensation claims. As of February 2003, the district was processing weekly payments in the amount of \$55,000 including indemnity and medical expense payments. The department anticipates that it will pay approximately \$935,000 more through the end of the fiscal year. Furthermore, it anticipates that it will settle additional claims totaling \$440,000 before the end of the year.

The district has been aggressive in settling workers' compensation claims during the 2002-03 fiscal year. This represents a double edge sword. Although the aggregate cost of the claim is reduced, employees become aware that the district is settling claims and the number of claims often increase in anticipation of an easy settlement. The district has doubled its legal fees because employees have become more apt to seek representation in resolving claims. These factors led to a departmental budget shortfall of \$685,000 for the year that had to be transferred from reserve operating funds.

The district lacks sufficient information to target and address areas of specific risks and to identify any abuses of its workers' compensation program. The district has been using an antiquated software program that does not allow the adjusters to track specific types of accidents that would enable them to identify trends and develop training programs to reduce the incidence of these types of accidents. Nor do the reports provide the necessary type of information to allow the workers' compensation adjusters to identify any potential abuse of the program.

The district considered two options to improve loss data reports. The first option was to purchase a new system that could provide reports that would allow the district to concentrate its efforts on the problem areas. The estimated cost of this system fell between \$125,000 and \$145,000. The annual maintenance fee would be approximately \$17,500. The district determined that this option would require additional training to implement and effectively use the system and was not the most cost-effective solution.

The second option the district examined was to return to a third-party administrator (TPA). This option would free the adjusters to actually adjust claims and initiate programs targeted at reducing the number of claims. The district was quoted an annual cost of \$125,000 for a TPA to administer its plan. The board approved the second option in June 2003. The addition of a TPA, as of July 1, 2003, allowed the district to reassign one of the adjusters to a vacancy in another department since the administrative functions would no longer be performed by the district.

One of the primary functions of a TPA is to provide detailed loss reports that can identify trends and work with the district to develop an effective strategy to contain costs based on the data. Improved reporting would allow the district to target specific areas and worker classifications to implement training and/or remove hazardous conditions and ultimately bring down the number of claims and further control costs.

Currently, three employees, a workers' compensation coordinator and two workers' compensation adjusters staff the workers' compensation department. The workers' compensation coordinator spends the majority of his time investigating employee grievances and exercises limited supervision of the adjusters. The primary task performed by the adjusters is administering the plan and not adjusting claims. The adjusters spend a significant amount of time dealing with administration duties such as paying claims, payroll and scheduling appointments with providers.

The adjusters have very little time to investigate accidents or meet with injured workers and the treating physicians to determine what steps need to be taken to ensure the injury will not reoccur or to develop training programs to reduce the incidence rate of accidents. There is no way to determine whether the majority of the accidents took place at one site or involved a specific worker classification. The adjusters must rely on each other's first hand knowledge rather than the loss data; however, neither of the adjusters has time to review every case with each other. This limits the district's ability to design a workers' compensation program that contains costs and addresses the specific injuries incurred by its employees. This makes it imperative that the district work hand in hand with its new TPA to develop the types of reports that will identify where the problems are and establish a plan to target these areas and reduce the number of claims and reduce its experience modifier to 1.0 or below.

Many school districts with the assistance of its TPA have been able to reduce both the number of claims and the average cost of claims. The Hillsborough County School District (HCSD) works very closely with its TPA to develop programs specifically target problem areas. As a result, HCSD has an exemplary workers' compensation program that integrates safety training to reduce claim costs. HCSD has been able to continually reduce its workers' compensation claims each year by evaluating loss reports each quarter and identifying potential problems as early as possible. El Paso Independent School District in Texas reduced its workers' compensation claims by 81% in the first year after implementing a TPA that provided quality loss reports. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) in Virginia receives a detailed workers' compensation loss analysis from its TPA each year. FCPS was able to reduce it workers' compensation losses by 5.3% in fiscal year 2001-02 and continues to have an exemplary workers' compensation program in its district.

If Collier County School District could reduce the number of claims by 10% in the first year, based on an estimated 450 reported claims totaling \$1.5 million in 2002-03, it would save \$149,985 (45 claims x \$3,333 per claim). If it could reduce the number of claims by an additional 5% in the second year, the district would save \$216,645 (\$149,985 from the first 10%) plus (20 claims x \$3,333 per claim). If the district could continue to reduce its claims by 2% in the third year, it would save \$243,309 (\$149,985 from the first 10% + \$66,660 from the next 5%) plus (8 claims x \$3,333 per claim). An additional 2% reduction in the fourth year would save \$269,973 (\$149,985 from the first 10% + \$66,660 from the next 5% + \$26,664 from the next 2% percent) plus (8 claims x \$3,333 per claim). Finally, if the district could reduce its claims by an additional 2% in the fifth year it would realize a savings of \$296,637 (\$149,985 from the first 10% + \$66,660 from the next 5% + \$26,664 from the next 2%+ \$26,664 from the next 2%) plus (8 claims x \$3,333 per claim). Action Plan 6-7 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-7

We recommend that the district work with its third party administrator to develop a strategy to identify loss patterns and tailor programs focused on addressing worker groups with a high incidence of reported claims.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Meet with the TPA to define the reporting requirements, determine what reports are available and train the adjuster to understand and use the TPA's database.</p> <p>Step 2. Establish annual goals and objectives to reduce the number of reported claims. Set 2002-03 as the baseline year and set thresholds to reduce claims by an established percentage each year. Develop variance reports to help track the district's performance. Included in these reports should be any "extraordinary" events that either kept the district from meeting its goals or resulted in a greater reduction than expected.</p> <p>Step 3. Develop employee education programs to respond to identified accident trends or to deal with a specific worker classification that may be experiencing a high number of similar claims. Design a tool to measure the impact of the program, such as a participant survey and track the future claims to identify future training needs and evaluate the effectiveness of the program in reducing related claims.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and director of risk management
Time Frame	June 2004

The district's light duty program is not being well supported by management throughout the district. One of the most successful ways employers contain their workers' compensation costs has been to institute a light duty, return to work program that gets injured or ill workers back to work as quickly as possible, taking into account any physical limitation an employee may have following the injury or illness. Studies have shown that employers who have return-to-work programs had a lower rate of lost workday cases, a reduction in workers' compensation claims incidence and fewer lost workdays per 100 employees. Statistically, \$0.45 of every workers compensation dollar are spent on the medical

costs associated with workers' compensation claims, while \$0.55 are spent in indemnity costs. Indemnity costs are those costs paid by the district to the employee when that employee is off from work as a result of a work related injury or illness. The Collier County School District has instituted a light duty program to get injured employees back to work as quickly as possible; however the program is not supported by management throughout the district. For example, transportation employees have a higher than average number of claims, however, the director of transportation has not developed a light-duty work plan for these employees. In order for a light duty program to be effective, it must have buy-in from top managers.

Currently, there are a limited number of light duty assignments available at the district. The high schools have created three positions: a parking lot attendant, a cleaning attendant and specific clerical duties. Food service workers that have been injured and can no longer work in the cafeterias have been given filing duties in the food service department. Some district staff voiced a hesitancy to use light duty employees because they required too much supervision, are not adequately trained and make numerous errors. The hesitancy to use these workers limits its effectiveness. Due to the lack of data, the adjusters were unable to provide a history of the light duty program and how many employees have used the program making it virtually impossible to evaluate its effectiveness.

The adjusters indicated that an additional problem associated with its light duty program involves a language barrier. Many district employees cannot read or speak English very well. This has compounded the lack of training issues that have discouraged many departments from developing light duty job duties. Action Plan 6-8 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-8

We recommend that the district restructure its light duty “return-to-work” program.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Collect data on the current light duty “return-to-work” program to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Include an analysis of the cost of the light duty program in terms of the cost of continued payment.</p> <p>Step 2. Establish measurable goals and objectives for the program such as to preserve, as closely as possible, a worker’s pre-disability earning capacity; to reduce a workers’ period of disability; to reduce or avoid negative effects on a worker resulting from long term absences from work; to retain a worker’s employment skills; to improve a worker’s physical and psychological well being after a work-related disability; to assist a worker maintain dignity and self-esteem; and to continually monitor the progress of each participant in the program to determine when, or if, he or she can return to their pre-disability position.</p> <p>Step 3. Establish a physical evaluation criterion to ensure the worker does not stay in the light duty program longer than is medically necessary.</p> <p>Step 4. Require that all school administrators and department heads create at least two light duty tasks that injured workers could perform. Examples include telephone reception, light filing and proof-reading.</p> <p>Step 5. Forward the job descriptions of the light duty tasks to the adjuster.</p> <p>Step 6. Compile the list of light duties and forward it to the district’s primary care physicians to ensure that the duties meet the physical constraints an employee returning to work could face.</p> <p>Step 7. Meet with staff development to review the job descriptions and develop a training program for the employees returning to work.</p> <p>Step 8. Incorporate English adult education classes into the light duty “return-to-work” program.</p> <p>Step 9. Track the number of employees that have returned to work under the light duty program.</p> <p>Step 10. Develop an evaluation tool to ensure the department and campus needs are being met by the light duty workers.</p> <p>Step 11. Follow-up with the light duty workers to determine when, or if, they can return to their prior position or can take on additional tasks.</p> <p>Step 12. Maintain an inventory of light duty tasks.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and director of risk management
Time Frame	January 2004.

The district’s does not budget effectively to ensure resources are available to meet its obligation to pay workers’ compensation claims. When developing the annual departmental budget, the district plans for a 5% increase in claims each year. As a result, the district has historically run a deficit in the workers compensation budget. The district has averaged an 11.9% increase in the average cost per claim over the last eight years. The director of risk management should incorporate historical results into the annual budget and assign a more reasonable estimate of the expected increase in claim costs based on that history. Action Plan 6-9 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-9

We recommend that the district use claim history data to develop its workers' compensation budget.

Action Needed	Step 1. Analyze the average cost per claim experienced over a ten-year period, a five-year period and the last fiscal year to identify the cost trend. Determine the percentage increase and evaluate what percent increase should be applied to the next year's budget. Include an evaluation of staffing trends and projections to ensure that additional growth in staff is considered in the percentage that is used. Step 2. Apply the percentage change to the budget for the next year. Step 3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 annually.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and director of risk management
Time Frame	February 2004 and annually thereafter.

The claims review committee does not perform assessments that assist the district in designing a more cost-effective workers' compensation program. Given the quality of the available reports, the claims review committee does not have the means to perform adequate claims review functions. The district is unable to evaluate its loss data to identify where the problems lie. Nor can it use the data to highlight abuses of the system from a specific worker classification, which could be used as evidence in defending itself against litigation. The adjusters provide details on individual claims and discussion is limited to the specifics of that claim. The data is not available for the committee to review the aggregate program. As a result of the lack of data, the claims review committee becomes merely a forum to discuss issues specific to one claim. It cannot assist the district in developing a workers' compensation program that effectively contains costs.

The claims review committee would also be more effective if its membership were expanded. The current committee is composed of the executive director of human resources, the director of risk management, the workers' compensation coordinator and the workers' compensation adjusters. Neither the safety manager nor the health and safety inspectors are members and therefore, are not involved in evaluating workers' compensation claims with respect to potential physical plant hazards or high-risk work duties. The committee also does not have a representative from the business services department.

A self-funded workers' compensation program represents a significant financial liability for the district. The claims review committee determines what claims to settle but does not have the expertise to evaluate the financial impact of their decisions on the district. This is evidenced by the \$695,000 shortfall that occurred in 2002-03. The district has finite resources available to fund its operations. It is imperative that any decision to settle a claim be considered understanding the district's current cash position and future financial viability. Action Plan 6-10 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-10

We recommend that the district expand the role of the claims review committee to include evaluating the effectiveness of the overall workers' compensation program.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Assign the safety manager to sit on the claims review committee. When necessary, include the health and safety inspectors in the committee meetings.</p> <p>Step 2. Assign the executive director of business services or his designee to sit on the claims review committee.</p> <p>Step 3. Present claims statistics to the committee each quarter. Include the following items: 5 year trend of the number of claims (total claims, claims by worker classification, claims by site); 5 year trend of claim costs (total claims, average cost per claim for all claims, average cost per claim by worker classification, average cost per claim by site); and action plans.</p> <p>Step 4. Identify areas where additional education programs are necessary and identify responsible personnel to develop the programs.</p> <p>Step 5. Report safety measures being initiated by the district at each committee meeting.</p> <p>Step 6. Prepare financial justification for each potential settlement and determine if the budget is available.</p> <p>Step 7. Develop performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall workers' compensation program.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources, executive director of business services and director of risk management.
Time Frame	February 2004

The district's workers' compensation stop-loss coverage does not adequately protect it from a catastrophic loss. As a self-administered plan, the district was ineligible to purchase aggregate stop-loss workers' compensation coverage, leaving the district vulnerable to a catastrophic loss. The district has purchased excess workers' compensation coverage for any claim that is in excess of \$350,000. However, without aggregate stop-loss coverage, the district is liable for up to \$350,000 for every claim that is filed. Florida faces a significant risk of hurricanes that could potentially cause widespread injuries to its employees. Other potential risks include fire, school shootings and a terrorist attack.

Should the district face a catastrophic event that resulted in loss of life, or severe injuries to a large number of employees, the district could face financial failure. The total workers' compensation budget for 2002-03 was \$3,119,415, exclusive of the additional \$695,000 that was required later in the fiscal year. A few high-dollar claims would drain this in the event of a disaster.

Now that the district has retained a third party administrator, it can purchase aggregate stop-loss coverage. The cost of aggregate stop-loss coverage is generally based on a rate per covered employee, with an average rate of \$5.00 per employee for aggregate stop-loss coverage in excess of \$2,000,000. The district should consider making this investment to protect itself against the increase risk profile. The annual cost for the district to purchase this additional coverage would be \$24,675 (\$5 x 4,935 employees). Given the alternative, financial disaster, this seems to be a small investment to ensure the financial viability of the district. Action Plan 6-11 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-11

We recommend that the district purchase aggregate stop gap coverage for its workers' compensation plan of \$2,000,000.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Meet with insurance broker to prepare request for quote for aggregate stop gap coverage.
	Step 2.	Review quotes with insurance broker
	Step 3.	Prepare agenda item for board explaining and recommending the coverage and the carrier.
	Step 4.	Receive board approval for the additional coverage.
	Step 5.	Purchase the additional coverage.
	Step 6.	Include the aggregate stop gap coverage in the district's annual quote for insurance coverage.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and director of risk management	
Time Frame	October 2003	

The district does not report the results of its workers' compensation program to the board.

The only information the board receives concerning workers' compensation is premium cost as a portion of the complete annual insurance renewal package for the district. The district assumes a tremendous liability being self-funded. Any claim cost overruns must be paid and the monies for these overruns must come directly from the general operating fund. This translates to dollars being unavailable for the classroom.

The board should have some information regarding the effectiveness of spending related to the plan. It is not necessary and is inadvisable to publicly announce the amount of money spent in settling workers' compensation claims. However, the district should present a workers' compensation report card to the board on an annual basis. The report card should show the annual trends in the number of claims and the cost of claims. In addition, workers' compensation staff should report on successful safety initiatives, education programs that have been successful in reducing reported claims and plans for the upcoming fiscal year. The claims review committee and the workers' compensation staff should be accountable for the success of its program. Action Plan 6-12 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-12

We recommend that the district annually present a workers' compensation report card to the board.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Analyze claim data for the prior five years to identify trends in the number of reported claims, the total cost of claims and the average cost per claim. Include trends for all claims, for claims by worker classification and for claims by site. Graph the results.
	Step 2.	Prepare flowcharts that illustrate the steps taken by staff to reduce claims and contain costs. For example, a training workshop on lifting techniques reduced the number of reported back injuries by 10 percent.
	Step 3.	Meet with claims review committee to develop the plan for the upcoming year.
	Step 4.	Develop report card for the board.
	Step 5.	Present report card to the board at September board meeting.
	Step 6.	Repeat steps 1 through 5 annually.
Who Is Responsible	Director of risk management and safety manager	
Time Frame	September 2004 and Annually thereafter.	

The district does not effectively integrate safety initiatives and training into its risk management program.

The risk management and safety functions within the district are segregated. The code enforcement department, under the supervision of the executive director of facilities, is

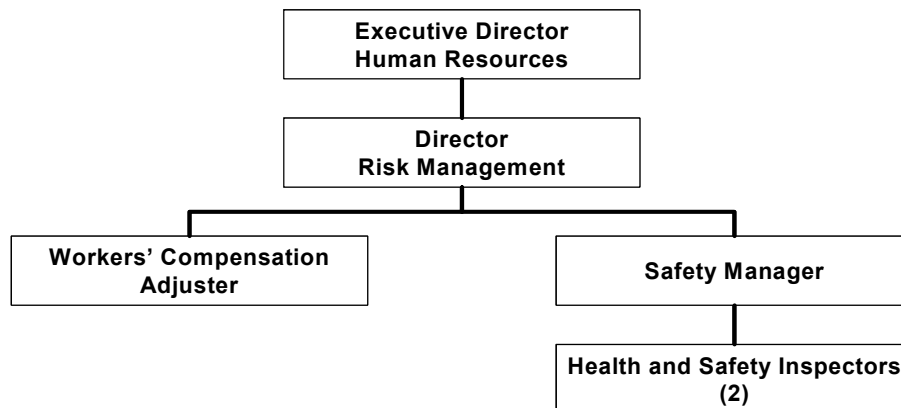
responsible for the safety function, while the risk management function is under the supervision of the executive director of human resources. There is no mechanism to integrate safety training into the workers' compensation program. There should be a cooperative effort between the safety and risk management functions of the district to best protect the district's employees from being injured while performing the duties of their job.

Two health and safety inspectors conduct inspections of district facilities. These inspectors determine the cause of any accident that occurs on district property. When a hazardous condition is reported, they are the second phone call after 911. They determine whether a hazardous condition exists and whether it is related to a deficiency on the part of the district or was an accident that is not likely to recur. Safety management should be an essential part of the district's risk management plan. Research has shown that an effective safety-training program can be instrumental in reducing the number of on-the-job injuries.

The Hillsborough County School District has combined its risk management and safety functions, although they occupy separate physical locations. Its workers' compensation program is cost-effective and innovative. The safety manager reports to the director of employee benefits and risk management. The safety manager and his staff have developed comprehensive safety training throughout the district and worked with the workers' compensation staff to develop specialized programs in response to specific issues identified in the district. For example, when the Hillsborough County School District discovered that 37.5% of the total number of back claims and 28% of the dollars spent were related to improper lifting, it developed a training workshop related specifically to proper back care and lifting and reaching techniques.

Reorganizing the Collier County School District's risk management department to include safety could help the district improve its workers' compensation program and better contain costs. The workers' compensation coordinator position has been phased out to allow this individual the opportunity to focus more directly on his duties related to investigating employee grievances. Under the new structure, the additional layer of management will not be required, especially if the district uses a TPA to administer its workers' compensation program. The proposed reorganization integrates the risk management and safety functions within the district to help develop a workers' compensation program that focuses on establishing a safe workplace. (See Exhibit 6-12).

**Exhibit 6-12
Reorganization of Risk Management Department
Can Lead To Improvements In Worker's Compensation Program**



Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Action Plan 6-13 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-13

We recommend that the district reorganize the risk management department by combining the workers' compensation staff and the safety staff.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Eliminate the workers' compensation coordinator position and create an Investigator position that reports directly to the executive director of human resources.
	Step 2.	Reassign the safety manager and health and safety inspectors to the risk management department.
	Step 3.	Adopt a new organization chart as illustrated in Exhibit 6-12.
	Step 4.	Revise the job descriptions to reflect the new reporting hierarchy.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and director of risk management	
Time Frame	August 2003.	

Best Practice 9: Using

The district uses cost containment practices for its employee benefits programs, including health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, disability insurance and retirement.

The cost of employee benefits is a substantial, ongoing expense for most school districts. In addition, due to rising health care costs, benefit expenses can increase more rapidly than anticipated resulting in districts having to reduce other services or borrow from reserves. Thus, each school district should use cost containment practices to limit increases in the district's costs for employee benefits and to provide optimum employee benefits for the costs incurred. The district should periodically review its employee benefit package, in cooperation with the employee unions, to identify alternative delivery options. The district should calculate the short- and long-term fiscal impact on all changes to its benefit packages prior to approval of those changes.

The Collier County School District has been proactive in finding ways to keep the costs of benefits affordable. It has developed an innovative and cost-effective benefits plan. The district has created a benefits committee that includes representation from each of the three employee unions. This representation allows the unions to see the cost of the benefits provided by the district, potential cost increases and creates greater buy-in to negotiated benefits. With the help of its consultant, Willis-North America, the district has identified medical claims trends and developed strategies to reduce the claims costs and further wellness among employees.

Each year the district reevaluates whether its self-insurance program is more cost effective than a fully insured program. The employee benefits committee reviews the cost of providing the same benefits to employees as the previous year and determines if changes to the plan must be made to ensure its financial viability. In an attempt to control prescription drug costs, the district instituted a new drug plan. The components of the new plan include a formulary, three-tier co-payments and mandatory generic, when available. The district estimates that the new drug plan will save the district \$500,000. Increased utilization and the rising cost of medical care required that the district raise its premium rate, effective January 1, 2003. The district uses a certified actuary to establish its premiums. A summary of the new health insurance rates appears below. (See Exhibit 6-13.)

**Exhibit 6-13
Health Insurance Rates Effective January 1, 2003**

Coverage	Annual Premium	Premium Per Pay Period
Single (Board Paid)	\$4,917.00	\$245.85
Family	\$7,453.00	\$372.65
Spouse Only	\$4,917.00	\$245.85
1 Child Only	\$1,606.00	\$80.00
Dual Spouse (Both employees with two or more children)	\$2,536.00	\$126.80

Source: Collier County School District Employee Benefits Newsletter, September 2002.

The district is required to register its self-funded plan with the State of Florida and must submit a certified actuarial report to the state documenting the plan's fiscal solvency. Revenues of the plan consist of payments that the district makes from employee premiums and the payments that employees make for their dependents' premiums. Expenses fall into two categories: claims payments and administrative costs. Ninety percent of the plan's expenses are for the payment of claims, such as hospital stays, physician care, pharmacy costs and laboratory and radiation services. The remaining 10% of the plan's expenses are administrative costs for services such as, medical network administrative fees, claims administration, professional and technical fees and stop loss insurance.

The benefits committee has attempted to identify areas where the escalating costs of health care could be contained. For example, with the assistance of its consultant, the district identified the three most prevalent diagnoses over the past three years. These diagnoses were low back pain, gastro-intestinal reflux disease and depression. The district responded by implementing pathways for treatment of back pain requesting physicians follow a specific treatment protocol. Further, the district initiated an employee assistance plan, beginning January 1, 2003, to help address stress and depression related issues from which employees may suffer. In addition, the district is working with its local provider network to implement Smart Choice, a disease management program. One example of how Smart Choice has allowed the district to decrease treatment costs related to gastric bypass surgery. Thirty-seven of the district's employees have had gastric bypass surgery as a method of treatment for obesity. This procedure is extremely expensive and can have dangerous complications. Under the Smart Choice disease management program, a candidate for the surgery agrees to participate in a physician guided diet program for 12 months before making the decision to have the surgery.

The district also provides a flex-care program where employees can choose to purchase additional benefits including supplemental life insurance, disability insurance, dental insurance, vision care, membership in a wellness center and flexible spending accounts. Flex-care is a cafeteria-style benefit plan authorized by Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. It provides employees with the opportunity to make benefit choices that best meet their individual needs. The district allocates \$400 to each employee to help purchase additional benefits for themselves or for their dependents, excluding dependant life insurance.

The district is a member of the Collier County Health Consortium, composed of five Collier County employers that have pooled their buying power in an attempt to control the escalating cost of providing health insurance coverage to their employees and their dependents. In the past year, the consortium has been able to negotiate an 8% reduction in the fee schedule from its plan providers. Each percentage decrease in the provider fee schedule will translate into a savings of approximately \$254,000 based on calculations presented in the superintendent's memo to the board dated November 2, 2002.

Best Practice 10: Not Using

The district's human resource program does not use an effective accountability system to ensure that the program is managed effectively and efficiently.

Like other publicly funded entities, a school district should be accountable for and provide information to parents and other taxpayers on the performance and cost of its major programs and support services. To accomplish this, each school district should have an effective accountability system that includes clearly stated goals and measurable objectives for the human resource program that identify the expected outcomes of the program. In addition, each district should consider the advantages and disadvantages, as well as the costs and potential cost savings, or alternative means of delivery of human resource services, such as increased use of automation and the use of outsourcing.

The Collier County School District human resource department is not effectively performing some important human resource functions. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the program had a filing backlog of personnel records and has a procedural loophole that allows new hires to report to work prior to the receipt of fingerprint reports. The department also lacks data on major productivity issues such as

absenteeism, turnover and recruiting, and the cost of workers' compensation claims. The program can systematically address these issues by developing measurable performance goals and objectives and conducting cost analyses of major activities.

The Human Resources Department does not have measurable goals and objectives for most of its operations. The human resource department does not have clearly articulated goals and measurable objectives for most of its operations. The district educational improvement plan covers only a small portion of the human resource department's operations. But, the human resource department presented goals to a budget workshop held May 1, 2002 that address most of the functions of the department. (See Exhibit 6-14.)

Exhibit 6-14

Human Resources Functional Area Goals for 2002-03 do not Set Measurable Standards

Functional Area ¹	Goals	
Labor Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent the district in Collective Bargaining • Contract Administration • Grievance/Arbitration Disposition • Labor Mediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and Consultation • Establish and Coordinate Labor/Management Collaborative Committees
Diversity and Recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and Disseminate Diversity Curriculum • Provide Diversity Training for Employees Diversity Task Force • Provide Community Outreach • Develop and Implement the District's Recruiting and Retention Program • Develop Timely Diversity Communications and Marketing Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a Grow-Our-Own and Adopt-a-Teacher Programs • Annual Recruitment Fair • College Recruiting • Participate in The Great Florida Teach In and The Florida Fund for Minorities • Provide Support/Networking for New Teachers
HRMD and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Teacher and Administration Training and Orientation • Coordinate the Development of the Teacher Performance Pay System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Recognition • Coordinate the District's HRMD Plan and CTAS • Assist Principals with "Strand 3" Teachers
Professional Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a safe work and educational environment • Coordinate Internal Investigations • Screen Applicants, Employees and Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment Comp • Provide Due Process Assistance • Process Subpoenas • Coordinate with DOE and CCSO

¹ Some of the areas of service for the department have changed since this document was created.

Source: Human Resources Division, Budget Workshop #1, May 1, 2002.

However, few of these goals have measurable objectives and many of the items simply list tasks routinely performed by the sub-departments and, as a result, do not constitute goals. For example, a measurable goal for labor relations might be to complete negotiations on all three collective bargaining agreements prior to the beginning of school or within two months of negotiation commencement; for diversity and recruiting, increase the number of minority applicants by 10%; for HRMD and assessment, increase the number of teachers receiving at least three accomplished levels on CTAS by 5; for professional practices, complete background checks prior to reporting to work for 95% of new hires. Action Plan 6-14 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-14

We recommend the human resource department identify key areas and develop annually measurable goals and objectives for a five-year period and evaluate progress towards these goals on an annual basis.

Action Needed	Step 1. Evaluate the human resource department functions to identify key areas for improvement and essential performance measures. Step 2. Contact peer and other Florida district human resource departments and determine what goals and performance measures, if any, they have for the identified functions and how they measure completion of the goals. Step 3. Develop, with the assistance of senior human resources staff, measurable goals and objectives for the identified key areas. Step 4. Develop timelines for accomplishing identified goals and objectives. Step 5. Develop a status report timeline. Step 6. Review the goals and objectives on at least an annual basis. Step 7. Update goals and objectives as necessary.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources
Time Frame	August 2004

The human resources department does not conduct cost analyses on activities. The human resource department does not conduct cost/benefit analyses for most decisions or cost their activities so as to justify systems or quantify ongoing savings from efficiency initiatives. For example, the district collected cost data for the substitute management and application software systems but only included the costs of the software programs themselves and did not compare them to costs to the efficiencies these systems would bring. The substitute system replaced a previous system, yet the department did not compare the ongoing costs of the previous system with the ongoing costs of the new system to measure the advantages of the new system over the old system.

The lack of cost/benefit comparisons and analysis, places the superintendent, the board and other decision makers outside of the department at a disadvantage. Without this data, truly informed decisions cannot be made and require guesswork. Action Plan 6-15 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 6-15

We recommend the human resource department perform cost/benefit analysis on major decisions and document the ongoing cost savings from improvements.

Action Needed	Step 1. Investigate the costs of new initiatives. Step 2. Identify the benefits to implement the new initiatives, including any potential cost savings. Step 3. Analyze the costs and the benefits of the initiatives and prepare a report. Step 4. Present cost/benefit analysis to appropriate decision-makers, both inside and outside the department. Step 5. Retain the reports.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and designees
Time Frame	March 2004

Best Practice 11: Using

For classes of employees that are unionized, the district maintains an effective collective bargaining process.

Each school district should maintain a collective bargaining process that results in affordable and fair employee compensation package. To achieve this, district negotiators should receive training to enhance negotiation knowledge and skills and the roles and responsibilities of the negotiator, superintendent and school board during the negotiating process should be clearly defined. The district should identify and

review issues to be considered during the negotiation process, determining the estimated fiscal impact as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal. The negotiating team should have access to an attorney trained in collective bargaining law and procedure and records of negotiations should be maintained for a time set by the district.

The Collier County School District negotiates contracts with three employee unions each year. The Collier County Education Association, CCEA, represents teachers; the Collier Support Personnel, CSP, represents support positions such as bus drivers, custodians, food service and maintenance workers and the Collier County Association of Educational Office and Classroom Assistant Personnel, CCAEOCAP, represents clerical personnel and instructional assistants. Each union is on a rotating cycle where salary and one to two articles are open to negotiation for two years, and the entire contract is open to negotiation in the third year, this is also called “full book” negotiations. The district entered into its first collective bargaining agreement in 1970 and copies of all collective bargaining agreements negotiated since that time are maintained by the executive director of human resources. In addition, notes are taken by the district at each of the collective bargaining sessions. These notes are also maintained in the district’s negotiation files and provide a historical record of the “intent” of the parties.

The district is active in a number of organizations for negotiators and employs attorneys who specialize in such practices to provide guidance and assistance as necessary. The executive director of human resources meets with these teams regularly during active negotiations to provide guidance and input on negotiations and proposals, and the board and superintendent are kept informed of the progress and allowed to submit input when necessary.

The district assigns teams on a yearly basis for each of the collective bargaining agreements. Members are usually assigned to the teams for the duration of the contract and the district teams include management from the affected groups. The negotiating teams for each union include representation of the affected management groups to ensure that line and mid-level managers’ concerns are recognized. This representation is important because the line and mid-level managers, which would include building level administrators and non-instructional department heads, are primarily responsible for implementing the terms of the collective bargaining agreements.

Training is provided to the teams internally by the executive director of human resources. In addition, some team members receive training or attend Florida Education Negotiators or National Association of Education Negotiators meetings/conferences. One of the members of one of the bargaining teams confirmed that training, in addition to the internal training, is available. Negotiating team members also meet periodically with the executive director of human resources to discuss contract negotiations and receive guidance and technical support.

A collective bargaining training manual and handbook are used by the district and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent and the board in the negotiating process. The district pays close attention to maintaining confidentiality of management negotiations and meets often to review the district’s proposal. The team handbook covers the roles of the superintendent and board the confidentiality of negotiations. The handbook also discusses when and how negotiations can be discussed and includes copies of applicable statutes.

Neither the team handbook, nor any other documentation provided, specifically addresses the roles and responsibilities of the chief negotiator, spokesperson and the other members of the bargaining team. Team members interviewed indicated that they are given verbal instructions on what their roles on the team entail during the regular meetings held with the executive director of human resources prior to and during active negotiations. The district does not inform the respective unions of the members of the districts bargaining team until the pre-negotiation meeting, and the unions do not inform the district of the members of their negotiating teams until the same meeting.

In order to ensure that the negotiations meet the needs of the line managers who will be the first point of contact in administering the agreement, the district conducts surveys of administrators and managers. The district provided copies of survey forms provided to administrators to identify areas of contracts that need

renegotiation or had caused problems in the past. Principals from each level and/or appropriate district supervisors/administrators are members of each bargaining team as is the coordinator of compensation to ensure that management concerns are heard.

The weekly meetings of the teams with the executive director of human resources and the executive sessions of board meetings provide ample opportunity for the negotiating team to construct and revise both management and union proposals. The district completes cost analysis and other relative benefit analysis on management proposals but did not provide documentation of similar analysis of union proposals to the review team. When questioned regarding this practice, the executive director of human resources said the district does not cost out union proposals but may revise management proposals, at which point a revised cost analysis is done.

The district has used two firms to provide legal assistance in negotiations and labor relations. The district keeps one firm on retainer and a review of the firm's website showed that the firm has at least one lawyer with expertise in employee and labor relations in the Naples area. The firm also has several more labor and employment attorneys in their Ohio offices. The agreement between this firm and the district calls for a "retainer" of \$270,000 to be paid by the district in exchange for unlimited routine attorney services that are covered under the contractual arrangement.

This allows staff and board members to have ready access to the attorney for a fixed fee.

However, this retainer does not cover many legal questions related to collective bargaining. The district pays the attorney on an hourly basis a rate of \$175 per hour for additional services, such as litigation. Legal work related to collective bargaining that requires hourly payments include litigation in state and federal courts; litigation in arbitration proceedings; litigation in administrative hearing, including due process hearings; employee grievance proceedings; and attendance at collective bargaining sessions.

The district has also used the services of another Florida firm with offices in Fort Myers, FL that exclusively represents management in labor and employment law matters. Prior to the engagement of this labor and employment firm, the district used another labor and employment firm for such services. A memo to the board explained that during the period in which their retained counsel did not have labor and employment expertise, other firms were engaged to provide these services. The law firm on retainer regained labor and employment law expertise in December 2002. According to a memorandum to the board on legal services for fiscal years 2001, 2002 and 2003 (up to November 30, 2002), the district had paid \$176,432 for labor/employment law service.

In addition to expertise from outside firms, the executive director of human resources provides a level of in-house expertise in labor relations and has received a certificate in employee relations law from the Institute of Applied Management and Law and has completed the Law and Policy Development Institute of the American Association of School Personnel Administrators. In addition, the district is a member of the Florida Association of Educational Negotiators and the North American Association of Educational Negotiators.

In the last two years, the district has not been able to successfully negotiate some union contracts prior to the start of the new school year. The district has not been able to successfully negotiate some union contracts prior to the start of the school year in the last two years. The president of the teachers' union said that they always try to settle contract negotiations prior to the start of school and have the proposals ready for ratification when the teachers return from summer break. However, when the teachers' union renegotiated the entire contract in Fiscal Year 2002, the process took longer than usual and ended in mediation. In this case, the union demanded to negotiate a non-mandatory issue. The mediator upheld the district's position and the final contract issues were resolved.

In April 2003, the district and the clerical and instructional support union had finalized negotiations for the 2002-03 contract and it was available for ratification. In May 2003, the district was still actively negotiating the support personnel contract for 2002-03 after the union had threatened to go to impasse over salary issues. The entire support personnel collective bargaining agreement, in addition to salaries,

was open for negotiations for 2002-03 and issues within the union organization prevented bargaining from beginning until August 2002.

The executive director of human resources said that the district does not initiate contract negotiations, but waits for the union to notify the superintendent and/or board and file the appropriate documents with the Florida Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC).¹² The executive director of human resources also said it would not be wise for the district to begin negotiations until it was sure of its financial situation since most negotiated issues have a monetary impact. Due to special session, as of May 2003, the state legislature had not informed school districts of the amount of money they would receive from the state budget.

We recommend the district have negotiating teams organized and training completed prior to the earliest possible date negotiations can begin, according to the respective contracts. Training should include the roles and responsibilities of the bargaining team. Further, the district should actively initiate negotiations once budget constraints are known.

Contract negotiations have been characterized as adversarial by the unions. The review team interviewed the president of the teachers' union and the president of the support personnel union to solicit feedback on the district's negotiation process. In May 2003, the support personnel union was still in the midst of "full book" negotiations for the 2002-03 contract. Although current contract expired in July 2002 the school district and union will work under the terms of the expired contract, until a new agreement is completed and ratified. Bargaining on this contract began in August 2002. The bargaining teams had almost reached a consensus on language changes and were preparing to negotiate salaries in April 2003. In May 2003, the district was still actively negotiating the support personnel contract for 2002-03 after the union had threatened to go to impasse over salary issues. Once the salaries are negotiated and ratified, the district will be responsible for retroactive pay for all members of the bargaining unit back to July 2002.

Should these negotiations go to mediation, this will represent the third year in a row that a mediator has been invoked to resolve contract talks. Both unions have described the district's negotiating style as adversarial and one of the presidents characterized the district's negotiating style as "bare minimum and antagonistic." The executive director of human resources responded that this is in response to the unions' sometimes excessive demands, especially for salary.

The district provided the review team with evidence that it has worked and trained with all its unions on the collaborative model of negotiations in 1995. The district provided a multi day hands-on training using Dr. Jerome Barrett's "PAST Model" (principles, assumptions, steps, and techniques). In addition, subsequent collaborative negotiating training was provided under a grant from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS). The training—"interest-based bargaining"—was conducted over several weekends and involved management and the three unions. These multi-session training activities have not been completed since the initial training in 1995. Collaborative negotiations involves a tremendous amount of time not only in training, but in the time needed to negotiate an issue. It is easy for either party to resort to the collective mode of bargaining, especially on salary issues. However, the district provided no comparison of the time invested in negotiations using collaborative negotiations and other techniques. Given the amount of time currently being invested in negotiations, further training in collaborative negotiations may be appropriate.

We recommend the district require that all bargaining team members attend training on collaborative negotiation styles at least once during each contract cycle, which is three years and work with each of the unions to accomplish joint training when possible.

¹² Although the district does not initiate negotiations, neither statute nor case law prohibits the district from formally initiating negotiations with any of its unions.

7 Facilities Construction

Summary

The Collier County School District is using 20 of the 24 facilities construction best practices. All items in the facilities five-year work plan prepared in 1998 have been completed, additional projects have been added, and all new construction and major renovation projects have been brought in on time and on budget. Facility users are satisfied with the condition and suitability of schools for educational purposes. There are no major deferred maintenance issues outstanding in the district, and the district has a proactive program for the replacement of major building systems as they reach the end of their expected or actual useful lives. The district adheres to high standards for safety and security in facilities. The district has an effective and commendable process for site selection and acquisition that is based on long-range (20-year) planning. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its facilities construction program, the district should establish a plan for the evaluation and potential reduction of new construction costs, develop a consistent program for facilities post-occupancy evaluations, develop effective accountability mechanisms and establish benchmarks and collect and report appropriate performance data relative to those benchmarks.



As seen in Exhibit 7-1, the district could realize significant savings by reducing the cost of new construction. These savings are based on the premise that the district could reduce its cost of new construction from the level of existing planned expenditures (for projects that have not yet begun) to the average anticipated cost of new construction throughout the state of Florida.

Exhibit 7-1

Our Review Identified that the District Could Reduce the Costs of Facilities Construction

Best Practice Number	Fiscal Impact: Savings					Total
	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Year 2006-07	Year 2007-08	
12 Reduce new construction Costs	\$0	\$8,024,000	\$4,458,000	\$0	\$20,136,000	\$32,618,000

Determining whether to take advantage of this opportunity is a district decision and should be based on many factors including district needs, public input and school board priorities. We found that the board has historically made decisions to build facilities that exceed state standards and has actively participated in the selection of prototypical schools to be built. Therefore, the decision to take advantage of this opportunity may require a change in board policy, rather than an action at the departmental level. If the district implements these cost savings, it would be able to redirect the funds to other priorities, such as putting more money into the classroom or addressing deficiencies identified in this report.

Background

Background information on the district's facilities operations and needs are presented in this section. The first section presents general information relating to facilities utilization. The second section presents information on the age and condition of the district's facilities inventory. Next, information on the district's capital budget is presented. A final section presents information on how the district facilities construction operations are managed.

Facilities Utilization. As shown in Exhibit 7-2, based on the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) data dated December 23, 2002, the district has a total of 47,763 satisfactory student stations (42,737 permanent student stations and 5,026 student stations located in relocatables) across its 38 regular schools. With a 2002-03 (March 25, 2003 data) enrollment of 37,586 students, the utilization rate of district facilities is 81%. If only permanent student stations are counted, however, the utilization rate increases to 90%.

Exhibit 7-2 Overall the District Uses 81% of Its Capacity

Description	Number	Total Satisfactory Student Stations	Full Capacity	Satisfactory Permanent Student Stations	Capacity of Permanent Facilities	Enrollment 3/25/03	Permanent Area (Gross Square Feet)
Elementary	22	23,632	23,632	20,741	20,741	18,455	2,087,174
Middle	8	11,745	11,158	11,140	10,583	8,885	1,155,692
Senior High	5	11,656	11,073	10,126	9,620	9,808	1,354,646
Everglades City (PK-12)	1	566	538	566	538	187	76,539
The Learning Center (PK)	1	164	164	164	164	251	56,580
Total	37	47,763					
Vocational Technical	1	1,009	959	614	583	N/A	135,480
Immokalee Comm (K-3)	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	112	N/A
Adult Education	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	24,195
Charter Schools	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	435	N/A
Special Schools	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	16	N/A
Administration	N/A	-	-	-	-		124,881
Maintenance/Transport	N/A	-	-	-	-		55,784
Alternative Education	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	500	N/A
Total	19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,063	340,340
Grand Total	56	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	38,649	5,070,971

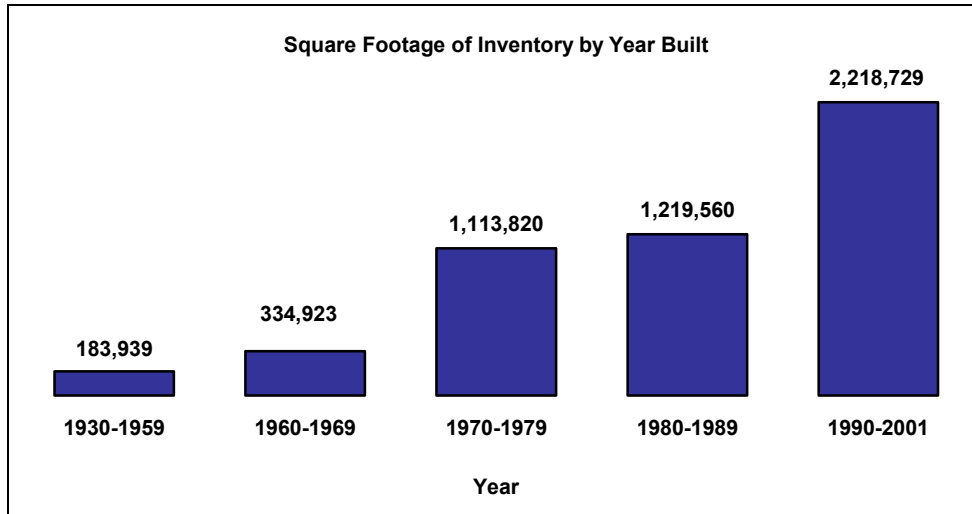
Notes: The Learning Center also includes 188 student stations reported in the FISH data as being in "Unsatisfactory Condition." Some figures do not add appropriately due to rounding. "N/A" used in individual line items indicates that data was not available, or that using available data from another source would be misleading to the reader. Totals do not include any data for line items listed as "N/A."

Sources: Number Schools and Enrollment: Collier County School District Web Site, Membership end of Month #8, Effective dates: March 25, 2003 - April 29, 2003, (except number of charter schools, adult education and voc/tech from other sources); Student Stations and Permanent Area: Florida Inventory of School Houses, District Provided Hard Copy dated December 23 2002; Capacity: Calculated Based on FISH Number of Student Stations--Elementary Schools 100%, All Other Schools 95%.

Facilities Inventory. Collier County School District has 56 schools; including adult education, alternative, and special schools, and encompasses 5,070,971 square feet, including ancillary facilities, but excluding alternative, charter, and special schools. The average age of the facilities is 18 years, with 2,218,729 square feet completed since 1990, as shown in Exhibit 7-3. All items in the facilities five-year work plan prepared in 1998 have been completed, additional projects have been added and all new construction and major renovation projects have been brought in on time and on budget. Interviews and

spot site visits indicate facility users are well satisfied with the condition and suitability of schools for educational purposes, there are no major deferred maintenance issues outstanding in the district and the district has a proactive program for the replacement of major building systems as they reach the end of their expected or actual useful lives. The district adheres to high standards for safety and security in facilities.

**Exhibit 7-3
Age of Collier County Public School Buildings**



Source: Florida Inventory of School Houses, District Provided Hard Copy dated December 23, 2002.

Capital Budget. The district’s facilities five-year work plan calls for the construction of two high schools, two middle schools and two elementary schools in the next five years, as well as multiple remodeling and addition projects. The district’s capital budget for the next five years is shown in Exhibit 7-4.

**Exhibit 7-4
The Bulk of the District’s Capital Budget for the Next Five Years Is Devoted to New School Construction and Remodeling, Renovations and Repairs**

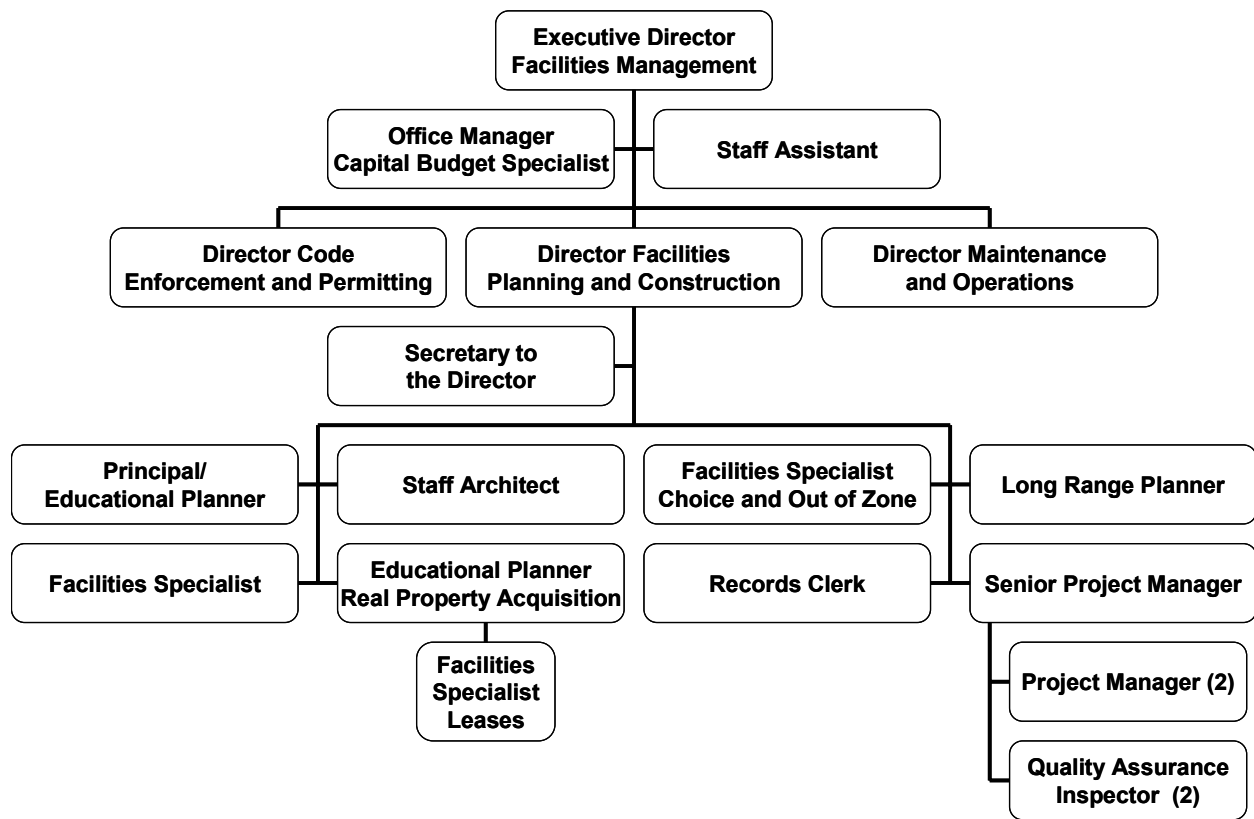
Project Descriptions	2002-03 Projected Budget	2003-04 Projected Budget	2004-05 Projected Budget	2005-06 Projected Budget	2006-07 Projected Budget	Totals
New School Construction	123,025,000	-	18,497,000	26,500,000	-	168,022,000
New School Additions	-	8,600,000	3,700,000	-	-	12,300,000
Remodeling, Renovations, Repairs	8,877,400	4,583,900	4,764,500	4,382,500	4,852,300	27,460,600
Architecture/Engineering	1,300,000	1,231,000	1,527,000	185,000	2,901,000	7,144,000
Equipment and Fixtures	8,474,200	15,840,000	9,098,300	6,857,440	9,593,180	49,863,120
Technology	4,911,931	5,061,094	1,958,989	1,274,785	2,771,089	15,977,888
Salaries and Benefits	3,418,555	3,610,823	3,529,376	3,509,149	3,808,242	17,876,145
Land Purchase	7,000,000	5,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	21,000,000
Satellite Central Services	6,000,000	600,000	6,000,000	400,000	3,200,000	16,200,000
Total	163,007,086	44,526,817	52,075,165	46,108,874	30,125,811	335,843,753

Note: the 5/10/20 Year Capital Outlay Plan does not reconcile with the approved 2002-03 Annual Budget (as described in detail later in this document).

Source: 5/10/20 Year Capital Outlay Plan, Collier County Public Schools, dated April 11, 2002.

Organization and Management. As shown in Exhibit 7-5, at full staffing the facilities planning and construction department is comprised of a total of 16 people headed by the director of facilities planning and construction who reports directly to the executive director of facilities management. The executive director of facilities management reports to the associate superintendent for operational services, who in turn reports to the superintendent.

**Exhibit 7-5
Facilities Planning and Construction
is a Division of the Department of Facilities Management**



Source: The Collier County School District.

Activities of particular interest

There are a number of examples within the district where the facilities planning and construction department incorporates practices that are excellent examples of efficient and well-planned business activities.

The district does an excellent job of providing physical space for expansion through the use of relocatable facilities. All campuses have an identified area on the site plan for the location or future location of relocatables. For all new construction, this identified area includes utilities stubbed to the location and fire hydrants sited to allow close proximity.

The district has an effective and commendable process for site selection and acquisition that is based on long-range (20-year) planning. It is proactive in identifying and acquiring sites for future needs. Currently, the district owns sixteen sites with the potential to provide for seventeen schools, one service center, one special education facility and the expansion of a bus compound. The current land inventory is more than adequate to satisfy the majority of the district's needs projected over the next 20 years.

The district incorporates effective safety features in its new construction, remodeling and renovation projects. The district works closely with the sheriff's department to design schools with safety and security features prescribed by crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) standards. The Collier County Sheriff's Department (Crime Prevention Bureau) makes recommendations for facility designs and improvements and sits in on school planning meetings. Many schools are designed with security systems where appropriate and pads with electricity, water and sewer for sheriff's deputy trailers. The district has installed a state-of-the-art remotely controllable closed circuit TV system with wireless camera activation at a pilot site. If the pilot installation meets the district's expectations, the same model will be repeated at all schools.

The district, Collier County, and the appropriate municipalities have all entered into inter-local agreements regarding permitting and inspections. These agreements apply to permanent structures, transportable buildings and maintenance work. Under the terms of the agreements, the district's work must comply with the currently adopted editions of the *Florida Building Code*. The agreements provide that the county or municipality review permit applications, issue building permits and make appropriate inspections on a priority basis for the district. Both permanent buildings and transportables must have appropriately issued certificates of occupancy before the district can occupy any building. In addition, the district must request and be issued an annual maintenance permit at each site. These inter-local agreements are cost-effective and efficient, provide for third-party oversight and review of the district's construction work and are an exemplary model of the use of inter-local agreements and responsibilities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Facilities Construction Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Construction Planning	1. The district has effective long-range planning processes.	Yes	7-8
	2. When developing the annual Facilities Five-Year Work Program the district evaluates alternatives to minimize the need for new construction.	Yes	7-10
	3. The Facilities Five-Year Work Program establishes budgetary plans and priorities.	Yes	7-11
	4. The school board ensures responsiveness to the community through open communication about the construction program and the Facilities Five-Year Work Program.	Yes	7-13
	5. The district has an effective site selection process based on expected growth patterns.	Yes	7-14
	6. The board considers the most economical and practical sites for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as need to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to development and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties.	Yes	7-15
Construction Funding	7. Funds collected for school projects were raised appropriately.	Yes	7-16
	8. The district approves and uses 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 Facilities Five-Year Work Program.	Yes	7-16
Construction Design	9. The district develops thorough descriptions and educational specifications for each construction project.	Yes	7-17
	10. The architectural design fulfills the building specification needs as determined by the district.	Yes	7-18
	11. New construction, remodeling and renovations incorporate effective safety features.	Yes	7-20
	12. The district minimizes construction and maintenance and operations costs through the use of cost-effective designs, prototype school designs and frugal construction practices.	No	7-20
	13. The district has effective management processes for construction projects.	Yes	7-26
New Construction, Renovation and Remodeling	14. District planning provides realistic time frames for implementation that are coordinated with the opening of schools.	Yes	7-28
	15. All projects started after March 1, 2002, comply with the <i>Florida Building Code</i> .	Yes	7-29
	16. The district requires appropriate inspection of all school construction projects.	Yes	7-29
	17. The district retains appropriate professionals to assist in facility planning, design and construction.	Yes	7-30
	18. The district follows generally accepted and legal contracting practices to control costs.	Yes	7-30

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
	19. The district minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to control project costs.	Yes	7-32
	20. The architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project.	Yes	7-32
Facility Occupancy and Evaluation	21. The district conducts a comprehensive orientation to the new facility prior to its use so that users better understand the building design and function.	Yes	7-33
	22. 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.	No	7-34
	23. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the construction program.	No	7-35
	24. The district regularly evaluates facilities construction operations based on established benchmarks and implements improvements to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.	No	7-38

CONSTRUCTION PLANNING

Best Practice 1: Using

The district has effective long-range planning processes.

Long-range facilities planning enables a district to identify its critical needs, establish strategies and plan for the allocation of resources to address these needs. To ensure that all critical needs are identified, the district should obtain broad stakeholder input by establishing a facilities planning committee, which includes school district personnel, parents, real estate and construction professionals and other community stakeholders. The decisions made during the planning process should be in writing and the resulting plans should address facilities needs from 5 to 20 years into the future. The planning process should assess enrollment projections, plant capacity, sufficiency of funds and other relevant information. Primary responsibility for facilities planning should be assigned to a district employee and that person should be responsible for developing and maintaining demographic information that can be used to predict facilities needs. Because the Florida inventory of school houses is used to report plant capacity and is used to help determine district facilities funding levels, it must accurately reflect the capacities and physical condition of the existing facilities. In addition, to refine projections with more current information, there should be an annual update to the facilities five-year work program, which establishes short-term capital budget plans and construction priorities.

The Collier County School District's long-range planning process is effective. The district has assigned responsibilities and authority appropriately for facilities planning, and personnel who are well qualified for their respective responsibilities and meet the requirements of their job descriptions staff planning positions. The planning process includes a written 5/10/20 Year Capital Outlay Plan that describes in detail future facility, renovation and improvement needs of the district. This plan forms the basis for the district's detailed facilities five-year work program and the initial basis for the district's annual budget. However, the process suffers from a lack of external oversight, consistent application and documentation and summary presentation data that would make information accessible to those not intimately familiar with the planning process. Although the district is using this best practice, there are four areas in which the district could improve interactions among the board, the superintendent and district staff.

The district should expand the membership of its facilities planning committee.

The district does not currently utilize a facilities planning committee that includes members outside of district personnel. The district does, however, use an internal facilities planning committee comprised of five members: the executive director for facilities management; the director of facilities planning and construction; the associate superintendent for operational services; the director of purchasing; and one additional member on an ad-hoc basis, depending on the project. Because the former board was comprised of a number of members that were familiar with the planning and construction process, the use of a formal arm's-length committee may have been cumbersome without adding significant value. The current board is in the process of educating itself with regard to the planning and construction process through a series of workshops that are open to the public but do not include board action. The result of these workshops may be that the board makes a decision to reinstate a formal committee as described. The lack of a committee does not in and of itself indicate an ineffective facilities construction program. In general, the effectiveness of the program should be measured by its ability to deliver projects that meet the educational needs of the district, that are timely and cost effective and that satisfy the demands of users, the board and the community. The effectiveness of the program is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. A committee comprised of district personnel and outside community members does, however, provide an additional level of oversight and accountability that may be useful to the district. Our review indicates that district controls for new construction are primarily internal and begin with the accountability of the project managers. Additional accountability moves up the organization chart to

include the director of facilities planning and construction, the executive director for facilities management, the associate superintendent for operational services and ultimately the superintendent and the board. Action Plans 7-7, 7-8 and 7-9 (Best Practices 23 and 24) describe steps needed to establish additional accountability.

We recommend that the district expand the membership of its current facilities planning committee to include parents, construction professionals, and other community stakeholders as appropriate.

The district can enhance its operations by better communicating its process for demographic projections to the state demographer in order to achieve consensus among projections.

The process for demographic projections is quite detailed in its mechanical manipulation of the numbers. According to district personnel, overall demographic projections are based on information provided by the Florida Department of Education and are updated regularly as required by state law. However, the state's projections are not provided by campus and the district believes that state's projections are often low. Therefore, the district considers additional information based on number of dwelling units, population trends, planned development and other data to project population by campus.

We recommend that the district analyze the historical accuracy of the projections it prepares internally and those prepared by the state. To the extent that the district can determine that its internal projections are more accurate than those provided by the state, the district should inform the state demographer of any additional data in the district's possession that might improve the accuracy of state projections.

The district can improve its calculation and reporting of capacity data.

Inconsistencies in the district's reporting of school capacity make it difficult to make any conclusions about overall capacity utilization at the schools using internally prepared district documents. For example, the capacity reported in the facilities five-year work program is based on *permanent* facilities for 2001-02. While the data year is correctly labeled in the document, schedule 2(a) purports to include both *permanent* and *relocatable* facilities but it does not. The other major planning document is the 5/10/20 Year Capital Plan, which summarizes capacities for 2002-03 (a year later even though the document is prepared earlier than the five-year work program) and gives no indication as to whether the capacity shown includes permanent or total capacity. While these documents are used for different purposes, the inconsistency makes a summary determination of capacity, based on internal documents, difficult for the layperson.

A review of *external* data available from the Department of Education indicates that the district makes relatively good use of its building capacity compared to its peer districts. Based on April 19, 2002 state data, the district has an overall utilization rate of 82.3%, based on both permanent and relocatable facilities. While this utilization places the district slightly below average for the state, it ranks Collier 20th of 67 school districts or in the top 30% of all districts in the state. A review of peer districts, as shown in Exhibit 7-6, indicates that the district ranks fourth in terms of capacity utilization among the six districts analyzed for peer comparison purposes. In Exhibit 7-6, "COFTE" represents Capital Outlay Full Time Equivalent students.

**Exhibit 7-6
The District Ranks Fourth in Terms of Capacity Utilization among Peer Districts**

District	Permanent Student Stations	Relocatable Student Stations	Total Stations	Capacity	COFTE	Utilization	Rank
Lee	62,978	2,999	65,977	61,803	56,745	91.8%	1
Pasco	52,255	6,736	58,991	54,516	48,114	88.3%	2
Osceola	39,182	7,138	46,320	39,132	32,299	82.5%	3
Collier	40,149	2,752	42,901	41,456	34,129	82.3%	4
Manatee	41,774	6,436	48,210	44,508	35,675	80.2%	5
Lake	35,166	7,754	42,920	36,501	28,966	79.4%	6

Note: Data included in this exhibit does not match the data in Exhibit 7-2 because of the use of different sources and reporting dates.

Source: http://www.myfloridaeducation.com/edfacil/fish/r_summary_data.htm, Last Updated on April 19, 2002 By Dr. Charles L. Wooten.

We recommend that the district adopt a policy to consistently review its district-wide capacity utilization on a regular basis and report capacity utilization to the board in a clear manner that indicates how the district compares to state data and peer districts.

The district can enhance its operations by establishing a formal process and checklist for uniform, routine evaluation of existing schools.

Primarily the school center plant managers and principals assess the physical condition of facilities. Additionally, in-house health and safety inspectors and local fire department fire safety inspectors physically inspect the schools annually according to the state requirements for educational facilities (SREF) checklist for fire and safety. Because the major facilities stakeholders (i.e. principal and plant operator) provide evaluations on an annual basis, fire and safety inspectors conduct routine inspections and routine maintenance and systems replacement is covered in the district’s facilities five-year work program, the majority of physical plant needs are presumably addressed annually. However, these evaluations may suffer from a lack of training on the part of principals and plant operators and from inconsistency in the level of detail provided. By allowing a free-form format for evaluations, the quality of information may vary widely. In addition, without specific written standards for educational suitability, each evaluation is subject to the relative experience of the evaluator.

We recommend that the district develop a uniform checklist for physical condition, educational suitability and technology readiness and perform an evaluation of the district’s schools to determine how each school measures up to this checklist. This routine evaluation should provide an objective measure of the needs of each school and establish a baseline for functional equity between schools.

Best Practice 2: Using

When developing the annual facilities five-year work program, the district evaluates alternatives to minimize the need for new construction.

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 are ways in which a district can avoid the high costs associated with building new space. Alternative methods of using existing facilities can help to mitigate the peaks and valleys in future student enrollments.

The Collier County School District has developed internal processes that include the active consideration of alternatives for new construction. The district continually looks at options to reduce the need for new

construction that include: rezoning (constant rezoning as a result of new construction, as well as occasional spot rezoning), the use of portables and shifting programs. The district utilizes an educational planner in its analysis. Further, before deciding to add any relocatable facility to an existing campus, the decision is reviewed by one of three assistant superintendents who consider overall building operations and analyze utilization reports available at middle and high school campuses.¹ In addition, the district utilizes joint-use agreements that share the construction, operation and maintenance costs of a multi-use infrastructure with local government to further reduce the construction and operating costs of schools.

Although the district is using this best practice, it can enhance its operations by better documenting the process it uses to consider alternatives to new construction. Written analysis was provided as part of this study indicating that the district has recently documented the consideration of alternatives to new construction for a given project, the analysis of growth options for Golden Gate and Golden Terrace Elementary Schools. While the option recommended and chosen for this project was more construction intensive than other options, the documentation provided district justification for the recommendation. We believe that the district should adopt a policy to provide similar documentation for future projects involving new construction, in order to allow for continued public input into the process.

We recommend that when all new facilities are proposed to the board, the recommendation for new construction be accompanied by a written evaluation of the alternatives to new construction that have been considered and the impact of these alternatives on the district.

Best Practice 3: Using

The facilities five-year work program establishes budgetary plans and priorities.

A facilities five-year work program, mandated by Florida law (s. 1013.35, *Florida Statutes*), should be prepared and submitted to the Department of Education. It is primarily a current-year budget document with an additional four-year projection of anticipated revenues and new and continuing capital projects. The plan details a schedule of major projects intended to maintain the educational plant and ancillary facilities of the district properly and to provide an adequate number of satisfactory student stations for the projected student enrollments. Information developed and contained in the five-year educational plant survey is the basis for the work plan. A five-year work plan is not and should not become a district's strategic plan but it is an important element to be used in the planning process. A five-year view of capital needs is inadequate and reactive in nature for a school district; a much longer-term view, a strategic plan, is necessary to assure that the district will develop adequate funding and make appropriate land acquisition decisions. Capital project priorities such as site acquisition, site improvement, construction, remodeling, renovation, and maintenance should be established in the strategic plan and linked to the district's anticipated revenues and budget projections through the five-year work plan.

The Collier County School District's five-year work plan establishes budgetary plans and priorities. However, the district does not manage its budget to the level of detail provided in the five-year plan, nor does the district report the budgets in the five-year plan in a manner consistent with the annual budget. Although the district uses this best practice, there are three areas in which the district can improve its performance.

The district can better link and explain budget documents.

The district should improve the linkage and explanation of budget information in various internal documents and documents provided for state and public reporting. These documents include the facilities five-year work program (dated October 1, 2002, document certification dated September 19, 2002), the

¹ While the effectiveness of shifting programs, rezoning and scheduling changes is difficult to compare across districts, there is data available from the state that allows a comparison of the use of relocatable facilities. Based on a review of state data, the district houses 6.4% of its students in relocatable facilities compared to 12.6% statewide. While it appears that the board has made a conscious effort to reduce the number of students in relocatable facilities, this has the effect of increasing the requirement for new construction. This appears to be a conscious decision by the board and supported by the community.

Facilities Construction

5/10/20 Year Capital Outlay Plan (April 11, 2002), and the annual budget (2002-2003, dated September 17, 2002), as well as other internally prepared documents used as a basis for comprehensive planning. While the cost figures shown in these documents are of similar magnitude, the documents are often inconsistent and differ from one another on a line-item basis and in total. For example, the approved 2002-03 final budget includes costs for renovations at Vineyards Elementary School, Shadowlawn Elementary School and Tommy Barfield Elementary School. The five-year educational plan does not include these renovation costs. While some differences in the data relate to the timing of the preparation of the documents, this does not account for all discrepancies.

Some of these documents included line item detail (including the facilities five-year work program submitted to the state); some did not. Based on interviews with the executive director for facilities management, the district manages to the total budget category (e.g., carpet), but not to the individual line items. Budget items are approved on a line item basis, but may be subject to future revision. While differences may exist for various reasons that are easily explainable by personnel with inside knowledge, various budgets with different line item totals tend to be confusing to the outsider and make management oversight difficult. In fact, various explanations for budget category differences given by various personnel we spoke to differed from one another and failed to actually reconcile any two numbers to one another.

The facilities five-year work program identifies sources of funds and itemizes the costs of facility needs. However, inconsistencies between the various planning and budget documents indicate that the five-year plan does not accurately itemize all of the district's facility needs and does not, as titled in the document, match the 2002-03 district approved budget. The "actual 2002-03 budget" in the facilities five-year work program, dated October 1, 2002, is not an accurate summary of the final 2002-03 budget, dated September 17, 2002.

The executive director for Business Services is responsible for preparation of the annual budget and the sign-off on the facilities five-year work program, along with the district superintendent. Therefore, the implementation of our recommendations related to this issue will require the cooperation of other departments, and may fall outside the boundaries of the facilities department.

We recommend that the district maintain a single and consistent set of budget document files and continually reconcile changes from one budget or document to another. We further recommend that, when reporting various budgets to the state, the board, or the public, the most recent or accurate budget be reported. For example, we recommend that the district review its reporting procedures in the facilities five-year work program and report planned expenditures as accurately as possible and in accordance with the district's actual adopted annual budget. If budgets differ from other available documents purporting to show the same item, notes should be added, where practical, explaining differences or changes from the prior document. The district should determine on a case-by-case basis which documents should be reported on a line-item basis and which should be reported by category. Where documents are reported by category, but built by line item, accurate files should be kept that document the details used for the category-basis reporting.

The district should determine whether facilities are treated equitably.

As described earlier in this chapter, no survey for existing facilities was made available that would allow the determination of equitable or inequitable treatment of areas within the district.

Based on the results of recommendations associated with Best Practice 1 of this chapter, we recommend that the district make a determination, based on written and consistent documentation, as to whether or not school facilities are equitable across the district. Based on the results of this determination, the district should consider whether to include equity between schools as a basis for the prioritization of projects.

The district can improve its use of escalation factors.

The district uses escalation factors inconsistently in the estimation of future construction costs. For example, the budgets in facilities five-year work program for schools planned from 2004 to 2008 use escalation factors ranging from 2% (High School “DDD,” 2007-08) to 11% (new middle school “CC,” 2005-06). Based on interviews with the executive director for facilities management, budgets are first calculated based on a consistent escalation factor of 10%. The budgets are later adjusted on an as-needed basis, prior to the development of the 5/10/20 Year Capital Outlay Plan, by the executive director of Business Services based on the appearance of reasonableness. This process allows for a certain amount of arbitrary judgment that is neither well documented nor quantifiably justified.

We recommend that the district annually adopt a reasonable estimated escalation factor to account for inflation, document the basis for the factor and apply this escalation factor consistently to budgets as appropriate.

Best Practice 4: Using

The school board ensures responsiveness to the community through open communication about the construction program and the facilities five-year work program.

School districts should be accountable for and provide information to parents and other taxpayers on the performance and cost of their major programs, including the facilities construction program. A school district should provide the public with clear and accurate information regarding its capital program, such as information about planned projects, the priorities it has set for future projects and how those priorities were determined. A district should provide a complete explanation of how the planned projects will help the district meet its educational, site acquisition, construction, remodeling, renovation and maintenance needs. Effective communications with district stakeholders helps earn the support of the public for its capital program. Typically, districts that successfully communicate their capital program priorities hold regular school board meetings at which information regarding the construction program is provided and clear explanations of each construction project are made available in a format that allows for public input.

The Collier County School District makes decisions about its construction program and five-year plan in open and public forums and in general uses this best practice. Public hearings are held regarding the capital budget workshop (the basis for the 5/10/20 Year Capital Plan). While information is provided and available at these public hearings, it would be very difficult for the general public to draw conclusions or glean detailed project data from the documents provided. Project details and summary documentation describing individual construction projects are not generally available. In fact, as previously described in Best Practice 3 of this chapter, the detailed information that is reported publicly may actually be unintentionally misleading to the public. While the district is using this best practice, there are two areas in which the district can improve community responsiveness.

The district should better document how facilities decisions are made and how architects and prototypical designs are chosen.

The review team examined the materials used to decide to build the new Golden Gate prototype high school. A request for proposals was prepared asking architects to submit various prior construction projects for consideration as a new prototype. The facilities department then screened the proposals and at the request of the board submitted all responsive proposals to the board for review and decision. The board interviewed each architect and did not seek the input or recommendations of the facilities department. No summary documents were requested by or prepared for the board highlighting the various attributes of the designs submitted by the architects; however, each architect presented the attributes of their designs and site visits were made to the existing schools. Based on interviews with district personnel, no detailed data is routinely provided at board work sessions; board members must request additional information that is then made available as-needed.

The lack of a consistent format and lack of summary comparisons of the various projects acts to make a comprehensive and quantitative analysis of the attributes of the various designs very difficult, if not impossible. It appears as though individual board members made qualitative and quantitative judgments as to what was considered important in the decision process. While the board decision was public and presentations were made in a public forum, it is difficult to understand how the general public could have had any meaningful input into the analysis and decision, especially without any summary descriptions of projects or materials provided for public consumption. We believe that the board should request and consider detailed data provided by the facilities department and rely in part on the expertise of facilities department personnel when selecting architects and facilities prototypes.

We recommend that the board actively seek the recommendations of the facilities department in choosing architects and prototypical designs. These recommendations should be made in a format that is objective, measurable, and appropriate for both board and public review. Prototypical designs should be evaluated for total cost, area per student station, cost per square foot, educational suitability, operating costs, aesthetics, and other factors that meet the needs of the public, the students and users of the facility, and board policy.

The district does not report the attributes of approved construction projects in a format easily understandable by the public.

The board approved a “facility list” as part of the facilities work program educational facilities survey, last updated July 1998. This list provides a summary of space types and their programmed area in square feet and serves as a basis for new construction until revised by the board. Beyond this process, new construction projects are based on review and approval of prototype designs. While these prototype schools are established designs and are available for inspection, the district does not have summary data describing the schools at a level of detail appropriate for public review and response.

We recommend that the district develop a plan for the reporting of construction projects in a format that more easily allows for public response. For major projects, a summary report should include, but not be limited to, such items as project name and location, architect, general contractor and/or construction manager, budget, grade levels served, capacity, square footage by space type, a general description of the facilities and educational requirements to be provided and other data that may assist in describing the project.

Best Practice 5: Using

The district has an effective site selection process based on expected growth patterns.

The appropriate and timely selection of sites for new facilities is a critical issue for a district’s capital program and ensures that land is available when and where it is needed. A district should use the demographic projections to identify land in areas, which may require school facilities as the district grows or needs change. Early identification of appropriate parcels will allow the district to acquire the land well in advance of construction needs. When multiple sites are to be considered, the district should use the facilities planning committee, which includes experts and community stakeholders, to review the proposed sites.

The Collier County School District has an effective process for site selection and acquisition that is based on long-range (20-year) planning. The district’s current land inventory, of 16 sites, will satisfy the vast majority of the district’s needs projected over the next 20 years. According to the facilities standard operating procedures manual, the district has a well thought out and comprehensive methodology for the identification and acquisition of sites. The process of land acquisition generally follows the following methodology:

- the general area for potential new school sites is identified based on demographic projections;

- a summary review of the general area is performed;
- potential specific sites are identified and owners are contacted to determine a preliminary indication of their willingness to sell the parcel(s);
- for sites that appear to be candidates based the preliminary analysis, an appraisal and feasibility study are ordered;
- contract negotiations are entered into with potential sellers; and
- if contract negotiations are unsuccessful, the board considers eminent domain.

The district has provided monthly minutes for the meetings of the real estate acquisition committee indicating comprehensive review and input from the committee members. An analysis of maps, documents, meeting minutes and various planning materials made available as part of this Best Practice review indicates a comprehensive approach to site acquisition that includes long-range vision on behalf of the district.

Best Practice 6: Using

The board considers the most economical and practical sites for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as the need to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to development and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties.

An effectively managed district acquires the right property for its facilities and makes economical land acquisitions. To accomplish this, a district should ensure that the land meets its needs as to location and that the site complies with the requirements of Florida law as it pertains to land for educational facilities. Moreover, the price should be reasonable. In determining the appropriate price, the district should consider factors beyond the cost of the land itself such as the need for site development and improvement or other work that may be incidental to construction.

The Collier County School District considers the most economical and practical sites for current and anticipated needs including the factors described in this best practice. Based on interviews with the district's educational facilities planner, there are generally few parcels within the county that meet all of the district's planning criteria. Full feasibility studies are often prepared prior to entering into final contract negotiations and most obstacles to development are identified prior to establishing the final purchase price. When more than one site meets the criteria, final location may be determined in the acquisition phase. For example, for elementary school "F," two sites met all development criteria, feasibility studies and appraisals were prepared and contracts were sent to land owners. Ultimately one site was abandoned in favor of another as a result of acquisition problems and potential acquisition expense.

The board considers condemnation where appropriate to acquire selected sites. When considering a parcel for condemnation, the facilities management department routinely prepares for the board a comparison of appraised values, the proposed purchase offer and the cost of condemnation. The district obtains independent appraisals as required by Florida law. In fact, the district orders appraisals on all parcels acquired by the district and requires board super majority vote (4/5) on any parcel acquisition price that exceeds appraised value, regardless of the value of the parcel. Florida law requires one appraisal for each purchase exceeding \$100,000 and two appraisals for each purchase greater than \$500,000. In the one case we reviewed, the district prepared two appraisals even though the parcel values ranged from \$2,500 to \$19,500 and no appraisal would have been required under state law.

CONSTRUCTION FUNDING

Best Practice 7: Using

Funds collected for school projects were raised appropriately.

Funding for district capital projects is commonly derived from a variety of revenue sources, which include property taxes, bond referendums, sales surtaxes and certificates of participation. A district should be able to demonstrate that each revenue source is used as authorized in the law. For instance, a district must be able to show that if local bond referendum proceeds were used, the scope of each project was spelled out in the bond referendum; and, that if local sales surtax revenue was used to finance any project, the scope of that project was spelled out in the sales surtax referendum resolution advertisement. The district should have evaluated the advantages and drawbacks of alternative methods for funding and financing construction projects when developing its capital-planning budget. The best way to ensure the greatest amount of construction funding is for the district to first maximize the use of local revenue alternatives.

The Collier County School District raises funds appropriately for school projects. A review of the district's historical and projected financial data indicates that the district has utilized and plans to continue to first utilize the maximum use of local revenue alternatives. This district has historically had available funds to meet its capital needs and has budgeted funds available in the future to meet its capital needs. The district does not have a local general obligation bond issue or a local sales-surtax issue.

Best Practice 8: Using

The district approves and uses 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 facilities five-year work program.

A school district must use tax revenues appropriately and for their intended purposes. All capital projects, including new construction, renovation, remodeling and site acquisition, development and improvement projects may have separate funding sources with differing expenditure requirements. Districts typically rely on a finance officer to ensure that revenues generated for use as construction or site acquisition funds have been collected as authorized by Florida law and are being expended for lawful purposes. Generally, the district finance officer ensures that funds from the Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund are used for construction of educational plant space with total student station costs, including change orders, which meet the allowable amount specified in Florida law. The finance officer ensures that the school tax defined in Florida law as two-mill money is only used for construction, maintenance, or other authorized capital or facilities purposes. The finance officer is responsible for the timely use of state funds, avoiding reversion of any unspent revenues. During the budget process, the finance officer should ensure that all available capital resources are applied towards the facilities five-year work program and limited use capital funds are not diverted to other, lower priority allowable uses.

The Collier County School District approves and uses construction funds only after determining that the projects are in compliance with the lawfully designated purpose of the funds. All reports are submitted as required. The district's external auditor found no violations of laws, rules, regulations; improper or illegal expenditures; improper or inadequate accounting procedures; or other inaccuracies or shortages. In addition, no funds reverted to the state for the year ended June 30, 2002.

Although the district uses this best practice, there is one area in which the district can enhance and possibly reduce the cost of facilities construction. Specifically, the district should review and consider the reduction of its costs per student station for new construction. The district obtained a state waiver from the cost ceiling established by Florida law. The waiver request, dated April 27, 1999, included certification that all of the district's educational plant needs for the next five years can be met from capital outlay sources that the district reasonably expects to receive. Further, the request was based on the

premise that it is impossible to properly allocate funding for the purchase of an appropriate amount of technology equipment to provide a truly technology enriched environment for the district's students without the waiver.

In 2001, the district constructed two elementary schools, Calusa Park Elementary and Osceola Elementary, at a cost per student station of \$17,858 and \$17,439, respectively. The maximum cost per student station as of June 2001 (as specified by Florida law) was \$12,755. Therefore, for its most recent schools, the district exceeded the maximum expenditure by \$5,103 (40%) and \$4,684 (37%). While the district may have purchased technology equipment that provided a truly technology enriched environment, this equipment did not account for the entire increase in cost per station. The entire average budget for *all* furniture and equipment for the two schools was \$2,538 per student station.

We recommend that the facilities staff review its cost per student station for new construction projects, compare these costs to state and peer standards and averages and determine the reasons that the district exceeds the cost per student station established by Florida law. This analysis should be made available to the board when the district requests board approval for new construction projects. The facilities planning and construction department should provide an indication to the board that proposed cost in excess of the amounts specified by Florida law are (or are not) consistent with the terms of the waiver requested from the state.

Note: The district should implement this recommendation in conjunction with Action Plan 7-1, which pertains to the evaluation of construction costs.

CONSTRUCTION DESIGN

Best Practice 9: Using

The district develops thorough descriptions and educational specifications for each construction project.

Educational specifications are an important part of the planning process allowing stakeholders, including parents, subject matter specialists, educators, administrators and design professionals to develop working descriptions of a planned educational facility. Well-written educational specifications will ensure that, once built, the facility meets the needs of a variety of users. Educational specifications should include a rationale for the project, determine the size of the facility and define the district's program goals, objectives and activities, teaching strategies and instructional methods, all based on staff input. Educational specifications should identify the needs and design implications of advanced technology and provide for adaptability as changes and innovations occur in education. They should address spatial relationships and circulation patterns, security issues and comply with the 'small schools' requirement.

Because the Collier County School District uses prototypical designs for new school construction projects, the district's process for the development of educational specifications varies somewhat from the traditional method of specification development contemplated by this best practice. Once the prototype design is chosen, the district only documents changes to that design when considering construction of a new school based on the existing prototype. The district's educational specifications committees typically include approximately 40 people. For example, the educational specifications committee for the two new high schools that included 42 members representing a diverse cross section of district personnel. An attendance contact sheet was provided by the district indicating that 39 district personnel attended the May 31, 2002 programming meeting for high schools "BBB" and "CCC." The minutes for the meeting indicate detailed participation on behalf of the attendees.

Although the district is using this best practice, it can enhance its operations by preparing and adopting current comprehensive educational specifications for each school type. The use of approved prototypical

designs ensures that the general design of the school meets the district's requirements as anticipated when the prototype was chosen. Initially, detailed specifications were developed that supported these prototypical designs. The district provided, as part of this Best Practices review, educational specifications for elementary school "F," now Pelican Marsh Elementary (board approved February 16, 1995) and "AAA" high school, now Gulf Coast High School (dated November 1995, no board approval date indicated). Both schools continue to serve as prototypes, with Pelican Marsh serving as the prototype for all new elementary schools and Gulf Coast serving as the prototype for high school "BBB" (formerly Lewis and Clark). Although the process for collecting data to be considered for design updates is relatively comprehensive, specifications are not updated in a format so that anyone not intimately familiar with the process can understand them. In fact, the district did not provide any comprehensive Educational Specifications dated after 1995.

As part of the district's educational facilities survey prepared in July 1998, the board approved "facility lists" prepared by the facilities planning and construction department. These lists serve as a preliminary basis for the design of schools. Lists are included for each school type and describe the number and type of classrooms and the overall student capacity for five school types (elementary, middle and high schools, vocational-technology and adult education). The 1995 educational specifications vary from the 1998 facilities lists in a number of areas. The elementary school "F" educational specifications call for a total capacity of 928 students while the facility list calls for 960 students. There are also a number of differences for classroom size and type. Similar differences exist in the high school documents, though the total number of student stations is consistent at 1,995 stations.

We recommend that the district update its educational specifications to comprehensively address educational program components. We further recommend that the district establish a formal process to continually update these specifications as new schools are proposed and to approve changes to these specifications. These specifications should, among other items, appropriately address technology. When changes to the specifications are proposed or considered, they should be accompanied by appropriate cost estimates associated with the adoption of the decision under consideration.

Best Practice 10: Using

The architectural design fulfills the building specification needs as determined by the district.

A district should submit a well-developed educational specification to the design professional for use in preparing written construction documents, which include materials and equipment specifications and schematic drawings. A review of the documents should be made to ensure that the district planning leader, the users of the facility and the architect and engineers have matched the written construction specifications and schematics against the educational specifications. The final plans must represent the district's needs as expressed in the educational specification.

Because the Collier County School District approves the use of prototypical designs, the district has inherently determined that the overall general design meets the district's needs. The district communicates the program requirements, as outlined in the specifications, to the architect before the commencement of design specifications and working drawings. These specifications are then modified on an ad hoc basis through programming sessions to address any required changes to the prototypical designs. While the district is using this best practice, there are two areas in which the district could enhance its ability to ensure that the architectural design meets the district's needs.

Prototypical designs should be updated.

The comparison of the prototypical design to the updated specifications should be a part of the approval process and documentation should be made available to the board when approving any new construction

projects. In addition, any updates to the design of the prototype should be reflected in the summary comparison document when changes are made or proposed. As described in Best Practice 9 of this chapter, this process should become more proactive in the development and update of design specifications and that these new modified specifications be provided to the architect as part of the process for the update of prototypical designs.

We recommend that the district establish and adopt a procedure for comparing architectural designs to educational specifications, once the updated specifications are prepared as recommended in Best Practice 9 above. This comparison should be presented to the board in summary format when the board is asked to approve new construction.

The district should better communicate its findings and recommendations for every step of the design process to the school board.

The board should be provided with documents that concisely present the educational specifications, design specifications and plans at various stages in the process. Documentation was provided indicating that the discussion of new construction projects is included on the board agenda, and the board receives a written construction status report from the superintendent and the associate superintendent for operation services. This report, however, gives only a short paragraph for each project and does not include any quantitative, cost, or schedule data. The board should be kept regularly apprised of the project schedule and any changes to the budget.

In the Collier County School District, school board approval is required for site selection and purchase. At some point when the district identifies the need to build the new school and prior to the final approval of prototypical design updates, the district internally prepares a budget and estimated schedule. At this time, the board should generally be expected to approve or be apprised of the planned project educational specifications, budget, schedule and general project summary. While there is no standard format for this document, it should be a few pages long and certainly should be much more concise than the 250+ page total specification book. The board agendas provided indicate that additional written material is available for “board member’s perusal and study.” According to district personnel, detailed project information is available to board members at their request; however, summary documentation at an appropriate level of detail is not routinely provided to the board.

The board is presented with materials at the time of schematic design approval and phase III construction documents. At some point, generally around the time of schematic design, the board should also be given a summary comparing the educational specifications to the design, with appropriate recommendations from the various stakeholders in the process. As described above, the district has no formal process for the comparison of the design to the educational specifications.

The board, with the exception of one member, has turned over recently and the district, through a series of workshops, is in the process of establishing how the board, and facilities staff will work together. This working relationship is still under active consideration by the board and materials were provided indicating that an overview of how the construction process works within the district is available to the board. However, the materials historically provided to the prior board were at a level of detail either too high for performance assessment (i.e. regular project summaries that did not include cost or schedule data), or too detailed for consumption by the board (250+ page specification documents).

We recommend that the district establish and adopt a formal process to communicate its findings and recommendations for every step of the design process to the school board in a format established by the board and at a level of detail appropriate for board and public consumption.

Best Practice 11: Using

New construction, remodeling and renovations incorporate effective safety features.

To ensure the safety and security of those using school district facilities, all building specifications should include common safety elements such as controlled access entrances, appropriate signage and circulation patterns that allow unobstructed views of the entrance and hallways. Other safety needs and design elements include lighting, intra-communication systems, security and fire systems, security fencing and a combination of fenestration and doorways, which provide safe and quick evacuation. A district must review safety and address it as part of the construction process when designing and building new structures, as well as during renovation and remodeling projects.

The Collier County School District incorporates effective safety features in its new construction, remodeling and renovation projects. The district works closely with the Sheriff's Department to design schools with safety and security features proscribed by crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) standards. The Crime Prevention Bureau of the Collier County Sheriff's Department makes recommendations for facilities designs and improvements and sits in on school planning meetings. All schools are designed with limited access entrances controlled visually from the front desk, signage instructing visitors to report to the front desk and sufficient ingress and egress. In addition, the board reviews and approves annually the district's best practices for safety and security as provided to the state.

Schools are designed with security systems and pads with electricity, water and sewer for sheriff's deputy trailers. Typically, the sheriff's department provides two youth resource deputies on site at each high school, one deputy at each middle school and one deputy at most elementary schools. The district has installed a state-of-the-art remotely controllable closed circuit TV system with wireless camera activation at a pilot site. If the installation at the pilot site meets the district's expectations, the model will be repeated at all schools.

The district's fire safety consultant commended staff in comments to the board, naming Collier County as "one of the safest districts" in the state in 2002. In fact, the district had zero life safety violations in its 2002-03 SREF inspections.

Best Practice 12: Not Using

The district does not minimize construction and maintenance and operations costs through the use of cost-effective designs, prototype school designs and frugal construction practices.

A district should design new and remodeled space as efficiently as possible in order to minimize the costs of construction, provide for long term-energy efficiency and reduce lifetime building operations and maintenance costs. The construction design and major equipment selection are to be analyzed to maximize the efficient use of energy and the environment, the potential for joint usage, how technology is used and the life cycle and costs of the materials chosen. To control the costs of building new facilities, a district should have a written policy that encourages the design team to comply with Florida's soundly made, accountable, reasonable and thrifty ("SMART") school design philosophy and develop practical design solutions that are functional and cost-effective.

The Collier County School District does not have a policy or procedure for minimizing construction and maintenance costs or for comparing district construction and maintenance costs to peer districts or other state data. As described above, the district uses school prototypes in the design of new schools. Golden Gate High School will involve a new prototype design; high school "BBB" (formerly Lewis and Clark High School) will be based on the prototype design for Gulf Coast High. Elementary schools are based on the prototype chosen for Pelican March Elementary School in 1995. Middle schools are based on the prototype chosen for Corkscrew Middle School in 1999.

The district makes design decisions on a case-by-case basis aimed at reducing costs to keep projects within district budgets. In addition, the district makes decisions to reduce energy life-cycle costs as required by statute and to reduce other life-cycle expenditures on an ad hoc basis. The district does not,

however, have a process for comparing the costs of prototypes to other designs, other alternative program solutions, other school districts, other local construction, or other state or national data.

The district should adopt a formal policy of evaluation and comparison of estimated construction costs when considering new prototype designs for schools.

Data is available from the Florida Department of Education that compares the historical cost of construction for all new schools throughout the state. Exhibit 7-7 summarizes the cost of the district’s most recent construction of three school types, compared to other projects of similar size throughout the state.

**Exhibit 7-7
The District’s Costs for New School Construction Are Among the Highest in the State**

District	Facility	Student Stations	Square Feet	SF/ Station	Contract Cost	Total Cost	\$/ Station	\$/ SF	Percentile \$/ Station	Percentile \$ /SF
2001 Elementary Schools										
Collier	Calusa Park ES	940	110,608	117.7	14,133,000	16,786,479	17,858	151.77	95%	95%
Collier	Osceola ES	940	110,608	117.7	13,542,828	16,392,372	17,439	148.20	91%	91%
22 Schools	State Average	909	103,866	114.3	10,110,064	12,758,996	14,038	122.84		
1990 Middle Schools										
Collier	Corkscrew MS	1,233	145,995	118.4	14,238,847	17,368,279	14,086	118.96	53%	47%
17 Schools	State Average	1,381	156,045	113.0	14,943,602	18,741,824	13,571	120.11		
1998 Elementary Schools										
Collier	Corkscrew ES	987	120,965	122.6	10,807,367	12,300,117	12,462	101.68	95%	50%
20 Schools	State Average	881	97,226	110.3	8,051,479	9,923,913	11,260	102.07		
1996 High Schools										
Collier	Gulf Coast HS	1,995	302,103	151.4	37,349,147	44,268,547	22,190	146.53	86%	86%
7 Schools	State Average	2,095	301,629	144.0	31,102,520	37,390,217	17,845	123.96		

Source: Florida Department of Education Website, Office of Educational Facilities, May 2002 data.

As shown in Exhibit 7-7, the district’s 2001 construction costs for elementary schools were among the highest in the state. Calusa Park Elementary was in the 95th percentile for both cost per student station and cost per square foot, compared to elementary schools of similar size throughout the state. Osceola Elementary School ranked in the 91st percentile in both cost categories. In 1999, the district’s cost for Corkscrew Middle School was just above the state average for cost per student station and in the 53rd and 47th percentile for cost per station and cost per square foot, respectively. However, because Corkscrew Middle School shares site infrastructure with the adjacent elementary school, the district’s costs may be artificially low in predicting the costs of additional schools using the same prototype. In 1996, Gulf Coast High School was in the 86th percentile for both cost per square foot and cost per student station.

Looking forward, based on the district’s projected budgets included in the facilities five-year work program and using state average costs for 2001, escalated based on state projected Consumer Price Index (CPI), the district’s projected costs continue to be well above state averages. In the next five years, the district is expected to exceed state averages for elementary schools by 51%, middle schools by 8% and high schools by 22%. Action Plan 7-1 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 7-1

We recommend that the district systematically evaluate estimated construction costs when considering new schools and present this information to the school board.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Collect appropriate benchmark data from peer groups, state schools districts and other public and private sources related to new school construction. Data should be grouped by school type and size and collected at an appropriate level of detail to provide meaningful comparisons.</p> <p>Step 2. Prepare a detailed analysis of the district's historical and current construction costs (and estimated costs for new designs under consideration).</p> <p>Step 3. Prepare a presentation to the board comparing the costs of the current prototypes in use by the district to the cost of other schools of the same type throughout the state.</p> <p>Step 4. Prior to the approval of any new prototype design, prepare for the board a concise summary of the estimated costs of the various designs under consideration.</p> <p>Step 5. Prior to the approval of any new construction, provide the board with a comparison of the budget for the design under consideration to the budgets of other peer school districts in the state (using their respective Facilities Five-Year Work Programs as a basis for comparison).</p> <p>Step 6. Prepare a justification for all projects that exceed benchmark data, in terms of square feet per student station, cost per square foot and/or cost per student station.</p> <p>Step 7. Prepare recommendations for potential cost reduction to bring district costs in line with benchmark data where appropriate.</p> <p>Step 8. Present the analysis to the board for the district's historical and current projects and as appropriate for all future projects.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the direction of the executive director for facilities management
Time Frame	April 2004

The district does not have a written policy encouraging the design team to comply with the SMART school design philosophy.

No anticipated school infrastructure thrift (SIT) program awards are shown in the facilities five-year work program provided by the district. Based on the district's facilities five-year work program, projected construction costs will exceed the SIT award levels for frugal construction practices by 79% for elementary schools, 52% for middle schools and 34% for high schools. Supporting data is shown in Exhibit 7-8.

**Exhibit 7-8
District New Construction Costs Far Exceed SIT Award Levels**

School	Plan Date	Budget	Stations	District Cost Per Station	Average State \$/ Station	SIT \$/ Station	District Cost Over SIT Cost
New Elementary School "E"	02-03	\$17,935,500	940	\$19,080	\$15,680	\$13,221	144%
New Middle School "BB"	02-03	\$23,295,136	1,233	\$18,893	\$21,247	\$15,159	125%
New High School "BBB"	02-03	\$51,811,000	1,950	\$26,570	\$22,091	\$20,060	132%
New High School "CCC"	02-03	\$53,461,000	1,950	\$27,416	\$22,091	\$20,060	137%
New Elementary School "F"	04-05	\$21,431,300	840	\$25,513	\$15,961	\$13,458	190%
New Middle School "CC"	05-06	\$31,707,000	1,233	\$25,715	\$22,100	\$15,768	163%
New Elementary School "G"	07-08	\$24,516,400	840	\$29,186	\$17,092	\$14,412	203%
New High School "DDD"	07-08	\$56,934,000	1,950	\$29,197	\$24,081	\$21,867	134%
New Middle School "DD"	08-09	\$35,149,200	1,233	\$28,507	\$23,795	\$16,977	138%
Elementary School Average							179%
Middle School Average							154%
High School Average							134%

Source: Average 2001 School Cost from <http://smartschools.state.fl.us/smartschools/index.html>, escalated by February 2002 CPI Forecast from www.state.fl.us.edr/Conferences/PECO/station.htm, Collier County Public Schools' Costs from 2002-03 Budget and Five-Year Facilities Work Program.

Action Plan 7-2 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 7-2

We recommend that the district adopt a formal policy for compliance or non-compliance with SMART school design philosophy. Even if the district continues with its decision not to follow SMART school design, the policy should be carefully considered and justified by the district.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Evaluate whether the SMART school design philosophy is in line with district objectives.
	Step 2.	Prepare a recommendation for compliance or non-compliance with SMART school design philosophy.
	Step 3.	Adopt a written policy related to SMART school design.
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the direction of the executive director for facilities management, school board	
Time Frame	April 2004	

Even if the district chooses not to adopt a policy that would reduce school costs to SIT-award level, savings could still be achieved by reducing school construction costs to the *average* cost per student station throughout the state. Exhibit 7-9 shows the savings that could be achieved if the district reduces its cost of new construction from the level of existing planned expenditures (for projects that have not yet begun) to the average anticipated cost of new construction throughout the state of Florida. Average anticipated costs are calculated using actual 2001 construction costs throughout the state, escalated at projected CPI to the anticipated year of construction. As described earlier in this chapter, we found that the board has historically made decisions to build facilities that exceed state standards and has actively participated in the selection of prototypical schools to be built. Therefore, the decision to take advantage of opportunities to reduce construction costs may require a change in board policy, rather than an action at the departmental level.

**Exhibit 7-9
Potential New Construction Cost Savings Using Average State Cost per Student Station**

School	Plan Date	Budget	Budget at Avg. State \$/Station	Potential Savings	Potential Savings (Rounded)
New Elementary School "E"	02-03	\$17,935,500	14,739,351	N/A-In Progress	N/A
New Middle School "BB"	02-03	\$23,295,136	26,197,376	N/A-In Progress	N/A
New High School "BBB"	02-03	\$51,811,000	43,077,193	N/A-In Progress	N/A
New High School "CCC"	02-03	\$53,461,000	43,077,193	N/A-In Progress	N/A
New Elementary School "F"	04-05	\$21,431,300	13,407,175	\$8,024,125	\$8,024,000
New Middle School "CC"	05-06	\$31,707,000	27,249,251	\$4,457,749	\$4,458,000
New Elementary School "G"	07-08	\$24,516,400	14,357,684	\$10,158,716	\$10,159,000
New High School "DDD"	07-08	\$56,934,000	46,957,179	\$9,976,821	\$9,977,000
New Middle School "DD"	08-09	\$35,149,200	29,338,787	\$5,810,413	\$5,810,000

Source: Average 2001 School Cost from Florida Department of Education website, Office of Educational Facilities, May 2002 data., escalated by February 2002 CPI Forecast from www.state.fl.us.edr/Conferences/PECO/station.htm, Collier County School District's Costs from 2002-03 Budget, Five-Year Facilities Work Program and 5/10/20 Year Capital Budget.

The district does not prepare life-cycle cost analyses on a consistent basis for all major construction projects.

The district made various energy analysis documents available to the review team and provided an energy analysis for Pelican Marsh Elementary School, comparing various HVAC plant life-cycle costs. The document is a comprehensive analysis of energy use and cost for three plant options. In addition, the district provided documentation from the Florida Department of Education that summarized the life-cycle costs for the three options, and made the mandatory conclusion that the lowest life-cycle alternative would be chosen. The district subsequently built the mandatory alternative. The indication is that the district has made various decisions regarding cost-effective life-cycle design for energy-saving alternatives and complies with relevant state statutes.

The district has also made other various life-cycle design decisions on a case-by case basis. For example, the district's policy is to use standing seam metal roofs rather than asphalt shingles because of lower anticipated life-cycle costs for metal roofs. However, the district does not have a school board policy requiring the preparation of life-cycle costs, and we believe that the district could be more aggressive in its use of life-cycle analyses to reduce facilities operating and maintenance costs.² Action Plan 7-3 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 7-3

We recommend that the district adopt a school board policy for the consideration of life-cycle cost analyses.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Determine the parameters to be measured in a life-cycle cost analysis.
	Step 2.	Prepare a recommendation for life-cycle cost analysis policy in order to design, construct, select equipment for and furnish new facilities to minimize maintenance and operations costs.
	Step 3.	Adopt a written policy related to life-cycle cost analysis.
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the direction of the executive director for facilities management, school board	
Time Frame	April 2004	

² While reducing life-cycle costs certainly represents potential cost savings, the effect of such a reduction cannot be globally quantified.

The district does not have a policy for maximizing passive design or green architecture and no mention of these concepts was found in the educational specifications.

Districts can reduce life-cycle costs by considering the use of passive design and “green architecture” concepts including techniques such as building orientation, shading of walls and fenestration, using light colors on exterior walls and roofs, etc. to take advantage of, or minimize the negative impact of, the prevailing environmental influences. Our review of educational specifications found no mention of these concepts, and the district currently has no school board policy requiring they be considered. The district would likely be able to reduce life-cycle costs by considering passive design when selecting new prototypes and updating existing prototypes as a basis for new construction. Action Plan 7-4 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 7-4

We recommend that the district adopt a school board policy for maximizing passive design and “green architecture” concepts and techniques.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Identify the passive design and “green architecture concepts to be maximized.
	Step 2.	Identify prevailing environmental influences that will impact the district.
	Step 3.	Prepare a recommendation for green architecture policy.
	Step 4.	Adopt a written policy related to green architecture to take advantage of, or minimize the negative impact of, the prevailing environmental influences.
	Step 5.	Consider passive design when selecting new prototypes and when updating existing prototypes as a basis for new construction.
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the direction of the executive director for facilities management, school board	
Time Frame	April 2004	

The district does not assess comparable maintenance and operations costs from other school districts, government agencies, or private industry.

A review of the meeting notes for the programming session for high school “BBB” included a number of suggested changes to the prototypical high school design. Based on the review of these potential changes, none of the recommendations minimize maintenance or operations costs. The district has, on a case-by-case basis made decisions based on maintenance and operating costs (e.g., the decision the use standing seam metal roofs, rather than composite shingles). However, no written analysis was provided regarding this decision. Action Plan 7-5 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 7-5

We recommend that the district regularly assess and revise facility designs and construction practices to ensure it minimizes maintenance and operations costs based on appropriate standards from comparable school districts, government agencies and private industry.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Assess and revise facility designs and construction practices.
	Step 2.	Determine the parameters to be tracked.
	Step 3.	When changes to existing prototypes are considered or proposed, estimate the impact of the change on construction and/or operating costs.
	Step 4.	Estimate operating costs when considering new prototypes. When new prototypes are considered, present estimated operating costs for the various designs under consideration.
	Step 5.	Prepare a recommendation for the analysis of operating costs when considering new facilities design.
	Step 6.	Adopt a school board policy related to the analysis of operating costs for new facilities.
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the direction of the executive director for facilities management, school board	
Time Frame	April 2004	

NEW CONSTRUCTION, RENOVATION, AND REMODELING

Best Practice 13: Using

The district has effective management processes for construction projects.

A district may be able to improve the management of construction projects by exploring alternative service methods. A district has several options on how to complete a construction project, which include whether to do the project in-house or contract out to a private company. The potential cost savings of alternative methods should be weighed before a project begins. This practice ensures that the district has evaluated the various types of construction contracting and chosen the most beneficial method given the circumstances of individual projects. Once the method is chosen the project must be monitored for quality, timeliness and cost.

The Collier County School District, when examined at the level of day-to-day operations, has an effective management process for construction projects. The district has in the past considered (and used) various alternative delivery methods. The district has determined that the construction manager at risk method of delivery is effective for new construction and that the hard bid method of delivery is effective for smaller capital renewal projects. The district therefore has no current plans to consider other delivery methods. On March 13, 2003, the executive director for facilities management delivered to the board a comprehensive justification and explanation of the district's decisions to continue with these delivery methods.

While the district uses this best practice, it suffers from a lack of management reports and summary information that can be used to effectively and easily analyze and report on these operations. The district can enhance its operations in this area by addressing two issues. Generally, these issues relate to 1) the reporting of overall project status in periodic management reports and 2) the reporting of data when requesting changes to the project budget or guaranteed maximum price (GMP).

The district should adopt management reports that provide additional information to personnel, the board and administrators.

The project manager on any given project is responsible for keeping that project on time and on schedule. Beyond the responsibility of the project manager, the exact nature of management responsibility is not clearly defined. Meetings are held regularly that include the project managers, the director of Facilities management and construction, the executive director for facilities management and the associate superintendent for Operational Services. At these meetings project status is discussed for all active projects. The actual project budgets for both new construction and major capital improvement or maintenance projects are set by the executive director for Facilities Management without significant input from the director of facilities management and construction. Budget responsibility therefore includes the project manager and executive director for facilities management, but bypasses the director of facilities management and construction. This makes direct reporting responsibility unclear and difficult to manage.

Management reports are prepared for the regularly scheduled internal staff meetings and for regular board meetings. Evidence of these reports was indicated in the board agendas and interviews with district personnel. Weekly project reports prepared by the external construction manager are comprehensive in detail. While both of these management reports include general or specific information about the status of projects, they do not include a running or cumulative total of project budget changes and estimates to complete.

We recommend that the district prepare and adopt management reports, at appropriate levels of detail for the audience considered, that provide the project managers, senior managers and board members with up to date, accurate information on how much was budgeted originally, the current budget, change orders and expenditures to date, in addition to other relevant project details.

The district should adopt budget reports and a format for change order requests that accurately reflect total project costs.

Sample board agendas indicate that the board approves not-to-exceed costs, which are the guaranteed maximum price (GMP) under the contract manager at risk delivery methodology. The board is required to approve all change orders after the GMP contract is approved. Multiple documents were provided summarizing change order requests presented to the board and internal management documents summarizing change orders. For every change order, the current proposed change is presented along with an indication of the most recent prior approved value of the contract, having considered past cumulative change orders.

None of the summary documents provided by the district compared the actual *total* project costs to the *total* budget. Documents were provided that showed the cumulative effect of change orders compared to the construction contract or GMP. However, the construction contract did not include design and engineering fees or furniture and equipment, which together typically accounted for 15-20% of the budget or more. The construction contract may also exclude site work that has been on occasion contracted separately. No documentation was available summarizing the total cost of completed projects.

Additionally, the cumulative effect of direct materials purchases has a major impact the construction contract but is not reported in a summary format that easily understandable to those outside of district personnel. When materials are purchased directly by the district, the materials are deducted from the GMP contract, a standard practice for saving sales taxes. The cumulative net contract is then reported to the board when additional change orders are requested. For example, documentation requesting board approval for change order #4 (June 5, 2003) for Golden Gate High School described the change order as representing the direct purchase of materials. The document included data for the current proposed change (direct materials purchased of \$3,243,838.72) and the total original contract amount (\$43,750,521.00), and the total as a result of both prior change orders (\$39,495,466.72) and as a result of the proposed change order (\$36,251,627.50). In addition, there was a summary explanation describing the total tax savings to the district as a result of both the proposed change order and prior change orders. However, without additional calculations on the part of the reader, there is no summary of total construction costs that includes the cost of materials purchased directly by the district. Therefore, it is difficult for the board to make any summary determination as to the cumulative effect of change orders. In addition, without referring to the prior approved change orders, the reader would not be able to determine whether the total changes to the construction contract result only from direct materials purchases or from other changes.

Shown in the Exhibit 7-10 is an example of information that would, as a minimum, be required in order to make a meaningful informed decision regarding a potential change order increasing the GMP construction cost. Exhibit 7-10 is shown for illustrative purposes only (not a real project) and is greatly simplified from the detail that might be provided to a project manager. For example, it does not show expenditures to date or details that might be meaningful to the day-to-day manager.

**Exhibit 7-10
Hypothetical Budget Reporting Example**

Budget Item	Original Budget	Prior Approved Changes	Current Proposed Change	Proposed Revised Budget
A Design and Engineering	400,000	-	-	400,000
B Construction Site Work	1,500,000	75,000	-	1,575,000
C Construction	12,500,000	(2,000,000)	(1,500,000)	9,000,000
D Furnishings and Equipment	2,500,000	-	-	2,500,000
E Other	600,000	-	20,000	620,000
F Contingency	300,000	-	-	300,000
G Total	17,800,000	(1,925,000)	(1,480,000)	14,395,000
H Cost of Direct Materials	-	1,880,000	1,410,000	3,290,000
I Grand Total	17,800,000	(45,000)	(70,000)	17,685,000
J Tax Savings		(120,000)	(90,000)	(210,000)
K Other Changes to the Budget		75,000	20,000	95,000
L Total Budget Changes		(45,000,)	(70,000)	(115,000)

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Currently, the board is presented with the data shown in lines “C” and “J” above. This information would indicate that construction is projected to cost \$9,000,000, or \$3,500,000 less than the original GMP, and that total tax savings are \$210,000. While this is true, the *total* project budget is expected to decrease by \$115,000, rather than the \$210,000 in tax savings. There is no evidence to suggest that the reporting of data was intentionally misleading--only that the data is incomplete for the purposes of explaining total budget changes to board members or other interested parties.

All summary data provided by the district suffers from a similar lack of information. While the project managers or personnel in the facilities management department may be tracking total project budgets in some summary manner, there was no evidence provided indicating that a board member or third party could easily track total project budget status.

We recommend that the district adopt a format for the request of approval of change orders by the board that includes information relating to the project budget as a whole.

Best Practice 14: Using

District planning provides realistic time frames for implementation that are coordinated with the opening of schools.

A district can obtain maximum use of construction and operating funds by reducing the impact of inflation and ensuring a smooth, non-disruptive transition of students into new facilities at the beginning of a school term. Planning, coordination and regular communication between the district’s representatives and its contractors are required. Realistic expectations for project completion must be established and should include contingency planning for delays caused by bad weather or unanticipated construction problems.

A district should ensure that the tasks for achievement of all phases of each project have been incorporated and timed to coordinate with the opening of schools to cause the least disruption to students and teachers. When time frames are not met, the district should revise them accordingly and identify why they were not met, periodically updating the board and public. The plan should contain an accountability component that provides assurance to the board and to the public that the projects addressed in the plan will be implemented at the proposed budget levels within the time frame outlined. Regular budget updates, prepared at the completion of each phase of design, should be delivered to the board.

The Collier County School District's planning process effectively provides realistic time frames for implementation that are coordinated with the opening of schools. Based on interviews with district personnel, no projects in recent history have exceeded the projected construction period or opening schedule. The contract manager at risk methodology places accountability for the timely and cost-effective completion of projects on the third-party construction manager. If budgets and schedules have been established based on reasonable expectations, this methodology is effective within the confines of the actual construction contract.

Best Practice 15: Using

All projects started after March 1, 2002, comply with the Florida Building Code.

The State of Florida has completed a major rewrite of the state building code, including those elements that pertain to educational facilities, which became effective on March 1, 2002. Significant changes included allowing districts to establish alternative methods of obtaining permits and required the re-education of existing staff certified to conduct building code inspections. All school construction projects begun after the effective date are required to meet the new code requirements. Districts must adjust for the code changes in contracted projects and consider the impact the new code will have on future projects. To ensure that districts are aware of and follow these new requirements, construction personnel should have received training in the Florida Building Code or the district should be able to justify why training is not needed.

The Collier County School District has an effective system to ensure that all projects started after March 1, 2002, comply with the Florida Building Code. All appropriate district personnel have been certified to administer the code. The director of Code Enforcement and Permitting is both a licensed building code official and a licensed architect in the state of Florida and the district employs appropriate staff to coordinate permitting and inspections with the local building departments. The district has executed inter-local agreements with the county and local municipalities to govern the plan review and inspection processes. The inter-local agreements define the details of the permitting and inspection process such as priority review, pre-application meetings, review fees, inspection requirements, etc. These measures demonstrate that the district has put in place the required training, directives and initiatives to comply with the Florida Building Code.

Best Practice 16: Using

The district requires appropriate inspection of all school construction projects.

Compliance with the Florida Building Code ensures that completed building projects provide a safe and secure facility. Therefore, all school construction projects must be inspected by a competent authority, schooled and certified in the requirements of the state building code. Inspectors must be trained and certified in accordance with Florida law and the inspections must be in accordance with the new Florida Building Code as revised March 2002. All information about the affected space should be recorded in the Florida inventory of school houses, a database that contains extensive information about school sites, capacity and condition.

The Collier County School District requires appropriate inspection of all school construction projects. The district, Collier County, and the appropriate municipalities have all entered into inter-local agreements regarding permitting and inspections. These agreements apply to permanent structures, transportable buildings and maintenance work. Under the terms of the agreements, the district's work must comply with the currently adopted editions of the Florida Building Code. The agreements provide that the county or municipality will review permit applications, issue building permits and make appropriate inspections on a priority basis for the district. Both permanent buildings and transportables must have appropriately issued certificates of occupancy before the district can occupy any building. In addition, the district must request and be issued an annual maintenance permit at each site. These inter-local agreements are cost-effective and efficient, provide for third-party oversight and review of the

district's construction work and appear to be an exemplary model of the use of inter-local agreements and responsibilities.

Best Practice 17: Using

The district retains appropriate professionals to assist in facility planning, design and construction.

A district should make reasoned and appropriate selections of design and construction professionals to aid in carrying out the mission, goals and obligations of the school board and in accordance with Florida law. The selection process should be in writing and available to the public. It should begin sufficiently in advance of a proposed project's completion date to ensure that the necessary persons are selected, obligated and committed to the project. Districts may select from a combination of in-house and out-sourced options to staff a particular project or group of projects. Hiring of permanent employees may not be cost-effective for smaller, low growth districts, but larger districts or districts with significant student population growth may find it appropriate to have permanent, professionally staffed design and construction departments. When out-sourcing, the district should use a selection committee to choose appropriate professionals who will act in the district's best interests during the construction project.

The Collier County School District retains appropriate professionals to assist in facilities planning, design and construction. The district uses either a selection committee comprised of district management or a selection committee comprised of members of the board, depending on the type and scope of the projects. The selection committee for architectural/engineering design services for additions and renovations at Golden Gate, Naples Park and Ponciana Elementary Schools was comprised of the executive director for facilities management, the associate superintendent for operational services, the director of Code Enforcement and Permitting and a project manager. The selection committee for the design of the two new high schools "BBB" and "CCC" was comprised of the entire board.

The invitation to submit proposals and the supplement to the Invitation to submit proposals for design services for additions and renovations at Golden Gate, Naples Park and Ponciana Elementary Schools (October, 1999) were provided by the district as sample documentation. The specific instructions to interested firms include the requirement for compliance with specific requirements to be included in a written proposal. In a memo to the board dated October 21, 1999, the selection committee informed that board that it had reviewed the proposals and included its recommendations based on a number of evaluation criteria. Firms were scored according to a comprehensive scoring system considering the criteria outlined in the district's response above. The three highest-ranking firms were recommended to and approved by the board based on the scoring criteria described.

The district requires project professionals to provide recent client references. These references are contacted and interviewed to determine quality of work, timeliness of projects and general professionalism. Contracts with professionals include all of the district's requirements, meet the requirements of current law and clearly state the amounts and methods of compensation and that compensation does not encourage overbuilt or extravagant project costs. The district selects the finalist based on the interviews, visits to examples of their work, calls made to previous clients, examination of typical documents and office visits. The committee has the discretion to use any or all of the methods above to evaluate and select consultants. A firm is selected and awarded the opportunity of contract negotiations with the school district by the school board.

Best Practice 18: Using

The district follows generally accepted and legal contracting practices to control costs.

A district should have policies and procedures in place, which delineate bid solicitation and contracting practices, to control costs and protect itself from litigation. These policies and procedures should have been reviewed by legal counsel for adequacy and conformity to statutes and generally accepted practices. Generally accepted bidding procedures include bids with set opening dates and times that are inspected to

confirm that all required documents are in order. Contracting practices include the use of standardized agreements that have been modified to satisfy local concerns and conditions and review by legal authority. The district should determine the type of contract appropriate for the work to be performed after considering alternative bid and construction systems for each new project. The contract should be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder whose bid, after review by district legal counsel, meets the specifications or to the construction manager or design build contractor selected pursuant to Florida law. The contracts should be submitted to the school board for final contract award.

The Collier County School District follows generally accepted and legal contracting practices to control costs. The district uses construction management as the primary approach for new construction because it brings professional rather than entrepreneurial direction to the entire design and construction process. The district hires a professional construction manager (CM) based on qualifications. The CM then provides services before, during and after the actual construction process. This eliminates the probability that the quality of the project is compromised as a result of the contractors seeking to be the lowest bidder. The CM provides significant input to the architect during the design process relating to cost, quality and time. Competitive biddings are employed for what are traditionally the subcontracts to the general contractor. The CM bids the project to hire sub-contracts and then provides the district with a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP). This GMP is evaluated and negotiated by the district staff. Upon the completion of the evaluation and negotiation process, the GMP is recommended to the board for approval. Once the board approves the GMP a purchase order is processed for the construction manager to commence construction. The construction manager has prime contract with the district.

In traditional hard-bid delivery, the district's standard operating procedure manual requires that an employee of the board or other appointed individual publicly open bids and read and tabulate the bids at a designated time and place. This ensures that the competitive bid process is fair and open to public scrutiny. In addition, it guarantees that no advantage is given to any individual bidder. All bidders are provided the same information throughout the process. The advertisement and the bid tabulation form for each project are opened as required by district standards and SREF Section 4.2(2). A signed bid form is required to comply with legal requirements. The bid form includes a dollar amount, bid, bond, designation of sub-contractors and certificate of worker's compensation and liability insurance.

The district selects the lowest qualified bidder as outlined in SREF Section 4.2(2) (h), which requires the consideration of base bid and accepted alternates and the award of a contract for a fixed fee. The district recommends to the school board the lowest responsible bidder on each project. The district contracts have the necessary legal provisions and are signed by the superintendent and the school board chair. Applicable state statutes require adequate documentation from contractors. The documentation protects the district from certain risks associated with construction contracts. The district's current construction contracts for renovations, remodeling and new construction include as part of the contract the following:

- A signed owner-contract or agreement;
- Workers compensation insurance certificate;
- Payment bond;
- Performance bond;
- Certificate of liability insurance; and
- Guarantee of completion – dates for substantial completion and final completion are established and liquidating damages are provided on a daily basis for each day that the actual date of substantial completion exceeds the schedule date of substantial completion.

We have determined that the district currently has a number of projects under construction without benefit of a construction management agreement fully executed by the board. **This is not a generally accepted contracting practice.** In each of these projects the board has accepted the Guaranteed Maximum Price, a purchase order has been issued, bonds have been issued, and counsel has determined that a binding

contract exists by law between the district and the contractor. However, the board chair has not executed the contracts. While a full discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this document, it may be sufficient to say here that, as of the writing of this document, the issue remains controversial and unresolved with the respect to these specific projects. We believe, however, that the district has addressed this issue for future projects. By policy, issued by the associate superintendent for operations services and adopted by the district, this practice will not be continued in the future and no new projects will begin without fully executed contracts.

We recommend that the district take the actions necessary to fully execute contracts for construction projects underway.

Best Practice 19: Using

The district minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to control project costs.

Changes to a facility's design after construction has begun must be carefully considered as they can be very costly to a district or they can save a substantial number of dollars. Design changes have the potential to create substantial delays in the intended completion date of a project, while adding overlooked elements can enhance the educational environment or the delivery of educational services, or reduce future operational/maintenance costs. Necessary changes to the construction agreement, which may be requested by either the contractor or the district's representative, should generate a request for a change order. Change orders should be reviewed for viability, necessity and cost. A district should use planning and contracting methods that minimize change orders and retain information sufficient to document the reasons behind a change order and the responsible individual. Critical to the change order process is a review that, when possible, ensures change orders implemented do not result in the project exceeding budget, do not compromise educational specifications, do not exceed industry standards and do not extend the completion date beyond the established completion date.

The Collier County School District minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to control project costs, based on limited data available from the district. The construction manager is selected and hired immediately after the programming phase of the project. Phase III construction documents, 100% working drawings and specifications, are completed before the project is submitted for subcontractor bids. By district policy, board approval is required for all change orders exceeding the district's threshold individually, 10% of the original contract or \$50,000, whichever is less; or in total, \$100,000, subject to certain conditions. In practice, the board approves all change orders after execution of the GMP contract. Therefore, the board is aware of any change orders that significantly alter the GMP.

As discussed in Best Practice 13 of this chapter, multiple documents were provided summarizing change order requests presented to the board and internal management documents summarizing change orders. Taken in total, the documentation provided indicates that change orders consistently and significantly *decrease* the guaranteed maximum price. However, there was no documentation provided indicating the final budget for any given project, *after the effects of all changes are considered*. See Best Practice 13 of this chapter for related recommendations.

Best Practice 20: Using

The architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project.

Payments to contractors for larger construction projects are usually separated into a series of partial payments known as progress payments. This practice protects the school district and pays the contractor in a fair and reasonable manner and in proportion to the work completed. Once a payment request is received, the district should respond in a timely and efficient manner. A district should retain a

predetermined percentage of the contract pending final completion to be used to cover non-performance issues or liquidated damages, should such a situation arise. The district should have a system of internal controls to ensure that payments are made timely and only after the architect has approved the completed work and with the concurrence of the district's project manager.

The Collier County School District has adequate policies to ensure that the architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed and that a percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project. All applications for payment provided by the district have been certified by the architect based on percentage of work complete and in compliance with the contract documents. Following the recommendation of the application for payment and certification by the architect, the application is then submitted to the executive director for facilities management who must sign off on the application and submit it to purchasing and forward to accounts payable for payment. Sample applications were provided that include the certification of the architect and the signature of the executive director for facilities management. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending final completion of the project to cover non-conforming work that must be corrected prior to occupancy. Final close-out documentation is presented to and approved by the board prior to the release of final contractor retention. With respect to the timeliness of payment, contractors are paid within 10 days of the fully certified and approved application for payment.

FACILITY OCCUPANCY AND EVALUATION

Best Practice 21: Using

The district conducts a comprehensive orientation to the new facility prior to its use so that users better understand the building design and function.

The proper operation of a school is dependent on the users understanding of the facilities systems and why certain design elements were included in the project. Therefore, school district personnel should be familiarized with a new facility prior to occupation. Orienting users to a facility is a critically important activity that allows the new facility to work as it was designed, provides for the safety and comfort of the occupants and ensures that the building's components are operated in a non-damaging and efficient manner. An orientation program should include the delivery of clear and understandable users' manuals designed for the appropriate staff, elements of the program being customized for a particular group of users such as maintenance staff, custodians or administrators and teachers. The district should include clauses in the design and construction contracts to require the architect and the contractor to share the responsibility for and provide the orientation programs and supporting documentation.

The Collier County School District provides adequate and comprehensive training for new facility users. Operations and maintenance manuals related to maintenance personnel and project closeout and training sessions are required as part of the construction manager's contract. Full copies of all operations and maintenance manuals were made available to the review team and closeout sessions are videotaped and available to school staff. The district uses the project manager, architect, contractors and vendors to assist in the orientation of the school staff. After substantial completion, these individuals work with the principal to establish a standard comprehensive orientation program to meet the specific needs of the school. These individuals are responsible for assisting the principal with the opening of the new schools and ensuring that the transition into the new school is a success.

Best Practice 22: Not Using

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; however, the evaluations are not well documented, are not consistent, and lack written qualitative and quantitative data.

A post-occupancy evaluation helps a district determine how well the design of a facility meets the educational, service, community and administrative needs of the building's users. Information from a post-occupancy evaluation can be used to improve the design of subsequent projects. Such an evaluation should be conducted on every new facility no earlier than one year and no longer than three years after occupancy. This window of time allows for a full school year in the new facility and for the evaluation to occur before any functional design changes or remodeling might take place, which would change elements of the original design. As part of the evaluation, users, including students, parents, district and school-based maintenance and food service personnel, teachers, administrators and bus drivers, should be surveyed or interviewed to determine their attitudes about the design. District facilities design and construction staff, the design professional for the new facility and a representative of the contractor should also provide input to the evaluation. The information gathered should be compiled into a report, enumerating the positive aspects and difficulties, if any, with the design of the facility. Information obtained through post-occupancy evaluations should be communicated to educational specification committees, the design review committee and when contracted for a new facility, the design professional.

The Collier County School District performs building evaluations. However, in order to use this best practice standard, the district's methodology for building evaluations should be better documented, more consistent, and include written quantitative and qualitative data that can be used to make objective decisions regarding changes to future facilities planning and design.

The district made available to the review team examples of post occupancy evaluation forms that were filled out related to Gulf Coast High School (completed in 1998) and Pelican Marsh Elementary (completed in 1996). There were a total of 24 forms completed for Gulf Coast High School and 42 forms completed for Pelican Marsh Elementary. These forms were provided to the architect prior to construction of new schools using the same prototype. Generally speaking, the tone of the forms was positive in the assessment of the facilities. There were no documents, however, summarizing the findings of the formal post occupancy evaluations or what conclusions were made and the only quantitative data collected in the forms related to subjective user satisfaction. There were no similar post-occupancy evaluations provided for other schools built more recently (Corkscrew, Osceola and Calusa Park Elementary Schools, Corkscrew Middle School). In lieu of formal post-occupancy evaluations, the district activates educational specification committees that review school designs prior to the commencement of new construction projects using the same prototype. The programming sessions for these new projects actively consider the experience of existing users of the prototypes. However, the process may suffer from a lack of consistency due to changing personnel, the relative experience of the evaluators, changes in design firms and updates to the educational specifications.

In order to meet this best practice standards, district post occupancy evaluations should be performed in a consistent manner, evaluated in a reasonably objective format and performed regularly for three to five years after occupancy. Action Plan 7-6 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 7-6

We recommend that the district establish and adopt a formal program to 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.

Action Needed	Step 1. Establish individual responsibility for the preparation of post occupancy evaluations. If district staff is unavailable, consider the use of third-party consultants with post occupancy evaluation experience. Step 2. If third-party consultants are to be used, make appropriate recommendations to the board and hire consultants. Step 3. Prepare format for post occupancy evaluations and develop data collection tools. Step 4. Collect data from all appropriate personnel for each school built within the last three years and for each school using current prototypes. Step 5. Prepare post occupancy evaluations. Step 6. Make recommendations for new school construction and updates to school prototypes based on the results of the post occupancy evaluation. Step 7. Present summary evaluations and recommendations to the board and other interested parties.
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the supervision of the executive director for facilities management,
Time Frame	June 2004

Best Practice 23: Not Using

The district has not established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the construction program.

Like other publicly funded entities, a school district should be held accountable for and provide information to parents, other taxpayers and the school board on the performance and cost of its major programs and support services, including the facilities construction program. To accomplish this, each school district should have an accountability system that includes clearly stated goals and measurable objectives for the facilities construction program that identify whether it is operating efficiently and effectively. An effective accountability system includes performance and cost-efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks, including comparisons to adjoining districts, to evaluate the program and use these in management decision-making. As part of its accountability system, the district also should establish and implement strategies to continually assess the reliability of program performance and cost data and take advantage of significant opportunities to improve construction operations management.

The district does not have adequate accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the construction program. In general, the district has established accountability mechanisms at the project level that are intended to bring projects in on time and at or below the board approved budgets for the projects; however, no summary information was provided that would establish accountability for the program as a whole. Management interviews indicate that all items in the facilities five-year work plan prepared in 1998 have been completed, that additional projects have been added and that all new construction and major renovation projects have been brought in on time and on budget. Taken at face value, these are admirable accomplishments. Spot interviews and site visits indicate that the facility users are well satisfied with the condition and suitability of schools for educational purposes. Interviews indicate that there are no major deferred maintenance issues outstanding in the district and that the district has a proactive program for the replacement of major building systems as they reach the end of their expected or actual useful lives. The district adheres to high standards for safety and security in facilities. However, no data was provided as part of this Best Practice review that would allow a summary analysis of:

- historical project capital costs in total or as compared to budgets or peers (construction cost-effectiveness or cost-efficiency);

Facilities Construction

- historical facilities operating costs in total or as compared to budgets or peers;
- the accuracy of budgets (both overage and underage) or project scheduling;
- the minimization of long-term operating costs;
- success in completing projects as identified at the beginning of any planning period;
- capacity utilization;
- the minimization of change orders;
- demographic planning effectiveness;
- how well new construction deliveries met the project educational specifications that were set out at the beginning of a project;
- the size or cost of the facilities staff compared to the volume of construction;
- functional equity between facilities or areas within the district;
- facility user satisfaction; and
- school Board satisfaction or public satisfaction as to the quality and quantity of information provided and with the facilities program in general.

It should be noted that data alone is not a measure of performance accountability. However, without data with which to measure performance and clearly stated goals and measurable objectives, there can be little objective accountability.

The district has not established an accountability system that sets clear priorities and expectations for the construction program in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

Because of the lack of consistency between planning documents, it is difficult to determine what is or is not included in any given budget. It is therefore difficult for third-party observers to compare the final product delivery to the scope of projects that were approved at the appropriate outset of the project or planning period. While budget accountability is an important part of an overall program to measure performance, managing to budgets alone does not provide performance accountability. For example, to have a stated goal that the district will this year spend \$3 million on HVAC repairs is not an indicator of performance. While this goal is measurable and important, it does not provide an indication of what is to be accomplished by such expenditures.

The district stated in its written responses to this study that the “Capital Plan and Five Year Work Program state the goals and measurable objectives of the construction program.” Both of these documents are generally available to the board and the public and, taken together, appear to provide a level of detail that would allow for an objective measure of budget accountability in the construction and capital improvements program. However, the two documents cannot be reconciled to one another on a line item basis or in total. For the initial planning year (2002-03) the capital plan includes total expenditures of \$281,210,556. The facilities five-year work program includes capital expenditures of \$144,830,400. The budget figures for the majority of line items in the two budgets cannot be reconciled. Neither of these documents can be reconciled to the 2002-03 actual budget. There was no information provided by the district indicating that management is held accountable to what might loosely be considered goals contained in either of these documents.

This facilities five-year work program plan generally provides an indication of the projects that are anticipated at the beginning of the five-year planning period. However, even this document suffers from an inability to provide accountability because:

- It is not reconciled to or updated to represent the actual annual budget in the first year of the planning period;
- It is not used for any management purposes;

- It is not reconciled to actual historical expenditures; and
- It does not represent a complete picture of anticipated projects because some projects are not included and all carryover projects from previous years are excluded.

At a minimum, the district should report on an annual basis its progress in meeting the detailed line-item expectations that are contemplated by the facilities five-year work program. The document would need to be expanded, formatted in a way that would allow for objective comparison to actual expenditures and progress and updated to match the annual budget. When changes are made to the annual budget, the data in the five-year plan needs to be updated accordingly. In addition, the accountability program should address, where practical, the bullet points described at the beginning of this best practice. Action Plan 7-7 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 7-7

We recommend that the district establish an accountability system that sets clear priorities and expectations for the construction program in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

Action Needed	Step 1. Establish individual responsibility for the development of an accountability system. Step 2. Develop appropriate goals and benchmarks for facilities construction to ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the construction program. Establish objectives stated clear, measurable statements that in turn drive the data that should be collected and how “success” will be determined and reported. Step 3. Seek appropriate district approval of goals and accountability program. Step 4. Collect appropriate benchmark data for measurability of the goals established by the accountability program (see Action Plan 7-8). Step 5. Establish and adopt a regular periodic reporting system that will provide meaningful measurement of the department’s progress in meeting the goals of the accountability system.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for facilities management under the supervision of the associate superintendent for operational services.
Time Frame	April 2004 for initial presentation, annually thereafter.

The district does not collect and report appropriate performance and cost-efficiency benchmark data from adjoining districts and/or the state and use this data to evaluate program performance and for management decision-making.

As part of this study, the review team has collected a limited amount of benchmark data from publicly available sources and reported the district’s performance relative to that data. This data has been reported in the appropriate sections of this chapter. The district should use this information as a starting point for identifying, collecting, assessing, and publicly reporting performance and cost-efficiency information.

Action Plan 7-8

We recommend that the district collect and report appropriate performance and cost-efficiency benchmark data from adjoining districts and/or the state and use this data to evaluate program performance and for management decision-making.

Action Needed	Step 1. Establish individual responsibility for the collection of benchmark data. Step 2. Collect appropriate benchmark data for measurability of the goals established by the accountability program in Action Plan 7-7. Step 3. Prepare and present goals and performance measures to the board (see Action Plan 7-9). Step 4. Prepare annual updates.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for facilities management under the supervision of the associate superintendent for operational services.
Time Frame	April 2004 for initial presentation, annually thereafter.

Best Practice 24: Not Using

The district does not regularly evaluate facilities construction operations based on established benchmarks and implements improvements to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

Evaluation of completed projects is an important management tool because it assesses how tax dollars were spent and whether a district took full advantage of available, usually scarce, public funds. Districts should assess their facilities construction operations as a whole at least annually using performance data and their established benchmarks. They should report their progress towards meeting established goals, objectives and benchmarks to the board and the public on at least an annual basis. Strategies should be established and implemented based on the outcomes of these evaluations.

The Collier County School District does not evaluate facilities construction operations based on established benchmarks and therefore has no basis for the implementation of improvements based on the results of such evaluation.

Action Plan 7-9

We recommend that the district establish and adopt a policy to evaluate and where applicable improve construction operations, based on the results of measurement against the goals and performance measures established in Best Practice 23 above and report its progress toward meeting its goals, objectives and benchmarks on an annual basis.

Action Needed	Step 1. Establish individual responsibility for the analysis of benchmark data.
	Step 2. When developing the presentation of goals and performance measures outlined in Action Plan 7-8, prepare recommendations and action plans where objectives are not being met
	Step 3. Prepare and present recommendations and action plans goals, along with the performance measures described in Action Plan 7-8 .
	Step 4. Prepare annual updates.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for facilities management under the supervision of the associate superintendent for operational services.
Time Frame	April 2004 for initial presentation, annually thereafter.



Facilities Maintenance

Summary

The Collier County School District is using 20 of 22 best practices relating to facilities maintenance. District facilities are safe, secure, clean, and equitably maintained. The department is managed well with staff ratios below staffing formulas and an overall excellent operation. To implement the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its facilities maintenance program, the district should establish procedures and staff performance standards to improve training for custodians and to ensure that all maintenance department employees have a clear understanding of how they can individually improve their performance and increase efficiency for the district while advancing their own careers.



As seen in Exhibit 8-1, the district has an opportunity to reduce costs in the area of energy conservation. Determining whether to take advantage of this recommendation is a district decision and should be based on many factors including district needs, public input and school board priorities. If the district implements this recommendation, it would be able to redirect the funds to other priorities, such as putting more money into the classroom or implementing the custodial job intervention training program to improve custodial training.

Exhibit 8-1

Our Review Identified Ways the District Could Reduce Facilities Maintenance Costs

Best Practice Number	Fiscal Impact					Total
	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Year 2006-07	Year 2007-08	
15 Implement Energy Conservation Incentive Program	\$0	\$123,104	\$123,104	\$123,104	\$123,104	\$492,416

Background

The Collier County School District's Facilities maintenance department is responsible for all aspects of preventative, routine and emergency upkeep for 37 school sites, as well as several other administrative and instruction- related facilities, which include approximately 5,333,043 square feet of maintainable building space. The department also maintains all grounds and athletic facilities. The maintenance department has 92 authorized positions in various skilled trades, clerical, supervisory and maintenance

support positions. The department had an adopted operating and capital budget of \$26.6 million for the 2002-03 fiscal year.

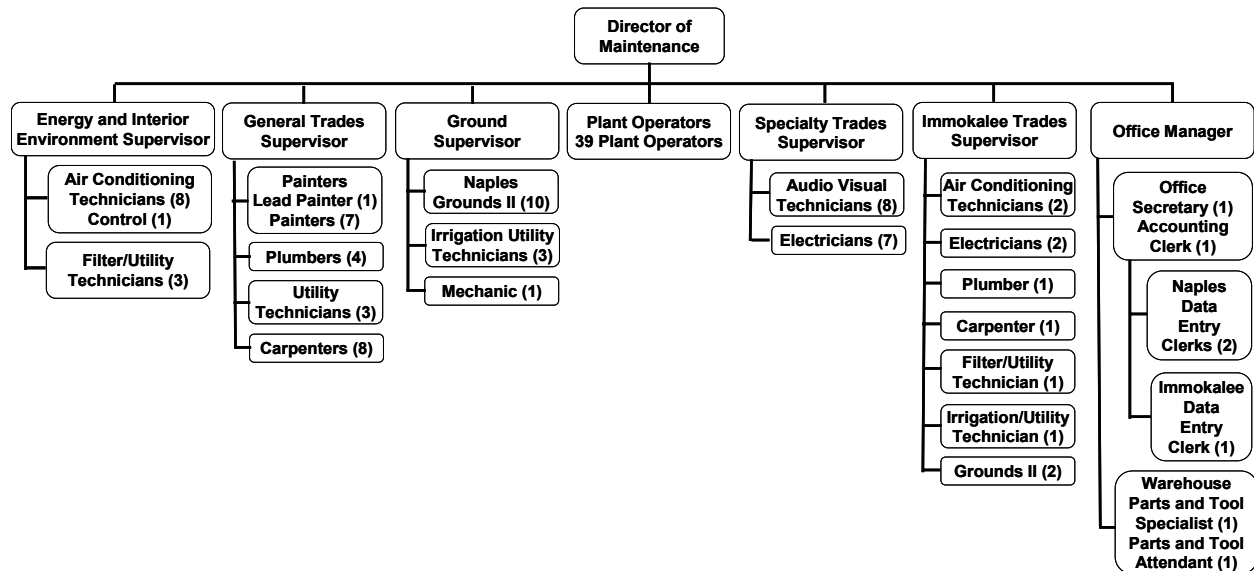
**Exhibit 8-2
The Approved 2002-2003 Maintenance Department Budget was \$26.6 Million**

Maintenance	Approved 2002-03 Budget
HVAC/Energy	\$ 7,752,535
Roofing	3,448,641
Technology Infrastructure	2,792,176
Carpet Replacement	1,766,748
Portable Transfer/Setup	3,277,018
Transfer to Maintenance	2,500,000
Maintenance Supervision	5,043,908
Total	\$26,581,026

Source: Collier County School District Approved Budget, 2002-2003.

As shown in Exhibit 8-3, the department is organized with a director of maintenance, five supervisors, and an office manager. The supervisors cover five key areas including energy and interior environment, general trades, grounds, specialty trades and the Immokalee satellite maintenance office. Each supervisor provides oversight for maintenance tradesmen and technicians. In addition to the supervisors, there are 39 plant operators located at each school location. The plant operators report to the principals at each location. This organizational structure results in shared responsibility for maintenance services.

**Exhibit 8-3
The District’s Maintenance Department Has a Hierarchical Organizational Structure**



Source: Collier County School District, Projected Personnel Requirements, 2002-03.

Activities of Particular Interest

The district collects data on most of the major building systems that have to be replaced on a recurring basis. Each of these systems is tracked to include their most recent replacement date and the projected replacement date. This information is used to forecast capital renewal expenditures for the next 20 years

and is updated annually during the budget process. Projecting lifecycle capital renewal funding requirements benefits the district by providing more accurate long range planning information and allows the district to prepare for what might otherwise be unforeseen emergencies not accounted for in the budget.

The maintenance department maintains a written record of all parts ordered or replaced, by school, in the parts warehouse. The paper-based system is a great resource for common repairs, minimizes parts ordering and improves institutional knowledge of the schools overall building system components.

The practice of relocating surplus equipment with a value less than \$750 to a central location has been determined not to be cost effective. Therefore, in accordance with the home-rule powers granted to the school board by the Florida Legislature, principals are authorized to hold school-based surplus property sales and to retain the funds collected within the school's internal funds, for all surplus property valued under \$750. This practice provides a revenue stream for the schools and decreases the district's administrative burden of transporting, managing, auctioning and discarding surplus equipment. In many districts, such surplus equipment must eventually be discarded without recognizing any income from the obsolete property.

Most school facilities have intrusion alarms and each school has a deputy sheriff assigned to the location. Eighteen schools have a "sheriff pad site" with a dedicated sheriff presence on campus. This program requires the district to provide the trailer's concrete pad, the utilities and the sewer. The sheriff provides the trailer and staffs the position at no charge. In conjunction with the sheriff, the department also conducts monthly SWAT drills at selected schools.

The school board and Collier County entered into an inter-local agreement where the county building department serves as the school board's permitting and inspection agency. The code enforcement and permitting department requires the maintenance department, at the beginning of each year, to apply for four blanket maintenance permits for each facility within the district, for a total of 156 permits. These blanket permits ensure that all maintenance activities are permitted according to code requirements and that inspections are made upon completion of major projects. The code enforcement and permitting department coordinates with the county building department to insure that all permits are acquired, plan reviews conducted and inspections completed by the county building department. The district has established a code officials office which oversees the safety and security division.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Facilities Maintenance Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Program Direction and Accountability	1. The district's maintenance department has a mission statement and goals and objectives that are established in writing.	Yes	8-6
	2. The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance and efficiency of the maintenance and operations program.	Yes	8-6
	3. The district obtains and uses customer feedback to identify and implement program improvements.	Yes	8-7
	4. The district has established procedures and staff performance standards to ensure efficient operations.	No	8-8
	5. The department maintains educational and district support facilities in a condition that enhances student learning and facilitates employee productivity.	Yes	8-9
Organizational Structure and Staffing	6. The district regularly reviews the organizational structure of the maintenance and operations program to minimize administrative layers and assure adequate supervision and staffing levels.	Yes	8-10
	7. Complete job descriptions and appropriate hiring and retention practices ensure that the maintenance department has qualified staff.	Yes	8-11
	8. The district provides a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff to enhance worker job satisfaction, efficiency and safety.	No	8-12
Resource Allocation and Utilization	9. The administration has developed an annual budget with spending limits that comply with the lawful funding for each category of facilities maintenance and operations.	Yes	8-14
	10. The district accurately projects cost estimates of major maintenance projects.	Yes	8-15
	11. The board maintains a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations.	Yes	8-16
	12. The district minimizes equipment costs through purchasing practices.	Yes	8-17
	13. The district provides maintenance department staff, the tools and equipment required to accomplish their assigned tasks.	Yes	8-18
	14. The district uses proactive maintenance practices to reduce maintenance costs.	Yes	8-18
	15. The maintenance department identifies and implements strategies to contain energy costs.	Yes	8-20
	16. The district has an energy management system in place and the system is maintained at original specifications for maximum effectiveness.	Yes	8-21
	17. District personnel regularly review maintenance and operation's costs and services and evaluate the potential for outside contracting and privatization.	Yes	8-22

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Information Management	18. A computerized control and tracking system is used to accurately track work orders and inventory.	Yes	8-22
	19. The maintenance department has a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the district.	Yes	8-23
Health and Safety	20. District policies and procedures clearly address the health and safety conditions of facilities.	Yes	8-25
	21. The school district complies with federal and state regulatory mandates regarding facility health and safety conditions.	Yes	8-25
	22. The district is aware of and prepared for the permitting and inspection requirements of the Florida Building Code.	Yes	8-26

PROGRAM DIRECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Best Practice 1: Using

The maintenance department has a mission statement and written goals and objectives.

Like other publicly funded entities, a school district should be held accountable for and provide information to parents and other taxpayers on the performance and cost of its major programs and support services, including facilities maintenance. To accomplish this, a school district should have an accountability system that includes a mission statement, clearly stated goals and measurable objectives that identify the expected outcomes of the facilities maintenance program. The program's goals and objectives should be in writing, tied to the district's strategic plan and focused on operating facilities in a cost-efficient manner while allowing for maximum utilization of facilities. Maintenance program goals and objectives also should include comprehensive projections of the size of the necessary work force, the amount and types of equipment required and anticipated long-term budget requirements. These projections should be based on a survey of the physical condition of the facilities and equipment and should identify repair or replacement needs of district facilities.

The Collier County School District has developed a *Maintenance/Operations Standard Operating Procedure Handbook*, 2001-2002 that identifies the maintenance department's mission statement, goals and measurable objectives. This comprehensive handbook contains sections on policies, communications, training, health and safety, board policy, benefits standard operating procedures and the SSA/ELKE computer maintenance management system. The district developed its standard operating procedures handbook based on the Florida Department of Education handbook called *Maintenance and Operations: Administrative Guidelines for School Districts and Community Colleges*. The 2001-2002 handbook has recently been revised with updated staffing, organization charts and procedures. The department's goals and objectives are stated in the form of five key strategies. These strategies address supporting student achievement by improving services, which enhance the environment and minimize disruptions; supporting a safe learning environment; providing fast response to work orders with 100 percent completion, using quality materials and workmanship; supporting partnerships with suppliers, architects, engineers and contractors through a "life cycle" approach to improve materials, services and methods; empowering "high performance employees" with training, tools, skills, safety and professional service techniques; and, use of management information systems to improve operational processes as the basis for decision making. Measures that support these key strategies include customer feedback surveys, work order response due dates and completion times, life-cycle capital renewal forecasting procedures, employee training and continuing education and the management information systems in place to support operations.

Best Practice 2: Using

The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance and efficiency of the maintenance and operations program.

An effective accountability system includes performance and cost-efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks, such as comparisons to adjoining districts or an industry standard, to evaluate the program and use these in management decision-making. By periodically comparing established benchmarks to actual performance, a district can determine if changes are needed in its maintenance program to improve efficiency and effectiveness, reduce costs and assess whether alternative service delivery methods, such as privatization, may be cost-effective. Measures that should be considered for evaluating the maintenance program include costs per square foot (including energy use), full-time staff per square foot

of facility and costs per student.¹ As part of its accountability system a district also should establish and implement strategies to continually assess the reliability of program performance and cost data. In addition, school board members should periodically receive performance information that helps them assess the efficiency and effectiveness of its maintenance program.

While the Collier County School District does not appear to benchmark to other peer district performance indicators, the maintenance department achieves accountability through management techniques and direct accountability mechanisms. The maintenance department ensures accountability over privatized services through reviews of contract compliance and annual bidding procedures. Staffing formulas assist in measuring performance of activities performed by district staff. A set of seven performance standards has been adopted that includes process specific measures. The seven standards include A) determine the work, B) plan the work, C) define the work, D) do the work, E) communicate the work, F) support the work and G) assess the work. In addition, a customer satisfaction survey was implemented in December 2002 and the associate superintendent for operational services conducts a project review meeting six times a year.

The maintenance department has established measures including 1) bi-monthly project review meetings with the associate superintendent for operational services, 2) annual contract reviews for contracted services, 3) budget comparisons for major maintenance project, 4) work order completion reviews and status indicators and 5) employee training and continuing education tracking with assignment of trade employees to specific facilities. Additionally, the maintenance department opened a satellite maintenance facility to better serve the Immokalee area in 1995. This has resulted in a significant reduction in travel time and better service. The district also has specific measures such as square feet cleaned, customer satisfaction, and energy savings.

The district has privatized a number of functions that not only provide a cost savings and higher efficiency, but also provide a degree of outside objectivity. In particular, the district has outsourced health and safety inspections and grounds maintenance. By outsourcing inspections to the county building inspection office, the schools have an outside agency doing health and safety inspections at a reduced cost to the district. The district has certifications to do their own inspections, however, they have chosen to outsource. This provides an outside accountability measure.

Best Practice 3: Using

The district obtains and uses customer feedback to identify and implement program improvements; however, the new process has only recently been implemented.

Customer feedback drawn from surveys is another tool to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the maintenance program. Customer evaluation surveys should ask stakeholders, such as principals and school-based employees, to provide their perceptions of response times, work order completion times, quality of work, overall facility appearance and cleanliness and the professionalism of employees in the maintenance program.² This type of survey should be performed at least annually and summary results should be shared with maintenance employees, district managers, the superintendent and the school board. If the customer surveys identify problems, program managers should assess the situation, prepare corrective action plans for any identified problem areas and make program improvements.

The Collier County School District implemented an annual customer survey process in December 2002, the first and only time the process has been used. The value of this survey process will be determined when, and if, the results next year show improvement over the previous year. As shown in Exhibit 8-4, the initial survey resulted in high marks across the board with an average overall rating of 4.01 on a scale

¹ All Florida school districts are required to report operations and maintenance costs and energy usage to the Department of Education annually and this information is readily available to school districts for comparative purposes.

² A district may also survey students, parents, or other stakeholders as may be appropriate.

of 1 to 5 (five being excellent). The survey looked at six areas that generally cover operating procedures during emergency periods, operating procedures during normal periods, staff quality and response time, equipment quality and availability, availability of capital funding and an overall rating. Each section requested user comments. The first survey has been completed and the results distributed to all plant operators and maintenance supervisors.

**Exhibit 8-4
District Survey Response Tabulation**

	Average Score	Sections					Overall Rating 3
		Operation Emergencies 1A	Operations Normal 2A	Staff Quality 2B	Equipment Quality 2C	Capital Funding 2D	
		Section Scores	4.01	4.20	3.70	4.20	

Source: Review of December 2002 CCPS Maintenance/Operations Customer Satisfaction Survey.

We recommend that the director of maintenance use customer survey responses to develop, in conjunction with the maintenance supervisors, specific plans to improve overall satisfaction.

Best Practice 4: Not Using

The district has not established procedures and staff performance standards to ensure efficient operations.

Up-to-date procedures, when coupled with appropriate district policies, ensure that activities are carried out in an efficient and effective manner and that districts are in compliance with federal and state laws. In addition, written procedures serve as a district’s institutional memory for key processes and as such help to minimize disruption to essential services and reduce the need for costly training and assistance due to staff turnover. Program management should develop written procedures and employee performance standards with input from maintenance managers, trade and custodial employees and human resource professionals. Procedures and standards should be developed utilizing a combination of national standards and local imperatives and adjusted for budgetary considerations. Performance standards serve as a basis for measuring how well the maintenance and custodial employees meet or adhere to board policies and set clear expectations for job performance, giving managers tools that allow them to consistently evaluate employees.

The Collier County School District has not established staff level and task specific performance standards. The maintenance department, however, does deliver maintenance and operations services at a satisfactory level and macro level performance accountability standards are in place. The customer feedback process has been only recently implemented and the work order response system is an informal email-based system. While signoff procedures result in accountability and apparent satisfaction, the district does not have objective feedback systems and tracking ability to verify follow-up and corrective action. The SSA/Elke work order system appears to have work order tracking capability and does collect materials and labor figures; however, detailed analysis of individual tasks completed by specific individuals is not a standard practice. This lack of task specific analysis may result in a lost opportunity to provide continuous improvement in the maintenance department.

While the district is operating at efficient levels, the district is not using this best practice because performance standards are not specific to repetitive tasks or for job functions. In addition, the standards are not benchmarked against industry practices or used in the performance appraisal process, outside of staffing formulas. The performance appraisal process does not involve direct assessment of productivity measures that are compared to written performance standards.

In addition, the current process for communicating opportunities for improvement is informal, based upon emails and interpersonal communication. The plant operators are the employees in charge of each facility’s maintenance. There currently is no standardized process for tracking responses to failures and measuring customer satisfaction on an incident level. The customer survey written commentary reinforces the need for a better communication process. Specific comments include “Maintenance technician should try to see plant operator or leave note as to why he was there and what work was done,” “More communication about planned work between the maintenance supervisors and plant operators,” and “Some trade employees don’t advise the site of completed jobs and some do not return to get work orders signed off.” A performance appraisal system could be completed with in-house resources. Implementation will lead to increased efficiencies and/or increased customer satisfaction.

Action Plan 8-1 outlines steps to assist the district in improving operations and using this best practice.

Action Plan 8-1

We recommend that the district develop a performance appraisal system to assess productivity and tie the system to a formal process for tracking opportunities for improvement and measuring customer satisfaction on an incident level.

Action Needed	Step 1. Identify potential appraisal processes, limitations and legal considerations. Step 2. Identify the work order system productivity measures for supervisors and trades categories. Step 3. Meet with trades’ supervisors to select measurement factors and identify the best methods for collecting data on individual performance. Step 4. Document the selected performance measures and communicate the program to employees that will be reviewed using the selected performance measures. Step 5. Prepares summary of performance measures prior to each employee’s review and benchmark employee performance against the selected standards. Step 6. Identify solutions to underperforming employees during the performance appraisal and identify and document performance review benchmarks for follow-up.
Who Is Responsible	Director of maintenance
Time Frame	January 2004 and ongoing

Best Practice 5: Using

The department maintains educational and district support facilities in a condition that enhances student learning and facilitates employee productivity.

Comprehensive maintenance of the physical plant is critical to sustaining a suitable environment for teaching and student learning and to extending the useful life of a facility. Facilities should be maintained in a condition that supports efficient operation, maximum utilization and provides appropriate working conditions for district employees. The district maintenance program should include routine condition inspections, a preventive maintenance component, regularly scheduled repairs and methods of responding to emergencies, plans for the modernization of building systems, facility enhancements and general renovations as primary functions.

Visits to the Collier schools and support facilities demonstrated a very high degree of maintenance quality and customer satisfaction. In the schools visited, site equipment and technology infrastructure were present to support curriculum delivery, classrooms were adequately equipped with instructional aids and the facilities were clean with visible safety and security precautions. Items that are identified as systems that typically have shorter-term or critical life cycles were inspected at a number of schools to determine if they were being replaced on a regular basis. For example, flooring systems, paint, ceiling tiles, visible roofs, parking areas and grounds maintenance were briefly inspected and found to be consistently maintained and well within their useful lives. No significant deferred maintenance items were noted.

Interviews with a number of principals and plant operators indicated a generally high degree of satisfaction with facilities maintenance.

An integral component of the learning environment includes indoor air quality (IAQ). The district's Risk Management Department addresses district indoor air quality concerns proactively. The district has a private contractor investigate and test all IAQ concerns. The district had an open symposium on IAQ that was attended by district principals, teachers, parents, support staff and interested public on October 10, 2002. The maintenance department has an air conditioning coil cleaning and air filter changing crew of four employees that changes filters on a regularly scheduled basis of four times a year, with portable classrooms being changed six times per year. The maintenance department, through the plant operators, responds to individual instructor needs to make the instructors teaching areas more user-friendly.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

Best Practice 6: Using

The district regularly reviews the organizational structure of the maintenance and operations program to minimize administrative layers and assure adequate supervision and staffing levels.

Well-run school districts are lean administratively and maximize funds available to support their primary mission, educating students. This requires districts to make the most effective use of funds allocated for administrative services, such as facilities maintenance. There is no single right way to organize and staff the facilities maintenance program. Critical factors that affect the structure of the maintenance organization include the number, age, general condition, size (gross square feet), and geographic distribution of a district's physical facilities, as well as the scope of services that have been assigned to the department. In general, however, the organizational structure of the maintenance function should be relatively flat with appropriate spans of control. Such a structure will result in minimized administrative and managerial costs while providing sufficient managerial controls to ensure operations are properly carried out. Staffing needs to be to the level by which needed work is accomplished in an economical and efficient manner.

The Collier County School District's maintenance department has had a stable maintenance organization structure for several years with the same number of supervisors for maintenance trade personnel for 17 years, despite a continually expanding facilities portfolio. Staff levels, including support personnel are determined based on staffing formulas originally developed by the Florida Department of Education. Job descriptions are established for all positions and describe their duties and responsibilities.

The organization chart identifies five supervisory positions, one for each major trade group including energy & interior environment, general trades, grounds, specialty trades and Immokalee trades. These positions have job descriptions that define their responsibilities. The director of maintenance reported that each of these supervisors has received a college degree. The ratio of supervisors to employees is established and monitored by recently approved staffing formulas based upon the Florida Department of Education maintenance and Operations guidelines.

The maintenance staffing formula used by the district is the total facility square footage as listed on the 2002-2003 projected personnel requirements report, divided by 45,000 square feet to derive one full time equivalent building maintenance-related staff position. The formula adds one additional full time equivalent support position for each 6.8 building maintenance-related staff positions. An adjustment is made for plant operators considering each plant operator as .75 of a building maintenance-related staff position. A comparison of the district's staffing formula and the district's actual staffing is found in Exhibit 8-5.

Exhibit 8-5
The Collier County School District's Actual Maintenance Staffing
Compares Favorably to the Staffing Formula

Measures	Collier	
	Actual	Formula
Square Footage	5,333,043	5,333,043
Maintenance Workers	92	136
Square Feet/Staff	57,968	39,231

Source: Collier Maintenance/Operations 2002-2003 Projected Personnel Requirements Report, Standard Operating Procedure Handbook, 2001-02.

The custodial staffing formula is also based on square footage and school type, and is comparable to other industry benchmarks, including state guidelines. The custodial formula divides the total square feet per school by 19,000 and then adds a position modifier to each school's total staff equivalent. The modifier is 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions for elementary schools, 0.75 FTEs for middle schools and one FTE for high schools. The FTE allowed by school type are summed to derive the total districtwide staffing level. Exhibit 8-6 shows the calculated results using the staffing formula and compares them to the actual staffing at the district.

Exhibit 8-6
The Collier County School District's Actual Custodial Staffing
Compares Favorably to the Staffing Formula and State Recommendations

	Collier	
	Actual	Formula
Square Footage	4,730,631	4,730,631
Custodial Workers	220	249
Modifier		
Modified FTE	23	23
Total Custodial Workers	243	272
SF per Custodian	19,468	17,393

Source: Florida's *Maintenance and Operations: Administrative Guidelines for School Districts and Community Colleges*, 2002-2003.

The district is below the formula in total staffing with 243 total staff, which is conservative as this includes custodial staff for all facilities, and the formula is based only on instructional spaces. The district also improves on the 19,000 square feet per custodian state standard by 468 square feet. The district conducts annual budget workshops where the staffing requests are presented. The custodial staff, however, does not report to the director of Maintenance. All custodians report through the plant operator, who in turn reports to the principal at each school.

Best Practice 7: Using

Complete job descriptions and appropriate hiring and retention practices ensure that the maintenance department has qualified staff.

A qualified, knowledgeable, stable group of employees is the cornerstone of any maintenance organization. Complete job descriptions that accurately reflect the knowledge, skills, abilities, duties and responsibilities of every employee in the department are essential to the development of such a workforce. The job descriptions should be readily available to school district employees and applicants, meet the district's needs and they should have been developed by human resource professionals in cooperation with individuals having specific expertise in the job tasks to be performed. Districts should establish

competitive compensation to ensure that they can attract and retain qualified candidates. Compensation includes salary and benefits such as health insurance, vacation and retirement benefits. Districts should establish procedures to ensure that personal and professional references are obtained and contacted.

The Collier County School District’s maintenance department has low turnover and fills vacancies quickly. The district attracts qualified applicants by posting job vacancy notices around the district, on the district’s web page and in newspapers. These procedures are sufficient based on district size, location and needs. As shown in Exhibit 8-7, it takes an average of 53 days to fill a maintenance vacancy based on interviews of candidates. The maintenance department has current job descriptions for all positions, which are reviewed by the supervisory staff periodically. The supervisory staff is given the opportunity to provide input in the development and revision of job descriptions.

**Exhibit 8-7
Historical Hiring Duration for Selected Positions**

Position	Days Position Open	Dates Open		Number of Candidates	References Checked	Signoff
1 A/C Filter Utility	120	11-Sep-02	9-Jan-03	21	2	Director of Maintenance
5 Irrigation Technician	77	25-Nov-02	10-Feb-03	6	2	Director of Maintenance
4 Carpenter	45	28-Oct-02	12-Dec-02	10	2	Director of Maintenance
2 HVAC Technician	14	28-Aug-02	11-Sep-02	4	2	Director of Maintenance
3 Audio/Visual Tech.	9	29-Oct-02	7-Nov-02	2	2	Director of Maintenance
Average	53					

Source: Interview with director of Maintenance, sampling review of maintenance position job descriptions, review of five most recent vacancy positions that have been filled. February 2003.

Based on a review of the organization of the maintenance department, a review of job descriptions including required education and experience, and interviews with appropriate personnel, the review team determined that the district had assigned responsibilities and authority appropriately for maintenance functions.

However, the district is experiencing difficulty attracting high tonnage heating ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) chiller maintenance personnel. This is caused by a general lack of industry in the area and the resulting shortage of this type of expertise. Normal residential and small commercial HVAC technicians are available, however, heavy tonnage technicians are difficult to find. Privatization to satisfy this training need does not appear to be an option due to the limited need for high tonnage chiller specialists in the area, with a limited industry-specific support capability within the surrounding area’s community colleges or career technical schools.

We recommend that the district develop a structured training course to provide high tonnage HVAC chiller maintenance personnel specialty expertise with necessary certifications. This course should be integrated with the job-based job intervention program referenced in Action Plan 8-2.

Best Practice 8: Not Using

The district provides a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance staff but is not providing consistent, adequate training to custodians.

Training ensures that school district employees understand the scope of their responsibilities and performance expectations and serves to update skills and knowledge necessary to effectively and efficiently carry out their duties. The sophistication of the maintenance employee-training plan, training methods and documentation of training may vary according to the size of the district. However,

maintenance training should address custodial operations, grounds maintenance, and specialized trades and should be tailored to the needs of the specific function. In addition, training in maintenance related activities such as operating procedures, use of tools, proper lifting techniques, work place safety, hazardous materials handling and emergency procedures should be required for all employees. A district can use a variety of training sources available to it including vendors and manufacturers of their supplies and equipment, contract trainers and professional association meetings. School districts also should take advantage of free training materials and programs available through the Florida Department of Education, subscribe to publications and maintain memberships in organizations that provide information on new technologies, equipment and procedures. Training programs should include an evaluation component so that employee feedback can be used to improve future training.

The Collier County School District's maintenance department conducts training and provides continuing education opportunities for its employees. Maintenance staff has a multitude of training available and a log of recent training shows that in 2002, maintenance staff attended seminars or training courses on:

- fire alarms,
- electrical training,
- door closer repair,
- pest control and management,
- irrigation services,
- key accounting,
- building codes and workplace safety,
- engineering ethics,
- fundamentals of propane,
- closed circuit TV,
- custodial train-the-trainer,
- front desk administration,
- asbestos materials annual refresher, and
- energy management software.

All of the departmental supervisors are degreed professionals and the district supports continuing education through professional associations. The district pays the associated dues and supports conference participation.

The training described above is for maintenance staff; however, the district does not have a standardized training curriculum for custodians and is not maintaining its custodial operating procedures through annual review. The custodial function has been changed to a plant operator under the site-based decision making structure and the custodial training position was eliminated. The system places job training at the school and has resulted in an inconsistently trained workforce. The current situation is characterized by a lack of standardization for procedures, limited integration of safety training, little ability for personnel to obtain the training necessary to achieve economic incentives, no structured training or tracking for continuing education, inconsistent cleaning procedures, inability to properly schedule on-site custodial in some locations and excessive material use and cost. All of these contribute to excess cost. The only formalized training is for blood borne pathogens, hazardous material handling and informal training put on by material and equipment suppliers as new products are introduced.

Even under site-based management with decentralized custodial reporting, a custodial supervisor to coordinate staff needs, training and recruiting is warranted. The director of maintenance and the director

of workforce education, customized programs have developed a job based training intervention program for custodial and plant operator positions. This program should be implemented to provide on-site training for custodial and plant operator personnel through the district’s workforce education department. The basic training curriculum is proposed to include first aid certification, CPR, OSHA certification, hazardous materials training, safety awareness, fire safety and emergency preparedness, personal protective equipment, safety and security procedures and policies and procedures. The 8-hour re-certification training will consist of first aid and CPR certification, OSHA certification and hazardous material and safety issues.

A review of representative claims settled from custodial injuries is startling. In the years 1998 through 2003, there have been 26 custodial employee related claims settled on behalf of the district for a total of \$1.9 million with an average settlement of \$73,387. Most of these claims are back or muscle strains, knee injuries, or slip-and-fall related injuries. If training reduced only one of these claims, the program would be cost justified. Action Plan 8-2 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 8-2

We recommend that the district initiate a district wide custodial training program.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Managers and custodians Identify custodial training needs
	Step 2.	Contact peer districts to identify successful custodial training programs
	Step 3.	Develop an appropriate training program
	Step 4.	Schedule and provide training
	Step 5.	Participants provide evaluative feedback on the usefulness of classes
	Step 6.	Incorporate feedback as appropriate when developing and arranging future classes.
Who Is Responsible	Director of maintenance	
Time Frame	January 2004 and ongoing	

RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND UTILIZATION

Best Practice 9: Using

The administration has developed an annual budget with spending limits that comply with the lawful funding for each category of facilities maintenance and operations.

Like most other organizations, school districts have limited funds and therefore, they must set budget priorities. A school district’s budget allocation decisions should reflect its priority goals and objectives. These goals and objectives (which should be part of a strategic plan) may either be explicitly stated in the budget or may be reflected in changes in allocations that are concurrent with the shifting priorities. A school district budget should allocate sufficient resources to ensure that its plant operations and maintenance needs are adequately funded and rely on dollars, which are raised and expended in accordance with Florida law. Work force, supplies, equipment, training and the technology to support the maintenance program are essential budget considerations. The budget should be based on assessments of the physical condition of the district’s educational and ancillary facilities, maintenance and custodial staffing standards, historical data, employee input and projects identified in the strategic and five-year work plans. The annual budget should address long-term goals for maintaining and operating district facilities, recurring maintenance tasks such as preventive maintenance and provide reasonably adequate funding to avoid the accumulation of significant deferred maintenance projects. The budget also should provide for the correction of deficiencies identified in the annual safety, casualty and fire safety inspection reports.

Under district established budget guidelines, Collier County School District's maintenance department is responsible for developing and maintaining three separate operating budgets. These budgets are the general maintenance budget, the grounds budget and the utility budget. The operating budgets are allowed to increase by 3% to 4% per year over previous actual expenses. Using a special needs request form, the maintenance department may make exceptions to the proposed annual budget. This allows the maintenance department to request additional operational funding for specific projects. All of these practices are within the bounds of legal limits and actions.

The maintenance department uses a life-cycle capital renewal approach to forecast recurring maintenance tasks that are caused by end-of-life cycle systems expiration. The annual reporting system uses the existing knowledge base of the director of maintenance and the maintenance supervisors. A worksheet with most major systems maintains expected replacement date and cost. While this approach is working, there is a risk of loss of institutional knowledge and the long range forecast would benefit from a consistent approach that not only considers the major building systems, but also considers subsystem type, maintenance quality, escalating replacement values and expected and remaining life. A database for life cycle forecasting could possibly be developed with internal resources.

We recommend that the district implement an automated system for life cycle capital forecasting to reduce the annual planning and budgeting process resulting in more accurate projections and reducing staff administrative tracking time for all schools.

The maintenance department has developed annual budget and spending practices; however, there may not be adequate checks and balances to ensure a thorough and efficient budget process on an ongoing basis. Budget fund shifting and comparisons of actual and budget projections with peer and industry benchmarks, as well as routine evaluation for budget expenditures, need improvement.

The maintenance department operating budget line item objects are reviewed on a monthly basis. If district maintenance needs require additional funding in a particular object, the funds are transferred from an object that has sufficient funding. The maintenance department capital budget projects may be cancelled and substituted for a project that is deemed more important by the district in any fiscal year. This is done with the knowledge and direction of the associate superintendent for operational services and the executive director of facilities management.

The shifting of budgets may distort reporting and does not provide a sound basis for project completion cost comparisons. The budget shifting and project prioritizing also lend themselves to abuse or manipulation and may be covering up cost overruns in certain budget objects. There is not an individual specifically responsible for planning projects or budgets and an analyst position may be warranted to assist in preparation and tracking of these expenditures and their corresponding budgets.

We recommend that the district develop a better capital budget process and provide mechanisms for managing and monitoring budgets on a line item basis, rather than by category throughout the year.

Best Practice 10: Using

The district develops cost estimates of major maintenance projects.

The cost of major maintenance projects can be a substantial expense for a school district and therefore, must be effectively managed.³ A district can do this in a number of ways. For instance, cost estimates for these projects should be developed considering experience with prior similar projects; current estimating cost standards, local market conditions and an inflation factor for multi-year projects. A

³ Individual projects that are beyond the scope of routine maintenance work are considered major maintenance projects.

district should also be realistic in its project estimates so that once the five-year work plan is adopted; it is a valid indicator of the work that will actually be accomplished and the dollars that will both be needed and available, in the plan's out years.

The Collier County School District uses cost comparisons of similar projects and outside vendors for cost estimating support for proposed projects. A review of three recent projects reveals that two of the three projects were completed slightly under budget. One project was over budget; however, the scope of work was expanded to include additional site work for a memorial area for a student that passed away during the year.

The maintenance department estimates the costs of major maintenance capital projects by using the expertise of the district's contracted architectural services for estimating pricing of current market and equipment. When forecasting a major maintenance project, the district will also refer to a completed project as an estimating cost reference source and use the district's purchasing requirements when actual prices are obtained. The district requires that all bids for services and materials be reviewed annually. The director of purchasing will review the bids by requesting the supplier's renewal price of their current contract and either accept or re-bid the service. The bids have a life cycle of five years with annual options for cost consideration, according to the district's purchasing policy.

The maintenance department, when producing the proposed 5/10/20-year capital budget, uses an inflation rate of 5 % per year directed by the executive director of business services. The original direction was 10% for inflation; however, the compounding affects of this higher level of inflation were excessive over 20 years so the director of maintenance lowered it to 5%. Five percent inflation is still very high especially in light of the economy's inflationary indices over the last three years. This high inflation rate may be covering budget inefficiencies or may actually be serving as a contingency rather than an inflationary adjustment.

The maintenance department should revisit the need for a 5% inflation factor, rather than a Consumer Price Index (CPI) standard inflationary adjustment and select a consistent factor for use in all budget projections.

Best Practice 11: Using

The board maintains a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations.

A well-managed school district has funds available to address unanticipated or emergency contingencies that may arise during the fiscal year. The age of the facilities and equipment, the repair history of major systems such as HVAC and roofs, area climatic conditions and the effectiveness of the district's preventive maintenance program are considerations that will help determine the amount of a maintenance reserve fund. Overall, the district's budgetary policy must be flexible to ensure funding of unforeseen maintenance needs that could adversely affect the district's mission.

The Collier County School District allocates adequate funds within capital budgets (as shown in the 5/10/20 year capital outlay plan and in the 2002-03 annual budget) to handle current maintenance needs. Maintenance budgets in the 5/10/20 year capital outlay plan and the 2002-03 annual budget include both on-going maintenance issues and capital replacement of building systems that are at the end of their useful lives. The budgets include unforeseen projects within individual line items.

Although the district is using this best practice, in the long-term it needs to improve its performance in the approval of its annual budget. Discrepancies between the 5/10/20 year capital outlay plan and the 2002-03 approved budget indicate that these reserve funds may not be appropriately funded for the current year. At some point during the period between the approval of the 5/10/20 year capital plan and the approval of the 2002-03 annual budget, additional projects were added. The result of adding these

additional projects was that the contingency and reserves funds originally contemplated in the long-term capital plan were significantly decreased for the current year. In fact, the \$19.8 million originally shown in the long-term budget for 2002-03 was reduced during the year to less than \$1.5 million in the annual budget. While this appears to have been the result of unforeseen changes mandated by the board, this process should be closely monitored to make sure that adequate reserve funds are maintained in the future.

We recommend that the board carefully monitor any potential reallocation of reserve or contingency funds contemplated by the long-range plans to assure that adequate reserves are maintained and not consumed by current projects.

Best Practice 12: Using

The district minimizes equipment costs through purchasing practices.

Sound purchasing practices foster competition, which yields the best pricing for goods and services. A district should not only establish purchasing policies and procedures that meet the requirements of Florida law but also ensure cost-efficient purchasing practices. The purchasing policies and procedures must be in a purchasing manual that is readily available to employees and the public. Periodically the district should conduct cost comparisons to determine whether purchasing practices have minimized costs. Consideration of long-term equipment operating and maintenance costs; inflation and the cost-effectiveness of repair or refurbishment of existing equipment should be a part of the cost projections made for replacement equipment.

The Collier County School District reviews all contracted service bids annually and will either renew the bid with the current service provider or re-bid the desired service. The district requires the maintenance department to obtain pricing from three sources, unless the equipment/material is a direct replacement or the equipment/material is needed by a certain date. Although the maintenance department does not desire to stock large quantities of materials, the department will purchase in quantity when the price break is advantageous to the district. Bulk purchase products include lumber, liquid soap, freon, field marker paint, mulch and air filters. The maintenance department compares pricing obtained from state contracts to pricing from local vendors and will use the supplier with the best price.

The facilities department and their architects regularly consult with the maintenance department when designing new schools and selecting the equipment that will be installed. The maintenance department has standardized certain equipment throughout the district to aid in the replacement of the items either through trades' employee knowledge of equipment for troubleshooting, equipment durability and or reducing the amount of spare products carried in stock. Items such as door closures, door hardware, A/C control, fire alarm systems and soap dispensers have been standardized. The maintenance department maintains a written record of all parts ordered or replaced, by school. Although the information is paper-based and stored in three-ring binders in the parts warehouse, the system is a great resource that minimizes parts ordering and improves institutional knowledge of the schools building system components.

Although the district is using this best practice, it could improve its parts inventory system through automation of this data and online access. An automated system would allow greater access to the information now contained in three-ring binders and ensure that the data is properly stored and protected through routine backups in case of a fire. Such an automated system would also allow the district to perform analytical queries on part replacement trends and possibly cost benefit analysis on particular high volume replacement parts. Creation of this automated system could be done with a small database and a web interface to the district's intranet using current district resources.

We recommend that the district automate the parts record system with a web-accessible database system for better access by users that would result in secured storage and data backup and increased analytical capabilities.

Best Practice 13: Using

The district provides maintenance department staff the tools and equipment required to accomplish their assigned tasks.

To be efficient and effective in completing their day-to-day activities, maintenance employees require a wide selection of common tools and equipment. Specialty tools may be required to accomplish unplanned or unusual projects. A district should have procedures in place to ensure that maintenance employees have access to the right tools to accomplish their duties. Most maintenance departments have an inventory of commonly used tools that are available for day-to-day use, but usually find it more cost-effective to rent less frequently used specialty tools. Some districts provide small hand tools while other districts require the employees to provide their own. Districts should have written operating procedures that outline acquisition, use and return of tools, parts, materials and other equipment required for the day-to-day work and for special or emergency projects.

The Collier County School District's maintenance department provides all employees with uniforms, a vehicle (equipped with a district radio) and a pager for departmental communications. The department supplies the trade employees with all power tools, testing meters and specialized tools, but requires employees to supply common trade tools such as wrenches, screwdrivers and hammers. If common trade tools are broken, the district replaces them. If these tools are stolen or lost, the employee must replace the tool. This practice minimizes tool abuse and instills a sense of responsibility in the trade employees. Tools and equipment that are seldom needed are readily available through the tool crib or other sources. Specialty tools that are not regularly needed are rented from equipment rental agencies. The maintenance budget contains an amount for tool and equipment rental (code 360 in the operating budget). The maintenance department has open purchase orders with the equipment rental vendors to meet these equipment needs. A procedure for acquiring parts/materials not stocked in the warehouse is outlined in the standard operating procedures manual. The district has appropriate forms to purchase supplies directly from suppliers. Warehouse personnel issue commonly used stocked parts. The warehouse issues vendor supply request forms and special order parts purchases using vendor blanket purchase orders that are charged to the work order. The parts and tool specialist orders special parts for the technicians.

Best Practice 14: Using

The district uses proactive maintenance practices to reduce maintenance costs.

An effective proactive maintenance program can reduce maintenance and operations costs, reduce service outages and extend the useful life of expensive building systems. Therefore, a district should have proactive maintenance policies that include the continuing evaluation of building systems and the costs to maintain them, the development of districtwide equipment and building system standards, preventive maintenance programs and the surplusing of property. Evaluative information developed by the maintenance department can be used to recommend standard building systems, which are cost-efficient, for future construction projects. Standardizing equipment and building systems reduces employee training and avoids the costs of maintaining multiple parts inventories. Standards should be developed for HVAC, energy management controls, roofing, plumbing fixtures, mechanical and electrical equipment, door hardware, security and fire alarms and commonly used finishes such as paint, carpet and resilient flooring. While larger districts may need a computerized preventive maintenance program to schedule and track work orders, smaller districts may find paper-based systems cost-effective and sufficient for their level of activity. In addition, school districts should have policies and procedures in place to properly identify and dispose of surplus property in the most cost-effective manner.

The Collier County School District's maintenance department has instituted preventive maintenance programs for

- building envelope,
- roofs,
- sprinkler systems,
- emergency generators,
- security system/alarms,
- smoke/heat detectors,
- elevators,
- library book security systems,
- fire alarm systems,
- emergency lighting/battery packs,
- lighting relamping,
- switchboards,
- fume hoods,
- irrigation systems,
- water heaters,
- fire extinguishers,
- vehicle/heavy equipment,
- relocatable classrooms,
- fire safety,
- grounds play equipment and grandstands,
- cross connection controls,
- bleachers,
- public shelters,
- treatment plants,
- pumps, and
- grease traps.

Additionally, the maintenance department conducts compressor inspections, compressor oil samplings, boiler inspections and public address tests on a regularly scheduled basis.

Chapter 274, *Florida Statutes*, requires school districts to conduct an annual inventory for all property that exceeds \$750 in value. Procedures for the disposal and replacement of equipment with value greater than \$750 are detailed in the district's "selected subjects of interest." Equipment is listed on the surplus property form identifying the pieces of equipment to be shipped to the district warehouse and declared surplus. The practice of relocating surplus equipment with a value less than \$750 to a central location has been determined not to be cost effective. Therefore, in accordance with the home-rule powers granted to the school board by the Florida Legislature, principals are authorized to hold school-based surplus property sales and to retain the funds collected within the school's internal funds.

Supervisors review and suggest changes to plans and specifications of all new building construction with facilities and planning. These reviews include air handlers, locks and closures, tile, carpeting, new ball field soil and grasses, irrigation and use of plantings. These reviews do not proceed through a structured process. Participation is unstructured without a single point of review. Additionally, they are principally driven by value engineering to reduce cost and again this value engineering process does not follow a structured value engineering process. Industry practices for value engineering are typically not focused on cost cutting, but rather value creation. The University of Wisconsin-Madison has two college level courses available in their degree program, as well as continuing education seminars in daily formats. There is a great deal published on this subject and a formalized process would identify problem design areas and cost reduction opportunities in new construction and renovation projects.

We recommend that the maintenance department, in conjunction with the facilities department, develop a structured value engineering process using value engineering procedures and protocols.

Best Practice 15: Using

The maintenance department identifies and implements strategies to contain energy costs.

A comprehensive energy management plan guides a school district in ways to lower energy use and utility costs. Plan development should be a collaborative effort of district stakeholders including maintenance employees, custodians, site-based administrators, instructional personnel and utility providers and other experts on energy conservation. The district's energy manager should contact peer districts, state and local agencies, utility providers and other stakeholders to identify resources available to aid the district in their energy management efforts. The energy management plan, at a minimum, should provide incentives to schools to reduce energy costs, provide for energy audits, implement strategies for effective demand-side energy management and take advantage of energy rebates or other options to lower rates, which are offered by utility providers. Maintenance administrators should analyze the energy management system's reports and assess major building system conditions regularly to identify anomalies indicating problems that need to be addressed.

The Collier County School District incorporates energy management monitoring, conducts preventive maintenance procedures to maintain equipment at peak operating efficiency and has a site-based program that encourages energy conservation.

The district has an energy program that is directed by the maintenance department. There is ongoing management of energy reduction measures and individual school sites are monitored daily. The program is a site-based program that includes six basic energy procedures. These procedures include:

- A monthly budget versus actual review using a school-by-school energy usage report provided to the principal. The budget and report are based on a forecasted kilowatt/hour usage and a peak demand;
- Air conditioning systems are designed and selected based upon long term operational and maintenance costs. Thermo energy storage plants are widely used;
- Energy management systems are implemented at all facilities in the district;
- A full time energy monitoring system operation specialist monitors the energy management system and prepares reports for review and corrective action when demand curves exceed limits;
- An aggressive cooling and condenser coil cleaning program to maintain air conditioning equipment at top operational efficiency; and
- A thirteen-week filter replacement program with high efficiency filters.

In addition, the maintenance department, through the use of capital budgeting projects, has installed a total of twelve thermal ice storage units that receive demand charge breaks on power bills from Florida Power and Light. Florida Power and Light has reimbursed the district for installing the thermal ice storage systems. There are currently eight additional thermal ice storage systems being planned, two for existing facilities and six for new facilities. The cost savings on an annual basis is approximately \$25,000 for elementary schools, \$40,000 for middle schools and \$62,000 for high schools in energy costs.

The district does not, however, have an energy conservation incentive program since site administrators disbanded the program due to perceived manipulation. The Hillsborough County School District (HCS D) has a robust energy conservation incentive program, which may serve as a model. To assist schools to minimize consumption, the HCS D has tips on how schools can conserve energy, the temperature at which thermostats should be set, and offers an incentive program where schools get to keep a share of saved energy dollars. Over 60%, 103 of HCS D's 170 schools, have achieved their targets at least once. The HCS D has saved about \$2.8 million (5%) on energy costs over the past five years even as the cost of energy has gone up. If the Collier County School District were able to reduce electricity costs by 2%, the district could realize savings of \$123,000 per year. Assuming that savings could be achieved in the second year of the program, this would represent total savings of \$492,416 over a five-year period ($\$6,155,185 \times 2\% = \$123,104 \times 4 \text{ years} = \$492,416$).

We recommend that the district consider reinstating an energy conservation incentive program serving to complement their existing programs by providing site-based administrators with an incentive to conserve energy.

Best Practice 16: Using

The district has an energy management system and maintains the system at original specifications for maximum effectiveness.

Ever-increasing energy costs and limited budgets make it advantageous for school districts to install comprehensive, modern energy management systems (EMS), which can substantially reduce energy costs. An EMS enables a school district to remotely operate and monitor HVAC equipment. The EMS controls allow the district to maintain facilities at uniform temperature settings during established operating hours. The system should be capable of generating reports that can help to identify inefficiently operating building systems that may need service or upgrading. Because total replacement or installation of a new energy management system can be an expensive undertaking, a school district should budget for energy control enhancements and system replacements in its five-year work plan until an effective system is in place.

The Collier County School District incorporates energy management monitoring and conducts preventive maintenance procedures to maintain equipment at top operating efficiency and ensure maximum effectiveness. The maintenance department monitors the daily operation of the school-based energy management systems. The department's control specialist, who works under the Energy and Interior Environment supervisor, monitors the system. Daily review of the facility energy management system allows the district to identify facilities operating in manual mode instead of the automatic mode, which would allow lighting and air conditioning systems to run 24 hours a day. The maintenance department produces monthly reports for each school facility listing kilowatt usage and costs. An annual budget is produced and comparisons are made for monthly usage to budget and discrepancies are investigated and resolved. Additionally, the maintenance department has instituted a districtwide comprehensive heating ventilation and air conditioning control preventive maintenance and repair contract. This outsource contract allows for annual inspections and repairs of faulty equipment of all HVAC control equipment. The maintenance department has changed the specifications for the last four installations of energy management systems going to an intranet-based system, using advanced graphical displays. These

displays make the energy management systems more user friendly for principals, plant operators and trades' employees when looking for information or troubleshooting system anomalies and failures.

Best Practice 17: Using

District personnel regularly review maintenance and operation's costs and services and evaluate the potential for outside contracting and privatization.

Maintenance administrators should consider opportunities for privatizing services, weighing the potential advantages and disadvantages of using in-house resources against alternative service delivery methods. Outsourcing may be cost-effective and allow the district to reduce, reassign, or make better use of in-house staff. An annual review of services to determine if alternative delivery methods are more cost-effective should be an ongoing, established function of the department. These evaluations should be in writing and available to the school board and the public for review. If a service is outsourced, periodic written follow-up analyses should be made to confirm the effectiveness of the service and to verify that any anticipated cost savings have actually developed. Criteria that may support outsourcing services include opportunities to save money and management time, the opportunity to add specialized skills or training not available in-house, difficulty in hiring qualified employees and the opportunity to improve the overall quality of the maintenance function.

The Collier County School District maintenance department has outsourced a large portion of its service areas to more cost effective outside service firms. These contracts are reviewed on an annual basis and renewed through five-year contract option agreements. These practices ensure cost competitiveness and effective cost savings measures. The maintenance department uses contracted services for the repair of roofs, major utilities, lift station pumps, media center book security systems and large cement work. The maintenance department has privatized the following areas of services:

- Grounds landscaping services;
- Palm and deciduous tree trimming services;
- Fire alarm inspection and repair;
- Fire sprinkler inspection and repair;
- Fire extinguisher inspection and repair;
- Waste treatment plant operation;
- Chilled water treatment;
- HVAC control inspection and repair; and
- Centrifugal chiller inspection.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Best Practice 18: Using

District personnel use a computerized system to accurately track work orders and inventory.

Work order systems enable school districts to effectively track maintenance work orders and warehouse inventory and improve maintenance response time and efficiency. Larger school districts should use an electronic work order system to coordinate day-to-day activities including workflow, personnel, budget

and inventory associated with maintaining educational facilities.⁴ There are several types of computerized maintenance management systems available, some specifically designed for a single organization as well as “off the shelf software.” Any system in use should include work order control, scheduling, assignment and billing, inventory and preventive maintenance scheduling and record keeping as integrated functions. The system should provide statistical information that can be used to assist managers in determining employee productivity and in developing cost reports and estimates, equipment histories and facilities condition assessments, while interfacing with other district financial programs. District administrators should receive sufficient training to maximize the potential of the system.

In 1994, the Collier County School District contacted SSA/Elke Client Services to engage in a maintenance material audit process to determine requirements and procedures to establish a warehouse facility within the maintenance department. This function controls the requisitioning, purchasing and assignment of material to work orders. To manage and account for all maintenance material required on all work orders, a centralized warehouse was established. A maintenance inventory planning and control team was accountable to have parts available, along with requisitioning, ordering, receiving, invoicing and issuing of parts for corrective maintenance work orders. This action also enabled the district to achieve audit compliance. A manual was produced for districtwide staff and plant operator training, which provide detailed instructions for electronic work request processing. Initially, work request information forms were distributed around the school by the plant operator and/or placed where anyone could access one when needed. Anytime a repair was needed (except for computers) a work request information sheet was completed and given to the plant operator or contact person. The computer work request information sheet has been replaced with the online intranet-based work request form.

While the district has a computerized maintenance management system, the application and its procedures require an AS-400 computer mainframe platform, rather than a more current Windows based client-server platform. The original application was developed for the machine industry and is therefore an adaptation for K-12 school facility use. Problems associated with this include the lack of drop-down menus requiring non-user friendly coding for many of the entries, a lack of data integrity controls, poor reports with dot matrix style printing with limited format controls and a field data dictionary that refers to machines and parts, rather than buildings and repairs. The district has developed methods to work around these hurdles; however, the district should consider more current technology for this functionality.

The current system produces voluminous reports. However, these reports are not graphical or easy to understand and do not have analytical characteristics that would allow the maintenance department to routinely analyze labor and material results to improve performance. The ability to conduct individual labor analysis by trades person or individual materials consumption by project type are not part of the analysis and reporting functionality of the current system. However the director of maintenance conducts supplemental analysis of work orders three times per year. Trades people are evaluated on the amount of uncompleted work orders, and the smaller district size allows trades supervisors to adequately monitor individual staff work order performance.

Best Practice 19: Using

The maintenance department has a system for prioritizing maintenance needs uniformly throughout the district.

All school district maintenance departments must establish a work order system that prioritizes maintenance requests while equitably allocating maintenance resources. Work orders submitted by district employees define the scope of a maintenance department’s reactive workload. Additional services provided by the department keep the facilities clean and operating efficiently. Written guidelines and

⁴ Automated work order and billing systems are not required by all districts to ensure the effective and efficient operation of their Maintenance Department. Smaller districts with a limited number of daily work order requests and school buildings may find a well-designed paper-based system provides the same type of control as a computerized system in a larger district.

Facilities Maintenance

operating procedures should be established for emergency, routine and preventive maintenance activities. The guidelines should define what is to be considered an emergency, the individuals responsible for reacting to the emergency and the appropriate response to the emergency. Serious problems that affect the life, safety, or health of any student, district employee, the public, or an event that, if ignored, renders a facility unusable are to be considered an emergency. Finally, the priority system should address routine and ongoing preventive maintenance activities in a way that ensures all district facilities receive equal attention and service for all of their needs.

The Collier County School District maintenance department has a five-step priority system for work requests. The work requests are assigned priority numbers by either the director of maintenance or the data entry clerk in charge of receiving emergency telephone calls for work requests. The five priorities include:

- 01 As Soon as Possible
- 02 By a Deadline Date
- 03 As Time Permits
- 04 Emergency-Was a Call In
- 05 Work-in-Progress on Site (Work is Being Done Now)

The director of maintenance reviews work requests at least three times during the day. During these times the director assigns priorities or directs the work request back to the originator for additional information. Trades' supervisors may also add comments to the work requests.

Emergency work requests take precedence over all other work requests. The maintenance and operations standard operating procedures specifically define emergencies and include a specific listing addressing fires, immediate safety hazards, high freezer readings and power failures to fire alarms, phone systems and public address systems. The definition also includes infrastructure problems including chillers and air condition leaks, major electrical outages, plumbing problems and floods, irrigation system problems, hazards caused by trees or plants and washouts presenting a clear and present danger to pedestrian traffic. If the data entry clerk receives an emergency work request by telephone from a facility, the data entry clerk will notify the trade supervisor in charge of the required trade to address the specific nature of the emergency. The data entry clerk will also notify the director of maintenance depending on the severity of the problem. The trade supervisor will direct the data entry clerk to dispatch the appropriate trade personnel. The trade personnel and supervisor will investigate the emergency and formulate a plan to repair the emergency. If the district can perform the work, additional personnel will be placed on the job until the repair is made. If the work requires outside contracted services, the trades' supervisor makes arrangements. A purchase request is written to cover the services and the work is completed.

Emergencies are addressed in the same day that the call is originated, regardless of whether the call originated during school hours or after school hours. Conversations at the individual sites confirm a high degree of satisfaction with the overall response time for the maintenance department. The customer satisfaction survey resulted in scores between 4.07 and 4.65 (1 to 5 range with 5 as excellent) for emergency related response calls.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Best Practice 20: Using

District policies and procedures clearly address the health and safety conditions of facilities.

Florida law requires school districts to develop policies and procedures establishing a comprehensive program of safety and sanitation to protect the occupants of educational facilities.⁵ All districts are required to conduct annual inspections of each educational and ancillary plant to determine compliance with the sanitation and casualty safety standards prescribed in the rules of the state board of Education. Florida law also requires that inspectors certified by the Division of State Fire Marshal conduct annual fire safety inspections. Districts should have established written health and safety standards and ensure that documented evaluations are made of the condition of each educational plant and ancillary facility. Districts should have a written plan for maintaining healthy indoor air quality, which includes monitoring of indoor air quality and corrective action plans necessary to address indoor air quality issues.

The Collier County School District is using the best practices for health and safety. The district architect stated that the district responds immediately to mold or air quality problems. For relocatable buildings owned by the district (approximately one-half of the relocatable facilities in use), the district immediately undertakes a rebuilding of the building where required. For leased buildings, the district has the building(s) immediately replaced. The maintenance department works closely with the risk management department, investigating all permanent facility indoor air quality (IAQ) problems, correcting IAQ problems and supervising any IAQ remediation contractors. The district has adopted the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Education Association endorsed “Tools for Schools” indoor air quality kit for resolving indoor air quality issues. The kit includes procedures for resolving indoor air quality matters. In addition, the district contracts with an indoor air quality firm to conduct indoor air quality testing at schools and departments to make assessments of the air quality every few years. The last one was done two years ago with no negative results. There has been one portable building found to have mold and it was remediated, even though the mold was not harmful.

The district’s educational plan includes compliance with all state and federal requirements concerning school health and safety. It also establishes objectives and action plans for annual comprehensive health and safety inspections that follow written standards. The maintenance department conducts annual facility surveys with a maintenance supervisor and the plant operator. The plant operator conducts a monthly playground inspection and conducts quarterly inspections of each site. The facilities department does an annual needs assessment survey from the schools, which includes site visits. The code and permitting department conducts annual state requirements for education facilities inspections concerning the facilities and the county health department does quarterly inspections of all facilities.

Best Practice 21: Using

The school district complies with federal and state regulatory mandates regarding facility health and safety conditions.

A school district, regardless of size, should have written policies and procedures that direct the district’s compliance with state and federal regulations governing health and safety conditions within its facilities. The district should have established health and safety training programs in place for their maintenance and custodial work force which comply with federal and state regulations such as the EPA guidelines, Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) Regulations-29 CFR, hazardous materials handling, the proper reporting of accidents and asbestos handling and abatement. Focused training on the

⁵ See s. 1013.12, F.S.

Facilities Maintenance

safe use of specialized equipment and building systems should be delivered to all custodial and maintenance employees and supervisors.

The Collier County School District has been aggressive in meeting health and safety mandates. Although allowed by law to conduct their own inspections through in-house certified inspectors, the district has contracted with third-party inspection services, including county building officials to perform these services. The district conducts training for employees on hazardous materials and contracts with an outside company to collect hazardous waste including biohazard waste and fluorescent tubes. The State Requirements for Education Facilities (SREF) has been integrated into the new Florida Building Code and therefore all provisions of the Florida Building Code apply to schools and fall under the purview of the Code Officials Office, a function that is currently outsourced to county building officials. All facilities meet or exceed the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF), all OSHA regulations and standards established by the National Federation of High School Standards and Florida High School Activities Association Standards. The Collier County Health Department, the Department of Environmental Protection and Collier County School District, have also established standards.

The district also participates in state and federal voluntary programs regarding facility health and safety conditions and documents participation when doing monthly plant operator's reports, inspections and SREF health and safety inspections. This is done to reduce preventive maintenance costs and risk of injury. The district has established a Code Officials Office, which includes a Safety and Security Division.

Most schools have intrusion alarms and each school has a deputy sheriff assigned to the location. Eighteen schools have a "sheriff pad site" with a dedicated sheriff presence on campus. This program requires the district to provide a concrete pad, utilities and sewer for a trailer. The sheriff provides the trailer and staffs the position at no charge. In conjunction with the sheriff, the department also conducts monthly SWAT drills at selected schools. The district is considering a districtwide camera surveillance system with wireless cameras that can be remotely operated from the deputy's car. A pilot test program is being implemented at this time. Each school gets a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design review once every four years which includes lighting, landscaping, trees and passive barriers as well as other safety and security items.

Based on the minutes for the regular school board meeting dated June 6, 2002, the district's fire safety consultant "commended staff, naming Collier County as one of the safest districts" in the state. In fact, based on interviews with the district's Health and Safety Inspector, the district had zero life safety violations in its 2002-03 SREF inspections.

Best Practice 22: Using

The district is aware of and prepared for the permitting and inspection requirements of the Florida Building Code.

Effective July 1, 2002, the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (Rule 6A-2.001, *Florida Administrative Code*) were merged into the new Florida Building Code (FBC). Under the FBC, school districts are exempted from regulation by other local authorities and are required to follow a single state code. They are allowed to review project plans, issue their own building permits, conduct required building inspections, issue certificates of occupancy and generally perform as the local governing authority had in the past.

The Collier County School District has aggressively anticipated code changes and continually meets more stringent code changes ahead of the implementation of these codes and has established a Code Enforcement and Permitting Department to deal with building permitting, inspections and code enforcement. The director of code enforcement and permitting is a licensed architect and a registered and licensed building code official.

The school board and Collier County School District entered into an interlocal agreement where the county building department will serve as the school board's permitting and inspection agency. The Code Enforcement and Permitting Department requires the maintenance department, at the beginning of each year, to apply for four blanket maintenance permits for each facility within the district, for a total of 156 permits. These blanket permits ensure that all maintenance activities are permitted according to code requirements and inspections are made upon completion of major projects. The Code Enforcement and Permitting Department coordinates with the county building department to ensure that all permits are acquired, plan reviews are conducted and the county building department completes inspections. The department also requires that contractors working on projects by themselves obtain proper permitting and inspections.

9 Transportation

Summary

The Collier County School District is using 18 of the 20 best practices for transportation. The district plans for future transportation needs; effectively organizes and staffs the transportation department; efficiently trains and supervises bus drivers and attendants; provides timely servicing for buses; efficiently provides fuel; maintains secure facilities; ensures regular bus routes and activity trips operate in accordance with established routines; provides efficient transportation for exceptional students; acts promptly in response to accidents and breakdowns; maintains appropriate student behavior on buses; provides technological and computer support for transportation functions and operations; effectively monitors the fiscal condition of transportation functions; and has explored the prospect of student transportation privatization. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its transportation program, the district should enforce policies and procedures for cost-effective bus routing and adopt a performance monitoring and reporting system for student transportation.



As seen in Exhibit 9-1, the district has several opportunities to reduce costs and increase revenues. Determining whether to take advantage of these opportunities is a district decision and should be based on many factors including district needs, public input, and school board priorities. If the district implements these action plans, it would be able to redirect the funds to other priorities, such as putting more money into the classroom or addressing deficiencies identified in this report. The fiscal impact of implementing the recommendations to improve the Collier County School District's transportation services total just under \$1.9 million over the next five years.

Exhibit 9-1 Our Review Identified Several Ways the District Could Reduce Costs and Increase Revenues in the Area of Transportation

Best Practice Number	Fiscal Impact: Savings					Total
	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Year 2006-07	Year 2007-08	
3 Revise staggered bell times to increase the number of school buses assigned to three-tier routes	\$ 0	\$320,000	\$320,000	\$320,000	\$320,000	\$1,280,000
6 Reduce bus driver overtime	57,027	57,027	57,027	57,027	57,027	285,135
14 Make claims for Medicaid reimbursement	61,524	61,524	61,524	61,524	61,524	307,620
Total	\$118,551	\$438,551	\$438,551	\$438,551	\$438,551	\$1,872,755

Background

During the 2001-02 school year the Collier County School District provided transportation to 17,342 of the 36,515 enrolled students. The district serves 2,733 students in Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs that require special transportation arrangements because of disabilities or the need for specialized classes in locations other than the neighborhood school. The school district is experiencing rapid growth in enrollment. The school district plans to add two elementary, two middle, and two high schools in the next five years. The addition of new campuses and student programs increases the need for student transportation. Urban development patterns are also a challenge for student transportation. School bus routes are often less direct and operate more slowly in communities with circular streets and cul-de-sacs. New residential communities in Collier County are often designed with limited or controlled access (referred to as gated communities), making it difficult to cost effectively provide transportation for students residing within neighborhoods with restricted access.

Florida law requires school districts to provide student transportation between home and school to some students, or students meeting certain criteria. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires a school system to provide transportation for students with disabilities if the school system also provides transportation for students in the general population, or if students with disabilities require transportation to receive exceptional student education (ESE).

The State of Florida helps districts fulfill their obligations for student transportation by providing transportation funding for the following groups:

- students who live two or more miles from their school;
- elementary school students who live within two miles of school but who would be required to walk through hazardous conditions (defined by the state) to attend school;
- students with disabilities who require transportation to participate in ESE programs;
- participants in teenage parent programs; and
- special education, vocational, and dual-enrollment students transported from one school to another.

Transportation costs for students who live less than two miles from school and do not face hazardous conditions (courtesy riders), extracurricular trips, and costs that exceed the state allotment are paid with district funds.

The state allocates student transportation funding to school districts based on a set formula and makes adjustments for

- the Florida Price Level Index to reflect the different cost of living conditions among Florida's 67 counties;
- a bus occupancy index that rewards districts that have higher load factors (student riders per bus); and
- a rurality index, derived from the Florida Statistical Abstract that adjusts a district's funding upward based on the number of rural inhabitants and downward based on the number of urban inhabitants.

The primary mission of the Collier County School District's transportation department is to transport all qualified students to school and return them to their homes on time, safely, and cost effectively. The transportation department is also responsible for storing and maintaining the district's school buses (yellow fleet) and the general services vehicles (white fleet). The yellow fleet is comprised of 308 yellow school buses. The white fleet is comprised of 255 cars, vans, and trucks. See Exhibit 9-2 for a listing of the vehicles by category.

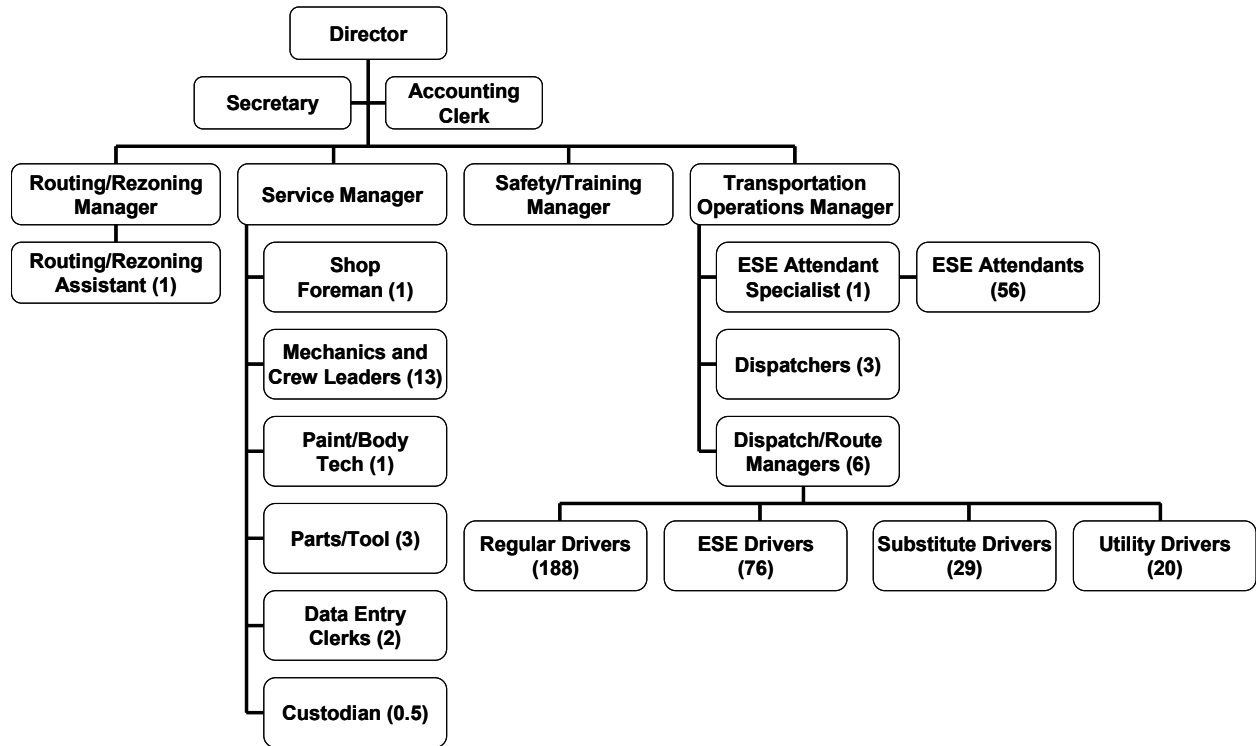
**Exhibit 9-2
Collier County School District Vehicle Inventory, 2003**

Vehicle Category	Number of Vehicles
School Bus	
Passengers 83/88/89	31
Passengers 65	191
Passenger 35/47	26
Passengers 32/42 w/wheelchair lift	6
Small ESE 8/14/15/20	54
Subtotal - School Buses	308
White Fleet	
Cars, Van, Pickups	225
Utility Trucks, Other	30
Subtotal-White Fleet	255
Total Vehicles	563

Source: Transportation Department, Collier County School District, July 2003

The transportation department is organized into four sections: routing/rezoning, safety/training, service, and operations. All facets of transportation are under the supervision of the transportation director. A manager supervises each of the four sections, and these managers report to the transportation director. The routing/rezoning manager is responsible for designing routes and schedules. The safety/training manager is responsible for implementing and managing the training programs for drivers. The service manager is responsible for vehicle maintenance and supervises mechanics and parts/tool technicians. The operations manager is responsible for the transportation of all students each day. Six driver/route managers, three dispatchers, and an ESE specialist assist the operations manager to supervise bus drivers and attendants. The organizational chart for the student transportation function is illustrated in Exhibit 9-3.

Exhibit 9-3
The Collier County School District
Organizational Structure for Transportation, March 2003



Source: Collier County School District.

Exhibit 9-4 presents selected student transportation data for the Collier County School District and five peer districts in the state for the 2001-02 school year.

**Exhibit 9-4
Comparative Student Transportation Data for
Collier County School District and Five Peer Districts, 2001-02**

Measure	Collier	Manatee	Lake	Osceola	Lee	Pasco	Peer Average ¹
Square miles	1,994	747	954	1,350	803	738	918
Number of students enrolled	36,475	38,250	30,626	37,744	60,661	52,632	43,983
Eligible students transported (riders)	17,342	13,389	18,127	17,046	33,389	26,648	21,720
Percent of students transported	47.5%	35.0%	59.2%	45.2%	55.0%	50.6%	49.0%
Student riders with disability	2,733	2,052	2,189	679	5,670	5,617	3,241
Percent riders with disability	15.8%	15.3%	12.1%	4.0%	17.0%	21.1%	13.9%
Number of buses in daily service	251	167	211	213	502	312	281
Average bus occupancy	69.2	80.4	86.1	80.0	66.5	85.4	79.7
Total annual vehicle miles driven	5,175,260	3,257,825	4,460,209	3,800,250	12,633,902	6,225,347	6,075,507
Total annual vehicle miles per bus in daily service ²	20,619	19,508	21,138	17,842	25,167	19,953	20,722
Route miles (including miles driven without riders)	4,971,080	3,069,471	4,325,814	3,701,157	12,502,702	5,876,133	5,895,055
Student transportation operations expenditures	\$12,467,703	\$9,601,338	\$8,076,092	\$8,429,704	\$22,586,401	\$13,800,235	\$12,498,754
Actual bus (capital) expenditures	\$1,357,782	\$3,725,028	\$708,768	\$0	\$3,204,846	\$1,991,731	\$1,926,075
Total Transportation expenditures as a percent of total district expenditures ³	5.4%	5.5%	5.2%	4.0%	6.9%	5.1%	5.3%
Percent state funding of total transportation expenditures	49.8%	42.5%	90.9%	80.1%	50.9%	72.5%	66.6%
Transportation operations expenditures per annual vehicle mile ⁴	\$2.41	\$2.95	\$1.81	\$2.22	\$1.79	\$2.22	\$2.20
Transportation operations expenditures per eligible student transported ⁵	\$719	\$717	\$446	\$495	\$676	\$518	\$570
Transportation operations expenditures per bus in daily service ⁶	\$49,672	\$57,493	\$38,275	\$39,576	\$44,993	\$44,232	\$44,914

¹ Peer averages do not include the Collier County School District.

² Total annual vehicle miles driven divided by buses in daily service.

³ Total student transportation expenditures equal transportation operating expenditures plus actual bus (capital) expenditures.

⁴ Student transportation operations expenditures divided by annual vehicle miles driven.

⁵ Student transportation operations expenditures divided by eligible students transported

⁶ Student transportation operations expenditures divided by buses in daily service.

Source: Q-Links: Florida District Transportation Profiles, July 2003 for School Year 2001-02, Florida Department of Education.

Among the peer group, Collier County has the second smallest number of students enrolled, but the percentage of students transported is approximately the peer average.

The Collier County School District does not compare favorably with peer districts for indicators reflecting cost efficiency, cost effectiveness, and service effectiveness. Collier County School District has the second highest cost per mile, highest cost per student, and second lowest average bus occupancy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Transportation Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Planning, Organization and Staffing	1. The district coordinates long-term planning and budgeting for student transportation within the context of district and community planning.	Yes	9-8
	2. 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.	Yes	9-8
	3. The transportation office plans, reviews, and establishes bus routes and stops to provide cost-efficient student transportation services for all students who qualify for transportation. ¹	No	9-9
	4. The organizational structure and staffing levels of the district's transportation program minimize administrative layers and processes.	Yes	9-12
	5. The district maintains an effective staffing level in the vehicle maintenance area and provides support for vehicle maintenance staff to develop its skills.	Yes	9-13
	6. The district effectively and efficiently recruits and retains the bus drivers and attendants it needs.	Yes	9-14
	7. The district trains, supervises, and assists bus drivers to enable them to meet bus-driving standards and maintain acceptable student discipline on the bus.	Yes	9-16
Vehicle Acquisition and Maintenance	8. The school district has a process to ensure that sufficient vehicles are acquired economically and will be available to meet the district's current and future transportation needs.	Yes	9-16
	9. The district provides timely routine servicing for buses and other district vehicles, as well as prompt response for breakdowns and other unforeseen contingencies.	Yes	9-18
	10. The district ensures that fuel purchases are cost-effective and that school buses and other vehicles are efficiently supplied with fuel.	Yes	9-19
	11. The district maintains facilities that are conveniently situated to provide sufficient and secure support for vehicle maintenance and other transportation functions.	Yes	9-20
	12. The district maintains an inventory of parts, supplies, and equipment needed to support transportation functions that balance the concerns of immediate need and inventory costs.	Yes	9-21
Operations, Management and Accountability	13. The district ensures that all regular school bus routes and activity trips operate in accordance with established routines, and any unexpected contingencies affecting vehicle operations are handled safely and promptly.	Yes	9-22
	14. The district provides efficient transportation services for exceptional students in a coordinated fashion that minimizes hardships to students.	Yes	9-23
	15. The district ensures that staff acts promptly and appropriately in response to any accidents or breakdowns.	Yes	9-24

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
	16. The district ensures that appropriate student behavior is maintained on the bus with students being held accountable for financial consequences of misbehavior related to transportation.	Yes	9-25
	17. The district provides appropriate technological and computer support for transportation functions and operations.	Yes	9-25
	18. The district monitors the fiscal condition of transportation functions by regularly analyzing expenditures and reviewing them against the budget.	Yes	9-26
	19. The district has reviewed the prospect for privatizing transportation functions, as a whole or in part.	Yes	9-27
	20. The district has established an accountability system for transportation, and it regularly tracks and makes public reports on its performance in comparison with established benchmarks.	No	9-28

¹ Measures of cost-efficient student transportation services include reasonably high average bus occupancy and reasonably low cost per mile and cost per student.

PLANNING, ORGANIZATION, AND STAFFING

Best Practice 1: Using

The district coordinates long-term planning and budgeting for student transportation within the context of district and community planning.

Because the transportation function staff is in the best position to know what the transportation needs of the district are, what priority should be assigned to these needs, and the costs associated with particular options to address each need, transportation staff should be involved in major decisions that will affect transportation operations. These needs and priorities, along with cost-saving options, should be presented to the school board and public during the budget process along with the factual information needed to assist the school board in making appropriate decisions. In a similar manner, the district transportation function needs to provide the school board and public information on the financial impact certain district decisions such as those involving staggered school start times and school choice programs will have on transportation. Also, because the location of a new school can have a significant effect on a district's transportation costs, the district transportation function also should be involved in the community and school district planning processes as related to community growth and the need for new schools. Failure to be involved and inform decision makers of the impact these decisions will have on district transportation can be very costly and negatively affect district transportation for many years.

The Collier County School District coordinates long-term planning and budgeting for student transportation within the context of district and community planning. The transportation department staff is involved in the community and school district planning processes as related to community growth and planning for new schools. The annual school district budget process provides the framework to identify needs and priorities for student transportation. The director of the transportation department makes an annual report to the school board. Cost-saving options are documented by the transportation staff and presented to school administrators. The associate superintendent of operational services presents opportunities for cost savings to the school board when appropriate.

The Collier County School District and the Collier County Board of County Commissioners have entered into an interlocal agreement for public school facility planning. The purpose of the interlocal agreement is to capture the benefits of coordinated planning and review public educational facilities. The school board has agreed to establish an informal site evaluation committee for the purpose of reviewing potential sites for new schools and proposals for renovation, expansion and closing of existing schools. The routing/rezoning manager for the transportation department works closely with the facilities planning and construction department to ensure that transportation needs and concerns are considered when planning for future schools.

Best Practice 2: Using

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 procedures and training are needed to improve the process.

The main source of transportation funds for most Florida school districts is the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). Approximately 60% of student transportation costs in the state are paid for through the FEFP-based primarily on the number of eligible students in various categories who ride school buses. The school districts determine the number of students riding their buses through sample counts conducted during October and February of each school year and report this information to the Florida Department of Education. Because these counts ultimately determine the level of transportation funding each school district receives, the information should be accurate. State auditors periodically review ridership records and, if the district cannot justify its claims for state transportation funds, funds are taken away from the

district. The student ridership counts used in this program are useful to district staff in establishing trend lines for the prediction of district student transportation needs.

Based on the most recent Auditor General's FEFP audit, issued in May 2003, the Collier County School District complied in all material respects with the FEFP requirements regarding the determination and reporting of the number of students transported for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2002. However, the Auditor General's report disclosed instances of reporting students in an incorrect ridership category or reporting students ineligible to be reported.

Findings in the Auditor General's report fall into the following general categories:

- inadequate documentation to support enrollment;
- incorrect ridership counts;
- missing individual education plan (IEP) for ESE students who are eligible for special education services, or missing information on the IEP;
- classification of ESE students into an incorrect ridership category; and
- incorrect or dated student data in the student information database, such as addresses and enrollment status.

The net impact of the audit adjustments reclassified 81 students who were eligible for a ridership category other than the one in which they were reported. The Florida Department of Education has not yet processed the 2001-2002 audit adjustments to calculate the impact to the school district's funding.

The transportation department provides training to the school bus drivers prior to each audit period. However, the training primarily covers the general process and does not use specific findings from the audit report to minimize the reoccurrence of previous errors. To enhance the use of this best practice, the district can improve procedures and training to ensure the accuracy of reports to the Florida Department of Education.

We recommend the transportation department develop and implement procedures and training that ensure: 1) the number of students reported in each ridership category is in agreement with the supporting detailed reports for that survey; 2) only eligible transported students who are in membership and attendance during a survey are reported with the survey's results; 3) only ESE students who are properly classified and documented as disabled are reported in IDEA-related ridership categories; 4) ESE students who received special transportation services have their needs for such services clearly specified on their IEP documentation; and 5) the distance from home to school, for students classified in the "two miles or more" ridership category, is verified prior to being reported.

Best Practice 3: Not Using

While the transportation office plans, reviews, and establishes bus routes and stops, it does not provide cost-efficient student transportation services for all students who qualify for transportation.

Routing is probably the single most important factor in establishing an effective, cost-efficient, and safe district student transportation system. Efficient bus routes incorporate features such as having fewer bus stops that serve larger numbers of students, avoiding transporting students who could safely walk to school and are ineligible for state transportation funding (generally called "courtesy riders"), using school starting and ending times that allow individual buses to have separate bus runs for elementary, middle, and high schools ("three-tiered routing"), and providing sufficient time between school starting and ending times that allow buses to get from the end of one bus run to the beginning of another. Where hazardous walking conditions exist, school districts should work with governmental agencies to provide crossing guards, reducing speed limits, installing sidewalks, and other safety measures. Larger school

districts with complex routes usually need the assistance of computerized routing systems to design cost efficient bus routes, while smaller districts can develop efficient routes manually.

The transportation department for the Collier County School District uses an automated routing and scheduling system, staggered school starting and ending times, and an annual review of bus routes to ensure effective bus routing. However, the district does not compare favorably with peer districts for performance indicators reflecting cost efficiency, cost effectiveness, and service effectiveness. As shown above in Exhibit 9-4, the district's operations cost per vehicle mile was \$2.41 in 2001-02, the second highest among the peers. The operations cost per student rider was \$719, the highest among the peer group. The average bus occupancy was 69.2%, the second lowest among the peers.

The district can improve its operations and cost efficiency by addressing two issues. First, the district can revise staggered bell times to allow enough time between bells to maximize transportation resources. The staggered bell times in effect for the spring semester 2003 are illustrated in Exhibit 9-5.

**Exhibit 9-5
Collier County School District Staggered Bell Times, Spring 2003**

	High School	Middle School	Elementary
Naples AM	7:20 AM	9:05 AM	8:20 AM
Naples PM	2:10 PM	3:35 PM	2:45 PM
Immokalee AM	7:30 AM	8:20 AM	7:45 AM
Immokalee PM	2:20 PM	2:50 PM	2:10 PM
Everglades City AM ¹	8:15 AM	8:15 AM	8:15 AM
Everglades City PM	2:45 PM	2:45 PM	2:45 PM

¹ Everglades City School has pre-K through twelfth grade students.

Source: Transportation Department, Collier County School District

The staggered times enable 50% of the buses to run three-tiered routing (one bus for a route that includes trips to a high school, a middle school, and an elementary school) in both the morning and afternoon. An additional 25% of buses run a triple trip in only the morning and a double trip in the afternoon or vice versa. Not all routes can be triple tripped because there are more elementary routes than middle and high school. Some routes are not triple tripped because of insufficient time between the staggered bell times. The time, 35 minutes, between the high school and elementary school exit (afternoon) bells is not long enough to make a third trip per bus on some Naples routes. Route managers told the review team 45 minutes are required between afternoon closing times to triple trip all afternoon routes. By adjusting bell times, the district could assign more buses to a three-tiered route both morning and afternoon. Adjusting the exit bell times between elementary and high school could save eight buses, as estimated by route managers in the transportation department. Eight fewer route buses could save \$320,000 annually. ¹

Second, the district can improve its operations by establishing written criteria and a systematic evaluation process to determine areas for unsafe walking conditions that prevent students from walking safely to school or a bus stop. The Collier County School District reports a high percentage of student riders eligible for student transportation due to hazardous walking conditions and a high percentage of courtesy riders, as illustrated in Exhibit 9-6.

¹ The transportation department calculates the annual marginal cost per bus in 2002-03 to equal \$40,000. The marginal cost is calculated using direct cost of driver salaries and benefits, as well as operating costs. A reduction in eight route buses equates to \$320,000 savings (\$40,000 x 8 buses).

Exhibit 9-6**The Collier County School District Reports a High Percentage of Student Riders Eligible for Student Transportation Due to Hazardous Walking Conditions or Courtesy, 2001-02**

School District	Student Riders	Hazardous Walkers as a Percentage of Riders	Courtesy Riders as a Percentage of Riders
Collier	17,342	4.4%	4.6%
Manatee	13,389	5.2%	1.8%
Lake	18,127	0.0%	2.6%
Osceola	17,046	2.0%	0.5%
Lee	33,389	2.3%	3.8%
Pasco	26,648	0.0%	7.0%
Peer Average	21,720	1.9%	3.2%

Source: *Q-Links: Florida District Transportation Profiles*, July 2003 for School Year 2001-02, Florida Department of Education.

For the 2002-03 school year, the board approved courtesy busing for 882 students who do not meet the State of Florida definition for hazardous walking conditions, and the recommended courtesy busing for the 2003-04 school year is approximately 1,000 students. The State of Florida provides funds to support the cost of providing bus transportation services within the two-mile limit if hazardous walking conditions exist that meet the criteria established in Florida statute. A school district may elect to establish its own criteria for determining unsafe walking conditions. However, the district must then provide transportation services at its own expense. At present, the district makes decisions about courtesy busing without systematic, explicit criteria defining unsafe walking conditions. Costs for providing courtesy busing are substantial. The transportation department estimates the 2003-04 costs will approximate \$500,000.² Action Plan 9-1 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

² The \$500,000 cost estimate is based on the annual marginal cost per bus as reported by the Collier County School District.

Action Plan 9-1

We recommend the Collier County School District adjust bell times and develop and implement formal guidelines to assess the safety of walking conditions within the district to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the district’s transportation system.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. The director of transportation and the operations manager identify optimal bell times for the transportation department and prepare an estimate of the cost impact.</p> <p>Step 2. The director of transportation submits the requested change and the cost impact to the associate superintendent of operational services to present to the superintendent and school board.</p> <p>Step 3. The school board adopts the recommendation.</p> <p>Step 4. School administrators send notices of the new bell times to parents for the coming school year.</p> <p>Step 5. The new bell times become effective.</p> <p>Step 6. The director of transportation, with the assistance of his staff, local law enforcement, and county and state transportation departments, develops and submits proposed unsafe walking criteria to the associate superintendent of operational services to present to the superintendent and school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 7. The school board approves the proposed unsafe walking criteria.</p> <p>Step 8. The director of transportation uses the approved criteria along with state hazardous walking criteria to determine the location of hazardous and unsafe walking conditions within the district.</p> <p>Step 9. The director of transportation determines the number of students, within the two-mile limit, that are eligible for transportation, as well as potential changes in bus stops.</p> <p>Step 10. The director of transportation submits the results and the cost impact to the associate superintendent of operational services to present to the superintendent and school board.</p> <p>Step 11. On an annual basis, the school board evaluates and approves the transportation of students within the two-mile limit who meet the approved guidelines.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of transportation and associate superintendent of operational services
Time Frame	August 2004

Best Practice 4: Using

The organizational structure and staffing levels of the district’s transportation program minimize administrative layers and processes.

Well-run school districts are lean administratively and should be relatively flat with appropriate spans of control. Such a structure will result in minimized administrative and managerial costs while providing sufficient managerial controls to ensure operations are properly carried out. Staffing needs to be to the level by which needed work is accomplished in an economical and efficient manner. Smaller districts with smaller staff sizes require staff to individually handle multiple areas of responsibility (such as repairing buses and ordering replacement parts) that would be done by different individuals.

The Collier County School District’s transportation department's organization structure is relatively flat with appropriate spans of control. There are three levels of supervisory personnel: the director of transportation, division managers who report to the director, and the dispatch/route managers. The district’s annual process to complete the District Education Improvement Plan (DEIP) includes an organizational and staffing analysis. Throughout the year, the transportation director and manager review staffing levels based on peer comparisons and industry staffing models, such as the Florida Department of Education staffing worksheets for mechanics.

Best Practice 5: Using

The district maintains an effective staffing level in the vehicle maintenance area and provides support for vehicle maintenance staff to develop its skills.

Vehicle maintenance operations have to strike a balance of having enough trained staff to properly maintain vehicles while not having excessive staff, which increases costs and reduces operational efficiency. The number of vehicle maintenance personnel needed can vary depending on factors such as the number of different types of buses being maintained, whether vehicle maintenance maintains the district “white fleet” (cars, trucks, and other on-road vehicles), and whether they maintain other district equipment such as lawn mowers and tractors. In addition to employing adequate maintenance staff, districts need to invest resources into updating the skills of their vehicle maintenance staff to improve vehicle maintenance efficiency. Such resources include the district providing training opportunities for staff and incentive pay for those who achieve certification in applicable work areas.

The transportation department of the Collier County School District services and maintains all district vehicles. The transportation department maintains 308 school buses and 255 white fleet vehicles with a staff of one service manager, one foreman, 13 full-time mechanics, and one paint and body technician. The district ensures the maintenance staff is skilled in current maintenance techniques by sending the technicians to manufacturers’ and suppliers’ trainings on new products and procedures. In addition to routine maintenance and service, mechanics conduct the required state inspections for the bus fleet. All 13 mechanics are certified to conduct the state inspections.³

Maintenance staffing levels are evaluated using the Florida Department of Education staffing model. The April 2003 staffing model calculations indicate the district exceeds the state standard by eight mechanics. In addition, the district’s ratio of buses maintained per mechanic in 2001-02 was higher than the peer average. Exhibit 9-7 shows that Collier County reported an average of one mechanic per 23.7 daily service buses in inventory, compared to the peer average of one mechanic per 15.8 buses.

Exhibit 9-7

Number of Buses per Mechanic for Collier County School District, Compared with Five Peer Districts, 2001-02

School District	Daily Service Buses in Inventory	Mechanic Positions	Buses per Mechanic
Collier	308	13	23.7
Manatee	233	23	10.1
Lake	248	15	16.5
Osceola	218	12	18.2
Lee	727	41	17.7
Pasco	338	21	16.1
Peer Average	353	22	15.8

Source: Q-Links: Florida District Transportation Profiles, July 2003 for School Year 2001-02, Florida Department of Education.

The district could enhance its operations by completing the current plan to hire two additional mechanics. The district experiences delays in scheduled maintenance for the white fleet and overtime for the service department. The automated maintenance system tracks due and overdue scheduled inspections for all district vehicles and generates a daily reminder report. A daily reminder report dated February 12, 2003 listed 58 of the 255 white fleet as overdue for scheduled maintenance. The average overdue status is 136 days.

³ The Florida Board of Education recently revised its rule to require school buses to be inspected at a maximum interval of 30 school days, rather than the previous 20 day requirement. See section 6A-3.0171(8), *Florida Administrative Code* as of April 21, 2003.

Through March 2003, there were approximately 1,920 overtime hours paid, totaling \$69,000 for the 2002-03 school year.⁴ The estimated annualized maintenance overtime in 2002-03 is \$92,000. The overtime hours equal approximately 1.8 full-time equivalent mechanics. The transportation department recommended that the school board approve two additional mechanic positions for the 2003-04 fiscal year. The increase in mechanic positions will allow the district to maintain an effective staffing level and reduce overtime costs. Once the mechanics are on board, a focused effort should be placed on eliminating the overdue maintenance and servicing for the white fleet.

We recommend that the transportation department complete the current plan to hire two additional mechanics, putting the staffing level more in line with the DOE staffing model. This action should alleviate overtime problems as well as problems with overdue maintenance on the white fleet.⁵

Best Practice 6: Using

The district effectively and efficiently recruits and retains the bus drivers and attendants it needs.

A stable workforce reduces costs and minimizes the disruption of essential district services. However, for most school districts job turnover among bus drivers and attendants is generally high compared to that of other classes of employees. Contributing to this high turnover is the fact that, unlike many other district employees, bus drivers and attendants are generally part-time employees who must report to work early in the morning and finish late in the day. In addition bus drivers face many other challenges that make their jobs particularly difficult and stressful, such as trying to drive safely while maintaining discipline on a bus. Because of the relatively high rates of turnover among bus drivers and attendants, school districts need to have an effective system for recruiting and retaining these individuals. Job turnover can be addressed through retention and recruitment. Retention is a preferred way to maintain the staffing levels through reduction in job turnover. Districts need to collect data to determine what it will take to keep drivers and attendants working and performing well for the district. Once the district determines why the drivers and attendants want to work for the school district, the district can put together a combination of salary, benefits, and incentives (both financial and non-financial) that will encourage good workers to keep working for the district yet not cause financial difficulties for the district. As there generally will be some turnover in district drivers and attendants each year, the district needs to be prepared to efficiently and effectively recruit high quality drivers and attendants. These efforts include collecting data on wages offered by alternative local employers (both public and private sectors) and knowing the best methods to put their recruiting message to potential drivers and attendants.

The Collier County School District conducts an aggressive recruiting effort to ensure that an adequate number of drivers are available and in the training pipeline to staff routes safely and effectively. A variety of low cost strategies are used to recruit and retain bus drivers and attendants. Recruitment strategies include signs on school fences, school marquees, and magnet signs on district vehicles and on a parked school bus placed in a prominent location. Schools periodically send flyers and advertisements home with students to assist in recruiting. The district offers a recruitment incentive bonus to encourage employees to refer bus driver candidates that are subsequently hired.

The district provides bus drivers and attendants with both non-financial and financial incentives. Non-financial incentives are provided for good performance and attendance. These incentives include service pins, certificates, and public recognition. Financial incentives include opportunities for drivers to supplement earnings. Drivers can work additional hours to drive for activity routes and field trips. Utility

⁴ Based on overtime reports provided by the district's business services department.

⁵ On June 24, 2003 the school board approved hiring two additional mechanics effective July 1, 2003.

drivers are guaranteed a 40-hour work week by assigning them administrative tasks when they are not driving. When a driver's hours exceed 40 hours per week, he/she is eligible for overtime pay.

Transportation staff collects information on wages and benefits to assess the district's pay rate competitiveness. The transportation department conducted a survey of district bus drivers and attendants in 2003 to evaluate job satisfaction. The survey results support that the district's wage and benefit structure is a major recruitment factor. Of the 342 responses received, when asked why the respondent became a bus driver or attendant the most common response was for the benefits (51% of drivers and 46% of attendants), followed by work schedule (40% of drivers and 41% of attendants).

However, the district can improve its efforts for recruitment and retention in four ways. First, the district should collect data on wages and benefits offered by alternative local employers that are competing for the same pool of applicants. The data should be used to ensure the district maintains a competitive combination of salary and benefits to attract new drivers and encourage good workers to continue working for the district.

We recommend the director of transportation develop and implement a process to collect information on wages and benefits offered by alternative local employers that are competing for the same pool of applicants. These employers do not need to be strictly other transportation employers, though the local city/county transportation authority should be included in the comparison. Large retail employers also provide good comparisons.

Second, the transportation department should track the turnover rate for drivers and bus attendants and conduct exit interviews to determine why employees leave. The exit interview data will complement data from the annual employee satisfaction survey to determine how the district can best keep drivers and attendants working and performing well.

We recommend the director of transportation track the turnover rate for drivers and bus attendants. The transportation department should also conduct exit interviews to determine why employees leave.

Third, the transportation department should monitor the daily assignments for utility drivers. The department does not track the allocation of utility drivers' time by administrative versus bus driver duties. This information is needed to more accurately report staffing levels by function.

We recommend the director of transportation establish a process to track and report the actual number of hours that utility drivers spend behind the wheel or as an attendant and the hours that they spend performing administrative duties.

Finally, the district can improve cost-effective operations by minimizing overtime hours. Administrative work assignments for utility drivers, assignments for activity runs, and field trips should be allocated so as to not exceed 40 hours per employee per week. A few drivers earn a lot of overtime. In general, utility drivers earn more overtime than other drivers. In 2000-01 the transportation department expenditure for salaries was \$6,864,606, of which approximately \$420,000 or 6.1% was overtime costs. The majority of overtime pay was for drivers, including utility drivers. The estimated overtime costs for 2002-03 equal \$319,082, or about 4.3% of salaries.⁶ The transportation department should keep overtime costs to less than 2% of transportation salaries. If overtime is limited to 2% of salaries the savings will be

⁶ Business services provided a summary report of total overtime hours for bus drivers, utility drivers, and substitute drivers through March 2003. Based on this report, the annualized overtime hours are 16,380. Using the minimum starting pay rate for the district's drivers of \$11.04 at a time and a half overtime rate plus 17.65% benefit cost, the minimum overtime hourly rate equals \$19.48 per hour. The annual overtime cost is estimated at \$319,082 (16,380 hours X \$19.48/hour). Salary cost for 2002-03 is budgeted for \$7.4 million.

approximately \$57,027 annually.⁷ The required overtime can be reduced by distributing assignments to drivers who have worked less than 40 hours during the week.

We recommend the district set a goal to reduce transportation department overtime to no more than 2% of annual expenditure for salaries.

Best Practice 7: Using

The district trains, supervises, and assists bus drivers to enable them to meet bus-driving standards and maintain acceptable student discipline on the bus.

To effectively and efficiently carry out their duties, school district employees must be aware of the scope of their responsibilities, have the skills to carry out those responsibilities, and understand district performance expectations. Thus, school districts need to effectively train, supervise, and assist employees in the performance of their duties. School districts generally offer commercial driver license training (a commercial driver license is required to drive a school bus) on a no-cost basis in order to successfully recruit bus drivers. Since this license also can be used to drive other commercial vehicles such as tour buses and trucks, the school district needs a policy to recoup these training costs from bus drivers who resign as school bus drivers shortly after completing their driver training. Management also has responsibilities to supervise its drivers to ensure that necessary rules and regulations are followed with buses being safely operated. Supervision responsibilities include direct observation of bus handling, assisting drivers with student bus discipline problems, administering drug and alcohol tests, and enforcement of driving policies. Management can improve job performance by providing in-service training and resolving drivers' job-related problems.

The Collier County School District has a program to train, supervise, and assist bus drivers to enable them to meet bus-driving standards and maintain acceptable student discipline on the bus. Training staff includes one safety/training manager, an ESE specialist, 18 drivers certified to do behind-the-wheel and classroom training, and two drivers certified to teach cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). All prospective drivers are required to complete the initial training program conducted by the transportation department. Annual in-service training is also provided. In-service training includes behind the wheel skills training and pupil management techniques. The review team sampled 10 driver files to verify attendance at the in-service training classes. Each file reviewed contained evidence that the driver participated in the in-service training classes. In addition, each driver is subject to an annual evaluation by a route manager. The review team sampled five bus driver files and confirmed that the route managers document observations related to bus handling skills, safe driving practices, and pupil management issues.

VEHICLE ACQUISITION AND MAINTENANCE

Best Practice 8: Using

The district has a process to ensure that sufficient vehicles are acquired economically and will be available to meet the district's current and future transportation needs, but additional guidelines and controls are recommended.

School buses and other vehicles are an expensive but necessary investment for most school districts. Therefore, school districts need to have systems to ensure that decisions to purchase, maintain, and sell

⁷ If \$319,082 in 2002-03 represents 4.3% of salaries at \$19.48 per hour, then \$148,000 will be about 2% (\$7.4million x 2%). The approximate savings equal \$171,082 (\$319,082 - \$148,000 = \$171,082). However, the duties performed during overtime cannot be eliminated. This work should be assigned to drivers that are compensated at the regular pay rate, not the overtime rate. Paying drivers to complete this work at the regular pay rate would cost about 2/3 of the overtime savings. Therefore, approximately 1/3 or \$57,027 per year cost savings in overtime could be realized (\$171,082 x 1/3 = \$57,027).

vehicles meet the district's needs in the most economical way. These decisions must consider a variety of factors. For instance, the need for buses to transport students is a given for districts, but it is important to buy the right type of buses at the right time. In addition, it is generally more economical to operate larger buses than smaller ones, so long as a high occupancy level can be maintained. Districts should buy the vehicles through economical methods such as the state pool purchase program. Once vehicles are purchased and inspected, districts should track vehicle maintenance costs and age to determine when the optimal time is to remove and replace the vehicle (assuming the need for the vehicle still exists). Districts should minimize the number of spare buses they retain to avoid tying up funds through excess inventory. Vehicles removed from service should be processed so that the district recovers the maximum value possible for the disposal of the vehicle, such as fixing minor cosmetic flaws to encourage higher bids at auctions.

The Collier County School District makes annual updates to a 20-year capital purchase plan that includes school buses and white fleet vehicles. The plan includes an estimate for the number of replacement and expansion required each year and the estimated cost of the annual purchases. During the 2001-02 school year the Collier County School Board approved a policy to replace school buses on a 10-year cycle. Previously, the school district replaced vehicles on a 12-year cycle. The school board approved the 10-year replacement cycle based on the results of an analysis conducted by the transportation department. The analysis indicated the cost per mile to operate a bus remain relatively stable until passing the 9-10 year mark. From 10 to 12 years, the cost to operate the buses increases by \$.069 per mile or 27.2%. The district's formal replacement policy for school buses is based solely on vehicle age. In practice, age, accumulated service miles, and repair history should be considered in the decision to replace a vehicle. The school district's automated maintenance system produces reports that provide detailed maintenance costs, mileage, and repair history information for each school bus. However, the criteria for how services, miles, and repair costs are considered when a bus is evaluated for replacement are not formally defined or documented. Formally defined guidelines will enhance the district's bus replacement practices.

The district could enhance operations in three areas. First, the district could improve bus replacement practices by defining specific guidelines to determine if older vehicles should be maintained in service or replaced. Mileage, age, and repair history should be considered in the decision to surplus a vehicle. The guidelines should be developed for school buses and vehicles in the white fleet. Once the guidelines are defined they should be documented and reevaluated periodically.

We recommend the director of transportation, with the assistance of the service manager, define specific guidelines to determine if older vehicles should be maintained in service or replaced. The guidelines should address age, mileage, repair history, and maintenance costs. Once the guidelines are defined they should be documented, incorporated into the existing vehicle age policy, and reevaluated periodically.

Second, a formal spare ratio analysis should be conducted. The district minimizes the number of spare vehicles and ensures that enough spare vehicles are available when needed. However, the transportation department does not conduct a formal analysis that provides data to support the district's spare ratio. The spare ratio is 12.4% of the buses in daily service. Research shows the ratio of spare buses for a vehicle fleet of 100 or more buses is usually around 20% of the number of buses in daily service.⁸ The transportation department prepares a list each day of the buses that are out of service for various reasons, but this information is not captured to analyze historical trends for spare vehicle requirements. The district could improve the process to determine the spare ratio by tracking the average number of buses on a daily basis that are out of service due to state inspections, preventative maintenance, unexpected maintenance and repair, and field trips.

⁸ Transit Cooperative Research Program, Project J-07 Fiscal Year 1994 and continuing. Synthesis of Information Related to Transit Practices.

We recommend the director of transportation, with the assistance of the service manager, prepare a formal analysis to determine the appropriate spare bus ratio for Collier County School District. The analysis should track the number of buses out of service due to state inspections, preventative maintenance, unexpected maintenance and repair, and field trips. The data should be captured periodically and input to a spreadsheet such that a management report could be generated. The report should include the ratio of buses out of service to the buses available for daily service, and the number of buses out of service by reason. The reason categories to track include state inspections, preventative maintenance, unexpected maintenance and repair, and field trips.

Finally, the transportation department should develop white fleet cost comparison procedures and controls. To purchase buses, the district uses the Department of Education's annual pool purchase agreement to minimize cost. To purchase vehicles for the white fleet, the district participates in a purchasing cooperative with Collier County and the City of Naples. These agreements benefit the district by securing vendor contracts with advantageous prices and terms. The Collier County purchase contract is based on a competitive bid for a percentage discount applied to the published Kelley Blue Book New Car Price Manual dealer invoice. The district has the option to use the county or state contract through the Department of Management Services. The service manager is responsible for making the decisions on white fleet vehicles to purchase. A formal cost comparison between the county bid and state bid is not a standard procedure. The school district can ensure that vehicles are acquired economically by requiring that the purchasing department document a comparison of costs from different sources before issuing a purchase order for the transportation department.

We recommend the director of purchasing and the director of transportation work cooperatively to develop procedures and controls to ensure that a cost comparison is documented before any purchase order is issued for the purchase of a white fleet vehicle.

Best Practice 9: Using

The district provides timely routine servicing for buses and other district vehicles, as well as prompt response for breakdowns and other unforeseen contingencies, but a concentrated effort is needed once additional mechanics are hired to address overdue preventative maintenance for the white fleet.

Good stewardship of district resources dictates district vehicles should be properly maintained to operate properly and maximize their value. District vehicle maintenance operations can be divided into two types: those that service just buses and those that service buses and some or all other district vehicles. No matter what type of vehicle maintenance operation is used, it is important that the district's transportation department tracks vehicle maintenance for all district on-road vehicles to ensure that timely servicing is performed. Use of this tracking can help the district make appropriate decisions on whether to make complex or expensive repairs on older vehicles. The servicing of district vehicles does not have to be accomplished in district-owned facilities (especially if there is lack of facilities and manpower to do so) but can be done on an outsourced basis. Quality control by district staff needs to make sure that servicing and repairs (both those done by district staff and those done by vendors) is done on an economical and timely manner.

The transportation department of the Collier County School District services and maintains all district vehicles including 308 buses and 255 white fleet vehicles. During a focus group interview with the review team, school bus drivers commented that the quality of vehicle maintenance is very good. The district's service staff ensures compliance with state required inspections for school buses. State Board of Education administrative rules require district school buses undergo regular inspections at a maximum interval of every 30 school days. Inspections are to be conducted in accordance with procedures included in the *State of Florida School Bus Safety Inspection Manual*. Technicians that are certified as school bus

inspectors conduct the inspections. The Department of Education does not require a third party to inspect school buses. Twelve of the district's 13 technicians are certified to conduct the inspections. Periodically, the Department of Education assesses each Florida school district's compliance with the school bus inspection requirements. The Department of Education conducted an assessment of the Collier County School District for school bus inspection compliance during 2001-02. The school district received a 94% grade indicating the district complies with the state requirements for school bus inspections.

The district uses an automated vehicle maintenance management system that provides information to monitor the timeliness of scheduled preventative maintenance inspections. The system produces reports that list key data to track scheduled maintenance for each vehicle. Most importantly, the report provides a list of any vehicle that is overdue for preventative maintenance. Parameters, based on vehicle mileage and time elapsed since the last service, are set in the automated maintenance system to report when a vehicle is due for a state inspection, oil change, transmission service, or coolant filter replacement.

The district can improve its operations by addressing the overdue preventative maintenance on the white fleet. A review of the automated vehicle maintenance management system reports dated February 12, 2003 indicated that school buses are serviced timely. However, scheduled maintenance for the white fleet was overdue for 58 of the 255 vehicles. The average overdue status is 136 days. The delay in servicing the white fleet is due to the mechanic shortage. See Best Practice 5 of this chapter for further discussion and recommendations on this issue.

Best Practice 10: Using

The district ensures that fuel purchases are cost-effective and that school buses and other vehicles are efficiently supplied with fuel.

School districts need effective systems to ensure that fuel is purchased at the lowest possible cost, prevent unauthorized use of fuel, and that fueling stations are accessible to vehicles. Cost-effective purchases of fuel generally occur when the district and other large users of fuel (such as other school districts and local governments) pool their fuel purchases into a large bid. Part of the bid should include timely deliveries of fuel to district fueling stations. To ensure that the fuel stations have sufficient fuel for district operations, districts must monitor fuel disbursements to prevent theft and know when to reorder fuel supplies. Most districts are sufficiently large to be able to justify using automated fueling systems that are designed specifically to prevent unauthorized fuel disbursements and monitor fuel tank levels as well as log the amount of fuel individual vehicles taken. Leaking fuel tanks can be a major cost for the district. Failure to promptly deal with fuel leaks found either through automated fueling systems or during inspections by governmental environmental agencies could result in large district costs to clean up ground contamination especially if the contamination is underground and in the groundwater.

The Collier County School District participates in a purchasing cooperative with Collier County and the City of Naples to purchase gasoline and diesel fuel. The last procurement was issued in 1999 by Collier County on behalf of the purchasing cooperative. The term of the bid is five years. The procurement required the bid price to be based on the weekly average price for each product as reported by the oil price information service report plus a firm markup or discount. The oil price report is published weekly and is available to the school district to verify price. The competitive bid solicitation resulted in three bidders. Awards were made to the lowest bidder according to product (gasoline, diesel, motor oil) for each of 17 locations throughout the county. The procurement price structure and the competitive bids ensure the school district receives the most competitive rates available on the market.

The district uses automated software to effectively manage the fuel inventory and to track usage so that school district departments using the fueling stations are appropriately billed. There are established guidelines for arranging timely fuel deliveries so that the fueling stations never run out and always receive the maximum delivery to take advantage of bulk rate pricing.

Coordination with governmental environmental agencies for fueling station inspections is the responsibility of the safety and security manager in the code enforcement and permitting division of the facility management department in the district. The code enforcement and permitting division is responsible for inspecting every school facility twice a year to ensure the district complies with state requirements for education facilities. The district employs three state certified fire and safety inspectors to conduct the inspections. The code enforcement and permitting division issued inspection reports for each of the district's vehicle compounds, including fuel compounds, in November 2002. The inspection reports included 16 items for correction by the transportation department. The department has corrected 12 of the 16 items. Most of the 16 were related to general maintenance. Only one item was specifically related to a fuel issue - the fuel pump emergency shut off button was broken. The four remaining items are general maintenance related and were scheduled for correction by July 2003.

Best Practice 11: Using

The district maintains facilities that are conveniently situated to provide sufficient and secure support for vehicle maintenance and other transportation functions.

If uncontrolled, vehicle maintenance costs can represent a significant expense to school districts and, thus, should be effectively managed. To efficiently maintain vehicles and reduce maintenance-related costs, the district must have maintenance facilities that are appropriately situated within the district so as to minimize distances district vehicles have to travel for servicing yet have access to vehicle parts houses and delivery services. Service areas should be equipped with parts rooms, administrative areas, specialized tools, and covered and hard surfaced working areas so that technicians can concentrate on their assigned jobs rather be distracted/prevented from work due to weather, lack of tools, etc. The maintenance facilities will generate hazardous wastes such as antifreeze, which need to be stored and properly disposed of. In general, district vehicles should be parked in secure compounds at the end of the working day to reduce transportation costs for the district. The only time that vehicles are allowed to be taken home is if it can be shown to be in the district's best financial interests to allow certain vehicles to be taken home. One example of this exception is when it is cheaper for the school district to allow a bus driver take a bus and park it at home instead of taking it to a distant bus compound. It is also appropriate for district employees in an on-call status (such as district facility staff) to park vehicles at their homes instead of a district compound if the drivers are frequently responding to calls after normal working hours involving the transport of materials not easily transported in personal passenger vehicles (such as heavy welding equipment or sheets of plywood).

Presently, the Collier County School District maintains three compounds where all district vehicles are serviced and parked overnight. The locations of the compounds minimize the distances district school buses must travel to begin and end the routes and for servicing. Each compound has an administrative area, secure parts and supplies room, and covered work areas. District procedures and processes control access to parts inventory and parked vehicles.

The district can improve its ability to provide convenient maintenance facilities by completing the planned formal needs assessment to justify a fourth vehicle compound. In conjunction with the facilities planning and construction department, the transportation department is evaluating the addition of another vehicle compound in 2004-05. The district has planned but not completed a formal needs assessment for the new facility. The plans are to locate the facility in the Corkscrew area. The development and new schools planned for this area are the primary factors driving the need for another transportation compound. A goal is to minimize miles by locating buses in close proximity to the new developments.

We recommend the transportation department and the facilities planning and construction department work together to prepare a formal needs assessment including cost/benefit analysis to justify the addition of a fourth vehicle compound.

Best Practice 12: Using

The district maintains an inventory of parts, supplies, and equipment needed to support transportation functions that balance the concerns of immediate need and inventory costs.

Minimizing the amount of time vehicles spend out of service being maintained minimizes disruptions to district services and reduces the number of vehicles required to support the district's transportation needs. Thus, keeping vehicles on the road in good repair saves the district money. Several factors affect vehicle maintenance time and costs. For instance, insufficient parts inventories can result in higher maintenance downtime for buses and the need to maintain extra spare buses. Conversely, excessive parts inventories can cost the district needed funds that can be used to meet other district transportation needs. Ideally, districts should have the minimum number of parts and supplies necessary to efficiently operate the fleet. Strategies for achieving this goal include standardizing engines and bodies and the using just-in-time inventories. Parts and supplies that are purchased also need to be secured to safeguard district assets, using management tools such as restrictions on who can be in parts rooms, maintaining inventory tracking systems, and periodically conducting part inventory audits. Districts also need to make sure that they fully use the warranties provided by bus manufacturers, thus avoiding paying for repairs and parts that are covered by warranty.

The Collier County School District uses an automated vehicle maintenance management system that includes an inventory control module. This inventory control module is used to minimize the size and cost of inventory while ensuring adequate parts and supplies are maintained. Competitive bids, local pool purchases, pre-negotiated contracts, and discounted blanket purchase orders are used to purchase and stock parts, supplies, and services. The inventory is not audited.

The inventory control module should assist the transportation department to minimize excessive inventory in stock. The transportation employees of the Florida Department of Education have stated that the inventory turnover ratio should be at least four (an average of three months of inventory on hand). Collier's turnover ratio for 2002-03 equals 2.6 (an average of about four and a half months of inventory on hand).⁹

The district can enhance its operations in this area by calculating the inventory turnover rate routinely and reporting the figure as a performance indicator and by minimizing inventory based on the usage rate of specific parts by category and by standardizing additions to the bus fleet.

We recommend the inventory turnover rate should be calculated routinely and reported as a performance indicator. To manage the parts inventory effectively, the transportation department should minimize inventory based on the usage rate of specific parts by category and by standardizing additions to the bus fleet. In addition, we recommend an independent auditor conduct an inventory audit on an annual basis.

⁹ The inventory turnover calculation is: $[(\text{beginning inventory} - \text{ending inventory}) + \text{purchases}] / [(\text{beginning inventory} + \text{ending inventory}) / 2]$.

OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Best Practice 13: Using

The district ensures that all regular school bus routes and activity trips operate in accordance with established routines, and that any unexpected contingencies affecting vehicle operations are handled safely and promptly.

Up-to-date procedures, when coupled with appropriate policies, ensure that activities are carried out in an efficient and effective manner and that districts are in compliance with federal and state laws. In addition, written procedures serve as a district's institutional memory for key processes and as such help to minimize disruption to essential services and reduce the need for costly training and assistance due to staff turnover, a particularly important issue to the transportation function. Therefore, districts need effective procedures to handle circumstances that prevent normal bus operations. These include vehicle breakdowns, driver absences, bus overcrowding, and excessive ride times. While the district needs to minimize these occurrences, they also need effective procedures to follow when these situations occur. To recover costs of field trips, districts should also have a policy to charge schools 100% of all transportation costs for these trips.

The Collier County School District uses dispatch, substitute drivers, utility drivers, and a driver handbook to ensure that all regular school bus routes and activity trips operate in accordance with established routines, and that unexpected contingencies affecting vehicle operations are handled safely and promptly.

Dispatch is the central point of contact when a breakdown occurs. The driver is instructed to pull off in a safe area and radio dispatch of the problem. Dispatch is responsible for notifying the school of a late arrival and finding a replacement bus and driver. The school is responsible for notifying the parents the bus will be delayed. Parents of ESE students are also notified by dispatch. The bus is out-of-service until checked and repaired by a mechanic followed by a complete work order. The review team noted that a copy of the procedure and guidelines is posted in the dispatch room for easy reference. White fleet vehicle breakdowns are also called into central dispatch. Maintenance is contacted and a technician is sent out for a "road call." Bus breakdowns always get first priority.

Overcrowding situations are addressed immediately by using another underutilized bus, if possible. The long-term solution is to establish a new route or change existing routes to address the overcrowding situation. The transportation department provided the review team an example of a new run added for an overcrowding situation. The driver handbook states, "report immediately to the director or supervisor of transportation, school principal or other designated officials overloaded conditions on the bus which exceed the rated capacity of the bus." During an interview with the review team, the dispatchers said the procedure is for the driver to call dispatch immediately when an overcrowding situation occurs.

Students may be released at stops other than their own only with parental permission certified by school staff. The handbook policy states, "[The] bus driver is responsible to permit a student to leave the bus only at their assigned stop, except upon written authorization of the school principal or other district designee." The review team verified the procedure with the safety/training manager. The review team obtained examples of boarding passes that are used to provide documentation to the driver that the student may be discharged at an alternate stop. The boarding pass requires a signature by the principal or designee.

The district could enhance its operations by recovering the full costs of field trips. The district has a written process for school site staff to request and pay all transportation costs (including operational and administrative costs) for all educational, extracurricular, and athletic activity trips. Field trips are billed to schools at a rate of \$19.57 per hour. The executive director for business services establishes this rate. Two charter bus companies are occasionally contracted if the buses are not available from the

transportation department. If a charter service is used the school is charged the same rate as for district school bus. The rate is an internal rate and does not reflect total operational and administrative costs. Therefore, the full cost is not recovered. The district did not have an estimate of the amount that could be recovered.

We recommend the transportation department recover full transportation costs (including operational and administrative costs) for all educational, extracurricular, and athletic activity trips.

Best Practice 14: Using

The district provides efficient transportation services for exceptional students in a coordinated fashion that minimizes hardships to students.

School districts are required by law to provide specialized transportation services to certain students with disabilities (i.e., students in Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs).¹⁰ While necessary, these services can be very costly to a district. Many ESE students can ride on regular buses with no assistance or equipment. However, others may require accommodations such as specially equipped buses that lift a student and wheelchair into the bus and secure it for transport. To ensure their compliance with law while controlling costs, school districts need effective systems for determining ESE students' need for special transportation. As the need for special transportation is determined in meetings between teachers, ESE staff, and parents, districts need policies that clearly outline the circumstances that require special transportation. These policies also should identify circumstances in which alternative transportation modes, such as paying parents to drive children who need special supervision. Finally, districts should seek to recover Medicaid reimbursement for ESE transportation whenever possible, as this federal program will reimburse school districts for transporting Medicaid-eligible students on certain approved bus runs. It is rare for the cost to complete Medicaid paperwork to exceed the amount of the reimbursement. Every Medicaid dollar coming into the district frees up a general fund dollar for another district need.

The Collier County School District transportation department works in coordination with district ESE staff and school based ESE specialists to provide appropriate transportation services in accordance with each student's individual education plan (IEP). The operations manager for the transportation department communicates and consults regularly with the district ESE staff. The review team met with the ESE director, associate director, and coordinator for middle schools to discuss student transportation. The ESE staff said the working relationship between ESE and the transportation department is positive and coordination has increased in the last five years. A representative from the transportation department attends the annual meeting of ESE specialists who are involved in the IEP process. A representative of the transportation department also provides training about student transportation for new ESE specialists. As of March 2003, there have been three trainings for new ESE specialists for the 2002-03 school year. The ESE department participates in training bus drivers about the special needs of ESE students. Nurses and a behavior specialist participate in an annual in-service training for all bus drivers. The ESE department also works one-on-one with bus drivers and attendants during the school year to address individual student situations.

Unless special accommodations are required by a student's IEP, ESE students are scheduled on regular school buses. The ESE staff told the review team that the school district emphasizes least restrictive environment (LRE) for special needs students. LRE calls for an ESE student to be assigned to a regular school bus route first, if appropriate. The ESE staff said they continue to develop practices to encourage LRE. The review team reviewed a sample IEPs for ESE students that receive special transportation. Each IEP noted specialized transportation services as a requirement. Each IEP provided a descriptive reason justifying the use of special transportation services.

¹⁰ The ESE population in a school includes gifted students as well as learning disabled and physically disabled students.

The Collier County School District would enhance its operation by seeking Medicaid reimbursement for trips provided to qualifying students. In June 2003 the district contracted with an outside firm to file for Medicaid reimbursement to begin August 2003 with recovery of funds dating back to August 2002. The review team obtained a completed copy of the Medicaid worksheet for transportation from the executive director of the department of student services. The annual estimated transportation reimbursement for which the district would qualify equals \$61,524 (after subtracting the certified match). If the district began filing for reimbursement in August 2003, this would generate savings of \$307,620 over five years.

We recommend the district make a claim for Medicaid reimbursement for transporting students who qualify for Medicaid funding on approved bus runs.

Best Practice 15: Using

The district ensures that transportation staff acts promptly and appropriately in response to any accidents or breakdowns.

No matter how competent bus drivers are and how well buses are maintained, accidents and breakdowns occur. Districts need written procedures to guide employees when these situations occur to ensure that activities are carried out in a safe, efficient, and effective manner; proper officials are notified; and they are in compliance with federal and state laws.¹¹

The Collier County School District uses radios and procedures documented in the driver and attendant handbook to help respond to accidents and breakdowns promptly. All school buses and transportation support vehicles have two-way radios. Wireless phones are provided to drivers who are assigned to drive out of the county on field trips. All transportation compounds have dispatchers assigned who handle radio communications and emergency procedures. Radios are also installed in the offices of the director of transportation, all route managers, and the service manager. In Everglades City, the school office has a two-way radio to communicate with buses supporting their school. The transportation department provided the review team a copy of the procedures that cover communication instructions for radio usage, operating procedures, and communications monitoring.

The Collier County School District's transportation department's *Driver and Attendant Handbook* contains the procedures and guidelines for bus breakdowns and accidents. The procedures address the roles and responsibilities of district staff, including the bus drivers, operations staff, vehicle maintenance staff, and school site staff. A copy of the handbook is kept on each school bus. To ensure the driver remembers the correct steps to be taken, dispatchers have a checklist they go through when a driver calls in to report an accident. Procedures for white fleet vehicle breakdowns are not documented. White fleet vehicle breakdowns are called in to central dispatch. Maintenance is contacted, and a technician is sent out for a "road call." School bus breakdowns always get first priority in the case of an accident or breakdown.

The district reports accidents in accordance with state requirements. All accidents and incidents are reviewed by the transportation driver review committee to determine whether training or procedures need to be changed or if drivers require additional training. The department generates accident reports that include the date of the accident, the driver involved, whether the driver was at fault, and comments regarding the accident. For the 2002-03 school year, the transportation department reported 11 accidents to the Department of Education. During 2002-03, there were a total of 33 accidents and incidents.

¹¹ For example, under Florida law, accidents involving damage of \$500 or more or having student injuries must be reported to the Florida Department of Education.

Best Practice 16: Using

The district ensures that appropriate student behavior is maintained on the bus and holds students accountable for financial consequences of misbehavior related to transportation.

Inappropriate student behavior on school buses can distract bus drivers from their responsibility to drive their buses safely and can potentially result in accidents, cause injury to students and others, and saddle the school district with costly legal liabilities. Therefore, school districts need effective methods to control the behavior of students while they are being transported. Several individuals are primarily responsible for ensuring the appropriate conduct of these students and should be involved in developing these methods. For example, school principals are responsible for the conduct of students on buses from the time students get on the buses until the time they leave them. School bus drivers assist in the maintaining appropriate student behavior on school buses through various management techniques and by writing disciplinary referrals to principals when appropriate. Principals can assist bus drivers in maintaining student bus discipline by informing them of what disciplinary actions are taking place in response to written disciplinary referrals.

The Collier County School District uses effective methods to control the behavior of students while they are being transported. Drivers are provided student discipline training and documented procedures for disciplinary infractions. Students are disciplined according to the *Code of Student Conduct*. School personnel are responsible for administering discipline for infractions committed aboard the bus. Drivers report student misconduct by completing a student referral form and forwarding it to school officials. The student referral form includes a section for action taken by the school that is to be returned to the driver. The school official returns the report of action taken to the transportation department for review by the route manager and driver. The transportation department route managers file each student referral form.

The district can improve its operations by implementing additional policies and procedures to detect vandalism on school buses and increase reimbursements for damages. The district's *Code of Student Conduct* specifically states that the school district will hold parents liable for the costs of repairs or replacement for damage or destruction of school property by students. However, the district could not determine how much money was assessed and collected to reimburse the district in school year 2002-03. The district should establish and implement policies and procedures that will increase the detection of vandalism on school buses and increase reimbursements for damages. These policies and procedures should include use of assigned seats, drivers checking buses for vandalism after each bus route, and the holding of students responsible for damage to assigned seats unless there is evidence that the damage to the seat was caused by a non-assigned student.

We recommend the district establish and implement policies and procedures that will increase the detection of vandalism on school buses and increase reimbursement for damages.

Best Practice 17: Using

The district provides appropriate technological and computer support for transportation functions and operations.

The proper use of technology can make the district transportation function more efficient and safe, and less expensive. For instance, technology can assist school districts in mapping out the most efficient bus routes and can reduce the need to manually manipulate data. Therefore, school districts need appropriate technology to support their transportation systems. This includes providing computers to access databases with driver traffic histories maintained by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and to maintain data such as vehicle maintenance histories, fuel disbursements, and parts inventories. Districts also need specialized diagnostic tools to accurately troubleshoot bus engine problems. In very small districts, districts may be able to maintain some of this data manually, but most districts require computer systems to enable management to make more informed and appropriate decisions.

Transportation

The Collier County School District provides technological and computer support for student transportation functions and operations. The district uses automated systems to support the following functions:

- routing and rezoning;
- vehicle maintenance tracking and reporting;
- parts inventory control;
- student information, payroll and budget data;
- field trip scheduling and billing;
- staff training and certification tracking;
- email communications; and
- various desktop applications.

The automated routing and rezoning system is interfaced with the school district's student information management system, a key to managing and analyzing data for student transportation.

Best Practice 18: Using

The district monitors the fiscal condition of transportation functions by regularly analyzing expenditures and reviewing them against the budget.

Like most other organizations, school districts must make difficult decisions during the budget process to control expenses and maximize funds available to support their primary mission, educating students. Exceeding these budgets may require the district to reduce funds to the classroom, forgo other needs, or to dip into reserves to meet unanticipated expenses. Thus, transportation management must monitor operations and control costs to ensure that budgets are not exceeded. Budget categories need to be sufficiently detailed to be useful to transportation managers. Wide variance between actual expenditures and budgeted expenditures indicates problems in either deriving accurate budgeted expenditure figures or controlling actual expenditures. In either case, transportation management can prevent budgeting problems through analysis of expenditures and comparing those expenditures to budgeted items. Such analyses will help alert transportation management to unexpected patterns of expenditures as well as identifying opportunities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of operations.

The Collier County School District has a monthly budget review process that provides timely oversight of budget expenditures and rate of spending. The monthly budget review process includes monitoring the fiscal condition of transportation functions by the associate superintendent of operational services, who receives budget reports generated by the automated financial accounting system. The reports provide budgeted, month-to-date expended, year-to-date expended, committed, and balance amounts for each category of expenditure. In addition to receiving the budget reports, the associate superintendent of operational services is provided a project review report monthly. The project review is a management status report prepared by the transportation department director, operations manager, and service manager. The purpose of the project review is to communicate to senior management key information related to budget, driver training, scheduled and nonscheduled maintenance, excessive costs associated with particular types or ages of buses, surplus vehicles, and parts and supply inventory.

Best Practice 19: Using

The district has reviewed the prospect for privatizing transportation functions, as a whole or in part, but key unit cost information should be developed for comparison to determine if cost savings are feasible.

To be good custodians of public resources, school districts should evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations continually, which includes examining the benefits of alternative service delivery methods, to reduce costs and maximize funds available for classroom instruction, and/or to improve performance. Certain administrative and support functions, including transportation, are more easily privatized due to the limited scope operations and availability of private providers. Therefore, school districts should conduct periodic analyses to determine if they would benefit from privatization of certain aspects of their transportation systems. Privatizing specialized functions such as rebuilding bus transmissions can save districts money by avoiding the need to buy and maintain equipment and skills for a job that will only be used a few times a year. In some cases, districts have privatized their entire transportation operations and achieved cost savings. However, these steps need to be taken only after “make or buy” analyses are done to ensure that the move will produce real benefits. To conduct these analyses, districts need to identify their unit costs, both direct and indirect, of providing services (such as oil changes, paint and body work, and engine rebuilds) so that they can compare these costs to the prices charged by private vendors.

The Collier County School District reviewed the prospect for privatizing the transportation function during 2001-02. A national provider of education transportation services conducted a comprehensive analysis of the Collier County School District transportation operations. Prior to the study, this provider estimated that school districts of similar size to Collier county can usually save as much as 10 to 15 % per year through outsourcing student transportation. After analyzing the Collier County School District, the national provider concluded significant cost savings could not be realized by privatizing the transportation functions. The review team conducted a phone interview with the director of business development from this national provider. The representative said the analysis did not identify any major cost reduction opportunities other than the elimination of courtesy busing.

The transportation department does use some private contractors for maintenance work and specific transportation needs. Cost savings is the primary reason these functions are contracted. Vehicle windshield repair and replacement is contracted to a private service provider. Specialized transportation service was obtained for an ESE student who is transported approximately 100 miles per day after determining that it was much more cost-effective to contract out the service than use an additional district school bus. In addition, the transportation department periodically contracts with private charter bus companies to provide field trip transportation when a school bus is not available, or for out-of-state trips. The transportation staff monitors all work performed by outside vendors to ensure quality, responsiveness, and value.

Cost comparisons with districts that have private providers are limited, since only two Florida districts currently outsource the transportation function (Duval and Santa Rosa). The district does not conduct comparisons with similar districts nationwide that privatize student transportation.

The district would improve its transportation privatization practices by determining the full cost of student transportation and key unit cost information. This information will allow the district to identify potential cost savings in the future, compared to peers and private providers in other school districts.

We recommend the district determine the full cost of in-house services, develop key unit cost information and make comparisons with private providers to determine if privatization would result in savings.

Best Practice 20: Not Using

The district has not established an accountability system for transportation to regularly track and make public reports on its performance in comparison with established benchmarks.

Like other publicly funded entities, a school district should be held accountable to parents and other taxpayers for the performance and cost of its major programs and support services, including transportation. To accomplish this, each school district should have a system that allows managers at both the district and program level to evaluate performance and make informed decisions regarding the use of limited resources. In addition, school transportation departments need to be able to demonstrate to district management, school boards, and the public that they are good stewards of the public's funds and are constantly striving to improve. This is done by establishing measures, goals, and benchmarks and comparing internal performance to other school districts. Districts should monitor some performance measures on a regular, short-term (e.g., monthly) basis such as the number of bus breakdowns, driver/technician absenteeism, complaints received (e.g., buses not being on time and students not picked up), vehicle maintenance (oil changes, inspections not conducted, etc.) delayed, and overtime paid. Districts should monitor other performance measures on an annual basis, such as the percentage of courtesy students served, annual operational cost per student, vehicle breakdowns per 100,000 miles, the percentage of buses that are spare buses, accidents per million miles, and the percentage of students delivered within established ride time standards. Districts should compare their performance to those of peer districts as well as against established benchmarks. The transportation department's performance should be reported on a regular basis to the district superintendent, school board, and the public.

The Collier County School District develops goals for each department at the beginning of the school year. Departmental goals are aligned with the district goals. At the end of the school year a comparison is made between goals and accomplishments. The transportation department's goals for the 2002-03 are listed in Exhibit 9-8.

Exhibit 9-8

Collier County School District Transportation Department Goals for 2002-03

1. Collier County students are transported safely and efficiently between home and school, and on sponsored field trips with no reportable incidents. Students arrive at school ready to learn with a positive attitude.
 2. The transportation department provides buses that are reliable, clean and in outstanding material condition.
 3. The transportation department personnel embrace the district's character traits, setting the example for students by exhibiting professionalism, pride in their work and exemplary character at all times.
 4. Drivers and Attendants employed by the transportation department are professional, well trained, courteous, and enjoy a high state of morale.
 5. The transportation department continues, and improves, processes for dealing with concerned parents and school administrators, seeking always to ensure student safety.
 6. The transportation department, administration, school board and school administrators collaborate to achieve optimum transportation support to students.
 7. Reduce mishaps involving Collier County school buses by 10%. Reduce driver "at fault" mishaps by 20%.
 8. The transportation department allocates and monitors its budget to most effectively support the goals of the district school board of Collier County.
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Source: Collier County School District Transportation Department.

The goals are published in the transportation department's annual report. The transportation department also adopted the performance measures listed in Exhibit 9-9.

Exhibit 9-9
Collier County School District
Transportation Department Performance Measures for 2002-03

1. At least 95% of all students who ride the bus spend one hour or less going to school or returning home.
 2. At least 95% of all route buses are within load capacity guidelines established for each size bus, (e.g. no more than 65 elementary, 55 middle school or 45 high school students per 65 passenger bus).
 3. Route managers and/or supervisors respond to 99% of parent or school administrator's concerns within 24 hours.
 4. The district's annual school bus "at fault" mishap rate is equal to or less than 0.225 mishaps per 100,000 miles driven.
 5. The district's average bus occupancy, as measured by the State Department of Education, meets or exceeds the state average each year.
 6. No more than 10% of on-hand buses are dead lined and awaiting maintenance on a daily basis.
 7. Parts inventory is maintained with an error rate of less than 1% in dollar value and 10% in line item correction count.
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Source: Collier County School District Transportation Department.

However, the district is not using this best practice for two reasons. First, the performance measures are not tied to and do not specifically measure the goals listed in Exhibit 9-8. Actual results are not measured and reported so the district knows how it performed against these measures or benchmarks.

Second, the Collier County School District has not established an adequate accountability system for student transportation. The measurement parameters should be expanded to include both short-term critical internal measures to evaluate day-to-day transportation operations, such as driver absentee rates, and long-term measures for major aspects of the transportation department, such as operating cost per student, age of the bus fleet, and on-time performance of buses. Examples of performance measures for student transportation are presented in Exhibit 9-10.

**Exhibit 9-10
Example Performance Measures for Student Transportation**

Category	Examples Operational Performance Measures	Examples Annual Performance Measures
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student riders per regular bus route or bus ▪ Student riders per special bus route or bus ▪ Capacity utilization per bus trip and bus route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Average bus occupancy
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weekly hours worked by each driver with subtotals for hours driving bus routes and hours assigned to activity runs and field trips ▪ Weekly hours for utility drivers for administrative assignments ▪ Overtime hours by employee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fully allocated average cost per bus route or bus to measure cost effectiveness of route design ▪ Fully allocated average cost per route mile to measure efficiency ▪ Fully allocated average cost per student rider to measure service effectiveness ▪ Percent state funding
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hours of training for student discipline management for each driver ▪ Hours of training for the special needs of ESE students for each driver and attendant ▪ Hours of in-service training for each driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accidents per 100,000 miles of service ▪ Student discipline incidents per 100,000 students transported ▪ Number of items for correction in annual safety inspection of facilities ▪ Percent of 30-day maintenance inspections meeting DOE minimum standards
Service Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of regular routes cancelled due to lack of drivers ▪ On-time performance ▪ Percent of students with ride time above goal for maximum ride time ▪ Average bus occupancy per bus trip and bus route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual user survey of parents, school administrators
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of route driver positions vacant ▪ Number of attendant positions vacant ▪ Absentee rate for route drivers and attendants ▪ Number of available substitute drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual turnover rate for drivers and attendants ▪ Annual employee satisfaction survey
Customer Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comments received per route ▪ Response time per comment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual user survey of parents, school administrators
Vehicle Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Percent of preventative maintenance inspections completed on time ▪ Percent of 30-day maintenance inspections meeting DOE minimum standards ▪ Reported incidents of air-conditioning failure on ESE buses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age of bus fleet ▪ Route miles between in-service breakdowns ▪ Parts inventory turnover rate

Source: Gibson Consulting Group.

Without a comprehensive accountability system, district officials have limited meaningful information available to make informed decisions. Performance data should be compiled into regular management reports, such as an annual “report card” to show how well the transportation function is performing. Such reports could be used to demonstrate the benefits of the district’s transportation functions. Action Plan 9-2 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

This Action Plan should be implemented in conjunction with Action Plans 3-2, 3-2 and 3-4 in the Performance Accountability Chapter.

Action Plan 9-2

We recommend the district establish appropriate performance and cost-effectiveness measures and benchmarks for student transportation and provide an annual report card on all selected measures.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. The director of transportation, operations manager, and services manager work together to develop appropriate measures of efficiency, effectiveness, and quality for student transportation. Two sets of measures should be defined: those that address day-to-day operations and annual measures. If necessary, the supervisors contact peer districts to research examples of performance measures.</p> <p>Step 2. The operations and service manager develop monthly performance reports for the day-to-day measures and quarterly reports for the longer-term measures. The managers submit the reports to the director of Transportation. The director of transportation submits the reports to the associate superintendent of operational services.</p> <p>Step 3. The director of transportation compiles an annual “report card” that contains the transportation department’s performance on measures related to major aspects of the transportation function. The director of transportation submits the annual “report card” to the associate superintendent of operational services.</p> <p>Step 4. The associate superintendent of operational services submits the report to the superintendent and school board for review.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of transportation
Time Frame	January 2004

10

Food Service Operations

Summary

The Collier County School District is using 10 of the 11 best practices for food service. The district's food service program developed strategic plans, has a training program for employees, manages its operations well, and has a strong performance accountability system. To use the remaining best practice and ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of its food service program, the district should institute a shared manager program, balance the amount of scratch menu items with convenience foods, and convert the central warehouse to house food items only.



As seen in Exhibit 10-1, the district has several opportunities to increase revenues in this area. Determining whether to take advantage of these opportunities is a district decision and should be based on many factors including district needs, public input and school board priorities. If the district implements these action plans, it would be able to redirect the funds to other priorities, such as putting more money into the classroom or addressing deficiencies identified in this report. In addition, the department will be able to return \$212,627 annually to the general fund as a result of one of the recommendations in this report which provides the opportunity for district custodial costs to be shared by the department of food service, with federal dollars. These dollars can then be directed to the classroom.

**Exhibit 10-1
Our Review Identified Several Ways the District Could Reduce Costs and Increase Revenues in the Area of Food Service Operations**

Best Practice Number	Fiscal Impact: (Increased Costs)/Cost Savings/Increased Revenues					Total
	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Year 2006-07	Year 2007-08	
2 Implement a shared manager program.	\$ 0	\$ 53,042	\$ 79,562	\$ 106,084	\$ 132,604	\$ 371,292
2 Reduce labor hours by reducing the number of scratch items on the menu and raise the MPLH standards.	0	50,000	100,000	150,000	200,000	500,000
6 Expand Breakfast-in-a-Bag program.	30,240	88,960	140,308	191,655	243,003	694,165
6 Renovate four schools per year with \$50,000 budget to increase participation and net revenue.	(106,125)	(19,369)	241,394	154,144	240,900	510,944
Total	(\$49,365)	\$172,633	\$561,264	\$601,883	\$816,507	\$2,076,401

Background

The Collier County School District food service program provided 5,637,150 meals during the 2001-02 school year. In doing so, the program produced 1,252,179 breakfasts, 3,918,068 lunches and sold the equivalent of 1,092,992 meals in the form of a la carte items. During the 2002-03 school year, the program provided meal services at 9 alternate learning centers, 22 elementary schools, 1 combined elementary and middle school cafeteria, 7 middle schools and 5 high schools. The program employed 215 full-time and 106 part-time food service staff at 37 school locations with 13 staff members at the central office. The food service budget for the 2002-03 school year was approximately \$14.2 million.

The district's food service director is responsible for all aspects of the district's food service program, with the assistance of three area supervisors that directly oversee the cafeteria operations. The current director of food service has been with the district 16 years. Under her tenure, the program has been self-sustaining and has not required general operating funds to supplement its operation. At year-end 2002-03, the projected unreserved food service fund balance is \$5.1 million. This reserve is maintained for equipment replacement and for the start of the year expenses for food, supplies and salaries. In 2001-02, the department spent some of its reserve on equipment for the training kitchen in the new administration building as a means of keeping its reserve closer to the three-month operating balance cap set by federal guidelines.

The food service program has a point of sale system that is networked to all schools that enables the district to identify student status and submit daily participation reports. In addition, the department has purchased an inventory management computer software system and is in the process of implementing and training personnel on use of the system.

Program organization

The department of food service has a four-tiered organizational structure. The organization chart accurately reflects the reporting hierarchy within the department.

The director of food service oversees the high level activities of the department with eight direct reports, including the two departmental secretaries.

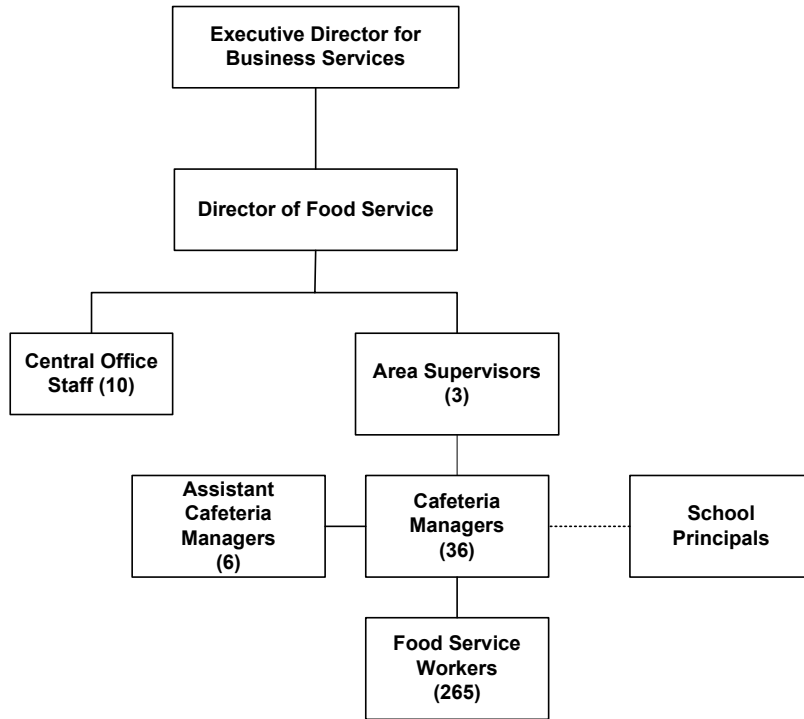
The next tier includes the central supervisory staff for the department.

- Three area supervisors share the supervision of the district's schools. One area supervisor is responsible for equipment, maintenance, new kitchen design and renovations as well as supervising all of the district's secondary schools. Another area supervisor is responsible for overseeing 11 elementary schools as well as food preparation, menu planning and nutrition. The third area supervisor oversees the free and reduced reporting and manages the computer needs for the department while managing twelve elementary schools.
- The food services specialist is responsible for the human resource functions of the department, including setting up interviews, updating the substitute pool, maintaining the staff development database, managing a lending library of training materials, facilitating new hire training and paperwork and providing cashier training and other miscellaneous training to staff.
- The chef/training manager is responsible for training food service workers in preparing new menu items and directing the manager training program for the district.
- The senior bookkeeper is responsible for the accounting function for the department.

The third tier includes the line managers. Each cafeteria has a manager that is responsible for the daily task of feeding the district's students. The managers are responsible for managing production levels, monitoring food costs, maintaining food inventories, addressing student likes and dislikes and acting as the department's representative at the schools. They report directly to one of the area supervisors. The three bookkeepers are also at this level on the organization chart. The bookkeepers support the reporting requirements of the National School Breakfast (NSB) and National School Lunch (NSL) Programs, the free and reduced price programs and purchasing and warehouse functions. The bookkeepers report to the senior bookkeeper.

The fourth and final tier includes the school food workers and the accounting clerk. The accounting clerk supports central accounting and invoicing functions. The food service workers are involved in food preparation, direct customer service and cashiering functions and report directly to the cafeteria managers. The high schools have another employee classification at this level. Each high school has an assistant manager. The department of food service organization chart is presented in Exhibit 10-2.

**Exhibit 10-2
Department of Food Service Organizational Chart**



Source: Collier County School District, Department of Food Service, February 2003.

The department of food services is provided technology support by the management information services (MIS) department. Two technicians support both hardware and software applications for the department and are paid by a technology grant.

National School Lunch Program participation

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and National Breakfast Program, which are regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). These programs assist states through grant-in-aid and other means such as menu design in establishing, maintaining, operating and expanding school feeding programs. The purpose of these federal programs is to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children as well as provide and encourage the consumption of nutritious domestic agricultural commodities (USDA Donated Foods).

These breakfast and lunch programs are administered through Florida's Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Each school district executes an annual agreement with these state agencies to operate the programs at the local level. The school board, superintendent and the Department of Food service share local responsibility for program administration within the district.

As a participant in these programs, the district receives monthly federal reimbursement income for the free, reduced and paid meals it serves. Quarterly, the state also provides required partial matching funds to lunch programs and to supplement breakfast meals. Exhibit 10-3 shows the federal reimbursement rates for the National School Lunch Program for 2002-03 school year. Based on relative economic need, districts receive a standard reimbursement of either \$0.20 or \$0.22 for each lunch meal served, plus additional monies based on the number of free and/or partially paid (called "reduced") meals served. Under the program guidelines, the district receives the \$0.22 reimbursement rate. Students pay the full, reduced, or free meal rate based on individual family economic conditions set by the USDA.

Exhibit 10-3
USDA Reimbursement Rates and Fees per Meal for School Year 2002-03

Meal	Federal Assistance	Fees Paid by Student	Program Total Revenue
Elementary Schools—The Collier County School District			
Full price paid			
Breakfast	\$0.22	\$0.75	\$0.97
Lunch	0.22	1.50	1.72 ¹
Reduced price			
Breakfast	\$0.22 + \$0.65	\$0.30	\$1.17 ²
Lunch	\$0.22 + \$1.54	0.40	2.16 ¹
Free			
Breakfast	\$0.22 + \$0.95	\$0	\$1.17 ²
Lunch	\$0.22 + \$1.94	0	2.16 ¹
Middle and High Schools—The Collier County School District			
Full price paid			
Breakfast	\$0.22	\$0.85	\$0.97
Lunch	\$0.22	\$1.75	\$1.97 ¹
Reduced price			
Breakfast	\$0.22 + \$0.65	\$0.30	\$1.17 ²
Lunch	\$0.22 + \$1.54	\$0.40	\$2.16 ¹
Free			
Breakfast	\$0.22 + \$0.95	\$0	\$1.17 ²
Lunch	\$0.22 + \$1.94	\$0	\$2.16 ¹

¹ In addition, the state quarterly pays partial matching funds to the district. For school year 2001-02 this equaled about \$0.03 per lunch served.

² For individual schools classified as "severe need," the federal program provides an additional \$0.23.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture and Florida Department of Education.

Although somewhat different rules apply, breakfast meals are similarly funded based on each school's participation rates and the economic need of its students. The state requires that all elementary schools provide a breakfast opportunity to students and supplements some of this cost. The district provides a breakfast program in all but two of its schools. It has considered going to a universal feeding breakfast program in all schools to increase participation. A universal feeding program would provide free breakfasts to all students regardless of eligibility for federal reimbursement.

As Exhibit 10-4 illustrates, the district food service program has maintained a strong financial position over the past four years. It has been able to sustain its program without requiring transfers from the district's general operating fund. Typically, it is the participation in the federal National School Lunch Program and cash food sales that account for the majority of revenue in a school food service program, while food costs, salaries and benefits represent the majority of expenditures. In addition, the district receives commodity food from the USDA and in many years accepts bonus commodities as they come available.

Exhibit 10-4
The Collier County School District has been Financially Stable over the Last Four Years

	Fiscal Year			
	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
REVENUE				
Food Sales Revenue				
Federal Meals Program	\$5,185,087	\$5,529,792	\$6,227,897	\$6,686,266
State Supplement	208,858	220,488	242,302	251,815
Meal Sales	2,201,328	2,527,095	2,601,199	2,606,472
A La Carte Sales	1,474,329	1,695,477	2,062,249	2,197,747
Other Food Sales	183,196	185,176	210,843	169,568
Other Revenue				
USDA Donated Food	1,183,536	736,483	1,231,726	864,201
Interest	85,192	134,070	189,248	109,637
Other Revenue	16,364	9,637	101,545	30,201
Total Revenue	\$10,537,890	\$11,038,218	\$12,867,009	\$12,915,907
EXPENDITURES				
Salaries	\$3,457,415	\$3,658,364	\$3,938,349	\$4,421,294
Employee Benefits	1,370,061	1,289,904	1,485,136	1,782,672
Purchased Services	38,151	66,233	107,705	119,860
Energy Services	112,165	117,627	314,637	324,727
Material and supplies	506,931	468,949	492,395	563,531
Food	2,879,011	3,173,447	3,397,162	4,032,128
Commodities	794,201	761,771	925,565	796,758
Capital Outlay	242,635	140,008	364,884	283,614
Other Expenses	280,928	281,814	302,689	358,121
Total Expenditures	\$9,681,498	\$9,958,117	\$11,328,522	\$12,682,705
Net Income (Loss)	1,056,393	1,080,101	1,538,487	233,202
Account Balance	\$2,474,530	\$3,554,631	\$5,093,118	\$5,326,320

Source: Collier County School District, Department of Food Service.

Peer Districts Used for Comparison

Manatee, Lake, Osceola, Lee, and Pasco counties were selected as peers for the purposes of this review. The Collier County School District food service program is serving more meals per student than most of its peers, with the exception of Osceola and Pasco. The ratio of free and reduced price eligible students is about the same for the district and its peers, with an average of 50.1 percent. Exhibit 10-5 compares the district to its peers in terms of the number of lunches served per student.

**Exhibit 10-5
General Comparison of Peer Districts, Fiscal Year 2001-02**

District	Reported Student Population ¹	Total Schools in District Serving NSLP Meals	Total NSLP Claimed Lunches Served	Lunches Served per Student for the Year	Free and Reduce Eligibility Percentage (Elementary)
Collier	36,009	45 ²	3,842,304	106	50.2%
Lake	30,128	43	2,984,197	99	49.7%
Lee	59,585	67	5,772,058	97	52.3%
Manatee	37,576	41	3,523,131	94	43.4%
Osceola	37,343	36	4,221,712	113	53.2%
Pasco	51,533	63	5,286,619	106	51.6%

¹ Unweighted FTE, all programs.

² Includes alternative learning centers, charter schools, elementary, middle, high schools and one combined school.

Source: Florida division of Education data sources.

Activities of particular interest

The food service program recently began using a portable electronic tool for completing visitation evaluations. The tool allows an area supervisor to enter the criterion into a hand-help instrument. Data is electronically transmitted into a database program that can be sorted, printed and downloaded into timely and easily accessible reports on cafeteria performance to upper management. The sorting feature allows for immediate review of specific criterion. The director is able to quickly gather important information about the cafeterias. For example, all managers receiving a specific score on a function, such as a “1” which would lead to a need for timely follow-up, can be viewed immediately following the inspections. The director and area supervisors have a practice of recommending training and monitoring for managers receiving a “1” on any line items on the visitation report; therefore, this instrument is an innovative tool for effective evaluations of the cafeterias.

The food service program also uses the visitation inspections to motivate managers. Managers are not only evaluated on performance but are awarded financial bonuses for superior performance. Managers showed enthusiasm and were making creative efforts to achieve these goals.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Food Service Operations Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Planning, Organization and Staffing	1. The program has developed strategic or operational plans that are consistent with district plans and the program budget and approved by the district.	Yes	10-9
	2. The district and program are organized with clear lines of responsibility and in a manner that provides the food service program sufficient authority to succeed.	No	10-10
	3. Program management has developed training designed to meet basic program needs as well as improve food services, both based on a needs assessment.	Yes	10-13
Management	4. Program management has developed comprehensive procedures manuals that are kept current.	Yes	10-14
	5. The district performs sound cash and account management.	Yes	10-15
	6. District and program management optimizes its financial opportunities.	Yes	10-16
Performance and Accountability	7. Food service program management has developed comprehensive performance and cost-efficiency measures that provide management with information to evaluate program performance and better manage operations.	Yes	10-22
	8. At least annually, the program inspects and evaluates its operational components and the system as a whole and then takes action to initiate needed change.	Yes	10-23
	9. District and program administrators effectively manage costs of the food service program and use performance measures, benchmarks and budgets on a regular basis to evaluate performance and use the analysis for action or change.	Yes	10-24
	10. The food service program and district complies with federal, state and district policy.	Yes	10-25
	11. The district conducts activities to ensure that customer needs are met and acts to improve services and food quality where needed.	Yes	10-25

PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND STAFFING

Best Practice 1: Using

The food service program has developed strategic or operational plans that are consistent with district plans and the program budget and approved by the district.

A well-managed food service program should have coordinated, approved plans that give the program a logical direction. These plans should include a mission statement, goals, objectives and strategies that describe what the program desires to accomplish. However, the extensiveness of such plans may differ by size of the district. For instance, larger districts should have more highly developed, detailed plans for their food service operations, whereas smaller districts may need less extensive, more general plans. Because school districts generally have seemingly unlimited demands for available funds, the food service program budget should be an extension of the district's plan and financial decisions should reflect the program's priority goals and objectives. The budget also should have school-level, detailed forecasts of revenue and expenses. In addition, the food service director should be involved in major capital projects such as kitchen-related design or renovation.

The Collier County School District has a five-year strategic plan for the food service program including mission, goals, objectives and strategies. The plan was developed using a district-implemented needs assessment and the program's budgetary needs and expectations. It was created by food service employees and district personnel through a formal needs assessment process that was approved by central administration personnel. The department conducted the assessment in July 2002 to identify and plan activities addressing the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strategies were also compared and linked to the district educational improvement plan and OPPAGA Best Financial Management Practices. Exhibit 10-6 displays examples of food service goals and objectives that were linked and are consistent with the district's strategic goals and objectives as outlined in the department's five-year strategic plan and the district educational improvement plan.

**Exhibit 10-6
Examples of Consistency between the Goals of the Department and the District**

Department of Food Service Five-Year Strategic Plan	District Educational Improvement Plan
<p>Goal A: To continue to operate a dynamic and solvent food service operation that is self supported and maintains an adequate reserve for anticipated expenses</p> <p>Objectives (sample):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase a la carte sales 3% per year at secondary schools 	<p>Goal #9: Fiscal and Resource Responsibility</p> <p>Objective (sample):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “At the beginning of the fiscal year 2001-02, the General Fund reserve for ending cash will be \$1,000,000 above the board’s contingency balance; all other reserves will be in compliance with the five-year goal.”
<p>Goal B: To improve program efficiency through sound management practices and new technological advances</p> <p>Objective (sample):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conduct a productivity study to develop a new Meal per Labor Hour formula 	<p>Goal #9: Fiscal and Resource Responsibility</p> <p>Objective (sample):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “At the end of the 2001-02 school year, the District will have conducted an OPPAGA Self-Study and results will show significant outcomes.”
<p>Goal C: To recruit, train and retain an effective and efficient workforce</p> <p>Objectives (sample):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide cashier training Develop strategies to recruit food service workers and management 	<p>Goal #6: Teachers and Staff</p> <p>Objective (sample):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “By the end of 2004-05 school year, all administrators, certified and classified employees will have been trained in Professional Practices.”

Source: Collier County School District, Department of Food Service, 5-Year Strategic Plan & District Education Improvement Plan, 2002-03.

Although the district is using this best practice, it can enhance its operations in this area by improving its objective statements to be outcome-oriented, measurable, and time specific.

We recommend that the district refine the food service objective statements in the strategic plan to be outcome-oriented, measurable, and time-certain to further improve accountability.

Best Practice 2: Not Using

The district and program are organized with clear lines of responsibility at the central office level and in a manner that provides the food service program sufficient authority to succeed; however, the cafeteria structure is not cost-effective.

For the food service program to function well, the district food service manager, the school’s cafeteria manager and its principal need to balance authority and responsibility. If not closely monitored, this shared responsibility and authority can create barriers to student meal purchases and program success. Food service staffing at both the district and the school cafeteria level should balance efficiency and effectiveness. Supervising too few workers is wasteful, but supervising too many can result in a loss of control. Management theorists generally agree that managers should oversee between 3 and 10 employees; more than 10 may be supervised if they are in close proximity to the manager and perform very routine or similar duties, such as in a cafeteria. All districts, even those with few employees, should maintain basic organizational charts to help management and employees understand their organizational relationships, explain lines of authority, assign responsibilities and avoid conflicts.

Although the Collier County School District food services department is effectively organized, departmental needs are not being addressed at the executive level.

The director of food service is not included in the executive team, even as an advisor. As a result the needs of the department can be overlooked. Research has clearly shown that student performance improves when they have access to nutritious and good tasting food. However, the food service program is not given a direct voice on the executive team. The food services program has been extremely successful but it has been limited to finding innovative solutions to issues that could have more easily been addressed at a higher level. For example, in five of the district's six high schools there is only one lunch period to serve an average of 1,800 students. This has made it difficult to maintain meal participation numbers at the high school. Although the department is self-sufficient, the rising costs of doing business could potentially hinder the program if participation cannot be sustained.

The district could benefit from including the director of food service in its executive team meetings when there are issues that directly affect the department. Food service plays an important role in improving the education of the Collier County School District students and should be given the appropriate attention at the executive level.

We recommend that the director of food service be appointed as an advisor to and more actively participate in the district's executive team.

Every cafeteria in the district has a manager regardless of the number of meals being served, which increases overall labor costs.

The staffing model the district uses for its cafeterias is based on a cafeteria manager in every cafeteria. The high schools also have an assistant manager. The model does not consider the size of the kitchen, student enrollment, or the number of meals served to determine whether a manager position is necessary. As of February 2003, there were 36 managers and 6 assistant managers for 323 full- and part-time approved cafeteria positions.

Some school districts have reduced overall labor costs by implementing a shared cafeteria manager program. For example, the Broward County School District food service program has successfully used shared managers to operate some of their school cafeterias. Shared managers split their time between two small schools that are in close proximity. A designated "key person" is left in charge to handle any emergencies that arise when the manager is not on-site.

The benefit of a shared manager program is that the district pays salary and fringe benefits to one manager and receives the workload previously required of two managers. The average manager's salary and benefits are \$38,689 per year. While the district could reduce costs by reducing the number of managers, there would be some costs associated with this change. The shared manager could be compensated for the extra workload (\$5,000). Also, the average hours for non-management food service workers could increase by 3 hours in each cafeteria sharing a manager. Assuming that the district began with two schools, replacing two cafeteria managers with one shared manager each year, the district could save \$371,292 over the next five years, as presented in Exhibit 10-7. The district could implement this change through attrition rather than a reduction in force.

**Exhibit 10-7
Projected Savings from Shared Manager Program**

Fiscal Year	Salary and Benefit Savings (\$38,689/Mgr)	Incentive Pay (\$5,000 plus Benefits/Mgr)	Additional Labor Hours (3 Hrs @ \$11.64/Hr for 180 days)	Net Savings
2003-04				
2004-05	\$77,378	(\$11,765)	(\$12,571)	\$53,042
2005-06	\$116,067	(\$17,648)	(\$18,857)	\$79,562
2006-07	\$154,756	(\$23,530)	(\$25,142)	\$106,084
2007-08	\$193,445	(\$29,413)	(\$31,428)	\$132,604
Total	\$541,646	(\$82,356)	(\$87,998)	\$371,292

Note: Totals may not foot due to rounding.

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Action Plan 10-1 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 10-1

We recommend that the district institute a shared manager program.	
Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Identify the kitchens that can be shared considering the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ schools must be located approximately five miles from each other; ▪ combined meals served at the two schools should be manageable; and ▪ manager should be willing to take on added workload and capable of doing so. <p>Step 2. Determine the number of additional hours that will be required for food service kitchen staff sharing managers.</p> <p>Step 3. Offer position to managers that qualify.</p> <p>Step 4. Phase in a shared manager program as managers leave the district.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of food service
Time Frame	January 2004

The staffing levels at the district cafeterias are not in line with industry meals per labor hour (MPLH) standards as a result of an overabundance of scratch cooking.

There are two systems of meal preparation, the conventional and the convenience systems. The conventional system involves using raw ingredients in the preparation of meals; the use of some bakery bread and prepared pizza; and involves washing dishes. In contrast, the convenience system maximizes the amount of processed foods and disposable wares. The district cooks a high percent of its meals from scratch. The district is particularly proud of its scratch bakery items and provides all bread items on the menu, including hot dog and hamburger buns. Excessive cooking from scratch is labor intensive resulting in overstaffing and increased labor costs. An additional problem that arises when district kitchens use a lot of scratch cooking in its recipes, especially in bakery items, is the difference between the qualities of cooks from kitchen to kitchen.

We compared industry standards for meals per labor hour with Collier’s meals per labor hour. This is a standard of worker efficiency. While some schools are below standard overall, the district’s staff takes 256.6 hours more per day than what the industry standard would suggest given the number of meals served. The district should move toward raising its meal per labor hour toward the industry standard. The district could use attrition to reach this standard. In addition, the district can determine whether any redistribution or reallocation of personnel across sites will improve the overall efficiency of the food service program.

If the district reallocated its daily labor hours by reducing the number of hours worked by some food service workers or eliminating staff, the annual savings would be approximately \$200,000 per year

(\$11.64 average labor cost per hour x 100 hours x 180 days, 100 hours of 256.61 estimated attainable). It is assumed that this reduction would be phased in over the four years after an initial adjustment year. Thus, none first year (transition year), \$50,000 second year, \$100,000 third year, \$150,000 fourth year, \$200,000 fifth year, total \$500,000 and sustained savings from that point forward. Action Plan 10-2 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 10-2

We recommend that the district balance the amount of scratch menu items with convenience foods and move toward the industry standard meals per labor hour.

Action Needed	Step 1. Establish the ratio of conventional to convenience food for the district’s menu and the timeline to implement. Step 2. Increase the district’s target MPLH to industry standards. Step 3. Phase out scratch bakery items from the menu. Step 4. Research additional available convenience foods and set-up taste tests. Step 5. Add convenience foods as menu changes occur until the target ratio is reached.
Who Is Responsible	Director of food service and area supervisors
Time Frame	June 2005

The majority of the stock housed at the warehouse is bulk food and commodities but food service management does not have any authority over the warehouse operations.

The district’s central warehouse houses bulk food and commodities for the department of food service and selected office and art supplies. The warehouse staff report directly to the supervisor of central services and not the director of food service although the majority of stock housed at the warehouse is food and food storage uses 60% of the floor space. The remainder of the central warehouse is used to store office supplies such as copy paper, pens and art supplies and surplus equipment until it can be transported to Tampa for auction. Most of the district’s office supplies are purchased directly from the supplies bid and delivered directly to the school or department placing the order, usually within 24 hours. If the office materials currently stored in the warehouse were also ordered on an as-needed basis from the local vendor, the warehouse could be used to house only bulk food and commodities and could become part of the food service department. This would enable the district to reduce the number of drivers since it would no longer be necessary to receive, store and deliver office supplies. Action Plan 10-3 outlines actions the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 10-3

We recommend that the district convert the central warehouse to house food items only and have warehouse staff report directly to the director of food service.

Action Needed	Step 1. Restructure the reporting hierarchy for the central warehouse to have the warehouse supervisor report directly to the director of food service. Step 2. Work with the purchasing department to facilitate the warehouse conversion. Step 3. Re-establish delivery schedules to the cafeterias. Step 4. Develop departmental procedures for the warehouse.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services and the director of food service
Time Frame	June 2005

Best Practice 3: Using

The district has developed training to meet basic program needs as well as improve food services.

Training ensures that school district employees understand the scope of their responsibilities and performance expectations and updates their skills and knowledge so that they can work effectively and efficiently. Thus, school districts should have a process for identifying and tracking employee training

needs. All food service employees should be required to complete at least a minimum level of sanitation, safety and food production/handling training. In addition, comprehensive training, though not necessarily required of all employees, should include essential program functions such as food safety; portion control; production control; special diets; inventory; meal count procedures; receiving and storing food and supplies; emergency procedures; and customer service. The district should have an annual training plan that addresses routine and special needs. All levels of food service employees (managers, assistant managers, interns and line-production staff) receive the appropriate level of training. The district should also have a strategy for addressing cafeteria manager turnover, such as an intern program or an assistant manager program. The sophistication of the training plan, training documentation and training methods may vary by the size of the district. Very large districts may designate an employee as a trainer, while in small districts training may be the responsibility of the food service director and cafeteria managers. All districts should be taking advantage of training materials available from the Department of Education.

The Collier County School District developed a food service training program based on the needs assessment performed in the July 2002 SWOT analysis. The district also identifies training needs at quarterly meetings of the food service administrators at which there is a review of each cafeteria's visitation and health inspection reports.

The department of food service produces an annual training schedule and revises it periodically as menus and regulations change. The annual training schedule, distributed at the beginning of the year to all managers and food service personnel, outlines all courses being offered. The courses are listed with a brief description of the content and a list of all dates on which the training is scheduled.

In addition to the training offered at the district office, employees can take self-study courses and have access to a video library maintained at the central office. Employees can view the videos at the central office or take them home to complete certification credits. Courses are 10-hour home study courses designed to educate the food service employee in sanitation and safety, nutrition, quantity food preparation techniques and dietary guidelines.

All employees are offered a progression of courses that allows them to advance their career and increase their salary. The employees said they are highly motivated to complete courses and attain designations for this reason. Completion of 75 hours of training including available self-study courses allows an employee a \$0.25 per hour salary increase. The department of food service maintains records of employee training by name and class

New employees are required to attend a two-hour orientation session. The training includes key components of a food service program including dress code, customer service, sanitation principles, meal patterns and the district's food service policies and procedures.

The district also offers manager training annually to food service workers that qualify. There are two levels of training required to be hired as a manager. Each level requires six weeks of class work. Level 1 trainees are designated as an assistant manager and hold this position during an evaluation period of approximately one year. During the one year period, an on-going evaluation of the Level 1 trainee is conducted and when completed the employee is promoted to a Level 2 trainee.

MANAGEMENT

Best Practice 4: Using

The district has developed comprehensive food service procedures manuals that are kept current and the department is in the process of completing a central staff procedures manual.

Up-to-date procedures, when coupled with appropriate policies, ensure that activities are carried out in an efficient and effective manner and that districts are in compliance with federal and state laws. In addition,

written procedures serve as a district's institutional memory for key processes and as such help to minimize disruption to essential services and reduce the need for costly training and assistance due to staff turnover. To ensure that employees know and use program policy and directives, school districts should make comprehensive procedures manuals available to all food service managers. The manuals should cover important areas of food service operations and district policy. The district should conduct a scheduled and documented review process to keep manuals current and complete.

The Collier County School District's department of food service has clearly defined policies and procedures that include essential components and are consistent with overall district policy. School board policies that are relevant to food service operations are readily available and located in the first section of the manual. The manual also addresses cash control; inventory ordering, receiving, stocking and reporting, meal production records, sanitation and food safety and employee safety guidelines. Policies and procedures are revised continuously as changes occur in the department. The manual is also available online.

The department of food service also has an employee handbook that is distributed to all food service personnel. The information is printed in both English and Spanish. Handbooks are revised every summer. The handbook addresses many of the areas in the procedures manual. In addition, other key areas such as emergencies in case of injury and the following items are outlined in the handbook.

Best Practice 5: Using

The district performs sound cash and account management by developing short and long term cash flow projections to ensure the department of food service can adequately meet its cash obligations.

School districts should run the food service program like a business, ensuring that it remains financially healthy, pays its share of operating expenses, and maintains a reserve fund balance within legal limitations to protect it from unanticipated emergencies. District management should require the food program to be self-sufficient by paying all appropriate direct and indirect expenses so that it does not drain general account dollars from the classroom. Managers should also ensure that program account balances, plans and budgets support future self-sufficiency. Districts of all sizes should make prompt requests for payment to the federal National School Lunch Program because payments are so substantial they affect cash management and interest income.

The director of The Collier County School District's food service program has developed a five-year cash budget that provides a strong cash planning tool. In addition, the district maintains a monthly cash flow tool that highlights any period where the department can expect cash shortfalls and ensure that adequate cash has been accumulated to cover these tight months.

The district could be transfer more dollars to the general fund through direct and indirect program costs.

Although the department of food service is using this best practice, it could charge more custodial costs to the program, which has a positive balance and could sustain more costs as allowed by federal guidelines. This would more accurately portray the financial position of the food services program and allow the district to transfer additional dollars to the general fund and, thus, the classroom. Many school districts chargeback these services based on a percentage of the total square feet directly allocated to food service. The total square footage of its cafeterias is 119,667, or 2.2% of the total 5,333,043 square feet in the district. If the department of food service were charged 2.2% of the district's expenditures for custodial services, \$212,627 (\$10,600,000 budgeted for custodial x 2.2 percent) annually would be directed back into the classroom.

We recommend that the district chargeback the department of food service approximately 2.2% of custodial costs.

In site visits to schools we noted that cash was not always adequately secured during the lunch period and immediately following the lunch period when the cash drawers were being counted. In addition, cafeteria managers take cash deposits to the bank each day. The district could be assuming unnecessary risk and liability by not effectively securing its cash. If the district were to use armored car pick-up at all schools, it would greatly reduce the risk. It would not be necessary to arrange daily armored car pick-up at each school and should be based on the amount of cash on hand. The district began looking into having armored car pick-up at those schools with daily cash receipts in excess of \$1,500 and plans to expand its pilot of seven schools to 20 in the 2003-04 school year. However, cafeteria managers should no longer make cash deposits. In those schools with limited cash, the pick-up could be once per week. Assuming the following schedule:

- Daily pick-ups at schools with \$500 or more in cash: cost \$54,000 (\$25.00 per pick-up x 12 schools x 180 days).
- Twice weekly pick-up at schools with daily cash receipts between \$100 and \$500: cost \$22,500 (\$25.00 per pick-up x 10 schools x 90 days).
- Once a week pick-up at schools with daily cash receipts less than \$100: cost \$13,500 (\$25 per pick-up x 15 schools x 36 days).

The total annual cost for using armored car service would be \$90,000 (\$54,000 + \$22,500 + \$13,500). However, schools can use this service to deposit activity funds or other cash collections and should therefore pay one-third of the cost. This would reduce the food service department's annual cost to \$60,000.

We recommend that the district consider establishing a schedule for armored truck pick-up at every school.

Best Practice 6: Using

District and program managers strive to optimize financial opportunities but could take additional actions to improve its financial stability.

If the food service program takes advantage of opportunities to reduce costs and enhance revenues, it can avoid the need to raise meal prices and/or supplement the food service program with general operating funds that otherwise could be directed to student education. For instance, the district should make optimal use of federally donated foods, which can substantially reduce food costs and maximize its participation in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs to increase federal reimbursement income. In addition, meal prices should be reasonable but sufficient to provide for quality food and service, as well as to enable the district to make needed capital investments and pay employees a fair wage. To respond to changing conditions and control costs, the district should also periodically review core processes such as warehousing and procurement. These reviews should help the district make informed decisions as to which functions the program should perform and which should be outsourced.

The Collier County School District's department of food service attempts to optimize its financial opportunities. It has undertaken a number of initiatives designed to raise its meal participation rates such as increased serving lines, surveying students and providing taste tests on a regular basis and increasing a la carte sales. However, its meal participation rates continue to be low. At the district level, the department has initiated a number of programs to encourage expansion of its operation, including:

- special diets: menu substitutions are available for those students with special dietary needs as long as a medical statement from their physician is obtained;
- after School Snack Programs: the district currently has 14 schools in the after school snack program;
- centralized food production: the district prepares cookies at five central locations and delivers them to all middle and elementary schools;

- parks and recreation program: during the summer, the district prepares breakfasts and lunches for Collier County parks and recreation program, raising \$181,306 during the 20-day period last year;
- summer school: the district operates three serving sites during summer school, generating \$211,413 in revenue last year;
- nutrition break: served between the first and second block period at the high schools to allow students that did not have breakfast to purchase food items, generating approximately \$350,000 annually;
- catering: the district actively pursues catering opportunities for district functions;
- Provision 2 expansion: there are 14 Provision 2 programs in the district; and
- milk vending machines: the district has installed two milk vending machines at each high school and one at each middle school.

The district uses its USDA commodities effectively to offset ever increasing food costs.

The district receives a significant amount of commodity food from the USDA which helps reduce the overall cost of food. According to the director of food service, the district consistently uses in excess of 100% of its allotment by taking advantage of bonus commodity offers and rebates. Exhibit 10-8 summarizes the commodity allocation between 1997-98 and 2001-02.

Exhibit 10-8

The Collier County School District Allocation of Commodities 1997-98 through 2001-02

Year	Commodity Allocation	Commodities Received	Percentage of Allocation
1997-98	\$630,062	\$717,194	113.8%
1998-99	\$1,083,861	\$1,183,536	109.2%
1999-00	\$639,792	\$735,968	115.0%
2000-01	\$1,042,583	\$1,230,840	118.1%
2001-02	\$611,457	\$780,100	127.6%

Source: Collier County School District P&L Operating Statements, 1997-98 through 2001-02.

Meal participation rates are low, particularly at the secondary school levels.

Exhibit 10-9 illustrates the 2002-03 meal participation rates by school level. Meal participation rates are generally low at elementary and high school levels, where lunch participation would be expected more in the 80% and 60% ranges respectively, based on participation rates in other Florida school districts.

**Exhibit 10-9
2002-03 Participation Rates by School Type**

School Type	Breakfast	Lunch
Elementary	29.0%	70.3%
Middle School	15.8%	71.0%
High School	23.5%	51.6%
District Wide	22.8%	64.3%

Source: Collier County School District, Participation Summary Reports by School.

Five of the six high schools in the district have only one lunch period to serve in excess of 1,800 students. Generally, one lunch period does not allow enough time for students to stand in line for their meals, eat and have time to socialize with fellow students. On the other hand, principals are concerned that increasing the number of lunch periods will increase discipline problems and have a negative impact on the school's block scheduling. Although an administrator should have control over the majority of his or her campus, the number of lunch periods can be a district policy. If the school board implemented a policy requiring at least two lunch periods in every high school, meal participation and service to students should be enhanced.

We recommend that the district adopt a policy that every high school provide at least two lunch periods.

Breakfast participation rates throughout the district are very low.

The district serves breakfast in all but two schools. These two schools are in affluent areas of the district and surveys to parents have shown that the majority of these students eat breakfast at home and it would not be cost effective to implement breakfast programs in these schools. The average free and reduced participation in these schools is 12%. However, in the schools that have breakfast programs, the participation averages 20%. This is low, given that the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price breakfast in the district exceeds 50%. There are a number of reasons that participation in the breakfast programs is typically lower than lunch participation. One major reason is that students do not arrive at school with enough time to eat breakfast prior to the start of classes.

Many districts have instituted a Breakfast-in-a-Bag program to increase participation without increasing labor costs. Teachers' aides are sent to pick up the breakfast from the cafeteria and students eat breakfast during the morning announcements. The breakfast bags are filled with convenience foods that meet the criteria for a federally reimbursable meal. The district has successfully introduced a nutrition break to try and feed the students that are reluctant to eat early in the morning. If the district could enhance its nutrition break with a widespread breakfast-in-a-bag program, a much higher percentage of students would receive a quality meal in the morning.

Studies from school districts that have piloted similar programs to breakfast-in-a-bag have identified the following educational benefits that can be expected from increased participation in the School Breakfast Program:

- increased school attendance;
- increased student attention;
- improved student behavior;
- decreased drop out rates;
- reduced disciplinary referrals;
- increased parental and community involvement;

- reduced tardiness; and
- measurably improved test scores.

If the district could increase its breakfast participation, it would substantially increase its revenue. Exhibit 10-10 presents the projected net increase in revenue, as well as the associated costs, that could result from an increase in breakfast participation.

**Exhibit 10-10
Increasing Breakfast Participation Would Provide Additional Savings ¹**

Elementary	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5 Year Total
Breakfast Price	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	
Average Daily Attendance	16,448	16,448	16,448	16,448	16,448	
Participation	31%	33%	35%	37%	39%	
Number of Days Per Year	180	180	180	180	180	
Revenue	\$688,349	\$732,758	\$777,168	\$821,578	\$865,987	\$3,885,840
Current Revenue	(643,939)	(643,939)	(643,939)	(643,939)	(643,939)	(3,219,695)
Net Revenue Increase	\$44,410	\$88,819	\$133,229	\$177,639	\$222,048	\$666,145
Incremental Expense (42%)	(18,652)	(37,304)	(55,956)	(74,608)	(93,260)	(279,781)
Net Savings	\$25,758	\$51,515	\$77,273	\$103,030	\$128,788	\$386,363
Middle School	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5 Year Total
Breakfast Price	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.85	
Average Daily Attendance	9,548	9,548	9,548	9,548	9,548	
Participation	17%	19%	21%	23%	25%	
Number of Days Per Year	180	180	180	180	180	
Revenue	\$248,343	\$277,560	\$306,777	\$335,994	\$365,211	\$1,533,886
Current Revenue	(219,127)	(219,127)	(219,127)	(219,127)	(219,127)	(1,095,635)
Net Revenue Increase	\$29,216	\$58,433	\$87,650	\$116,867	\$146,084	\$438,251
Incremental Expense (42%)	(12,271)	(24,542)	(36,813)	(49,084)	(61,355)	(184,066)
Net Savings	\$16,946	\$33,891	\$50,837	\$67,783	\$84,729	\$254,186
High School	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5 Year Total
Breakfast Price	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.85	
Average Daily Attendance	9,741	9,741	9,741	9,741	9,741	
Participation	25%	26%	27%	28%	29%	
Number of Days Per Year	180	180	180	180	180	
Revenue	\$372,593	\$387,497	\$402,401	\$417,304	\$432,208	\$2,012,004
Current Revenue	(381,370)	(381,370)	(381,370)	(381,370)	(381,370)	(\$1,906,849)
Net Revenue Increase	(\$-8,777)	\$6,127	\$21,031	\$35,934	\$50,838	\$105,154
Incremental Expense (42%)	(\$3,686)	(\$2,573)	(\$8,833)	(\$15,092)	(\$21,352)	(\$51,537)
Net Savings	(\$12,463)	\$3,554	\$12,198	\$20,842	\$29,486	\$53,617
All Schools	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5 Year Total
Additional Net Revenue	\$30,240	\$88,960	\$140,308	\$191,655	\$243,003	\$694,165

¹ The incremental savings is calculated by determining the average daily participation (average daily attendance x participation rate), multiplying that by the meal price and multiplying by 180 days to derive the total revenue. This number is then subtracted by the current revenue (average daily attendance x current participation rate x meal price x 180 days) to calculate the incremental revenue. It is assumed that the incremental expense related to the increase in participation would be 42 percent. The increases have been based on 2002-03 meal prices. As shown in the following exhibit, the district would generate additional net revenue of \$822,592 over the next five years.

Source: Collier County School District Department of Food Service and Gibson Consulting Group.

We recommend that the district expand the breakfast-in-a-bag program to increase breakfast participation.

The overall appearance of the district's cafeterias is not conducive to encouraging an increase in lunch participation rates.

Given that students are required to stay on campus for lunch, one would expect that the participation rates would be higher than just over 60%. One problem is that the institutional appearance of many of the cafeterias does not encourage participation. Many districts have recognized that they must invest in their infrastructure to encourage additional participation. School food service programs with excess fund balances have begun to use money to renovate the serving lines and provide a more inviting environment. For example, some districts have purchased jukeboxes and picture boxes containing school spirit items such as football jerseys and pictures of school mascots. These types of improvements require a budget of approximately \$50,000 average per school. Districts that have added these items to their cafeterias have seen increases in participation at the middle and high school level.

**Exhibit 10-11
Improving the Look of District Cafeterias Would Provide Additional Net Revenue ¹**

Elementary	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5 Yr. Total
Lunch Price	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.50	
Average Daily Attendance	16,448	16,448	16,448	16,448	16,448	
Participation	72%	74%	76%	78%	80%	
Number of Days Per Year	180	180	180	180	180	
Revenue	\$3,197,491	\$3,286,310	\$3,375,141	\$3,463,949	\$3,552,768	16,875,648
Current Revenue	(3,108,672)	(3,108,672)	(3,108,672)	(3,108,672)	(3,108,672)	(15,543,360)
Net Revenue Increase	\$88,819	\$177,638	\$566,469	\$355,277	\$444,096	\$1,332,288
Incremental Expense (42%)	(\$37,304)	(\$74,608)	(\$237,917)	(\$149,216)	(\$186,520)	(\$685,566)
Net Savings	\$51,515	\$103,030	\$328,552	\$206,061	\$257,576	\$946,734
Middle School	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5 Yr. Total
Lunch Price	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	
Average Daily Attendance	9,548	9,548	9,548	9,548	9,548	
Participation	72%	73%	74%	75%	76%	
Number of Days Per Year	180	180	180	180	180	
Revenue	\$2,165,486	\$2,195,563	\$2,225,639	\$2,255,715	\$2,285,791	\$11,128,194
Current Revenue	(2,135,410)	(2,135,410)	(2,135,410)	(2,135,410)	(2,135,410)	(10,677,050)
Net Revenue Increase	\$30,076	\$60,153	\$90,229	\$120,305	\$150,381	\$451,144
Incremental Expense (42%)	(12,632)	(25,264)	(37,896)	(50,528)	(63,160)	(189,480)
Net Savings	\$17,444	\$34,889	\$52,333	\$69,777	\$87,221	\$261,664
High School	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5 Yr. Total
Lunch Price	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.75	
Average Daily Attendance	9,741	9,741	9,741	9,741	9,741	
Participation	53%	54%	55%	56%	57%	
Number of Days Per Year	180	180	180	180	180	
Revenue	\$1,626,260	\$1,656,944	\$1,687,628	\$1,718,312	\$1,748,997	\$8,438,141
Current Revenue	(1,583,302)	(1,583,302)	(1,583,302)	(1,583,302)	(1,583,302)	(7,916,510)
Net Revenue Increase	\$42,958	\$73,642	\$104,326	\$135,010	\$165,695	\$521,631
Incremental Expense (42%)	(18,042)	(30,930)	(43,817)	(56,704)	(69,591)	(219,085)
Net Savings	\$24,916	\$42,712	\$60,509	\$78,306	\$96,103	\$302,547
All Schools	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5 Yr. Total
Total Net Savings	\$93,875	\$180,631	\$441,394	\$354,144	\$440,900	\$1,510,944
Renovation Costs	(200,000)	(200,000)	(200,000)	(200,000)	(200,000)	(1,000,000)
Additional Net Revenue	(\$106,125)	(\$19,369)	\$241,394	\$154,144	\$240,900	\$510,944

¹ An annual budget of \$200,000 is assumed will be dedicated to renovating district kitchens and cafeterias. Exhibit 10-11 presents the net increase in revenue that would result from the increase in lunch participation. The incremental savings is calculated by determining the average daily participation (average daily attendance x participation rate), multiplying that by the meal price and multiplying by 180 days to derive the total revenue. This number is then subtracted by the current revenue (average daily attendance x current participation rate x meal price x 180 days) to calculate the incremental revenue. It is assumed that the incremental expense related to the increase in participation would be 42 percent. This incremental expense is then subtracted from the incremental revenue to determine the net savings. The increases have been based on 2002-03 meal prices. As shown in the exhibit, the district would save \$510,944 over the next five years, based on a 180-day school year.

Source: Collier County School District Department of Food Service.

We recommend that the district use fund balance to renovate four cafeterias each year and budget an average of \$50,000 per school.

The district does not adequately ensure that all students eligible for free or reduced price meals have been identified.

The district sends free and reduced price meal family applications home with the students at the beginning of the school year. The area supervisor responsible for the free and reduced program trains school staff to assist students and their families with the application process. The principals try to follow up to ensure that students that were eligible the prior year have returned one. However, it is difficult for them to follow students that have progressed from elementary school to middle school or to high school.

Exhibit 10-12 illustrates the participation rate by category for free, reduced price and full price meals.

**Exhibit 10-12
The Collier County School District Free, Reduced Price
and Full Price Participation Rates 2002-03**

	Breakfast					
	Free		Reduced Price		Full Price	
	Approved	Participation	Approved	Participation	Approved	Participation
E.S.	7,698	47.5%	1,604	22.9%	8,334	8.9%
M.S.	3,900	27.1%	1,052	15.5%	5,315	5.4%
H.S.	2,779	26.6%	614	10.4%	7,031	2.7%
District	14,377	37.9%	3,270	18.2%	20,680	5.9%

	Lunch					
	Free		Reduced Price		Full Price	
	Approved	Participation	Approved	Participation	Approved	Participation
E.S.	7,698	85.6%	1,604	66.7%	8,334	46.7%
M.S.	3,900	82.7%	1,052	70.9%	5,315	52.9%
H.S.	2,736	60.9%	609	38.4%	6,992	15.0%
District	14,334	80.2%	3,265	62.3%	20,641	37.6%

Source: Collier County School District, Participation Summary Reports by School.

Although an increase in the number of eligible free and reduced price meals will increase the reimbursements received from the federal government, it is impossible to calculate what the fiscal impact would be since there is no way of identifying how many additional students would be eligible. It is important that the district assist in every way possible to identify all eligible students.

We recommend that the district present a free and reduced application workshop at appropriate school PTA meetings.

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Best Practice 7: Using

Food service program management has developed comprehensive performance and cost-efficiency measures that provide management with information to evaluate program performance and better manage operations.

Like other publicly funded entities, a school district should be accountable to parents and other taxpayers for the performance and cost of its major programs and support services, such as food services. To accomplish this, school districts should have a performance measurement system that allows managers at both the district and program level to evaluate performance and make informed decisions regarding the use of limited resources. A comprehensive set of program measures should include input, output, outcome and cost-efficiency measures. Districts need to periodically verify that their performance

information is reliable by testing its accuracy and assure its validity by assessing whether it is useful. Managers also need to occasionally review performance benchmarks and efficiency standards for appropriateness. The degree of sophistication of the district's performance measurement system may vary with the size of the district; smaller districts may have a less formal reporting system and simpler methodology for development and validation of benchmarks.

The Collier County School District has established benchmarks for meal participation and tied them to cafeteria managers' bonus compensation. Each cost item is benchmarked and annually reviewed against actual performance. A point system is assigned to each criterion and is used to rate each program during the area supervisors' evaluation of cafeteria managers.

Separate benchmarks have been established for the elementary, middle and high schools due the differences inherent to each school level, such as staffing requirements, volume of meal participation and portion sizes. The benchmarks measure labor cost, food cost, non-food cost, commodity usage, miscellaneous costs, meal participation, program revenue, benchmarks and profit margins. Actual costs for 2001-02 were compared to the benchmarks for each level. All school levels were within 1% of the benchmarks. Managers develop their goals and objectives for their program each year. Program management reviews the program goals each month and notes any discrepancies. Problems are addressed with the individual manager as they arise. When necessary, goals and objectives are revised to reflect any changes or corrections to a problem area.

The district's food service management reviews the department's financial reports each month. The cost per meal analysis report is used to identify any schools that did not meet the benchmarks. The area supervisor reviews all data to ensure that any discrepancies are not related to a data entry error. If the data is accurate, the area supervisor will meet with the manager and discuss the issues and try to arrive at a solution. The area supervisor continues to monitor the manager's reports each month until the benchmarks have been met.

Best Practice 8: Using

At least annually, the program inspects and evaluates its operational components and the system as a whole and then takes action to initiate needed change; however, a lack of formal procedures for preventive maintenance and long-range equipment needs could be improved to avoid potential critical budgetary issues.

School districts should have a system for inspecting individual cafeterias and for evaluating overall program operation to ensure efficiency and compliance with public safety standards. Cafeteria inspections should address, at a minimum, program assets, safety, food preparation and training. Evaluations of the program should analyze functions such as procurement and accountability. District managers should use inspection and evaluation results to ensure that corrective actions are taken and to make changes to improve the program. As part of overall operational efficiency and to assist in budgeting and planning, the district should have a long-range equipment replacement plan and preventive maintenance program.

The Collier County School District's department of food service effectively and regularly evaluates operational areas of the program as well as the entire department's performance. Corrective follow-up procedures are in place and appear to be implemented. However, a lack of formal procedures for preventive maintenance and long-range equipment needs could be improved to avoid potential critical budgetary issues.

One of the department's area supervisors is assigned responsibility for the equipment needs at all schools including preventive maintenance and long-range equipment replacement. The district maintains a record of all kitchen equipment sorted by date the equipment was acquired. As equipment approaches the end of its expected life, the area supervisor initiates a review of the maintenance records for this piece of equipment.

Private contractors perform preventive maintenance in several areas such as hoods, fryers, the fire suppression system and pest and rodent control. The district's maintenance department performs preventive maintenance on refrigeration equipment, water filters and boilers (de-lime and de-scale) as well as routine preventive maintenance. However, neither the department of food service nor the maintenance department has developed a formal plan to schedule preventive maintenance and ensure it is completed on a regular basis. Currently, the maintenance department responds to needs for repair on an as-needed basis and while on-site, preventive maintenance duties are performed if time is available. However, the district has not dedicated staff to perform preventive maintenance as part of its normal operating procedures. It appears that preventative maintenance is done sporadically and only when a more serious maintenance issue has occurred. It is possible that the more serious issue could have been avoided with regular preventive maintenance. There should be a formal preventive maintenance schedule or plan to ensure preventive maintenance duties are performed consistently.

The district is creating a routine maintenance log to be maintained on site at each cafeteria and in the district Maintenance Department. This log will list procedures that are to be performed regularly. It includes the piece of equipment, the date performed, whether the school or Maintenance Department performed the task and if there is potential of upcoming replacement needs for this piece of equipment. The district said the plan includes assigning responsibility for monitoring the log to area supervisors as part of the visitation inspection process.

We recommend that the district continue in its plans to develop a formal preventive maintenance program for food service equipment.

Best Practice 9: Using

District and program administrators effectively manage costs of the food service program and use performance measures, benchmarks and budgets on a regular basis to evaluate performance and use the analysis for action or change.

School district and program administrators should make informed management decisions based on a goal driven, performance measurement system that is linked to the district's overall mission and strategic plan. Best practice 7 addresses the design, development and maintenance of a comprehensive set of performance measures and benchmarks that comprise an accurate, complete and reliable system of reporting for management to use. This best practice addresses management's use of the performance measurement system through the routine collection, analysis and reporting of performance information. All districts should keep upper management informed with some form of performance reporting and analysis of operations.

The Collier County School District food service program sets benchmarks at the end of every year as part of its evaluation process. These benchmarks are established for meal participation levels, food costs and overall profitability and are reviewed and monitored throughout the year. Under the current system, monthly reports are generated and reviewed by the area supervisors. These reports are reviewed and compared against benchmarks and to prior year reports to detect any wide variances. The area supervisors also compare data to the countywide average as well as the state.

The point of sale system provides accurate and timely information at the school level. The district is in the process of converting to a new version of its financial system. It is uncertain whether the new system will enhance the reporting capability of the department. The district had originally scheduled the implementation of the new system for April 2003 but has moved the implementation date back to November 2003.

Best Practice 10: Using

The district complies with federal, state and district policy for the NSLP, nutrition and competitive foods.

To operate safely and efficiently, school districts must comply with applicable federal, state and district policies. Therefore, the district should have a systematic process for identifying these policies, performing the activities necessary for compliance, conducting internal periodic inspections to test for compliance and implementing corrective action when areas of non-compliance are found. Of particular interest are policies pertaining to the pricing of a la carte items and the availability of certain beverages. For example, a la carte items should be priced to promote the purchase of complete meals designed to fulfill nutritional needs of students. Certain beverages, such as carbonated soda, should not be available for one hour before or after meal serving periods, except in high schools when the board approves such sales.

The Collier County School District passes federal and state mandated reviews and has district policies for federal and state vending machine rules and outside sales that are followed and enforced

Best Practice 11: Using

The district conducts activities to ensure that customer needs are met and acts to improve services and food quality where needed.

Like most businesses, to be successful school district food service programs must be responsive to customers, particularly that of students, teachers and other employees. Therefore, food service programs should solicit feedback actively and use it to identify needed improvements, eliminate barriers to student meal participation and gauge reactions to changes in program operations, promotional campaigns and service levels. The district can use a variety of mechanisms to obtain this information such as individual cafeteria evaluations, regular customer surveys, suggestion boxes, customer taste tests and Web site access.

The Collier County School District department of food service has implemented a number of methods to garner customer input including identifying barriers to participation, effectively collecting suggestions and complaints. For example, there is a survey form on its web page to solicit comments regarding the service and food quality at the district. It has just established a bilingual hot line for parents to call in with any questions or concerns. At the school level, the department annually conducts a food service survey. Principals are requested to survey at least one class per grade. The completed forms are returned to the department of food service and compiled. The department incorporates the survey results when developing its menu for the next school year. The survey is also used to identify any customer service or training issues. Student advisory councils (SACs) provide input into menu planning and also assist food service managers with developing menus for student planned menus served each month. The department has instituted an employee suggestion form “bright idea” which gives employees the opportunity to make suggestions to improve the program. If their suggestions are used, they are recognized with a pin and a “bright idea” certificate. And, new recipes are periodically offered for taste-testing at managers’ meetings.

The Mystery Diner program is an innovative idea for assessing the service provided in the cafeterias. Randomly selected district employees are selected to be a “mystery diner” participant. The employee completes a detailed form after the visit containing questions about the taste of the food and the service provided in the cafeteria.

Although the district is using this best practice, it is also important to solicit the opinions of parents about their decision to, or not to, have their children eat in a district cafeteria. The district should ask parents specifically what changes would motivate them to have their children eat at the cafeteria. The department of food service said that there is a school survey that the principals send home to parents with students at

Food Service Operations

the beginning of the school year called the “school climate survey”. However, the survey does not contain questions about the food service program.

We recommend that the district solicit parent input on student participation in school meals.

11

Cost Control Systems

Summary

The Collier County School District is using 8 of the 22 cost control systems best practices. The district uses processes to ensure that significant expenditures are controlled; receives an annual external audit, ensures that capital outlay purchases meet strategic plan objectives, and uses updated procedures to provide for effective debt management. District staff also monitors compliance with regulations related to debt management and prepare analyses for insurance coverage and inventory management. To use the remaining best practice standards and enhance the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its cost control systems, the district should perform a risk assessment of its operations; reorganize the business services department to better facilitate effective operations; establish budget planning processes that tie the district's strategic plan objectives to the development of the budget; develop comprehensive written procedures that ensure consistency throughout the functional areas related to cost controls; and identify strategies to strengthen the financial condition of its general fund in line with district targets and implement procedures to monitor the success of those strategies.



As seen in Exhibit 11-1, the district has an opportunity to reduce costs in this area. Determining whether to take advantage of this opportunity is a district decision and should be based on many factors including district needs, public input, and board priorities. If the district implements this action plan, it would be able to redirect the resources to other priorities, such as putting more money into the classroom or addressing deficiencies identified in this report.

Exhibit 11-1
Our Review Identified One Way the District
Could Reduce Costs in the Area of Cost Control Systems

Best Practice Number	Fiscal Impact					Total
	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Year 2006-07	Year 2007-08	
1 Restructure the Business Services Department	\$0	\$19,980	\$19,980	\$19,980	\$19,980	\$79,920

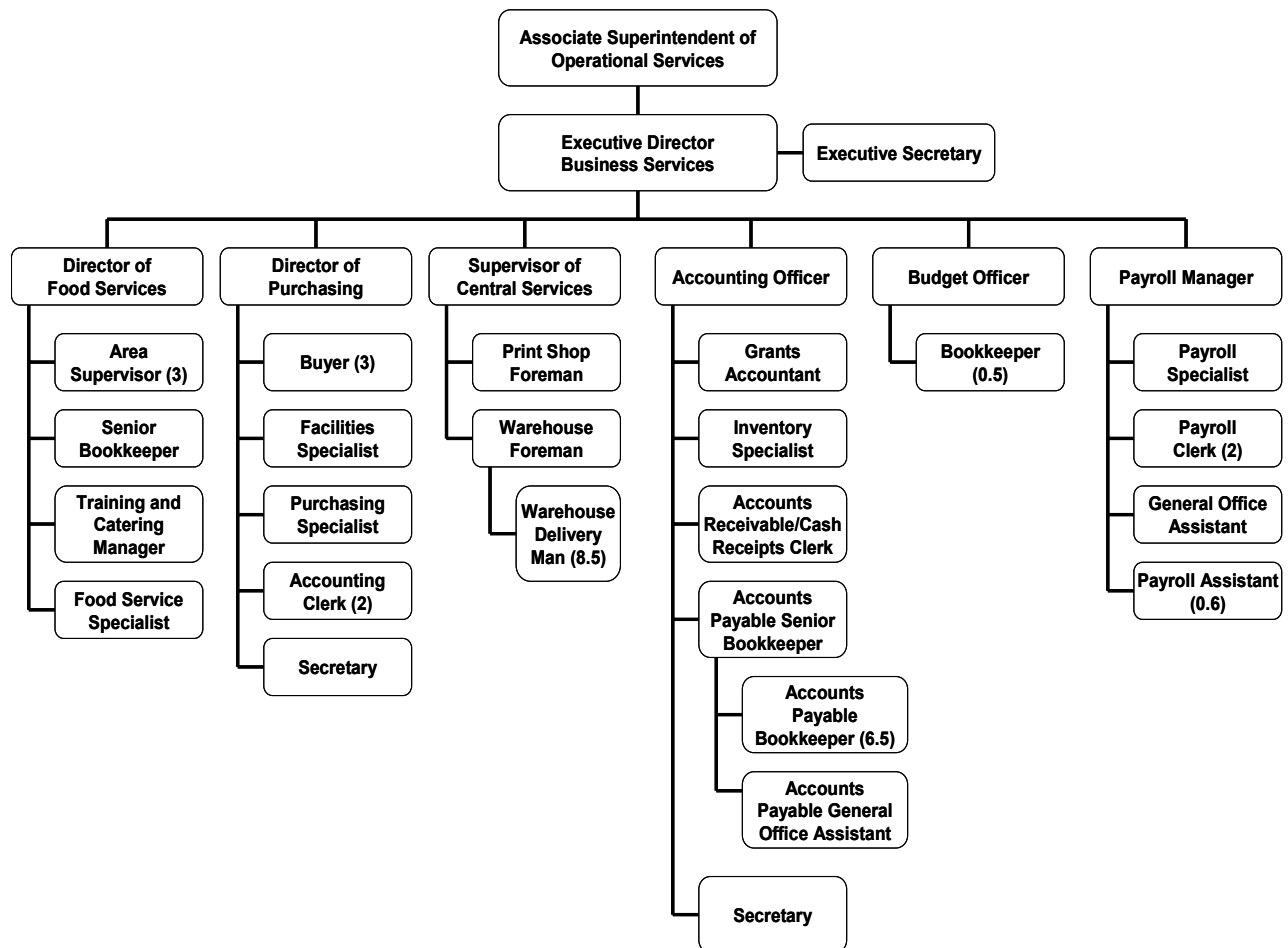
Background

Cost control activities in the Collier County School District are primarily managed by the finance function. Operational units of the finance function include general accounting, accounts payable, budget,

food service, accounting, payroll, purchasing, inventory management, and fixed asset management. The finance function consists of 50 positions, and the general fund budget for the 2002-03 fiscal year was \$1.6 million excluding the Food Services Department.

Finance and accounting functions are centralized. The current executive director of business services has been with the district for 24 years in various positions and has been assigned the executive director position for the last 3 years. A budget officer, accounting officer, payroll manager, director of purchasing, director of food services, and supervisor of central services support the executive director. The budget officer passed away in April 2003 after having been with the district for 10 years. The district upgraded this position to a director level in May 2003 and the position was filled in August 2003. The finance function's organizational structure is shown in Exhibit 11-2 below:

**Exhibit 11-2
Organizational Structure of the District's Finance Activities**



Source: Collier County School District, March 2003.

The district uses governmental accounting to report its financial position and results of operations. Governmental accounting segregates a governmental entity's operations and activities into funds based on the nature and restrictions placed on the revenue sources of each fund. The district's governmental funds include the general fund, special revenue funds, debt service funds, and capital projects funds. The district also reports fiduciary funds (trust and agency funds) and proprietary funds (internal service funds). Substantially all of the district's resources are accounted for in the governmental funds. Exhibit 11-3 shows that the district reported revenues of \$338.7 million in its governmental funds during the 2001-02 fiscal year.

**Exhibit 11-3
Governmental Funds Revenues—2001-02 Fiscal Year**

General Fund	Special Revenue Funds	Debt Service Funds	Capital Projects Funds	Total
\$213,849,451	\$45,574,016	\$65,382,173	\$13,920,285	\$338,725,925

Source: Audited financial statements.

Certain governmental funds account for non-operating activities of the district. For example, debt service and capital projects funds are used to account for resources restricted specifically for the payment of debt, for the acquisition of real property, and the construction, renovation, remodeling, and maintenance of district facilities, and acquisition of certain equipment and buses. These resources are not used to finance ongoing operating activities of the district.

The general fund accounts for most of the operating resources and expenditures of the district and provides most of the operating resources for K-12 education programs. Exhibit 11-4 shows federal, state and local sources reported in the general fund for the 2001-02 fiscal year.

**Exhibit 11-4
General Fund Revenues—2001-02 Fiscal Year**

Federal	State	Local	Total
\$1,438,105	\$39,916,505	\$172,494,841	\$213,849,451

Source: Audited financial statements.

Local revenues are primarily generated from ad valorem (property) taxes and represent 81% of the district’s general fund resources.

The state provided over 18% of the district’s general fund resources during the 2001-02 fiscal year. Four sources administered by the Florida Department of Education comprise the majority of state revenue accounted for in the district’s general fund. The first source is the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funding which is used for current operations. Resources provided for categorical education programs, which are earmarked for certain programs such as supplemental academic instruction, instructional materials, and transportation make up the second source of state revenue. Workforce development funds used for adult and other vocational educational services and lottery funds earmarked for educational enhancement and school advisory council activities account for the third and fourth revenue sources provided by the state respectively.

As is characteristic of governmental accounting, the district presents expenditures by character or functional purpose. Within the governmental funds, functional expenditures are segregated into current and non-current capital outlay and debt service categories. Sixty-one percent of the district’s 2001-02 fiscal year total annual expenditures were general fund current expenditures. Current expenditures are broken down into three major functional classifications: instruction, instructional support services, and general support services. Exhibit 11-5 presents the district’s general fund current expenditures on a functional basis.

**Exhibit 11-5
General Fund Functional Expenditures—2001-02 Fiscal Year**

Instruction	Instructional Support Services	General Support Services	Total
\$139,980,362	\$22,789,735	\$63,838,222	\$226,608,319

Source: Audited financial statements.

Cost Control Systems

Although the district's general fund expenditures were higher than its revenues for the 2001-02 fiscal year, the district transferred funds from the capital projects funds to pay for budgeted maintenance activities. This transfer resulted in revenues and other financing sources exceeding the district's expenditures.

Instruction and instructional support expenditures represented approximately 71% of total general fund expenditures for the 2001-02 fiscal year. Expenditures for instruction include activities directly related to teaching students, including the interaction between teachers and students. Instruction expenditures include those for basic K-12 programs, exceptional student instruction, vocational-technical instruction, adult general instruction and other instruction, such as pre-kindergarten, lifelong learning and workforce development. Instructional support services include those activities related to administrative, technical, and logistical support for the instruction program. It includes such activities as attendance, guidance, health, and psychological services.

Approximately 28% of total general fund expenditures for the 2001-02 fiscal year were for general support services. Although technically not a part of general support services, community services are included in this category because they represent a very small portion of the overall general fund expenditures. General support services include expenditures related to the functional categories of board activities, general administration (superintendent's office), school administration (principals' offices), fiscal services (financial accounting, payroll, etc.), central services (information technology, staff services, inventories, etc.), pupil transportation services (school buses), operation of plant (utilities, insurance, etc.), and maintenance of plant (repairs, preventative maintenance, etc.).

Exhibit 11-6 shows the district's general fund expenditures by natural classification (object) for the 2001-02 fiscal year. This schedule shows the expenditures in Exhibit 11-5 by type of expenditure in broad categories.

Exhibit 11-6

General Fund Object Expenditures—2001-02 Fiscal Year

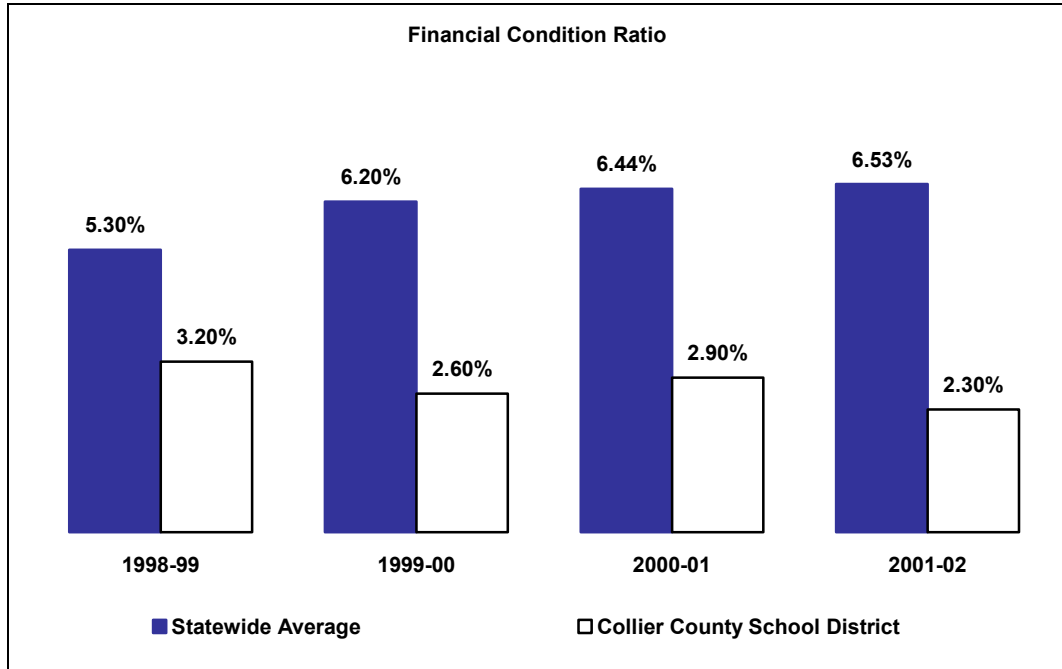
Salaries	Employee Benefits	Purchased Services	Energy Services	Materials and Supplies	Capital Outlay	Other Expenses	Total
\$143,662,973	\$41,854,587	\$13,255,536	\$5,626,147	\$9,387,794	\$7,410,089	\$5,411,193	\$226,608,319

Source: Audited financial report; Commissioner of Education (ESE 348).

The school district's major expenditure objects are salaries and employee benefits, which comprise approximately 82% of total expenditures. Purchased services, energy services, materials and supplies, capital outlay, and other expenses were consistent with that of previous years.

The most common measure of a school district's financial position is the ratio of its general fund balance to operating activity. The general fund balance of most school districts includes reserved and unreserved portions. Fund balances are often reserved for legal and other commitments of the entity. Common examples of reserves in Florida school districts include amounts reserved for outstanding purchase orders and contracts (encumbrances) and amounts reserved for restricted purposes (categorical programs). As a result, only the unreserved portion of the fund balance is actually available to offset unexpected needs, and this portion is often referred to as the "rainy day" fund. For the purposes of this analysis, a common financial condition ratio was used that compares the general fund unreserved fund balance with operating revenues. Exhibit 11-7 compares the financial condition ratio for the district with statewide averages for the four-year period ended June 30, 2002. The district's ratio of unreserved fund balance to revenues is less than the statewide average. The district's low unreserved fund balance is addressed in Best Practice 8.

**Exhibit 11-7
The District's General Fund Financial
Condition Ratio is Lower than the Statewide Average**



Source: Audited financial statements.

Activities of particular interest

The district made the decision to increase its property insurance deductible to reduce the annual premium. In making this determination, the committee members, with the assistance of the insurance broker, examined the losses from prior years. Although this decision increases the district's liability in the event of a catastrophic loss, it has not had a property claim in the four-year period examined. However, its annual property premium has increased 108% from \$404,035 in the 1998-99 fiscal year to \$841,620 in the 2001-02 fiscal year. The district's decision to raise its deductible to \$15 million was based on a thorough examination of the data.

The district maintains a self-funded vandalism & breaking and entry budget. If an item requires repair or replacement as a result of either vandalism or breaking and entry, the district uses moneys from this budget. The property custodian must have filed a report with the police or sheriff's department stating the method used for the break-in. By not having to file claims on this property, the district has been able to keep its property losses low, which translates to lower premiums.

The Transportation Department stores fuel for the county and receives a storage fee per gallon.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Cost Control Systems Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Financial Management	1. The district periodically analyzes the structure and staffing of its financial services organization.	No	11-8
	2. Management has developed and distributed written procedures for critical accounting processes and promotes ethical financial management.	No	11-15
	3. The district has adequate financial information systems that provide useful, timely, and accurate information.	No	11-17
	4. District financial staff analyzes significant expenditure processes to ensure that they are appropriately controlled.	Yes	11-20
Internal Controls	5. The district has established adequate internal controls.	No	11-21
	6. Management proactively responds to identified internal control weaknesses and takes immediate steps to correct the weaknesses.	No	11-24
	7. The district produces an annual budget that is tied to the strategic plan and provides useful and understandable information to users.	Yes	11-25
	8. Management analyzes strategic plans for measurable objectives and results.	No	11-25
External and Internal Auditing	9. The district ensures that it receives an annual external audit and uses the audit to improve its operations.	Yes	11-27
	10. The district has an effective internal audit function and uses the audits to improve its operations.	No	11-27
	11. The district ensures that audits of internal funds and its discretely presented component units (foundations and charter schools) are performed timely.	No	11-30
Cash Management	12. The district periodically reviews cash management activities, banking relationships, investment performance, and considers alternatives.	No	11-31
Capital Asset Management	13. The district has established written policies and procedures and periodically updates them to provide for effective management of capital assets.	No	11-32
	14. The district ensures that significant capital outlay purchases meet strategic plan objectives.	Yes	11-35
Debt Management	15. The district has established written policies and procedures and periodically updates them to provide for effective debt management.	Yes	11-35
	16. The district ensures that significant debt financings meet strategic plan objectives.	No	11-36
Risk Management	17. The district has established written policies and procedures and periodically updates them to provide for effective risk management.	No	11-37
	18. District staff periodically monitors the district's compliance with various laws and regulations related to risk management.	Yes	11-41
	19. The district prepares appropriate written cost and benefit analyses for insurance coverage.	Yes	11-41

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
Purchasing	20. The district has established written policies and procedures to take maximum advantage of competitive bidding, volume discounts, and special pricing arrangements.	No	11-43
Inventory Management	21. The district has established written policies and procedures and periodically updates them to provide for effective management of inventories.	Yes	11-48
	22. The district periodically evaluates the warehousing function to determine its cost-effectiveness.	No	11-49

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Best Practice 1: Not Using

The district does not employ staffing formulas to determine optimal staffing levels for the Business Services Department.

In recent years, a variety of external factors have directly and indirectly impacted school district finances. Some school districts have experienced significant changes in student population size—mostly getting larger, but some getting smaller. Similarly, law revisions have changed financial documentation and reporting requirements, which have impacted workload requirements. Because of this, districts should regularly evaluate the financial services function's organizational structure and staffing to ensure that financial services are being provided effectively and efficiently. Similarly, it is important that financial services staff receive timely and relevant training to ensure that the services they provide comply with current laws and reporting requirements.

Although the Collier County School District has an approved organizational structure, it is not using this best practice because it does not periodically analyze the structure and staffing to ensure that the financial services organization is operating efficiently and cost effectively. According to the director of FTE, surveys and staff allocations, and chairman of the staffing formula committee, the district has developed staffing formulas for schools and the Maintenance Department. They are also finalizing the formulas for the Transportation Department. The district has not developed staffing formulas for other departments, including the Business Services Department.

Similarly, the district has not established adequate performance measures to assist in gauging the appropriate number of employees for each section in the Business Services Department. Exhibit 11-8 displays examples of performance measures that can be evaluated to ensure that the Business Services Department is effectively staffed to maximize its productivity and efficiency.

**Exhibit 11-8
Performance Measures Used for Financial Departments/Functions**

Performance Measures
Departmental Performance Measures
Three-year comparison of actual to budget
Number of Finance Department employees per total district employees
Finance Department expenditures as a percent of total expenditures
Personnel turnover rate
Percent of absenteeism
Financial Reporting
Number of reports prepared per year
Percent of financial reports delivered on schedule
Percent of errors in reports
Time spent correcting erroneous inputs
Budget Reporting
Variance between budget predictions and actual revenues and expenditures
Percent of late reports
Number of complaints by end-users
Accounts Payable
Number of invoices processed
Number of checks processed
Number of untimely supplier invoices processed
Number of complaints by vendors
Percent of travel advances outstanding
Payroll
Number of payroll checks processed
Number of W-2s processed
Percent of errors in payroll data entry
Payroll processing time
Percent of time and attendance sheets that have errors on them signed by managers
Accounts Receivables/Cash Receipts
Number of cash receipts processed
Average number of days from receipt to process (schools and departments)
Average length of time billed and no payment received
Length of time to prepare and send invoice
Student Activity Funds
Average number of days it takes to make bank deposits
Average number of schools that deliver late reports to administration
Number of errors reported by outside auditors per school or department (5-year trend)
Number of misappropriation of money incidents per year (5-year trend)

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Action Plan 11-1 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-1

We recommend that the district develop departmental staffing formulas and performance measures for financial services.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Survey districts similar in size to find the number of positions by functional section and if they use staffing formulas and performance measures for their financial services departments.</p> <p>Step 2. Meet to establish performance measures and staffing formulas using information they receive from the peer districts and identify measures they can use to measure performance.</p> <p>Step 3. Present the staffing formula and performance measures to the staffing formula committee.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services, accounting officer, budget officer, purchasing director and business services supervisors.
Time Frame	March 2004

The Business Services Department lacks a level of management related to its critical accounting and budgeting functions and has not created adequate position descriptions that contain appropriate education and experience requirements for the duties required at this level.

The Business Services Department’s management organization is not well thought out with respect to its critical financial service positions. The district’s Business Services Department should be organized along a more traditional business reporting hierarchy than it is currently. Most large school districts have a director of accounting or controller and a director of budget position to oversee the functions of these sections of the business office. Collier County School District does not have this level of management for these functions. The current accounting officer position should be upgraded to a director level position. The district needs to hire individuals for its critical financial positions with at least a four-year college degree, certified in their designated field, and with adequate job experience in Florida public education and governmental accounting. The district may need to increase the salary levels of some positions in order to attract candidates with the necessary credentials. The district board members approved the request to upgrade the budget officer position to a budget director in the May 15, 2003, board meeting. The district filled this position in July 2003, and the new budget director is scheduled to start in mid-August 2003.

The review team examined the job descriptions for the executive director of business services, budget officer, accounting officer, payroll manager, purchasing director, and buyers. The only position that requires a degree is the executive director of business services—a masters in business administration or equivalent and three to five years of experience. The others require either a bachelor’s degree or anywhere from two to six years of related job experience. Only the budget officer’s position requires a license or certification. This position requires that the individual be a certified public accountant (CPA). The buyer position states that a certified professional public buyer is preferred.

As the district grows, it will become more crucial that it staffs its critical financial positions with employees that have at least a four-year college degree and are certified in their designated field in addition to having adequate job experience in Florida public education and governmental accounting.

When comparing the position descriptions of Collier County School District with its peer districts, we noted that both Osceola County School District and Pasco County School District require, at a minimum, a bachelor’s degree in accounting or business administration, depending on the position, with five to seven years of experience in school districts or governmental entities.

Upgrading the accounting officer to director will translate to an annual cost of \$21,768 by first taking the difference of the new salary less the current minimum salary (\$72,000 new salary - \$52,980 current salary for the accounting officer = \$19,020). Then the variable benefit is included in the increase in salary (\$19,020 x 1.1765 variable benefit = \$22,377). Lastly, the indirect cost reimbursement is deducted

[\$22,377 - (\$22,377 x 0.0272) indirect cost reimbursement rate]. The cost of upgrading this position could be offset by the additional staffing recommendations discussed below.

The district does not effectively analyze the structure and staffing of its financial services organization.

Based on the review team's observations and comparisons with peer data, the functional areas in the Business Services Department are not effectively organized. While the Purchasing Department and central warehouse are overstaffed, the Payroll Department, budget office, grants, and the property records section are understaffed. Reorganization would reduce district costs.

Line Management Staffing

Under the department's current structure, the grant accountant, the accounts receivable staff, the accounts payable staff, and the inventory staff report to the accounting officer. In addition, the accounting officer is responsible for performing the cash management duties for the district. The payroll manager reports directly to the executive director of business services. The budget officer supervises one-half of a full-time bookkeeper. Purchasing staff reports directly to the director of purchasing. The central warehouse staff reports to the supervisor of central services who reports directly to the executive director of business services. With the exception of purchasing, this structure does not encourage efficiencies within each functional area.

A more reasonable structure would be to realign the reporting hierarchy based on broad functional areas. For example, the grants, cash management, and accounts receivable functions lend themselves more toward being grouped under the director of budget since each of these functions require close monitoring to ensure budget funds are available and track the impact on the district's general fund balance. To facilitate the expanded role of the Budget Department, the district would need to hire a budget manager. As noted throughout this chapter, the district needs to enhance the budget reports it provides to the board, administrators, and the public and implement controls over the budget amendment process. The budget manager position will need to have a four-year college degree in accounting, finance, or business administration or a minimum of six years of related job experience. Adding the budget manager position will result in an annual cost of \$65,477 [(\$52,000 salary + \$9,178 variable benefits + \$6,130 fixed benefits = \$67,308) deducted by the indirect cost reimbursement (\$67,308 x .0272 indirect cost reimbursement rate = \$1,831)].

Payroll, accounts payable, and inventory management are primarily accounting functions and, as such, should report directly to the director of accounting. The warehouse should be moved under food services for a number of reasons that will be discussed in greater detail under Best Practices 21 and 22. Primarily, the majority of the items held at the warehouse are bulk food items and commodities. A small portion of the warehouse is used to house office and art supplies. In addition to the warehouse staff being required to receive, stock, and deliver the office and art supplies, a purchasing specialist is required to track this inventory.

Support Staffing

Although the Payroll Department with 5.6 positions is comparable to its peers, it had overtime expenses of just under \$30,000 in the 2001-02 fiscal year and as of March 22, 2003, the 2002-03 fiscal year overtime costs totaled just over \$17,000. The Payroll Department could use one position to reduce overtime costs.

The Purchasing Department currently employs two accounting clerks whose primary duties entail processing manual purchase requisitions. Once the new financial system is implemented, this process will become automated and reduce staff requirements by one full-time employee. According to the director of purchasing, the remaining accounting clerk could effectively perform the remaining duties.

Cost Control Systems

There are ten employees at the central warehouse that share stocking and driving responsibilities. If the warehouse was converted to a food warehouse, as recommended in the food service operations section of this report, the number of employees could be reduced by the four drivers that currently are scheduled to stock and deliver the office and art supplies. In addition, the purchasing specialist in the Purchasing Department could be eliminated since this position's main responsibility is purchasing office and art supplies. As of July 2003, the district reassigned the warehouse employees to report to the food services director.

The Budget Department would require additional support staff given the increase in the scope of the duties and functional oversight recommended by the review team. The one-half bookkeeper position should be expanded to one full-time bookkeeper to strengthen the budget function in the district. In addition, an additional support position should be established to assist the district in its monitoring of grant activities.

Property records, as discussed in greater detail in Best Practice 13, are seriously understaffed having only one specialist to oversee the inventory management function for the district. There is a critical need for an additional support staff member to assist the property specialist in maintaining the district's fixed asset base.

The district could shift positions eliminated in the Purchasing Department and central warehouse to the understaffed areas to fill in for the shortages and enhance the efficiency of the department. Exhibit 11-9 shows the number of support staff positions that would change each section. In addition to shifting positions, there would be a net reduction of two and one half employees.

Exhibit 11-9 Reorganization of Support Staff

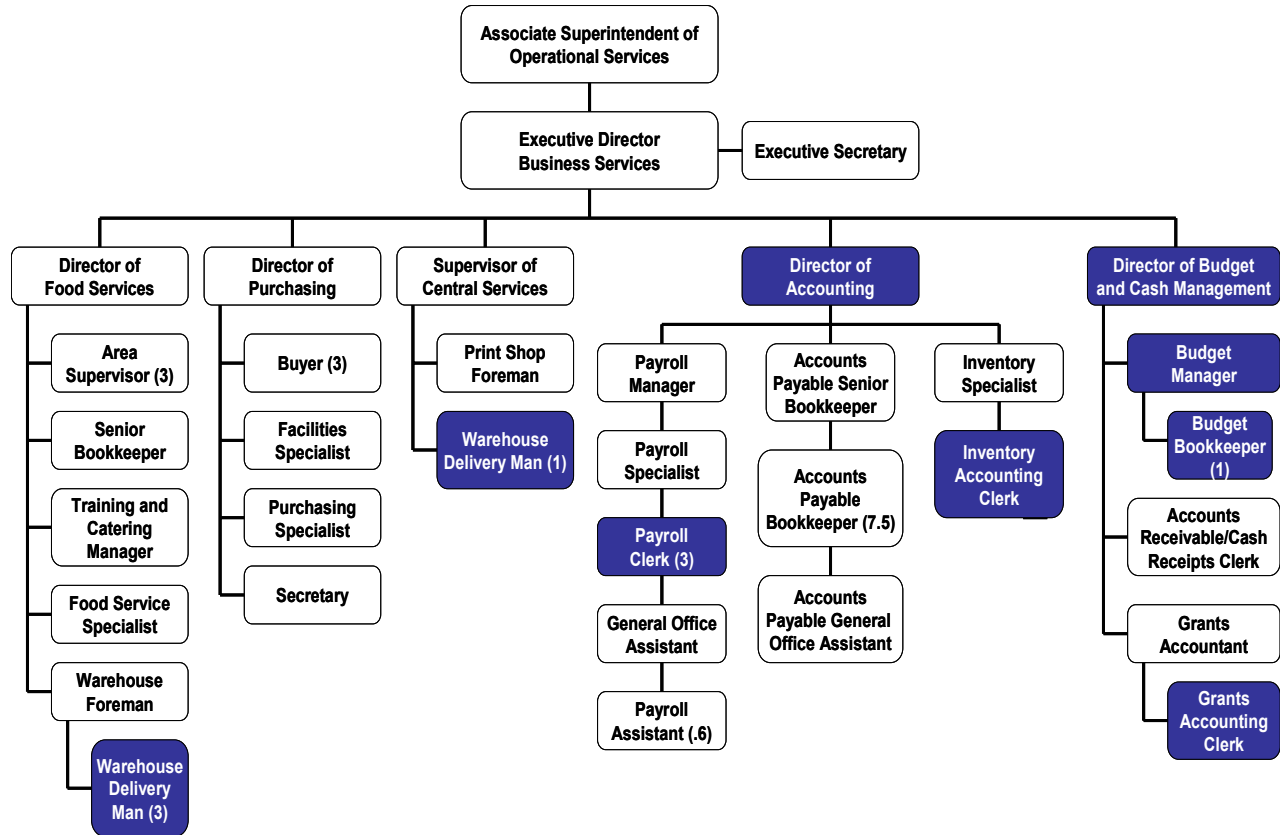
Department	Number Before Reorganization	Change	Number After Reorganization
Purchasing	9.0	(2.0)	7.0
Central Warehouse	10.0	(4.0)	6.0
Budget	1.5	0.5	2.0
Property Records	1.0	1.0	2.0
Grants	1.0	1.0	2.0
Payroll	5.6	1.0	6.6
Total	28.1	(2.5)	25.6

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Eliminating two and one half employees will result in an annual savings of \$107,225 (\$31,245 average salary + \$5,515 variable benefits + \$6,130 fixed benefits = \$42,890 for 2.5 positions). The average salary is calculated using the current salaries of central warehouse drivers, purchasing specialist, and purchasing accounting clerk.

Exhibit 11-10 presents a proposed organizational structure of the Business Services Department. The positions in bold print and shaded have been changed or are new in the restructure of the department.

**Exhibit 11-10
Proposed Organizational Structure for Business Services**



Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

By implementing the proposed reorganization of the Business Services Department, the district will realize a net savings of \$19,980 each year [(\$107,225 from the reduction in support staff) minus (\$65,477 annual salary plus benefits for the budget manager) minus (\$21,768 incremental increase in salary and benefits for the upgrading of the accounting officer position)]. Action Plan 11-2 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-2

We recommend that the district restructure the Business Services Department.	
Action Needed	Step 1. Determine staffing requirements based on the staffing formulas and other analysis performed. Step 2. Evaluate employees in each area to select individuals that have the appropriate qualifications for the opened positions. Step 3. Meet with staff affected by the move individually to notify them of the changes. Step 4. Meet with financial services staff and notify them of the changes.
Who Is Responsible	Associate superintendent of operational services, executive director of business services, executive director of human resources
Time Frame	July 2004

The district does not provide business services staff with adequate training and professional development.

With the exception of key staff attending the Florida Finance Officers' Conferences, attending seminars held by the Florida Department of Education such as GASB 34, and the budget officer attending

continuing education courses to maintain his CPA certification, staff in the Finance Department does not receive formal training and professional development. The only training that staff recently received is for the new accounting system. The executive director of business services stated that professional development is insufficient; however, staff does not have time to attend training.

To keep costs down and make it more convenient for staff to attend training, many districts offer non-instructional courses as well as instructional training. Providing in-house training also allows the district to customize the courses to be consistent with its policies, procedures, and processes. The district, to the extent possible, should use in-house resources to provide this training. If the district is not able to use in-house resources, we estimate that the district would need to budget up to \$10,000 each year to offer professional development and training to its financial services staff. Action Plan 11-3 outlines the steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-3

We recommend that the district provide Business Services Department staff adequate professional development and training to ensure that they are kept abreast of any state or federal regulatory changes, obtain certifications in their designated areas, learn or improve their skills in software applications, and provide opportunities to enhance technical skills to allow for career advancements.

Action Needed	Step 1. Meet with the office of accountability staff and school renewal staff to discuss opportunities for in-house training. Step 2. Determine the type of courses that will be offered in-house or the courses that will be taken outside of the district. Step 3. Develop course material if course is offered in-house. Step 4. Determine the required number of hours of professional development employees should take annually. Step 5. Update financial services procedures to state the number of required hours of professional development that each employee must take per year. Step 6. Inform staff of the new procedures. Professional development will be included in the employee performance evaluation.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of finance, executive director of human resources, and executive director of accountability & staff and school renewal
Time Frame	January 2004

School and department bookkeepers are not properly trained nor do they receive procedures manuals to assist them in performing job duties effectively.

Schools are considered a high-risk area because of the inherent weak controls, lack of segregation of duties, and potentially large sums of money being handled. School bookkeepers stated that training for new bookkeeper/office managers consists of spending approximately an hour with an employee of each section in the Business Services Department. If they have further questions or are not clear about a procedure, they call either the budget officer or staff in the appropriate section.

Many districts provide mandatory training classes for all new bookkeepers to go over the district's comprehensive procedures manuals. New principals are also provided training during the orientation process. Refresher courses are also provided to all principals and bookkeepers during orientation at the beginning of each school year to help reacquaint them with the procedures and get off to a good start. In addition to group training, new bookkeepers receive one-on-one training from either finance employees or senior bookkeepers. Some districts form cluster teams and identify experienced bookkeepers within the team to serve as mentors for the new bookkeepers. These individuals also assist any bookkeeper in their cluster area that is experiencing problems. Finance departments rely on these individuals to assist in training new bookkeepers and help out if there are problems with any bookkeeper in their cluster. Some districts also hold monthly or quarterly meetings with all the bookkeepers to discuss any problems they might be experiencing and also to provide training for either changes to procedures or for problematic

areas that they see are occurring universally. Action Plan 11-4 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-4

We recommend that the district develop training programs for school and department bookkeepers and provide assistance when needed.

Action Needed	Step 1. Create and conduct mandatory training classes for all new bookkeepers.
	Step 2. Incorporate training for new principals during their orientation.
	Step 3. Conduct refresher courses for all principals and bookkeepers during orientation at the beginning of each school year to help reacquaint them with the procedures and help them get off to a good start.
	Step 4. Create cluster teams and identify senior bookkeepers within each team to assist in providing training to new and the other bookkeepers in the cluster.
	Step 5. Provide one-on-one training with new bookkeepers by either the senior bookkeeper or business services employees.
	Step 6. Hold quarterly meetings with all the bookkeepers to discuss any problems that they might be experiencing and provide training for either changes to procedures or for problematic areas that they see are reoccurring.
Who Is Responsible	Budget officer
Time Frame	November 2004

School and department bookkeepers are hired with little or no bookkeeping experience in an educational setting.

The budget officer stated that the district has not established requirements for principals to follow when hiring bookkeepers. The review team determined that the majority of problems with bookkeeping errors were related to the lack of experience of the district’s bookkeepers. This issue can be resolved by developing specific guidelines as to the level of experience required for these positions. Action Plan 11-5 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-5

We recommend that the district develop job descriptions for school and department bookkeepers that require them to have a minimum of two years experience in bookkeeping with at least one year in an educational setting.

Action Needed	Step 1. Revise the bookkeeper position description to include a requirement of two years of previous bookkeeping experience with one year in an educational setting.
	Step 2. Notify principals and department heads of the new job requirements.
	Step 3. Hire bookkeepers that have experience in bookkeeping.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services and budget officer
Time Frame	November 2004

Best Practice 2: Not Using

Management has not developed and distributed written procedures for critical accounting processes.

It is critical that districts be able to continue day-to-day financial operations. Even small school districts must have numerous control processes and safeguards to ensure that district resources are adequately protected and used. These control processes should be documented to ensure consistency in their application. Written procedures frequently represent the best way to document these processes.

Every school district has board policies that generally include policies related to accounting and financial services. However, these policies are not considered procedures. Procedures show district employees how to carry out board policies. Well written and organized procedures:

Cost Control Systems

- Implement and assure compliance with board policies as well as document the intent of those policies;
- Protect the institutional knowledge of an organization so that as experienced employees leave, new employees will benefit from the experience of prior employees;
- Provide the basis for training new employees; and
- Offer a tool for evaluating employee performance based on their adherence to procedures.

The development and maintenance of procedures manuals can be cumbersome and time-consuming tasks. For this reason, districts should, at a minimum, identify critical accounting and finance processes and ensure that written procedures are maintained for these processes. For example, if a key accounting employee that has responsibility for generating a payroll leaves the district, are there sufficient written procedures that someone else can follow to generate a payroll? Other critical processes can include bank reconciliations, processing of accounts payable checks, budget amendment processes, and so on.

Similarly, even small school districts benefit from having strong ethics standards (policies) for district accounting and financial staff and from processes that encourage reporting of suspected improprieties. When employees understand the importance of ethical conduct of their responsibilities and the ramifications of unethical conduct, the overall control environment is enhanced. Also, processes that encourage reporting of suspected improprieties without fear of reprisal further strengthen the control environment.

The Collier County School District has not developed and distributed written procedures for the critical accounting and finance processes with the exception of procedures for the Property Records Department, which are not current. In order to be compliant with the GASB 34 requirements to depreciate tangible assets by the 2001-02 fiscal year, the district converted to the upgraded fixed asset module in fall 2002. The current property records procedures do not include the new system modules nor does it include procedures for GASB 34 depreciation requirements.

Comprehensive procedures manuals should provide new and current users step-by-step procedures for budget, purchasing, receipting, internal activity fund accounting, and fixed asset inventory. Action Plan 11-6 outlines the steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-6

We recommend that the district develop comprehensive written procedures for each section in the Business Services Department and for the internal activity accounts processes.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Instruct the associate superintendent of operational services and executive director of business services to develop comprehensive financial management and internal activity accounts procedures for all financial processes.</p> <p>Step 2. Organize a procedures task force consisting of representatives from accounting, payroll, budget, accounts payable, Investments, and other financial departments in the district.</p> <p>Step 3. Direct the task force to conduct a search for best practices and to identify the best model for the district.</p> <p>Step 4. Review existing procedures and develop comprehensive financial management and internal activity accounts procedures manuals for the district.</p> <p>Step 5. Present a draft copy of the procedures manuals to the associate superintendent of operational services for review and comment.</p> <p>Step 6. Present the procedures manuals to the superintendent for review and approval.</p> <p>Step 7. Instruct the associate superintendent of operational services and executive director of business services to publish the manuals and distribute them throughout the district and make them available on the district's web site.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, associate superintendent of operational services and executive director of business services
Time Frame	March 2004

Management does not have a board-adopted ethics policy to direct staff in the event that questionable practices arise.

During the 2001-02 fiscal year, the board requested that the board attorney examine an ethics policy for the board and district finance staff. After discussion, the district decided that a policy was not necessary due to the existence of existing statutes and/or state regulations.

It is critical that districts have ethics policies and procedures to encourage financial staff to report any suspected improprieties without fear of reprisal. Ethics policies and procedures also create an awareness of improprieties that could otherwise be overlooked by staff. Finally, a clear ethics policy helps to set the “tone at the top” to encourage and promote good internal controls and, if well written, identify remedies for unethical actions/behavior, including termination. Action Plan 11-7 outlines the steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-7

We recommend that the district implement board-approved written ethics policies and develop procedures for confidential reporting of suspected improprieties.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Draft written ethics policies.
	Step 2.	Present policies to the board for approval.
	Step 3.	Draft procedures for confidential reporting of suspected improprieties.
	Step 4.	Present the procedures to the superintendent for approval.
	Step 5.	Notify all district staff.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and associate superintendent of operational services	
Time Frame	March 2004	

Best Practice 3: Not Using

The district has not appropriately integrated financial software components to minimize manual processes or analyzed potential cost savings associated with increased automation.

Florida school districts are subject to significant federal, state and local (board) oversight of their financial activities. Given the limited financial resources provided to school districts, it is important that they have adequate financial information systems that provide useful, timely and accurate information. Users of this information must be able to understand the information provided so that they can make informed spending decisions.

The Collier County School District’s financial accounting system software conforms to the chart of accounts structure set out in the FDOE’s publication, Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools (also known as the Redbook). However, district administrative staff is not evaluating the system to ensure that they are using it in the most efficient and effective manner. Although the majority of small and medium sized Florida school districts use this same accounting system software, districts are operating different versions of the software. In addition, many districts have customized the software to meet their unique needs. The district’s current accounting system has been in use since 1980.

The district is converting to an upgraded version of this accounting system software and upgrading its computer platform. The district chose to convert to the upgraded version for the following reasons:

- The hardware vendor would no longer maintain the old operating system.
- The file structure of the old version is extremely complex making it difficult to extract data without a large amount of programming time and effort.
- The old system does not provide the user with any data gathering tools.

The new system will provide the following enhancements:

- Provide online requisition submissions;

Cost Control Systems

- Provide multi-year tracking for grant and capital projects;
- Afford user access through the control system using profiles instead of requiring customized programming; and
- Integrate staff and student systems.

During interviews with administrative staff in the Business Services Department and the Management Information Systems (MIS) Department, it was not apparent that they are seeking opportunities to further enhance the upgraded version to further reduce the manual processes and improve reporting capabilities.

In addition, a needs assessment was not performed by the MIS Department before implementing the new system and business services staff is not proactively examining their accounting processes to identify opportunities to reduce or eliminate manual processes. Spreadsheets are prepared to create reports or track data that could be generated from the accounting system if it was customized. The following are other manual processes the review team observed during the site visits to the district:

- The accounts payable staff manually tracks blanket purchase orders. The district has a significant number of blanket purchase orders. An accounts payable clerk processes blanket purchase orders for 32 vendors. Each vendor may have an open blanket purchase order with multiple school/department locations. Therefore, if an average of 10 schools had a blanket order opened with each of the 32 vendors, this clerk would be responsible for tracking 320 blanket purchase orders in addition to paying invoices for regular purchase orders.
- Staff keeps detailed information in spreadsheets that the financial system does not provide. In payroll for example, staff must manually calculate retroactive changes to an employee's payroll using a spreadsheet.
- The accounts payable module does not have an aging report that can assist management in ensuring that they pay invoices timely.
- The budget officer and the executive director of business services manually prepare salary projections after each payroll period to monitor actual versus budgeted amounts to ensure that they do not go over budget.
- The new system will not include an accounts receivable subsidiary module so the bookkeeper in charge of this task will continue to prepare and track invoices manually.
- District staff prepares year-end accounts payable retainage reporting by vendor manually each year.
- The grants accountant manually calculates indirect cost allocations for grants reimbursements.
- Schools and departments also keep spreadsheets of expenditures versus budget. Although school and departmental staff have access to the accounting system to review the expenditures versus budget, there is a timing difference for requisitions that have not been entered in the system and encumbered. Therefore, they keep spreadsheets that show a more current status of their accounts.
- Year-end leave data is downloaded from the accounting system to a spread sheet in order for the accounting officer to calculate the compensated absences.

The current system does not have a cash receipting module; however, the coordinator of enterprise systems and programs stated that the new system will have a cash receipting module. The module will include receipting and printing a paper receipt, generating a deposit slip, and entering a journal entry to reflect the deposit. This will substantially improve the cashing function in the district. Action Plan 11-8 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-8

We recommend that business services administrators meet with MIS and the new accounting system representatives to perform a comprehensive needs assessment to identify manual processes that can be automated to ensure that the department is operating as efficiently as possible.

Action Needed	Step 1. Perform a needs assessment and requirements study to identify manual processes that can be automated that will significantly improve efficiencies. Step 2. Prepare a proposal that prioritizes and establishes a timeline of the areas that will be customized, the description of the efficiency provided with each modification, and a fiscal impact that will show the net cost savings of implementing each customization to the accounting system. Step 3. Submit the proposal to the associate superintendent of operational services and superintendent for approval.
Who Is Responsible	Associate superintendent of operational services, executive director of business services, budget officer, accounting officer, and coordinator of enterprise systems and programs
Time Frame	September 2004

The district does not provide the board and district management with financial reports that effectively summarize financial operations in an easy-to-understand format that assists the board in understanding the district’s financial condition.

The financial statements and purchasing bids are placed as a consent item on the agenda and the board usually does not request that the statements be taken out of the consent item to be discussed. The financial information submitted to the board is not enough to provide the board members with a good understanding of the district’s financial situation and it is not displayed in a user-friendly format. For example, the board is provided with a budget report called the operating summary that consists of line item description; the original adopted budget; the prior month’s amended budget; current amended budget; year-to-date expenditure totals, and percentage of budget; encumbered totals; expended and encumbrance totals, and percentage of budget; remaining budget balance, and percentage of balance. There is no detail regarding the financial activity of the district since the last board meeting, the cash position of the district, a discussion of whether the district remained within budget, or an explanation of variances between actual expenditures and revenues to budgeted amounts for large dollar items.

The executive director of business services and budget officer should provide detailed financial reports each month, including an explanation of variances between actual expenditures and revenues to budgeted amounts and a projection of the fund balance for the end of the year. The executive director of business services and the budget officer should prepare an easy-to-understand report that includes bar charts comparing actual expenditures to budgeted expenditures for the major functions such as instruction. This will identify problem areas easily and timely so that necessary action can be taken before problems escalate. Exhibit 11-11 below presents sample financial reports that could be developed by staff and presented to the board. Action Plan 11-9 describes steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

**Exhibit 11-11
Financial Reports**

Report Name	Description	Report Components
Budget vs. Actual	Compares actual revenues and expenditures to budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual revenue and expenditures to date Budgeted revenue and expenditures to date Variance Explanation/Summary
Cash Flow (General Fund)	Summarizes the district's cash position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning balance Receipts for month Disbursements for month Additional encumbrances Ending balance
General Fund Balance	Summarizes the district's general fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning general fund balance Changes during the period Ending general fund balance Target general fund balance
Investment Report	Summarizes the district's investments and interest earnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of account Beginning balance Interest earned Ending balance
Extraordinary Items	Presents any non-budgeted items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of item Purpose of item Function Impact on general fund balance

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Action Plan 11-9

We recommend that the district establish detailed financial reports for the board that compare actual versus budgeted revenues and expenditures every month, as illustrated.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Prepare a draft of the revised reports to be presented at the board meeting and submit to the executive director of business services for review so that any necessary revisions can be completed three days before the board meeting.
	Step 2.	Submit board packet to board members to review two days before the board meeting.
	Step 3.	Present the report to the board.
	Step 4.	Address any questions from the board or the public about the finance report.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services and budget officer	
Time Frame	March 2004	

Best Practice 4: Using

District financial staff analyzes significant expenditure processes to ensure that they are appropriately controlled.

Other than salaries, the expenses of many school districts are frequently concentrated among a few vendors who are paid for goods and/or services on a repetitive basis. Examples include employee benefits, utility payments, payments for frequently used supplies, progress payments on contracts, and periodic payments for the use of assets, such as lease payments. It is important that employees approving such bills for payment are knowledgeable about relevant contract, payment, and other provisions to ensure that the bills are accurate and to ensure that only appropriate amounts are paid. In the case of

utility payments, appropriate stewardship includes analyses of the payments to identify and determine the reasons for unusual fluctuations in consumption.

The Collier County School District is analyzing salaries and utilities. We pulled a sample of credit card statements and cell phone statements and verified that these expenditures are appropriately controlled. In addition, the senior bookkeeper verifies that support is provided for each transaction requiring documentation, or she notes on the invoice that she is sending it back and does not pay it until she receives an approved signature.

In addition to monitoring charges from contract managers throughout a construction project by a district project manager, the district has hired an external CPA firm to audit construction expenditures at the completion of each major project before the retainage is paid out. The auditor compares the charges with the contract to ensure that they are allowed in the agreement and that the amount charged is appropriate for the service or material. A report is prepared that states the amount of the total project and shows any overages and savings found during the audit.

Although the district is commended for using the external CPA firm to audit construction projects, it would be beneficial that it track the audit findings and savings. By tracking this information, the district can calculate cost benefits of using this service, provide management savings information by project and in total for the year, identify contractors that repeatedly submit incorrect invoices, and use this information in the bid selection process.

We recommend that the district track the construction project audit findings and savings.

INTERNAL CONTROLS

Best Practice 5: Not Using

Although the district has established an adequate system of internal controls, some control procedures need improvement.

School districts must practice sound financial management in order to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources and to plan for future needs. Effective financial management ensures that internal controls are in place and operating as intended.

During our review of the Collier County School District, we noted the following internal control weaknesses:

- Lack of district wide comprehensive written procedures for critical accounting processes.
- Checks are not deposited promptly.
- Checks received are not securely stored.
- Grant expenditures are not appropriately monitored to ensure that all awarded moneys are expended before the expiration.

Without proper written and current procedures, the district's internal control structure is weakened because practices, controls, guidelines, and processes may not be applied consistently, correctly, and uniformly throughout the district. Action plan 11-7 in Best Practice 2 includes the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

The district could improve its manual check procedure by segregating the signing authority.

The accounts receivable bookkeeper processes manual accounts payable checks and also uses the signature stamp to sign the checks without the presence of another employee. The bookkeeper prepares the documentation for the manual check and gives the documentation to her supervisor to make the entry in the accounting system. She then receives a check from the employee that keeps the check stock and

manually prepares the check. After the check is prepared, she takes it to the accounting officer for approval. Once the accounting officer approves the check, she gets the signature stamp to sign the check and then mails it out. In order to segregate the duties, another bookkeeper could be assigned to review the documents for proper approvals and accompany the accounts receivable bookkeeper in the check signing responsibility and distribution of the check. Action Plan 11-10 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-10

We recommend that the district require that two employees be present in the manual check signing process.

Action Needed	Step 1. Develop new procedures for the manual check signing process.
	Step 2. Notify staff of the change in procedures.
	Step 3. Appoint an employee to team with the accounts receivable clerk in signing manual checks.
Who Is Responsible	Accounting officer
Time Frame	January 2004

The district does not adequately protect collections received through the mail or from collection points.

The accounts receivable clerk keeps collections in her desk drawer until she receipts and deposits checks. Storing the collections in an unsecured place puts the district at a greater risk of loss. This is especially true since many of the checks kept in the drawer have not been receipted and cannot be tracked if lost. Although the amount of money involved may not be substantial, internal control could be improved by requiring collections to be stored in a locked safe pending deposit. Action Plan 11-11 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-11

We recommend that the checks be secured in the Business Services Department safe at all times.

Action Needed	Step 1. Notify the cash receipts bookkeeper that she needs to keep checks and deposits in the safe at all times.
	Step 2. Keep checks and deposits in the safe instead of storing them in a desk.
Who Is Responsible	Accounting officer and accounts receivable clerk
Time Frame	January 2004

The district does not adequately monitor its grant awards to ensure that all grant resources are used before the expiration date.

The district receives a significant amount of grant awards from both state and federal sources. Most of the grants are recurring and have been received for a number of years. The grant program staff, instead of the Business Services Department, is responsible for ensuring that all grant moneys are spent; expenditures, especially salaries, are spent within the grant guidelines; and fixed assets are accounted for and surplus appropriately. The grants accountant sends out a reminder in February or March of each year to the grants program staff to place all their purchase orders timely so that they can use the current year's budget. She also sends them reminders around December of each year to verify that salaries charged to grants are in line with the grant requirements. Of the 75 grants awarded to the district for the 2001-02 fiscal year, 11 grants had remaining balances over 5% at the end of the fiscal year. Exhibit 11-12 lists the 11 grants along with the amount budgeted, the amount expensed and encumbered, balance, and the percentage not used.

**Exhibit 11-12
Grants with Remaining Budgeted Balance of Over 5%—2001-02 Fiscal Year**

Grant Program Name	Amount Budgeted	Expenses and Encumbrances	Balance	Percentage of Funds Not Used
Adult Basic Education	\$86,884	\$79,891	\$6,993	8%
English Lit & Civics Education	28,699	18,918	9,781	34%
Title I - Accountability	175,168	153,406	21,762	12%
Title I - School Improvement	36,098	9,260	26,838	74%
Innovative Education	219,286	199,656	19,630	9%
Comp School Reform Demo	445,800	183,323	262,477	59%
Head Start Training	27,874	18,443	9,431	34%
Indian Grant	14,115	11,476	2,639	19%
Generation Excellence	26,868	24,399	2,469	9%
S.W.A.T	11,310	9,199	2,111	19%
In-School Youth Grant	105,346	95,379	9,967	9%
Total	\$1,177,448	\$803,350	\$374,098	32%

Source: Collier County School District, Business Services Department, 2001-02 fiscal year.

In many school districts, finance departments are primarily responsible for overseeing and monitoring the grants process. During a site visit, the review team was shown a reapplication for funds that the district lost because not all the funds were expensed by the expiration date. They were only applying for a portion of the amount initially lost. The grants accountant stated that the grantors usually award the money from the reapplication; however, an oversight function overseeing that all moneys are spent initially would avoid the extra work in reapplying and loss of money. Any proceeds that are not spent must be returned to the grantor at the end of the grant period. By not effectively monitoring grant expenditures to ensure that all grant funds have been expended within the allotted time period, the district risks returning the moneys rather than spending them on the program for which they were intended. Action Plan 11-12 describes steps the district can use to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-12

We recommend that procedures are established to ensure that each grant is closely monitored to ensure all moneys are used, and require that the accounting section oversees the financial process of the grants.

Action Needed	Step 1. Meet with director of federal and state grants to discuss the monitoring role of the accounting office. Step 2. Request that the executive director of business services prepare procedures for monitoring and overseeing the grant programs. Step 3. Write the procedures and submit to the associate superintendent of operational services for review for approval. Step 4. Meet with the federal & state grants staff to present the procedures and set the ground rules. Step 5. Begin monitoring the grant programs.
Who Is Responsible	Associate superintendent of operational services, director of federal and state grants, executive director of business services, and grants accountant
Time Frame	March 2004

Best Practice 6: Not Using

Management proactively responds to identified internal control weaknesses and takes immediate steps to correct the weaknesses for external audits of the district wide financial statements; however, it does not follow through to ensure problems with fixed assets are addressed.

As noted previously, school districts must practice sound financial management to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources and to plan for future needs. Effective financial management ensures that internal controls are operating as intended. School districts demonstrate effective financial management when they proactively respond to internal control weaknesses identified in external audits and other monitoring reviews.

The Collier County School District has procedures for responding to control weaknesses. The district responds immediately to correct any weaknesses identified in its external audit report. However, the district has not been as effective in addressing weaknesses related to missing inventory items. Although the district has attempted to increase accountability for its fixed assets, it has not been successful in making district staff understand the importance of this issue. Items continue to come up missing, but the district is not enforcing its accountability efforts by holding the custodians responsible for the missing items. The district does not follow up on these items to ensure that the problems have been resolved. Action Plan 11-13 outlines steps the district can use to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-13

We recommend that the district enforce the procedures to resolve missing property.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Request that the accounting officer and inventory specialist track schools and departments that are not properly following procedures or have missing and stolen items that were not properly secured by the property custodian.
	Step 2.	Meet with the property custodian to discuss the discrepancies and request written responses including the action plan necessary to correct the issue and avoid future occurrences.
	Step 3.	Forward the information to the assistant superintendents.
	Step 4.	Establish procedures requiring property custodians that continue to receive exceptions to develop written corrective action plans that describe how issue(s) will be resolved and, if followed, will prevent future occurrences.
	Step 5.	The appropriate assistant superintendent periodically monitors the property custodian's efforts to prevent future occurrences.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services, appropriate assistant superintendents, accounting officer, principals, bookkeepers, inventory specialist , and property custodians	
Time Frame	March 2004	

Best Practice 7: Using

The district provides useful and understandable information to users and produces an annual budget that is tied to the strategic plan.

Districts that make the best use of their resources and achieve high student performance generally practice some form of strategic planning that looks at all district operations, links support functions to the achievement of institutional goals, and has a direct link to the annual planning and budgeting process.

Effective strategic planning includes:

- Identifying priorities through surveys of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community leaders;
- Board input on goals and major priorities;
- Developing objectives for strategic plan goals that include measurable outcomes and achievement dates as appropriate;
- Assignment of responsibility for achieving objectives;
- Annual performance monitoring and adjusting of objectives as necessary to ensure achievement of strategic plan goals; and
- Budgets that require expenditures to be tied directly to the strategic plan priorities of the district.

In preparation of its budgets, the Collier County School District provides users with analysis of student enrollment projections and comparisons of prior year actual resources and expenditures with budgeted amounts. The district is in compliance with state law and rules in preparing and submitting its budget to the Florida Department of Education. The district links its financial plans and budgets to its annual priorities in the district educational improvement plan and directs resources towards achieving those goals and objectives.

Best Practice 8: Not Using

Management does not analyze strategic plans for measurable objectives or measurable results.

As mentioned previously, districts that make the best use of their resources and achieve high student performance rates generally practice some form of strategic planning that looks at all district operations, links support functions to the achievement of institutional goals, and has a direct link to the annual planning and budgeting process.

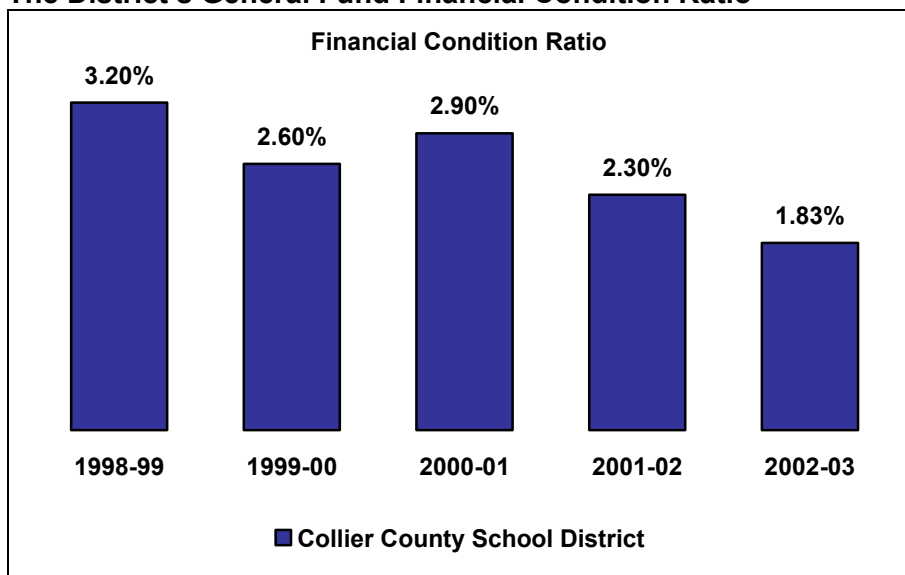
In Best Practice 7 we identified reasons why the Collier County School District was not meeting this best practice. Briefly, the District Educational Improvement Plan (DEIP) Goal 9 only has one of three measurable objectives. Action Plan 11-14 outlines steps to be taken to use measurable objectives and results in setting the district's strategic plan.

The district is far below its target unreserved general fund balance level as specified in the DEIP and has not developed a clear action plan to achieve the target.

The fund balance of a district's general fund is significant since it is the primary fund that supports most of the district's activities and receives state aid and local tax revenue. It is one of the primary measures of solvency for the district. The fund balance provides a critical reflection of the district's financial condition. The district's targeted unreserved general fund balance is 4% of appropriations. The district is currently far below this target.

The current objective requires the district to have a general fund reserve for ending cash of \$1 million above the contingency balance and the five-year objective states that at the beginning of the 2004-05 fiscal year, the general fund reserve will be 2% of appropriations and continue to grow by 0.5% each year until it reaches 4%. As of June 30, 2003, the district's unreserved general fund was \$4.5 million. The district was required to use the fund balance to make its property insurance premiums due in August 2003. Exhibit 11-13 presents the unreserved fund balance for the current fiscal year and the four previous fiscal years.

**Exhibit 11-13
The District's General Fund Financial Condition Ratio**



Source: Audited financial statements for the 1998-99 through 2001-02 fiscal years and the Business Services Office for the 2002-03 fiscal year.

The district provided the review team with the 2003-04 fiscal year budget philosophy which contained the plan that the district intends to follow to replenish the general fund unreserved fund balance. According to this document, the district intends to use the proceeds from a loan made to Osceola County School District to begin replenishing the general fund unreserved fund balance shortage. Osceola County School District will pay Collier County School District approximately \$2.8 million each year for 15 years.

Although the budget philosophy states that the district will use these loan proceeds to replenish the general fund unreserved fund balance, the district needs to prepare a formal report specifically addressing the action plan steps the district will take to replenish the fund balance including historical trends and projections. This report would provide the district with a formal plan that could be monitored to ensure

the district is on target. The report should include various budget scenarios and timelines. Action Plan 11-14 outlines steps the district can use to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-14

We recommend that the district develop an action plan that increases the general fund balance to 2% by the end of the 2003-04 fiscal year and 4% within the next three to five years.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Prepare an agenda item requesting the board to approve developing procedures and a schedule to rebuild the district's general fund balance.</p> <p>Step 2. Approve developing procedures and assign the task to the associate superintendent of operational services and the executive director of business services.</p> <p>Step 3. Prepare a report for the board that presents the general fund balance at year-end and compares it against the historical ten-year trend and a five-year projection of the fund balance. The report should allow for various budget scenarios and timelines for reestablishing the district's policy requiring the fund balance to be 4% of the budgeted revenue.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, associate superintendent of operational services, executive director of business services, accounting officer and budget officer
Time Frame	January 2004

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AUDITING

Best Practice 9: Using

The district ensures that it receives an annual external audit and uses the audit to improve its operations.

Sections 11.45(2)(d) and 218.39, *Florida Statutes*, require school districts to annually obtain a financial audit. Section 11.45(1)(c), *Florida Statutes*, defines a financial audit as an examination conducted in order to express an opinion on the fairness of the financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principals 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.

Annually, the Collier County School District obtains independent audits of the basic financial statements as required by law. The last three audit reports were provided as part of this best practices review. Each independent audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. In addition, the audits were conducted in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 10.800, *Rules of the Auditor General*, which govern the conduct of district school board audits performed in the state of Florida.

Best Practice 10: Not Using

The district does not have an internal audit function and it has not conducted annual risk assessments of its operations.

Section 1001.42(10)(l), *Florida Statutes*, permits school boards to employ internal auditors to perform ongoing verification of the financial records of the school district. This law requires the internal auditor to report directly to the board or its designee. Internal auditing is a managerial control that can be used to measure and evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness and cost/benefit of operations, programs, other controls and systems. The objective of internal auditing is to help management effectively discharge its responsibilities by providing analyses and recommendations on the activities reviewed. The internal audit function typically performs the annual risk assessments in private sector businesses.

Cost Control Systems

The Collier County School District does not have an in-house internal audit function. The district hires an external auditing firm to perform audits of internal accounts in schools and certain departments, third party administrator's Flex Care payments, ticket sales from athletic venues, Lorenzo Walker collections, and audits of construction payments to general contractors. In the 2002-03 fiscal year budget process, district staff requested an internal audit department be created by budgeting \$120,000 for an internal auditor and assistant. However, the associate superintendent of operational services did not include the position in the recommended budget submitted to the board.

The Collier County School District needs an internal audit function for several important reasons. First, the district may potentially have avoided some of the policy and procedure exceptions noted in this report if an internal audit function was present. Some of these exceptions are listed below:

- Incomplete personnel files;
- Several critical functions that lack written policies and procedures; and
- Lack of internal controls over grant expenditures and cash collections.

Second, the size and growth of the district increase the level of risk to the point where an internal audit function is justified. The annual budget exceeds \$200 million, and \$335,843,753 million of construction is planned over the next five years. Growing districts are also more vulnerable to control weaknesses because of the influx of new staff and programs.

Third, the internal audit function would be a natural candidate to verify data used to support the development of performance measures recommended in this report. While financial data is subject to external audit, staffing and statistical data is not subject to external audit procedures. The performance measures must use accurate data if management decisions are based on them. Inaccurate data can destroy an effective accountability system, and an internal audit can help develop and sustain the integrity of such a system.

Finally, an internal auditing function could perform the functions conducted by the external consulting firm, eliminating the need to pay for these outside services, as well as provide other essential services that the district currently lacks. An internal audit function would substantially improve the audits of internal funds and staff training. An internal auditor could enhance the following areas:

- Assist in the development of procedures documentation and provide support for conversion to the new accounting system.
- Strengthen accountability for tangible assets.
- Review and strengthen payroll-reporting practices for all schools and departments.
- Oversee audit of internal accounts, taking the budget officer out of the process and allowing the budget officer time to enhance departmental budget accountability and the overall budget process.
- Provide internal audit work relative to accounts payable, capital construction, and self-insurance activities.

An internal auditor would also provide the following benefits to the district:

- Audit the full-time equivalent (FTE) student count to ensure that the district is reporting accurate information to FDOE;
- Conduct annual risk assessments and perform departmental audits for high-risk areas;
- Analyze the existing financial manual and automated processes to identify opportunities to improve its operations and make them more efficient and effective;
- Coordinate external and regulatory audits on behalf of the district;
- Perform special investigations as needed;
- Audit the internal accounts and construction payments instead of outsourcing to an external auditor;
- Monitor the internal accounts and ensure that the bookkeepers are being provided with adequate support and training throughout the year; and

- Provide the board with an independent monitor to ensure that the district is spending public funds appropriately.

One critical function an internal auditor would perform for the district is to ensure that the district accounts for its FTE student count correctly. In May 2002, FDOE sent notification that the district owed for overpayment of the 2001-02 Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funding. The district was required to reimburse the overpayment to the state in June 2002. An effective FTE internal audit program could have prevented this from occurring.

In addition, the internal audit function could audit procurement card transactions to ensure that they are appropriate if the district implements procurement cards. Procurement cards, although an efficient and cost beneficial process, pose a risk of misappropriations and improper purchasing transactions if not monitored closely. An internal auditor could be assigned to review procurement card transactions to ensure that the proper documentation has been provided to justify the purchase. This provides the district an additional level of control for its procurement card program.

Finally, an internal auditor can provide the board with objective oversight of the district's finances and evaluate internal controls at the schools throughout the year in contrast to what can be provided by the external auditor only once per year. To the extent possible, internal auditors serve as "internal consultants" to help find opportunities for improvements and address problems early on before they become major ones. In addition to addressing problems early, internal auditors carry out far more comprehensive tests on accounting systems, both in terms of range and number of tests carried out. Furthermore, the existence of the internal auditors will make employees more careful in their work and thus reduce errors, and they act as a deterrent to fraud.

If the district establishes an internal audit function, it is imperative that the internal auditor report directly to the board and administratively to the superintendent to promote internal auditor independence. Findings and recommendations should be reported directly to the board without being edited by any district management staff.

An internal audit function would allow the district to eliminate the services from the external auditor currently charging the district \$66,000 for the additional internal fund and miscellaneous audits that could be performed internally. To conduct the internal audit function, the district would need to hire a lead internal auditor and an internal auditor. We estimate, based on average salaries in the area, the cost of salaries and benefits for these positions to be \$56,943. This calculation includes (\$60,000 for lead internal auditor salary + \$10,590 variable benefits + \$6,130 fixed benefits) + (\$37,000 internal auditor salary + \$6,531 variable benefits + \$6,130 fixed benefits) less the indirect cost reimbursement (\$126,381 in total salary and benefits x 0.0272 = \$3,438) and the current cost of \$66,000 for the external auditor that performs the audit on the internal accounts and miscellaneous expenditures.

Although the district would incur an initial cost from establishing an internal audit function, the future return on investment should exceed these costs when savings are identified through the evaluation of efficiencies and effectiveness of the district's operations, programs, and systems. The district can also experience a cost savings in its district-wide external audits due to the external auditor relying on the verification work performed by the internal auditors. If the internal auditors' work is shown to be reliable, the external auditors can reduce the number of items they verify and; therefore, reduce the time for the audit and allow a reduction in the audit fee. Action Plan 11-15 outlines steps the district can use to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-15

We recommend that the district hire a lead internal auditor and an internal auditor that report directly to the board and administratively to the superintendent.

Action Needed	Step 1. Develop a job description for the positions of the lead internal auditor and internal auditor. Step 2. Submit the position descriptions to the board for review and approval. Step 3. Advertise for the positions. Step 4. Interview prospective candidates. Step 5. Select and approve a lead internal auditor and internal auditor. Step 6. Discontinue the external audit services for the internal accounts.
Who Is Responsible	Board, superintendent, associate superintendent of operational services, and executive director of human resources
Time Frame	July 2004

Best Practice 11: Not Using

The district ensures that audits of internal accounts and its discretely presented component unit (charter school) are performed timely; however, the district is not proactive in responding to audit findings.

The financial transactions of individual school activities and organizations are accounted for in the school internal accounts (funds). The law requires that school districts provide for the annual audits of the school internal funds. Also, school districts may have related organizations such as foundations and charter schools. Due to the nature of these organizations, their financial activity generally should be included with that of the school district. However, law requires that these related organizations provide for their annual financial audits. School districts frequently monitor these related organizations’ activity by reviewing the annual audit reports. Accordingly, it is important that the school districts receive timely audits of these related organizations and perform appropriate review of the reports.

According to the Collier County School District’s executive director of business services, the charter school’s audited financial reports are provided to the assistant superintendents. The associate superintendent of operational services monitors the charter school and the executive director of business services ensures that the audited financial reports are submitted timely. The internal account audits also are performed timely; however, the district could improve this best practice by reviewing the internal accounts audit reports and use the findings to make appropriate decisions involving these accounts.

The district does require schools and departments to respond to audit findings related to the internal accounts; however, the district has not developed a methodology to ensure that audit findings contained in the reports do not reoccur. The 2001-02 fiscal year audit identified 58 audit exceptions at 24 of 43 schools. As of March 10, 2003, 7 of the 24 locations had not responded to a December 2, 2002, request for responses to the audit exceptions. In addition to reporting exceptions by location, the auditor also reported global findings that were prevalent throughout the district. The review team noted that many of the global audit findings were the same for the last three years and the findings by location lists similar findings for the same schools each year. Our evaluation of the global findings indicated that they are indicative of a lack of proper training among the school bookkeepers. The following are the global findings listed in the 2001-02 fiscal year audit report:

- Schools should file their principal’s financial reports timely to ensure proper accounting of internal funds. All monthly reports should be complete and include accurate bank reconciliations.
- All schools should review segregation of duties concerning the handling of receipts. Reports of moneys collected should be accurately filled out including dates and dual signatures.
- All moneys collected should be deposited intact and in a timely manner. We suggest that very clear and strict policies and procedures be implemented.
- All disbursements should have a uniform procedure to follow.

- An assistant superintendent must approve purchases from any one vendor that exceed \$5,000 for the fiscal year. A uniform procedure should be developed and all approvals be made prior to expenditures.
- The Adult Education and Lorenzo Walker Institute of Technology should reconcile tuition received from each class with the number of students enrolled.
- New accounting personnel should have adequate training and should be given copies of uniform procedures to follow for cash receipts and cash disbursements.

Action Plan 11-16 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-16

We recommend that the district develop formal procedures for addressing audit findings of the internal accounts.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Forward audit finding to responsible campus administrator and bookkeeper.
	Step 2.	Direct accounting officer to review internal account audit findings.
	Step 3.	Draft report detailing the status of all audit findings and the district's response.
	Step 4.	Develop formal procedures for handling audit findings of the internal accounts. The following elements should be included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Global analysis of findings to identify district wide issues. b. Step-by-step procedures of the response process, including the action plan to correct and avoid future problems. c. Follow-up procedures to ensure action plans have been implemented. d. Tracking process that will show outstanding responses and identify reoccurring problems.
	Step 5.	Submit the plan to the executive director of business services for review and make modifications if necessary.
	Step 6.	Meet with the school and department bookkeepers to inform them of the new procedures.
	Step 7.	Implement the procedures.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services and budget officer	
Time Frame	January 2004	

CASH MANAGEMENT

Best Practice 12: Not Using

The district does not maximize its cash position by requiring large dollar payees to wire payments.

Cash and investment management involves the systematic coordination of cash-flow forecasting, cash-flow management, investment of surplus cash, and sound banking and investment relationships. Even small school districts have annual cash flows of millions of dollars and effective cash management and investing of these resources can generate beneficial results and resources, which can be used to meet district needs. Similarly, beneficial banking services arrangements should promote the investment of idle cash and limit any banking service fees.

Although the district receives many small dollar collections, it also receives a significant number of recurring large dollar payments, ranging from \$5,000 to \$700,000, from agencies such as the Collier School Readiness Coalition, Board of County Commissioners, Florida 1st-Health Insurance Refund, and the Osceola County School District. The Collier County Tax Collectors Office also issues large dollar checks to the district periodically although the majority of funds are wire payments. By requiring these payees to wire the payments, the district would receive the money faster, resulting in additional

opportunities to earn more interest income. Action Plan 11-17 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-17

We recommend that the district arrange to have payees with recurring payments with large dollar amounts to wire transfer payment to the district's bank account.	
Action Needed	Step 1. Identify recurring payees with payments totaling more than \$5,000 per check. Step 2. Arrange with these payees to electronically wire transfer payments.
Who Is Responsible	Accounting officer
Time Frame	January 2004

CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

Best Practice 13: Not Using

Although the district has procedures for holding property custodians accountable for missing or stolen capital assets, the procedures are not being enforced.

Capital assets include properties, vehicles, equipment, and building contents. School districts should keep and maintain accurate accounting records because:

- Accurate capital asset records provide the basis for adequate insurance coverage;
- Annual physical inventories of capital assets allow the district to survey the physical condition of its assets and assess the need for repair, maintenance, or replacement;
- Reliable information about currently owned capital assets provides assistance when determining future needs and provides a basis for budgeting capital asset needs; and
- Accurate capital asset records provide users with documentation of how taxes have been used to carry out the operations of the district.

At Collier County School District, capital asset procedures do not provide consequences when custodians do not adequately safeguard property in their care. The district has an unusually high number of missing and stolen items each year. In the 2001-02 fiscal year, the district reported 506 items with original costs of \$876,575 missing, and 33 items with original costs of \$56,753 stolen. This is 5.4% of its total tangible fixed assets in the furniture, fixtures, equipment, and computer software categories. The missing and stolen items were purged from the system at fiscal year-end after management was afforded the opportunity to investigate. Exhibit 11-14 displays the amount of missing and stolen items by year.

**Exhibit 11-14
Missing and Stolen Capital Assets**

Year	Missing		Stolen		Total	
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
1999-00	408	\$838,242	21	\$34,068	429	\$872,310
2000-01	315	\$1,141,759	53	\$83,622	368	\$1,225,381
2001-02	506	\$876,575	33	\$56,753	539	\$933,328
2002-03 (as of May 2003)	729	\$1,871,523	11	\$14,623	740	\$1,886,146

Source: Collier County School District, Missing Equipment Report and Stolen Equipment Report.

At the direction of the superintendent, the district formed a task force committee in February 2001 to find a solution for the lack of control and accountability of the district's fixed assets. The task force was composed of the executive director of business services, the inventory specialist, three principals representing elementary, middle, and high schools, and an assistant superintendent. In February, the task

force determined that the procedures in place were adequate; however, they recommended that the principals and department heads should be held accountable for the fixed assets in their possession. As part of their performance evaluations, principals and department heads are to be evaluated for the outcome of the inventory in their charge every year. However, the inventory specialist stated that she has not noticed a positive difference with missing property. After the completion of the inventory process each year, the inventory specialist provides a list of missing property by custodian to the executive director of business services. The executive director of business services forwards the list to the assistant superintendents to include in the property custodians' performance evaluations. The inventory specialist stated that she no longer follows up on missing items from previous years.

One way that some districts have been able to increase accountability and reduce the number of missing and stolen items is to tie accountability to the campus or departmental budget. These districts reduce the campus or department's budget for the next year by the dollar amount of missing or stolen property in the event the custodian was deemed negligent in letting these items disappear from the district. By tying the accountability to the budget, custodians begin to appreciate how critical it is to the district that they properly safeguard their property. Action Plan 11-18 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-18

We recommend that the district develop tangible asset procedures that provide consequences when property custodians do not effectively manage property under their care and ensure that these procedures are enforced.

Action Needed	Step 1. Direct the executive director of business services to develop tangible asset procedures that include consequences for property custodians that are not safekeeping property. Step 2. Research how other districts are controlling the number of items that are missing or stolen. Step 3. Develop tangible property procedures. Step 4. Submit the procedures to the superintendent for approval. Step 5. Introduce to all assistant superintendents and property custodians the new tangible property procedures.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, associate superintendent of operational services, executive director of business services, inventory specialist, assistant superintendent, principals and department heads
Time Frame	March 2004

The district does not physically inventory capital assets annually using effective inventory control methods.

Schools and departments are responsible for inventorying 100% of the property before June 30 each fiscal year. The inventory specialist in the Business Services Department is only able to spot check items from each location each fiscal year.

In addition to a high volume of missing and stolen items, many of the district's property items are not tagged or properly tagged. During our review, we performed a verification of fixed assets at 10 selected locations and found that some items were missing and others were not tagged or were tagged in places that were difficult to find. In addition, school and department staff stated that there is a lag time between the time the items are received and when they get the inventory tags. In an effort to improve tagging procedures, the district has made arrangements to have its computer vendor tag all new computers before shipping them to the district. School and district staff noted that this is an improvement.

The district is planning to implement a bar-coding system as soon as the district acquires a central receiving facility. The district should not wait for the central receiving facility to implement this system. In addition to simplifying and speeding the inventory process for the property custodians, the inventory specialist will be able to increase the number of items she spot checks at each location thereby adding

more control to the process. The district should revise its budget priorities to include financing of the bar-coding system sooner than planned.

It is a cumbersome process to convert to a bar-coding system. Many districts contract with fixed asset valuation firms to assist with the initial bar-code tagging of all fixed asset items and inventorying of the property. Although the district should try to transition to the bar-coding system in-house, it may benefit from contracting with a fixed asset valuation firm given the number of missing items and items not tagged. This would provide the district with a starting point for future asset inventories conducted by its own employees. Should the district decide to outsource the initial counts and data entry, we estimate that it would cost approximately \$35,000 for an outside consultant to perform the initial tagging and inventory. Action Plan 11-19 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-19

We recommend that the district early implement the planned purchase of a bar-coding system to track fixed assets.

Action Needed	Step 1. Research bar-coding systems to find those compatible with the district's ERP system. Step 2. Develop request for proposals (RFPs) to solicit bids for a bar-coding system. Step 3. Advertise the RFPs and send out to all interested vendors. Step 4. Tally bids and submit recommendations to the superintendent and the board for approval. Step 5. Develop formal procedures for the receipt and tracking of existing fixed assets and new purchases using the new bar-coding system. Step 6. Contract for the purchase of a bar-coding system, required supplies, and fixed asset valuation services. Step 7. Tag the existing fixed asset inventory. Step 8. Conduct physical inventory of all fixed assets. Step 9. Review the process and ensure that all fixed assets have been tagged. Step 10. Ensure that inventory specialist conducts annual inventories.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services, purchasing director, management information systems department, inventory specialist, principals, and department heads
Time Frame	January 2005

The district does not assign accountability for its vehicles to the staff that operates them.

The Transportation Department holds the titles to every vehicle in the district and must account for them during the annual inventory. The problem arises with accountability for these vehicles. The Transportation Department does not have any control over the physical location of these vehicles, but is held accountable for them at year-end. By contrast, the principals are considered the property custodians of the food service equipment located in their school's kitchen and the equipment is carried on the school's inventory. Action Plan 11-20 outlines steps the district can use to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-20

We recommend that the district transfer the vehicle inventory to the individual departments that have custody of the vehicles.

Action Needed	Step 1. Reconcile the vehicle inventory to the general ledger at year-end. Step 2. Complete transfer forms for the department and campus vehicles. Step 3. Obtain appropriate department head and campus administrators' signatures on transfer forms.
Who Is Responsible	Director of transportation, parts manager and inventory specialist
Time Frame	March 2004.

Best Practice 14: Using

The district ensures that significant capital outlay purchases meet strategic plan objectives.

As mentioned previously, districts that make the best use of their resources and consistently have high student performance generally practice some form of strategic planning that addresses district operations, including the capital acquisition program, and links operational functions to the achievement of institutional goals.

The Collier County School District prepares separate budgets for each capital project. Prior to passing the budget each year, district staff prepares a capital plan. The board uses this plan in its capital projects workshop. The board reviews the plan and adopts the plan usually with modifications. The projects in the plan are projects that will help the district meet strategic plan objectives such as: optimal class size, that sufficient new facilities are available to meet the growing enrollment and are located in the areas with the most growth, that the district has purchased sufficient land to meet the growing enrollment demands, or to meet the ever-changing technology needs. The adopted plan is used for the preparation of the budget.

The Facilities Management Department has established procedures that ensure that capital outlay expenditures are identified and properly recorded. The district has implemented a direct purchase program that allows the district to purchase all construction material for subcontractors and saves the district thousands of dollars by not paying sales tax for the material. The purchasing process for direct purchases is identical to the processes used by the district for all of its other purchases. The requisitions are initiated by the subcontractors and approved by the contract management companies. The contract management companies forward the requisitions to the project coordinators for approval. The project coordinators forward the requisitions to the district's Purchasing Department for the processing of the purchase order.

DEBT MANAGEMENT

Best Practice 15: Using

The district has established written policies and procedures and periodically updates them to provide for effective debt management.

Many school districts must identify and procure other sources of financing to meet current facility needs and, in some instances, operating needs. There are specific provisions of state law that govern school districts' ability to incur debt. Also, most debt instruments are highly complex financial transactions that require a high level of expertise to ensure compliance with federal (primarily arbitrage), state, and district requirements as well as ensure that the transactions are appropriately accounted for and monitored. Many school districts, depending on the extent of their debt program, must have effective procedures to ensure that debt service requirements are appropriately followed.

The Collier County School District effectively manages its debt obligations by using consultants to provide external expertise. The district contracts with a consultant to ensure that all debt obligations are in compliance with all reporting requirements.

The district entered into a master lease purchase agreement dated as of August 1, 1992, for the purpose of providing for the lease purchase financing and refinancing from time to time of certain educational facilities, sites, and equipment. The master lease purchase agreement provides the accounting system and conditions governing the lease of projects and the framework under which the district is obligated to pay rent for the projects. As of June 30, 2002, the remaining lease payments totaled \$124,070,000.

In addition to the Certificates of Participation, the district has issued various state school bonds to finance capital outlay projects. The State Board of Education issues these bonds on behalf of the district. The

Cost Control Systems

bonds are secured by the district's portion of the state assessed motor vehicle license tax. As of June 30, 2002, the outstanding bonds payable totaled \$11,620,000.

Goal 9 of the DEIP sets a target for the district's debt service reserves to be equal to or exceed the amounts required by the debt instruments to meet its annual debt service obligations by the beginning of the 2004-05 fiscal year. As of June 30, 2002, the district's total outstanding long-term debt was \$135,690,000. During the year, the district added \$91,430,587 in debt and retired \$63,780,535. The annual debt repayment obligations for the 2002-03 fiscal year totaled \$13,783,960, including interest and principal. In reviewing the debt service schedules prepared by the budget officer, the district has adequate controls in place to ensure timely payment of debt obligations. The district has never been in danger of defaulting on any of its debt service payments.

In reviewing the debt instrument documents, the audit reports over the past five years, Moody's assessment of credit worthiness, and discussions with the district's external financial advisor, the district has had no difficulty in servicing its debt load. In addition, the district actively seeks opportunities to reduce its interest rates by refunding portions of the outstanding Certificates of Participation.

Best Practice 16: Not Using

The district does not ensure that significant debt financings meet strategic plan objectives.

As mentioned previously, districts that make the best use of their resources and achieve high student performance rates generally practice some form of strategic planning that covers all district operations, including the use of debt management to meet capital acquisition program goals and links them to the achievement of institutional goals.

The Collier County School District has used the services of a financial advisor since 1990 on a deal-by-deal basis for each new debt issue. Despite the assistance of consultants that have strong financial analysis expertise, there is some concern about the district's continued financial stability. Its declining fund balance has resulted in Moody's downgrading its outlook to negative. To date, the dwindling fund balance has not impaired the district's ability to issue debt. Moody's reported that it believes the "district's minimal direct debt burden, 1.1% of full valuation, will remain manageable given rapid tax base growth and lack of near term borrowing plans." However, in the same report, the service has revised its outlook on the certificates of participation to negative from stable to reflect the decline in general fund reserves associated with the district's growing operating pressures. Although the district has available debt capacity, the cost of that debt may be substantially higher with the lower rating.

The district targets a fund balance of 4% in its DEIP, but is currently far below that level. It is estimated that the general operating fund balance will only be 1% at the end of the 2002-03 fiscal year, if there is any left at all. In the past, the board has approved using general fund reserves to finance recurring expenditures. The money required to fund recurring expenditures will be required every year thereafter. If this additional money comes from a finite source, such as the fund balance, the recurring expenditures will soon exhaust that source. This leaves the district vulnerable to financial failure and causes legitimate concerns within the capital market. If the district's creditworthiness suffers, it may not have access to debt to further finance its growth. Action Plan 11-21 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-21

We recommend that the district develop a plan to improve the district's image in the financial market.	
Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Meet with district's financial advisor to review available options and share plans that have been successful in other districts.</p> <p>Step 2. Review district's ten-year capital plan and determine if adequate funding is in place.</p> <p>Step 3. Prepare documents to be taken to the capital market in an effort to improve the market's confidence in the district.</p> <p>Step 4. Present documents to the board. Include in the presentation the impact on the district's ability to secure debt capital at a reasonable borrowing rate if the plan is not followed.</p> <p>Step 5. Take the plan to the financial market.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Associate superintendent of operational services, executive director of business services, and financial advisor
Time Frame	October 2004

RISK MANAGEMENT

Best Practice 17: Not Using

The district has not established written policies and procedures for effective risk management.

Managing risks has become a critical component of school district operations. Rising costs of property, liability, and other insurance coverage has forced school districts to carefully evaluate the risks they are insuring and to identify ways to contain costs. Effective risk management involves:

- Evaluating insurance alternatives such as self-insurance and other current industry trends;
- Evaluating current insurance programs for deductible amounts, co-insurance levels, and types of coverage provided;
- Evaluating risks and implementing programs to minimize exposure to potential losses; and
- Monitoring district compliance with applicable laws and regulations.¹

Section 112.08, *Florida Statutes*, requires that insurance coverage be purchased by competitive bidding procedures. The Collier County School District's director of risk management works with the district's insurance broker to develop the RFP and annually bids insurance coverage. The director of risk management and the broker evaluate the bids and submit a recommendation to the board. Exhibit 11-15 presents the district's insurance coverage currently in force.

¹ Risk management as it applies to this section relates to insurance coverage required by law other than employee group benefits, such as group health insurance, which are discussed in Chapter 6 – Personnel Systems and Benefits.

**Exhibit 11-15
Collier County School District Insurance Coverage for the 2002-03 Fiscal Year**

Type of Insurance	Limits of Coverage	Deductible	Annual Premium
Property	\$150,000,000 Per Occurrence	\$15,000,000	\$ 698,815
Boiler & Machinery	\$50,00,000 General Aggregate	\$5,000 - Direct Damage 24 Hour Deductible - Business Interruption	13,987
Liability Package:	\$10,000,000 Aggregate		197,000
General Liability	\$5,000,000 Total Occurrence Limit		
Automobile	\$100,000 Per Claimant (GL/AL/EBL)		
EBL	\$200,000 Per Occurrence (GL/AL/EBL)		
Workers' Compensation	\$350,000 Per Occurrence (WC)		
Auto Physical Damage	\$4,200,903 Maximum Liability	\$2,500	85,000
School Leaders/Public Officials	\$2,000,000 Per Occurrence	\$100,000	24,751
Crime (Public Employee Dishonesty)	\$50,000 Each Occurrence	\$500	1,901
Underground Fuel Tank	\$1,000,000 Per Occurrence \$1,000,000 General Aggregate	\$5,000	2,098
Student Professional Liability	\$1,000,000 Each Incident \$3,000,000 Aggregate		5,215
Flood Insurance	\$500,000 Per Building \$500,000 Per Building Contents		134,708
Total			\$1,163,475

Source: Collier County School District, Director of Risk Management.

The national risk profile has changed significantly since September 11, 2001. Soft targets, such as schools, have been identified as potential terrorist targets. School districts must have established written policies and procedures to deal with the changing landscape of risk. The policy should include the development of a risk management program that includes the following steps:

- Create a realistic risk inventory that details what kind of risks pertain to Collier County District Schools, natural hazards, school violence, locality hazards, and terrorist threat;
- Identify risk reduction strategies that make sense, will be effective, and are affordable;
- Educate parents, students, and staff by conducting periodic workshops and distributing reference material as it comes available; and
- Develop strong relationships with local authorities.

Action Plan 11-22 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-22

We recommend that the district develop a risk management policy and associated procedures.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Draft a policy statement and detailed procedures related to risk management. Include specific targets and benchmarks for containing costs.</p> <p>Step 2. Present the draft policy statement and procedures to the insurance committee and make the necessary revisions.</p> <p>Step 3. Draft a board policy that includes the committee approved recommended plan and prepare an agenda item for board approval of the policy and the plan.</p> <p>Step 4. Adopt the policy and the plan.</p> <p>Step 5. Distribute the final board approved plan to all campus administrators and department heads as well as risk management staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of risk management
Time Frame	July 2004

The district does not review peer district risk management plans when revising its own plan.

Other school districts are good resources to assist in the development of an effective risk management plan. One district might have faced a same problem or situation and devised an innovative resolution. Every district in the nation has been faced with the escalating costs of insurance following the September 11, 2001, attacks. In Florida, hurricanes and severe storms have also played a significant role in rising premium costs. Often consortiums can be created to spread the risk and reduce each participant’s overall costs of insurance.

The director of risk management is a member of the Florida Educational Risk Management Association (FERMA). This membership provides the opportunity to network with other risk managers from within the state of Florida to discuss trends and experiences with respect to risk management. Although the director of risk management attends FERMA workshops, the review team was not provided with evidence that the district has incorporated FERMA recommendations into its risk management plan. The district is not adequately taking advantage of additional information channels that would allow it to build an effective risk management program. Action Plan 11-23 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-23

We recommend that the district research industry standards, peer district solutions, and programs developed by other risk managers to ensure the effectiveness of its own risk management program.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Select two members from the insurance committee to oversee industry research project.</p> <p>Step 2. Develop a questionnaire that can be sent to peer districts to request information regarding their risk management plan, insurance coverages in force and premium costs, and any special programs that have been initiated to reduce costs.</p> <p>Step 3. Distribute materials received in FERMA workshops to all members of the insurance committee.</p> <p>Step 4. Invite the district’s insurance broker to present industry trends to the insurance committee.</p> <p>Step 5. Incorporate innovative solutions into the district’s annual risk management plan.</p> <p>Step 6. Reevaluate industry trends and peer district plans annually.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of risk management
Time Frame	July 2004

Although the district has created an insurance committee to help it contain insurance costs, the committee make-up does not include the necessary functions to ensure success.

Currently, the committee consists of the associate superintendent for operational services, the executive director for human resources, the executive director for business services, and the director of risk management. The committee meets several times during the year to discuss the insurance programs and the renewal of coverage. During these meetings, they review the existing coverage, the financial position of the district, any proposed changes or revisions to the existing coverage, and the current conditions in the insurance market. The district's insurance broker is also present at these committee meetings.

In discussions with the district's safety manager and the director of risk management, it was clear that the district understands the need for effective risk management. However, the two functions are kept separate. The district's safety function is conducted by the Code Enforcement Department, a component of the Facilities Department. The Code Enforcement Department staff is not part of the insurance committee. Safety considerations should be an integral part of the district's risk management plan. Action Plan 11-24 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-24

We recommend that the district appoint the safety manager to the insurance committee.

Action Needed	Step 1. Appoint the safety manager to the insurance committee. Step 2. Incorporate safety initiatives into the committee meeting discussions.
Who Is Responsible	Director of risk management
Time Frame	October 2003

The district does not effectively evaluate its claims data to identify areas that could be improved.

Claims data can provide the district with a road map to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management program. This is especially the case with respect to its workers' compensation plan. The district is self-funded for its general liability, automobile liability, and workers' compensation insurance. This means the district assumes the liability for paying all claims incurred under these self-funded plans up to the policy limits. Many school districts choose to be self-funded as it can very often be more cost-effective than a fully insured plan because many of the expenses associated with a fully insured plan are eliminated and gains from better than expected claims experience belong to the district. In addition, a district with good claims experience does not have to subsidize employers with bad experience. However, in order to be effective in realizing the advantages of self-funding, the district must be disciplined about the eligibility of benefits, actual claim payments, and expenses. The district has assumed all of the risk between the normally anticipated claim level and the stop loss coverage level of \$10,000,000. In order to effectively contain costs, the district must have access to claims data, loss history, and premium costs so that it can track trends, identify problem areas, and design ways to address and resolve those problem areas. Action Plan 11-25 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-25

We recommend that the district develop report specifications to help track the effectiveness of the risk management plan and ensure that the district is adequately protected.

Action Needed	Step 1. Request that the district's insurance broker provide examples of risk management reports from industry. Step 2. Identify the data elements to include in the district's reports. Include, at a minimum, the following data items by insurance line: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims history for prior five years and percent change; • Loss run summary for prior five years and percent change; • Five-year premium history and percent change; • Five-year history of program cost per student and percent change; • Compare between the district and its peer districts; and • Compare between the district and the state of Florida. Step 3. Ensure that a complete inventory of the district's assets is maintained. Step 4. Define benchmarks for the district's risk management program. Step 5. Compile data and present statistics to insurance committee. Step 6. Repeat steps 3 through 5 annually.
Who Is Responsible	Director of risk management
Time Frame	March 2004 and annually thereafter

Best Practice 18: Using

District staff periodically monitors the district's compliance with various laws and regulations related to risk management.

School districts are 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. Florida law allows school districts 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. Due to the significant risks that school districts are exposed to, it is important that they effectively monitor compliance with the various laws and regulations related to risk management.

The Collier County School District uses the services of an insurance broker effectively to ensure that it is in compliance with all laws and regulations related to risk management. The plan is reviewed annually when coverages come up for renewal. Any changes in statutory requirements are addressed during the annual review. Risk management personnel maintain memberships in several organizations that allow the district to stay informed of state requirements, changes in state laws, and industry trends. Finally, the insurance broker works with the Risk Management Department to ensure that the district is in compliance with state laws, paying competitive rates, and are cognizant of industry trends.

Best Practice 19: Using

The district prepares appropriate written cost and benefit analyses for insurance coverage.

As mentioned previously, managing risks has become a critical component of school district operations. Rising costs of property, liability, and other insurance coverage has forced school districts to carefully evaluate the risks they are insuring and to identify ways to contain costs. Effective school districts regularly evaluate the costs of their risk management programs, compare their costs with their peers, and continually evaluate new risk management products to determine the cost benefit.

The Collier County School District strives to find innovative ways of minimizing its cost of insurance without jeopardizing its protection. It has experienced a consistent decrease in loss ratios for its general liability, educator's liability, and automobile liability/physical damage coverage. Each year, the district analyzes its insurance programs to ensure that it maintains the optimal levels of coverage. Too much

Cost Control Systems

insurance is an unnecessary cost and too little leaves the district vulnerable in the event of a major loss. Therefore, it is critical that the district periodically review its coverage.

Prior to the 2002-03 fiscal year renewal, the district's insurance broker informed the district of the certainty that it would be subject to major increases in insurance premiums. Certain carriers that had previously offered coverage in Florida left the market and those that stayed in the market were offering less coverage at higher premium levels. The district worked closely with the insurance broker to provide alternatives that would allow it to maintain adequate levels of coverage while minimizing premium costs. As a result of the careful study, the district was able to place its insurance coverage at a savings of \$285,000 over last year's premium. Had the district simply renewed its existing coverage, it would have seen an increase of \$980,000 in premium cost. The savings the district realized were a result of the following changes in coverage:

- Purchase of an aggregate package as opposed to separate lines of coverage;
- Higher deductibles;
- Removal of the medical payment provision from the general liability program;
- Self-insured retention amounts; and
- Internal adjusting of claims.

The district also elected to provide a \$15,000,000 self-insured retention through the appropriation of capital funds. This "deductible" reduced operating premium costs for building and contents by approximately \$437,000.

The district's insurance carriers provide loss control data and claim status via the Internet. This allows the district to access claim information quickly to respond to inquiries.

The district maintains a self-funded vandalism, breaking & entry budget to repair and/or replace equipment that has been stolen or damaged during vandalism or a break-in. There must be an official police or sheriff's report stating the method of break and enter. The district does not have to report these losses to its insurance carrier. This helps reduce the number of claims thereby keeping the district's property loss runs low. The reduction in claims keeps the district's premium costs in line.

Although the district is actively working to minimize its insurance coverage and meets this best practice, the following recommendations are intended to enhance the district's overall risk management program. First, the district does not effectively incorporate innovative solutions and cost-savings opportunities since it does not actively pursue this information. Risk management does not report industry trends or comparative data related to its insurance program.

Second, the board is not being informed about the losses incurred by the district on a regular basis. It is difficult to make decisions when the data is not available to examine trends and program effectiveness. The risk management program has been effective in controlling the cost of its liability, auto, and property coverage as well as reducing the number of reported claims. However, the number of workers' compensation reported claims have continued to increase. The board approves the risk management plan each year. It is important that the board follow losses to determine that the money is being well spent.

We recommend that the district actively pursue innovative solutions and cost savings opportunities and present loss data to the board annually.

PURCHASING

Best Practice 20: Not Using

The district has not established written policies and procedures to take maximum advantage of competitive bidding, volume discounts, and special pricing arrangements.

An effective purchasing system allows a school district to provide quality materials, supplies, and equipment in the right quantity in a timely, cost-effective manner. A good purchasing system has established purchasing policies implemented through effective and well-developed procedures. Careful planning and cost-effective practices such as bulk-purchasing and price/bid solicitation provide the framework for the efficient procurement of goods and services. School districts must also ensure that goods and services are obtained to the specifications of the users; at the lowest possible costs; and in accordance with applicable state laws and regulations.

Although the Collier County School District's purchasing function is well run, it is not using this best practice. The Purchasing Department does not have a procedures manual. It is in the process of developing one, having completed written bid and quote procedures. Action plan 11-7 in Best Practice 2 includes the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

There is a lack of communication between the Purchasing Department and some campuses and departments in the district.

Some campus and departmental staff do not understand the purchasing process and are frustrated as a result. In meetings with the buyers and the director of purchasing, it was clear that informal procedures and authorization guidelines exist. However, they are not being communicated down to the school and departmental user level. There is some confusion regarding purchasing thresholds, requisition authorization requirements, and purchasing authority. According to the food services procedures manual, the bid threshold is \$20,000. However, in the written procedures, the threshold is \$15,000. Additionally, some departments do not understand who within the district has the authority to approve, delay, or deny purchase orders. Communication is a critical component of success, something the director of purchasing clearly understands and is actively working to improve the communication between the Purchasing Department, the campuses, and the remaining departments within the district. There are a number of programs that the Purchasing Department could institute as a means of improving communication throughout the district.

At Houston Community College in Texas, the Purchasing Department regularly presents Lunch-n-Learn information sessions to increase communication with user divisions and promote understanding of purchasing policies and procedures. Staff is invited to bring their lunch to a series of Lunch-n-Learn meetings that have been offered and are open to all institution staff. Lunch-n-Learn meetings cover various topics such as purchasing policies and procedures, quote thresholds and requirements, competitive bid processes, uses of the Purchasing Department Web site, direct pay guidelines, and purchase order account codes. The presentations are concluded with a question and answer session, including opportunities for buyers to discuss issues directly with the department's customers. The executive director of purchasing leads the presentations and various buyers sit at the front of the room to personally identify themselves to their customers. The Lunch-n-Learn programs have resulted in a marked improvement in the perception of the department throughout the college. This concept would work well at the district, especially with the cafeteria facility located at the new administration building that is scheduled to begin serving food in the fall of 2003.

Many purchasing departments use a departmental web page that can be accessed by all district staff to provide information related to the purchasing process. This can be an excellent vehicle to open the lines of communication and clarify the district's purchasing policies and procedures. These policies and

procedures can be posted directly on the department’s Web page. Exhibit 11-16 provides an example of a table that could be posted to the web page that would answer a number of questions related to purchasing.

**Exhibit 11-16
Collier County School District Purchasing and Bidding Policies**

Purchase Levels	Bid Requirements (if no bid or contract exists)	Approval Requirements
\$15,000 and greater	Formal competitive sealed bid.	User department/school approvals Director of Purchasing Executive Director of MIS for technology purchases Director of Facilities for construction related purchases Superintendent or designee Board of Trustees
\$5,000 to \$14,999	Three or more quotes shall be solicited.	User department/school approvals Director of Purchasing Executive Director of MIS for technology purchases Director of Facilities for construction related purchases Superintendent or designee
\$0 to \$4,999	District ensures that the price paid for item is fair and that the cost of the item is not in excess of the published price or list price.	User department/school approvals Buyer

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Action Plan 11-26 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-26

We recommend that the district strive to improve communication between the Purchasing Department and district staff.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Develop a Lunch-n-Learn presentation that covers such topics as purchasing policies and procedures, quote thresholds and requirements, competitive bid processes, uses of the Purchasing Department Web site, direct pay guidelines, and purchase order account codes
	Step 2.	Send a Group-wise (E-mail) to all administrators and department heads identifying the program.
	Step 3.	Generate a schedule for three sessions during the year and provide the opportunity for participants to sign up.
	Step 4.	Investigate the feasibility of incorporating the development of a departmental Web-page into a student project.
	Step 5.	Determine what items should be posted to the departmental Web page, such as purchasing policies and procedures and purchase authorization requirements.
	Step 6.	Verify with MIS that the items can be posted and that the necessary programming staff is available.
	Step 7.	Post the information to the Web page.
	Step 8.	Send Group-wise (E-mail) to all staff notifying them that the information is available on the Web page.
	Step 9.	Update the information on the Web page as necessary.
Who Is Responsible	Director of purchasing	
Time Frame	March 2004 and updated as needed	

The district uses widespread blanket purchase orders to purchase products and services from selected vendors on an on-going basis.

Although there are instances when a blanket purchase order is acceptable, such as to pay monthly service fees, laboratory supplies that come from specialized vendors, or emergency automobile parts, they can be very difficult to effectively control. Blanket purchase orders are intended to reduce time and paperwork and enhance the system's ability to procure items that are purchased frequently from the same vendor. A purchase order is a legal contract obligating the organization to purchase stated goods or services. A blanket purchase order is no different.

Accounts payable staff is responsible for monitoring the activity on a blanket purchase order. In addition, the buyers monitor each blanket purchase order. The department has attempted to limit the number of blanket purchase orders by allowing department and school staff to increase and decrease an existing blanket purchase. If an increase is requested, the buyer ensures that the budget funds are available and forwards the request to the director of purchasing for approval. Although the level of control over blanket purchase orders at the district is better than that seen in most districts, the use of so many blanket purchase orders does raise some concerns, including:

- By their very nature, blanket purchase orders are difficult to control. When a number of employees are purchasing off the same blanket purchase order, it is difficult to ensure that they do not overspend. It is also difficult to identify what items are being purchased under those blankets that have a wide product line associated with them, such as the blanket purchase order for office supplies.
- The buyers and accounts payable staff are duplicating their efforts monitoring these blanket purchase orders.
- The district does not have written procedures in place to address blanket purchase orders.

Many districts use procurement cards to purchase small-dollar, recurring items instead of using blanket purchase orders. Procurement cards are credit cards issued by the district to designated employees. The district can set spending limits for each card when issued and place restrictions on the types of purchases made. Procurement cards are paid monthly to the issuing bank in one lump-sum payment. Cardholder charges can be reviewed daily, weekly, or monthly by the cardholder and accounts payable staff. The district has a number of blanket purchase orders to purchase products and services from a particular vendor on an ongoing basis. Procurement cards are designed to maintain control of expenses while reducing administrative costs associated with authorizing, tracking, and paying small, routine purchases. The district does not use procurement cards.

Industry experts recommend that the following best practices be in place in order for a procurement card program to be successful:

- *Ensure senior sponsorship of the program:* Successful procurement card programs require the support of senior management so that traditional purchasing policies and procedures can be reevaluated and replaced, when necessary, with a more efficient, cost-focused procurement system.
- *Establish program targets:* It is important to establish program targets to measure the performance of individual business units, as well as the district as a whole.
- *Integrate electronic delivery of the procurement card transactional data into the internal accounting system:* Due to the nature of the district's internal accounting structure, the majority of goods and services that are procured must be allocated specific account codes.
- *Implement a comprehensive training program:* Insufficient training is a major contributor to a majority of program performance issues such as, late bill payments, transaction splitting, off contract buying, and/or duplicate processing.
- *Create procurement card awareness package:* It is critical that the staff controlling the purchasing process within the district buy in to the plan as well as staff that are resistant to change.

Cost Control Systems

- *Optimize transactional and monthly procurement card limits:* Identifying optimal transactional and monthly spending limits for different procurement card users is instrumental to the success of the plan.

The benefits of using a district procurement card include:

- Allows employees to obtain certain goods and services more quickly;
- Sharply reduces paperwork and processing time both for the requesting department or campus and for the central administrative staff;
- Enables employees to be more efficient and to focus on the value-added aspects of their jobs; and
- Provides cost savings through consolidated payment to one vendor.

The director of purchasing does not feel that there can be enough controls established to deter abuse of the purchasing policy. However, controls can be put in place to ensure purchasing policies are not being abused. The distribution of procurement cards can be limited to authorized employees and controls can be built into the cards, allowing institutions to monitor, track, and evaluate employee-spending activities. Procurement cards can be limited by purchase amount and by a monthly maximum. Guidelines can be established that authorize a major bank to encode each card so that it is only accepted for certain types of goods or services. Each cardholder can be allowed only specific codes of purchases as assigned by the procurement card policy. In addition, specific vendors can be excluded if, for example, the district has a contract or preferred supplier agreement in place. Houston Community College has recently instituted a pilot program for a procurement card. The program includes the following controls:

- Single transaction limit of \$200;
- Monthly purchase limit of \$1,500;
- Monthly report by account code;
- Rejection report (purchases attempted by a cardholder that are not pre-assigned);
- Online review of transactions;
- Random cardholder audits;
- No authorized transactions for liquor, food, or cash withdrawals; and
- Use of the procurement card is a privilege and there is a zero-tolerance policy.

For a procurement card to be effectively controlled, there must be acceptance at the highest level and an understanding by all card users that abuse will not be tolerated. There must be a clear definition of what constitutes inappropriate or fraudulent card use. For example,

- Lack of proper documentation or repeated unreconciled transactions and prohibited purchases are examples of inappropriate use; and
- Purchasing personal items or returning items for cash are examples of fraudulent use.

Inappropriate card use should result in a minimum of a 30-day suspension of privileges. Fraudulent card use should result in the card privileges being revoked. There must be a strict policy in place to deal with any and all instances of abuse. For example, the policy could state the following:

“Any person or department responsible for initiating an illegal purchase (responsibility will be determined by appropriate associate superintendent with input from the director of purchasing) will be held personally accountable until the transaction is resolved. Resolution options are:

- To submit a letter signed by the individual AND the immediate supervisor and placed in the employee’s personnel file, which must include:
 - a. Description of the goods or services purchased;
 - b. Circumstances which led to the illegal purchase;
 - c. Justification for lack of prior purchasing services approval; and

d. Statement of actions being taken to prevent repetition of the situation.

- To return goods to the vendor for full credit, the individual may be required to pay restocking or other charges, if any;
- To pay for the goods or services personally from own funds, NOT from public funds; and
- Terminate employment if fraudulent use occurs and the employee is unwilling to reimburse the district for the purchases.”

Procurement cards have been shown to increase efficiency by removing the need to review small dollar purchases. Often these efficiencies translate into a reduction in the number of buyers required in the Purchasing Department. However, it is not possible to quantify the five-year savings that will be realized by the district by implementing a procurement card program, as it will take time to establish the program. Action Plan 11-27 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-27

We recommend that the district pilot a procurement card program and reduce the number of blanket purchase orders.

Action Needed	Step 1. Establish control guidelines and limits for the plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single transaction limit; • Monthly purchase limit; • Monthly report by account code; • Rejection report (purchases attempted by a cardholder that are not pre-assigned); • Online review of transactions; • Random cardholder audits; • No authorized transactions for liquor, food, or cash withdrawals; and • Zero-tolerance policy for abuse. Step 2. Define abuse of plan and establish recommended policy to deal with each type of abuse. Step 3. Meet with banking institution and MIS staff to identify system requirements. Step 4. Select the Transportation Department and high school principals as the pilot participants. Step 5. Prepare agenda item to present recommended policy to the board. Step 6. Approve pilot program and adopt policy. Step 7. Create a user manual for the plan. Step 8. Train pilot participants on the use of the procurement card including the penalties for abuse and the district’s zero tolerance policy. Step 9. Ensure system requirements and interface with ACCOUNTING SYSTEM are in place. Step 10. Initiate the pilot program. Step 11. Phase in procurement cards over the next fiscal year. Step 12. Establish strict limitations for using blanket purchase orders. Step 13. Post the procedures and limitations for blanket purchase orders on the department’s Web page.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, executive director of business services and director of purchasing
Time Frame	Pilot program initiated by March 2004 and district wide by June 2005

The district’s vendor database is not purged on a regular basis.

According to the accounting clerk, there are a number of duplicate vendors active in the vendor database. In addition, a quality issue could have occurred relating to a vendor causing the district to discontinue doing business with that particular vendor. If that vendor has a duplicate vendor number in the system, it could be used again. It is important to periodically purge the vendor database. This makes the vendor database easier to manage and ensures that only the highest quality vendors can do business with the

district. Purging the approved vendor list should be incorporated into the year-end closing process for the Purchasing Department. The criteria to purge a vendor should include the following:

- Any vendor that has not been used in two successive fiscal years;
- Any vendor that has provided less than \$500 worth of goods and services; and
- Any vendor that did not provide an acceptable level of quality.

Action Plan 11-28 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-28

We recommend that the district examine the vendor database to purge duplicate, idle, and unacceptable vendors prior to going live with the new accounting system.

Action Needed	Step 1. Request MIS run a current vendor report with the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor name; • Vendor address; • Vendor number; • Date of most recent purchase; and • Total purchases for fiscal year. Step 2. Export accounting system data into spreadsheet. Step 3. Sort vendors by name. Step 4. Highlight duplicate vendors, vendors not used for two or more years, and vendors with annual purchases less than \$500. Step 5. Remove or inactivate highlighted vendors from accounting system database.
Who Is Responsible	Director of purchasing
Time Frame	March 2004

INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Best Practice 21: Using

The district has not established written policies and procedures, but uses procedures for effective management of inventories.

Many school districts have chosen to centralize their warehousing function. In many instances, school district inventories include desirable items that are subject to misappropriation. Depending on the size of the warehousing function and the nature of the inventory items stored, it is essential that these school districts establish effective policies and procedures that ensure that the inventory assets are appropriately controlled, safeguarded, and accounted for.

The Collier County School District has three warehouses; a central warehouse that houses bulk food and commodities and miscellaneous office supplies, a transportation warehouse that houses the necessary parts to maintain district vehicles and buses; and a maintenance warehouse that contains maintenance stock used by the Maintenance Department on a regular basis.

The transportation warehouse maintains approximately \$239,000 of parts inventory throughout the year, with an ending balance of approximately \$162,000. In addition, the Transportation Department maintains a small parts stock, between \$7,000 and \$8,000, at its north and south compounds to deal with emergency service and repairs, because of the size of the county. The Transportation Department maintains its own vehicles in-house. The transportation warehouse includes repair bays, a parts inventory, and fuel storage. There are 3,578 line items maintained in the transportation warehouse and tracked in a perpetual inventory.

The maintenance warehouse maintains approximately \$250,000 in inventory. Each part that is taken out of the warehouse is billed directly to the work order. The Maintenance Department maintains telephones,

VCRs, and televisions in-house and stores replacement parts in the warehouse. In addition, the warehouse stores plumbing equipment, lumber and hardware, as well as one month's supply of air filters. There are approximately 2,500 line items maintained in the maintenance warehouse and tracked on-line.

The central warehouse houses bulk food and commodities for the Food Services Department and selected office and art supplies. The central warehouse inventory is not tracked on a computer system. However, the Food Services Department tracks the food inventory held at the warehouse, while the purchasing specialist tracks the office and art supplies.

Although the district is using this best practice, the district could improve central warehouse operations. The central warehouse staff has not automated its inventory to effectively track inventory held in the warehouse. By not tracking inventory on a computer system at the central warehouse, the warehouse staff cannot have a clear understanding of the inventory turnover rate, the average inventory on hand or what items may be depleted. Instead, the warehouse supervisor must rely on other departments to maintain optimal stocking levels. Paper records are difficult and time consuming to maintain and require a duplication of effort.

We recommend that the district track the central warehouse inventory electronically.

Best Practice 22: Not Using

The district does not periodically evaluate the warehousing function to determine its cost-effectiveness.

School districts that have centralized warehousing functions can meet this best practice by evaluating the total cost of its warehousing operation and comparing this cost with alternative inventory procurement services. Recently, many organizations have been reassessing the need to maintain central warehousing facilities by assessing the potential economies of outsourcing warehouse operations to inventory supply companies. Some organizational studies have found that some inventory suppliers can provide services comparable to the central warehouse function at costs equal or lower than the central warehouse function. The end result for these school districts has been to fully eliminate central warehouses and replace them with inventory supply delivery services for applicable and appropriate items.

The Collier County School District's Transportation and Maintenance Department each maintain a warehouse that holds a small contingency parts inventory for emergency repairs; inventory of other products is kept relatively low. The district operates a third warehouse, known as the central warehouse, that stores food service and office supplies. Central warehouse staff maintains the warehouse, receives and stocks product, and stages delivery to the schools. In addition, they deliver products for the print shop, coordinate surplus property movement, and respond to requests from schools and departments to transfer equipment between schools. Although the parts warehouses for the Transportation and Maintenance Departments are functioning effectively, the district does not effectively evaluate the cost-effectiveness of its warehousing function.

The district does not allocate inventory costs to the per-unit cost of inventory items to compare with other warehousing alternatives such as next-day or rapid response inventory services provided by vendors. Inventory costs include salary costs for warehouse stocking staff, equipment costs, and delivery costs. Although volume discounts are sometimes available for bulk purchases, it is not necessarily cost-effective to fund large amounts of idle inventory. The district maintains approximately \$750,000 in inventory; of this amount, approximately \$500,000 is held at the central warehouse. Without costing out the inventory on a per-unit basis, the district cannot ascertain whether its warehouse operation is cost-effective. Exhibit 11-17 presents an example of the data elements to consider when establishing benchmarks in a cost analysis based on a per-unit cost calculation.

**Exhibit 11-17
Inventory Allocation by Per-Unit Cost**

Item	Cost if Outsourced			Cost if Warehoused			Internal Cost per Unit
	Price per Unit	Delivery Cost	Cost per Unit	Volume Price per Unit	Staffing Cost	Equipment Cost	
Copy Paper	\$2.89	\$0.03	\$2.92	\$0.76	\$2.29 ¹	Not Known ²	\$3.05

¹ 0.15 hours at \$15.25 per hour.

² The district does not accumulate equipment costs in a way that permits allocating costs in this manner.

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Action Plan 11-29 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-29

We recommend that the district develop benchmarks to evaluate the per-unit cost of warehousing.	
Action Needed	Step 1. Develop criteria to calculate per-unit cost. Step 2. Research peer districts to determine their per-unit costs. Step 3. Compile results and develop benchmarks for per-unit cost. Step 4. Compare current costs with warehouse. Step 5. Eliminate non cost-effective inventory and purchase it directly off existing bid.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for business services, warehouse supervisor
Time Frame	August 2004.

The district lacks a central receiving function to ensure that all items invoiced have been properly received.

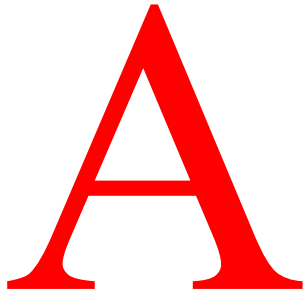
A central receiving function would enhance controls over major purchases and ensure that these items are properly tagged, received, and entered into the accounting system. Currently, accounts payable staff ensures that all items have been checked off on the receiving slip and follow up with the receiving party to confirm that the items were actually received before submitting any payment. This wastes time and resources and decreases the confidence level that all major purchases have been accounted for properly.

A central receiving function would allow district staff to tag fixed assets and enter them into the accounting system prior to being delivered to the requestor. This would improve the district's asset management system, ensuring that all new fixed asset purchases have been tagged and are properly tracked and maintained. A property record would be immediately created upon receipt of the item. Major purchases would be delivered to the central facility, signed for and received in the financial accounting system, and then delivered to the school or department. Action Plan 11-30 outlines steps the district can take to improve operations and use this best practice.

Action Plan 11-30

We recommend that the district consider establishing a central receiving department to serve the entire district and develop an interface with the financial computer system to effectively receive items.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Set the standards for which items should be received out of the central warehouse facility. For example, all technology purchases over a certain dollar threshold and all capital items.
	Step 2.	Determine what programming would be required to include a central receiving capability in the accounting system.
	Step 3.	Assign a programmer to the project.
	Step 4.	Test the interface to ensure it meets departmental needs.
	Step 5.	Establish receiving process and develop written procedures.
	Step 6.	Move asset management staff into new facility.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for business services and executive director for MIS.	
Time Frame	July 2005	



Action Plan

Management Structures

Action Plan 2-1

We recommend that the board develop a training plan that satisfies the needs of individual board members and also qualifies towards master board certification.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Develop a training plan for each board member. The plans should be based on the member's prior experience and interests, and should also consider the requirements necessary to obtain master board certification.
	Step 2.	Develop a training calendar to ensure that each board member obtains the necessary training requirements in a timely manner.
	Step 3.	Monitor the progress toward achieving individual board member training plans and master board certification quarterly and develop contingency plans for any anticipated training deficiencies.

Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and the board
Time Frame	June 2005

Action Plan 2-2

We recommend that the district school board develop a process for conducting self-evaluations.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Develop a plan and timeline for conducting self-evaluations.
	Step 2.	Determine whether the board chooses to use an outside consultant for assistance. If an outside consultant is used, develop a budget for the process.
	Step 3.	Contact other Florida school districts to obtain examples of the framework used for conducting self-evaluations.
	Step 4.	Compile a list of best practices from other Florida districts.
	Step 5.	Develop a process for conducting board self-evaluations using the best practices.
	Step 6.	Annually implement the board self-evaluation process.

Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and the board
Time Frame	March 2004

Action Plan 2-3

We recommend that the district hold one board business meeting and one Committee of the Whole meeting each month.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Revise the structure of current board meetings so that business meetings will be held one time per month.
	Step 2.	Develop a schedule of topics to be discussed at committee of the whole meetings monthly.

Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and the executive assistant to the superintendent
Time Frame	January 2004

Action Plan 2-4

We recommend that the board and the superintendent hold town hall meetings to allow for extensive public input and implement and enforce guidelines on public input during regular board business meetings.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Establish a schedule of town hall meetings to be held at various school locations around the county. A meeting should be scheduled in each of the county's districts and the superintendent and the board member representing the district should attend.
	Step 2.	Publicize the schedule of town hall meetings.
	Step 3.	Hold town hall meetings five times annually or more often as issues arise.

Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, board members and the district communications and information officer
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Time Frame	January 2004
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Action Plan 2-5

We recommend that staff prepare and present fiscal implications for all actions considered by the board.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Review all board action items to determine whether or not they have a fiscal impact.
	Step 2.	Present detailed financial data to the board for all action items determined to have a fiscal impact. This should include not only the anticipated amount of the item, but how the proposed item affects the budget, from what fund the item will be paid and whether the item is a one-time expenditure or a recurring expenditure.
	Step 3.	Consider all fiscal implications of board action items.

Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, executive director of business services and the board
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Time Frame	January 2004
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Performance Accountability Systems

Action Plan 3-1

We recommend that the district develop an accountability measurement system for all its operational functions and use performance data to inform management and to make policy decisions.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Assign the accountability and staff and school renewal division the responsibility and the oversight to assist operational directors with the development and monitoring of measurable goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 2. Conduct training for all operational department heads and managers on developing and monitoring measurable goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 3. Assign operational executive directors and directors the responsibility for identifying input and outcome measures and indicators of efficiency and effectiveness. Focus should be on desired results and outcomes, not just on activities. Each measure should be clearly defined and accountability and staff and school renewal staff must make sure that measures are adequate.</p> <p>Step 4. Assign operational executive directors and directors the responsibility of identifying how performance measures link to the budget and the measures in the strategic plan.</p> <p>Step 5. Assign program directors and supervisors the responsibility of reviewing program-level performance measures with staff of each major program to ensure that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet district expectations; and • Clearly and logically relate to those developed at various other district administrative levels such as those in school improvement plans and the strategic plan. <p>Step 6. For each performance measure, operational executive directors and directors should identify the data needed and provide the information below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will collect performance data and how often? What is the source of the data (e.g., state or district reports)? • In what format is the data needed? • How often should the data be collected? • Who (program staff, department head, assistant superintendent, superintendent, school board) will the data are reported to and how often? • How should the data be used? <p>Step 7. For each performance measure, the operational executive directors and directors should identify benchmarks the district should adopt as standards or expectations for performance to be achieved within the next budget cycle.</p> <p>Step 8. Present the proposed measures and standards to the superintendent and board for approval.</p> <p>Step 9. The superintendent should direct all schools and divisions to collect data on the measures.</p> <p>Step 10. Operational executive directors and directors should periodically evaluate the performance and cost-efficiency measures.</p> <p>Step 11. Operational executive directors and directors select a few critical performance and cost-efficiency measures that should be reported periodically to school board members, superintendent, parents and taxpayers to demonstrate how well the program is performing. The district could use communication resources such as TV broadcasting, brochures, Web Page and schools' bulletin boards.</p>
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Who Is Responsible	Executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal
Time Frame	February 2004

Action Plan 3-2

We recommend that Accountability and Staff and School Renewal Division review all major goals and objectives and ensure that all objectives are measurable.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Review all goals and objectives for major instructional and non-instructional programs and functions.
	Step 2.	Provide assistance and guidance to the department heads and managers needing help in developing measurable goals and objectives.
	Step 3.	Review the progress of developing measurable goals and objectives on a quarterly basis.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal	
Time Frame	February 2004	

Action Plan 3-3

We recommend that the district implement a peer review process to monitor instructional programs.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Assign the executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal the responsibility of establishing a peer review process.
	Step 2.	The executive director develops a process for conducting peer reviews and conducts training for instructional staff. The process should include the steps required for obtaining the necessary data from the accountability data warehouse system.
	Step 3.	The executive director and the associate superintendent for curriculum and instructional programs assign instructional staff the responsibility of monitoring and reviewing programs.
	Step 4.	The executive director develops a peer review calendar that complements the district's evaluation calendar and allows peer review findings to guide or prioritize full evaluation efforts.
	Step 5.	The appropriate instructional staff conducts program reviews according to the review calendar.
	Step 6.	The executive director provides continuous oversight for the peer review process and reviews final program review reports.
	Step 7.	The executive director for presents peer reviews to the superintendent's cabinet and to the school board as necessary.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal	
Time Frame	January 2004 and on-going	

Action Plan 3-4

We recommend that the district regularly evaluate operational programs against established objectives and goals and present the results to the board.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Develop processes and procedures that outline the regular review of operational objectives.
	Step 2.	Conduct training for all department heads and managers on the review process.
	Step 3.	Periodically compare district performance data to data from other, comparable districts or programs to determine whether the district could improve its operations.
	Step 4.	Based on the ongoing analysis described in Step 3 above, identify undesirable trends in performance and cost that need more in-depth evaluation.
	Step 5.	Conduct more in-depth evaluations to identify the cause and potential remedies to address trends identified in Step 4. Put the results of these in-depth evaluations in writing.
	Step 6.	At least annually, report performance related to high-level measures to the school board. Provide the written results of in-depth evaluations to the school board.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for accountability and staff and school renewal	
Time Frame	February 2004 and on going.	

Educational Service Delivery

Action Plan 4-1

We recommend that the district require individual campuses to include additional specific strategies in their school improvement plans that focus on increasing the participation of students with disabilities in regular education environments.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Review current data on placement and in-school suspension for students with disabilities on a campus-by-campus basis. Develop specific targets for each campus to increase the time students with disabilities spend in regular education. Specifically address (a) increasing the percentage of EMH students in regular education settings and (b) reducing the rate of in-school suspension of students with disabilities.
	Step 2.	Incorporate the targets into individual school improvement plans.
	Step 3.	Develop a staff development plan that provides strategies for regular education administrators and teachers.
	Step 4.	Provide additional staff development according to the plan.
	Step 5.	Evaluate each school's progress at the end of 2003-04.
	Step 6.	Evaluate overall progress of the district at the end of 2003-04.
	Step 7.	Revise school improvement plans and set targets for the 2004-05 school year.
Who Is Responsible	Associate superintendent of curriculum and instructional services, director of exceptional student education and director of staff development	
Time Frame	June 2004	

Action Plan 4-2

We recommend that the district continue its efforts to reduce the over-representation of black students in the EMH category.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Review the existing <i>Continuous Monitoring and Improvement Plan</i> submitted to the state.
	Step 2.	Disaggregate referral data by campus and identify campuses with higher than the district average of referrals of Black students in this category.
	Step 3.	Analyze data to determine age of referral, specific learning problems (i.e., reading) and gender.
	Step 4.	Modify the existing plan to include specific pre-referral strategies for campuses with the highest rates of referral.
	Step 5.	Train campus staff members on effective instructional techniques, modifications and accommodations.
	Step 6.	Evaluate data and review progress at the end of the 2003-04 school year.
Who Is Responsible	Exceptional student education director	
Time Frame	June 2004	

Action Plan 4-3

We recommend that the district begin to file for Medicaid reimbursement in the Certified Match Program.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	After completing the transportation and services worksheets, request bids from accounting or other firms with experience filing Medicaid claims.
	Step 2.	Conduct a needs analysis to determine how many, if any, additional staff will be required for claim filing.
	Step 3.	Conduct a cost-benefit study to ensure the profitability of participation in the program and to estimate revenue after expenses.
	Step 4.	Train staff in documentation procedures.
	Step 5.	Assign a team to visit other districts to gather information related to filing procedures.
	Step 6.	Work with the budget director to begin the process.
	Step 7.	File quarterly.
Who Is Responsible	Director of exceptional student education and executive director of student services.	
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing	

Action Plan 4-4

We recommend that the district explore the assignment and use of "severity aides" to determine the benefits of such positions and work the Florida Department of Education to clarify its position regarding extended school year services.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Review data for Collier and other districts regarding assignment of severity aides as well as provision of extended school year services.
	Step 2.	Provide staff development for campus principals and teachers regarding both issues.
	Step 3.	Evaluate current research regarding possible benefits/drawbacks to one-to-one services as well as constant schedule of programming.
	Step 4.	Work with Florida Department of Education staff to clarify responsibilities as well as "best practice" in the two areas.
	Step 5.	Establish on-going information sessions with families to clarify understanding of these issues in terms of legal requirements and best interests of students.
Who Is Responsible	Director of exceptional student education	
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing	

Action Plan 4-5

We recommend that the district modify its Plan B for identifying low income and minority students as gifted.

Action Needed	Step 1. Use the existing CHALLENGE Program Task Force to review the current Plan B, focusing specifically on the points raised in this report.
	Step 2. Modify Plan B to focus less on achievement and more on best performance of students.
	Step 3. Resubmit Plan B to the Florida Department of Education for approval.
	Step 4. Implement Plan B during the 2004-05 school year.
	Step 5. Establish annual evaluation procedures to ensure Plan B is having the intended outcomes of increasing the number of identified low income and minority students as gifted.
	Step 6. Revise Plan B as needed.
Who Is Responsible	Director of exceptional student education, coordinator of gifted services and executive director/instructional services 6-12
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing

Action Plan 4-6

We recommend that the district formally rewrite its Continuous Improvement/Self Assessment Monitoring Plan for indicator for disproportionate representation of student membership in programs for the gifted.

Action Needed	Step 1. Develop new improvement strategies designed to increase the disproportionate representation of student membership in programs for the gifted with input from the CHALLENGE task force and other stakeholders.
	Step 2. Write a new Continuous Improvement/Self Monitoring Plan for this indicator.
	Step 3. Collect yearly data on the number of students identified for the gifted program and disaggregate by the following subgroups: minority, low income, ESOL, and twice exceptional.
	Step 4. Track the data to determine if the plan's benchmarks are being met. Revise the plan as needed.
	Step 5. Use the results for planning purposes and staff development.
Who Is Responsible	Director of exceptional student education , coordinator of gifted services
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing

Action Plan 4-7

We recommend that the district develop a set of standard procedures for teachers to document the methods used to differentiate the curriculum and to document how they meet the goals of Educational Plans

Action Needed	Step 1. Use the existing CHALLENGE Program Task Force to develop a set of standard procedures for teachers of gifted students to use to document differentiation.
	Step 2. Train teachers to use the new procedures.
	Step 3. Incorporate the degree to which teachers use the new procedures in their teacher evaluations.
Who Is Responsible	Director of exceptional student education, coordinator of gifted services and executive director/instructional services 6-12
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing

Action Plan 4-8

We recommend that the district develop staffing formulas for the central office.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Review professional standards and those used by peer districts for allocating staff to the central office.
	Step 2.	Determine staffing levels that would be most appropriate for the Collier County School District's central administration.
	Step 3.	Adopt central office staffing formulas.
	Step 4.	Revise central office staffing using the formulas.
	Step 5.	Revisit the appropriateness of the staffing decisions after they have been implemented and revise the formulas if necessary.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent	
Time Frame	September 2003 and ongoing	

Administration and Instructional Technology

Action Plan 5-1

We recommend that the district establish a technology planning committee consisting of principals, teachers, administrative staff, technical staff parents and community members that develops and oversees the implementation of the technology plan.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Identify members, functions and meeting frequency of the new committee.
	Step 2.	Inform associate superintendent of operational services of members, functions and meeting frequency of the new committee for approval.
	Step 3.	Upon approval, inform members and district regarding the new committee.
	Step 4.	Conduct quarterly meetings.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of MIS	
Time Frame	November 2003	

Action Plan 5-2

We recommend that the district revise and develop goals and tasks for the district's technology plan that are measurable and assign a specific cost and timeline to each task.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Establish guidelines regarding writing measurable tasks and goals for the technology plan.
	Step 2.	Establish guidelines regarding the fiscal impact and timeline of the technology plan tasks.
	Step 3.	Revise tasks and goals of the technology plan based on new guidelines.
	Step 4.	Review and approve revised tasks and goals.
Who Is Responsible	Technology steering committee	
Time Frame	January 2004	

Action Plan 5-3

We recommend that the needs assessment process include network infrastructure, technical support and professional development components in addition to a software and hardware assessment.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Establish guidelines to incorporate all pertinent data into the needs assessment process.
	Step 2.	Review and approve the new needs assessment components.
	Step 3.	Notify schools and departments regarding the new needs assessment components.
	Step 4.	Ensure the district uses the new broad needs assessment process for the next assessment cycle.
Who Is Responsible	MIS director	
Time Frame	January 2004	

Action Plan 5-4

We recommend that the district improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its technical support service by creating a multi-level service standard.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Identify service standards based on input from principals, building technology coordinators, and department heads.
	Step 2.	Provide the new service standards to technology steering committee for approval.
	Step 3.	Upon approval publish and communicate the new service standards to all district staff.
	Step 4.	Review and update service standards based on the changing needs of the district.
Who Is Responsible	Coordinator of network services	
Time Frame	February 2004	

Action Plan 5-5

We recommend that the district improve efficiency and effectiveness of its technical support service by creating an equipment replacement policy.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Create minimum standards for existing equipment based on the applications, warranty, maintenance, and support costs.
	Step 2.	Compare the district's equipment inventory with the new minimum standard.
	Step 3.	Identify the equipment that needs to be replaced.
	Step 4.	Develop a multi-year replacement policy based on the number of units that need to be replaced.
	Step 5.	Update the minimum equipment standards and the replacement policy based on the application and support cost changes.
Who Is Responsible	MIS director	
Time Frame	February 2004	

Action Plan 5-6

We recommend that the district give Building Training Coordinators (BTCs) and principals access to work order information and meet with principals regularly regarding technical support issues.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Identify the work order reporting and access needs based on input from principals and building technology coordinators.
	Step 2.	Develop appropriate reports and user accounts to meet the work order information needs of the principals and building technology coordinators.
	Step 3.	Notify all principals and building technology coordinators regarding access to reports and information.
	Step 4.	Schedule regular meetings with school principals to discuss technical support issues.

Who Is Responsible	Executive director, MIS
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Time Frame	October 2003
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Action Plan 5-7

We recommend that the district provide customized technical training to system support technicians and include the completion of the training program part of the annual evaluation process for system support technicians.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Identify training program based on the skill level of each system support technician.
	Step 2.	Inform system support technicians of training program and evaluation process.
	Step 3.	Monitor and evaluate training program results on system support technicians' yearly evaluation.

Who Is Responsible	Network analyst
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Time Frame	January 2004
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Personnel Systems and Benefits

Action Plan 6-1

We recommend that the district collect, analyze and report turnover data for all employee groups and use the results to identify and address trends and issues related to turnover and employee morale.

Action Needed:	Step 1.	Review and strengthen the current exit interview process by ensuring that all employees complete exit interview forms, including all non-instructional and administrative employees.
	Step 2.	Review the exit interview form to ensure that reasons for leaving are varied enough to provide the district with meaningful feedback and determine which additional criteria the district wants to monitor, for example, location, length of employment and other similar criteria.
	Step 3.	Determine the critical turnover information that should be presented in the employee turnover report.
	Step 4.	Draft a report format with narrative analyses and present to the superintendent for approval. The report should allow both a short-term and historical look at key criteria.
	Step 5.	Review the reports semi-annually for teachers and administrators and quarterly for non-instructional personnel.
	Step 6.	Prepare annual turnover reports on all classes of personnel to identify turnover trends and present them to senior leadership and the board.
	Step 7.	Develop strategies to address the identified turnover trends.
	Step 8.	Determine costs associated with the strategies and compare to the benefits of reducing turnover, including the lowered turnover costs.
	Step 9.	Present the strategies and cost analyses to the superintendent and board for approval.
	Step 10.	Implement the approved strategies.
	Step 11.	Review the strategies and develop progress reports for presentation to the superintendent and the board.

Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources
Time Frame	August 2004

Action Plan 6-2

We recommend the district develop district wide incentives designed to reduce absenteeism for all classes of employees, especially for teachers.

Action Needed:	Step 1.	Collect absenteeism data for different types of positions throughout the district.
	Step 2.	Analyze the data to determine absenteeism trends for the different classes of employees.
	Step 3.	Contact peers and other Florida districts to determine which absenteeism reducing incentives they use for different classes of employees and which incentives work best.
	Step 4.	Determine the effectiveness of current incentives.
	Step 5.	Devise district wide incentives to reduce absenteeism for the different classes of employees.
	Step 6.	Determine cost/benefit of the different incentive plans.
	Step 7.	Identify funding sources necessary to implement the incentives.
	Step 8.	Submit the proposed incentives to the superintendent and board for approval.
	Step 9.	Implement the incentives.
	Step 10.	Continue to track and analyze absenteeism data to determine the effectiveness of the incentives.
	Step 11.	Eliminate incentives that are not working.

Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources
Time Frame	August 2005

Action Plan 6-3

We recommend the district define excessive absenteeism and enact an excessive absenteeism policy to address potential abuses of sick leave benefits.		
Action Needed:	Step 1.	Contact peer and other Florida school districts and request copies of excessive absenteeism policies.
	Step 2.	Draft an excessive absenteeism policy that meets the unique needs of the district.
	Step 3.	Submit the excessive absenteeism policy to the superintendent and board for approval. Notify the appropriate union of any proposed changes.
	Step 4.	Communicate the policy to all employees.
	Step 5.	Train administrators and supervisors on how to implement and enforce the policy.
	Step 6.	Implement and enforce the excessive absenteeism policy.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources	
Time Frame	January 2004	

Action Plan 6-4

We recommend the district offer additional training to substitute teachers and develop guidelines for schools regarding the additional training and support resources presented to long-term substitutes.		
Action Needed:	Step 1.	Modify the substitute orientation program to create a refresher course for substitute teachers and substitute instructional assistants.
	Step 2.	Make open spaces in in-service courses available to substitute teachers at no cost.
	Step 3.	Require substitute teachers to attend the refresher course once every two years to remain active.
	Step 4.	Solicit feedback from long term substitutes, teachers, team leaders and building level administrators on what additional training and support is needed for long-term substitutes.
	Step 5.	Work with the Office of Accountability and Staff and School Renewal to identify training opportunities and procedures for long-term substitutes.
	Step 6.	Compile the feedback and use this feedback to develop draft guidelines on what additional training and support should be provided.
	Step 7.	Present the guidelines to building level administrators and selected teachers to determine the feasibility of the guidelines.
	Step 8.	Revise the guidelines based on the feedback provided by the administrators and teachers.
	Step 9.	Present the guidelines the superintendent for approval.
	Step 10.	Communicate the guidelines to building level administrators, teachers and potential long-term substitutes.
	Step 11.	Implement the guidelines.
Who Is Responsible	Coordinator of compensation, substitute personnel specialist and director of staffing	
Time Frame	August 2005	

Action Plan 6-5

We recommend the district closely monitor filing and assess cost and time of manual filing.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Continue implementation of new filing plan.
	Step 2.	Monitor filing under new procedures.
	Step 3.	Assess compliance with rules requiring filing be done daily.
	Step 4.	Assess time and cost of manually filing records.
	Step 5.	Report to district administrators quarterly on effectiveness of new plan, employee time and cost of manual filing.
Who Is Responsible	Director of staffing and executive director of human resources	
Time Frame	August 2005	

Action Plan 6-6

We recommend the human resource department explore the available alternatives for imaging personnel files as a long range solution to personnel file management.

Action Needed:	Step 1.	Discuss software and hardware needs for an electronic filing system for personnel records with the management information services (MIS) Department.
	Step 2.	Determine what resources (equipment, software, personnel) would be necessary to complete the transition in house.
	Step 3.	Prepare a cost estimate of completing the project in-house based on the identified resources, in coordination with the MIS department.
	Step 4.	Explore outsourcing and equipment sharing alternatives.
	Step 5.	Prepare a cost estimate of the alternatives.
	Step 6.	Prepare a comparison of the costs of completing the project in-house and the costs of the alternatives.
	Step 7.	Present the comparison to senior management for feedback.
Who Is Responsible	Director of staffing and executive director of human resources	
Time Frame	August 2005	

Action Plan 6-7

We recommend that the district work with its third party administrator to develop a strategy to identify loss patterns and tailor programs focused on addressing worker groups with a high incidence of reported claims.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Meet with the TPA to define the reporting requirements, determine what reports are available and train the adjuster to understand and use the TPA's database.
	Step 2.	Establish annual goals and objectives to reduce the number of reported claims. Set 2002-03 as the baseline year and set thresholds to reduce claims by an established percentage each year. Develop variance reports to help track the district's performance. Included in these reports should be any "extraordinary" events that either kept the district from meeting its goals or resulted in a greater reduction than expected.
	Step 3.	Develop employee education programs to respond to identified accident trends or to deal with a specific worker classification that may be experiencing a high number of similar claims. Design a tool to measure the impact of the program, such as a participant survey and track the future claims to identify future training needs and evaluate the effectiveness of the program in reducing related claims.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and director of risk management	
Time Frame	June 2004	

Action Plan 6-8

We recommend that the district restructure its light duty “return-to-work” program.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Collect data on the current light duty “return-to-work” program to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Include an analysis of the cost of the light duty program in terms of the cost of continued payment.
	Step 2.	Establish measurable goals and objectives for the program such as to preserve, as closely as possible, a worker’s pre-disability earning capacity; to reduce a workers’ period of disability; to reduce or avoid negative effects on a worker resulting from long term absences from work; to retain a worker’s employment skills; to improve a worker’s physical and psychological well being after a work-related disability; to assist a worker maintain dignity and self-esteem; and to continually monitor the progress of each participant in the program to determine when, or if, he or she can return to their pre-disability position.
	Step 3.	Establish a physical evaluation criterion to ensure the worker does not stay in the light duty program longer than is medically necessary.
	Step 4.	Require that all school administrators and department heads create at least two light duty tasks that injured workers could perform. Examples include telephone reception, light filing and proof-reading.
	Step 5.	Forward the job descriptions of the light duty tasks to the adjuster.
	Step 6.	Compile the list of light duties and forward it to the district’s primary care physicians to ensure that the duties meet the physical constraints an employee returning to work could face.
	Step 7.	Meet with staff development to review the job descriptions and develop a training program for the employees returning to work.
	Step 8.	Incorporate English adult education classes into the light duty “return-to-work” program.
	Step 9.	Track the number of employees that have returned to work under the light duty program.
	Step 10.	Develop an evaluation tool to ensure the department and campus needs are being met by the light duty workers.
	Step 11.	Follow-up with the light duty workers to determine when, or if, they can return to their prior position or can take on additional tasks.
	Step 12.	Maintain an inventory of light duty tasks.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and director of risk management	
Time Frame	January 2004.	

Action Plan 6-9

We recommend that the district use claim history data to develop its workers’ compensation budget.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Analyze the average cost per claim experienced over a ten-year period, a five-year period and the last fiscal year to identify the cost trend. Determine the percentage increase and evaluate what percent increase should be applied to the next year’s budget. Include an evaluation of staffing trends and projections to ensure that additional growth in staff is considered in the percentage that is used.
	Step 2.	Apply the percentage change to the budget for the next year.
	Step 3.	Repeat steps 1 and 2 annually.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and director of risk management	
Time Frame	February 2004 and annually thereafter.	

Action Plan 6-10

We recommend that the district expand the role of the claims review committee to include evaluating the effectiveness of the overall workers' compensation program.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Assign the safety manager to sit on the claims review committee. When necessary, include the health and safety inspectors in the committee meetings.</p> <p>Step 2. Assign the executive director of business services or his designee to sit on the claims review committee.</p> <p>Step 3. Present claims statistics to the committee each quarter. Include the following items: 5 year trend of the number of claims (total claims, claims by worker classification, claims by site); 5 year trend of claim costs (total claims, average cost per claim for all claims, average cost per claim by worker classification, average cost per claim by site); and action plans.</p> <p>Step 4. Identify areas where additional education programs are necessary and identify responsible personnel to develop the programs.</p> <p>Step 5. Report safety measures being initiated by the district at each committee meeting.</p> <p>Step 6. Prepare financial justification for each potential settlement and determine if the budget is available.</p> <p>Step 7. Develop performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall workers' compensation program.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources, executive director of business services and director of risk management.
Time Frame	February 2004

Action Plan 6-11

We recommend that the district purchase aggregate stop gap coverage for its workers' compensation plan of \$2,000,000.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Meet with insurance broker to prepare request for quote for aggregate stop gap coverage.</p> <p>Step 2. Review quotes with insurance broker</p> <p>Step 3. Prepare agenda item for board explaining and recommending the coverage and the carrier.</p> <p>Step 4. Receive board approval for the additional coverage.</p> <p>Step 5. Purchase the additional coverage.</p> <p>Step 6. Include the aggregate stop gap coverage in the district's annual quote for insurance coverage.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and director of risk management
Time Frame	October 2003

Action Plan 6-12

We recommend that the district annually present a workers' compensation report card to the board.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Analyze claim data for the prior five years to identify trends in the number of reported claims, the total cost of claims and the average cost per claim. Include trends for all claims, for claims by worker classification and for claims by site. Graph the results.
	Step 2.	Prepare flowcharts that illustrate the steps taken by staff to reduce claims and contain costs. For example, a training workshop on lifting techniques reduced the number of reported back injuries by 10 percent.
	Step 3.	Meet with claims review committee to develop the plan for the upcoming year.
	Step 4.	Develop report card for the board.
	Step 5.	Present report card to the board at September board meeting.
	Step 6.	Repeat steps 1 through 5 annually.
Who Is Responsible	Director of risk management and safety manager	
Time Frame	September 2004 and Annually thereafter.	

Action Plan 6-13

We recommend that the district reorganize the risk management department by combining the workers' compensation staff and the safety staff.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Eliminate the workers' compensation coordinator position and create an Investigator position that reports directly to the executive director of human resources.
	Step 2.	Reassign the safety manager and health and safety inspectors to the risk management department.
	Step 3.	Adopt a new organization chart as illustrated in Exhibit 6-12.
	Step 4.	Revise the job descriptions to reflect the new reporting hierarchy.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and director of risk management	
Time Frame	August 2003.	

Action Plan 6-14

We recommend the human resource department identify key areas and develop annually measurable goals and objectives for a five-year period and evaluate progress towards these goals on an annual basis.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	Evaluate the human resource department functions to identify key areas for improvement and essential performance measures.
	Step 2.	Contact peer and other Florida district human resource departments and determine what goals and performance measures, if any, they have for the identified functions and how they measure completion of the goals.
	Step 3.	Develop, with the assistance of senior human resources staff, measurable goals and objectives for the identified key areas.
	Step 4.	Develop timelines for accomplishing identified goals and objectives.
	Step 5.	Develop a status report timeline.
	Step 6.	Review the goals and objectives on at least an annual basis.
	Step 7.	Update goals and objectives as necessary.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources	
Time Frame	August 2004	

Action Plan 6-15

We recommend the human resource department perform cost/benefit analysis on major decisions and document the ongoing cost savings from improvements.

Action Needed	Step 1. Investigate the costs of new initiatives.
	Step 2. Identify the benefits to implement the new initiatives, including any potential cost savings.
	Step 3. Analyze the costs and the benefits of the initiatives and prepare a report.
	Step 4. Present cost/benefit analysis to appropriate decision-makers, both inside and outside the department.
	Step 5. Retain the reports.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of human resources and designees
Time Frame	March 2004

Facilities Construction

Action Plan 7-1

We recommend that the district systematically evaluate estimated construction costs when considering new schools and present this information to the school board.

Action Needed	Step 1. Collect appropriate benchmark data from peer groups, state schools districts and other public and private sources related to new school construction. Data should be grouped by school type and size and collected at an appropriate level of detail to provide meaningful comparisons.
	Step 2. Prepare a detailed analysis of the district's historical and current construction costs (and estimated costs for new designs under consideration).
	Step 3. Prepare a presentation to the board comparing the costs of the current prototypes in use by the district to the cost of other schools of the same type throughout the state.
	Step 4. Prior to the approval of any new prototype design, prepare for the board a concise summary of the estimated costs of the various designs under consideration.
	Step 5. Prior to the approval of any new construction, provide the board with a comparison of the budget for the design under consideration to the budgets of other peer school districts in the state (using their respective Facilities Five-Year Work Programs as a basis for comparison).
	Step 6. Prepare a justification for all projects that exceed benchmark data, in terms of square feet per student station, cost per square foot and/or cost per student station.
	Step 7. Prepare recommendations for potential cost reduction to bring district costs in line with benchmark data where appropriate.
	Step 8. Present the analysis to the board for the district's historical and current projects and as appropriate for all future projects.
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the direction of the executive director for facilities management
Time Frame	April 2004

Action Plan 7-2

We recommend that the district adopt a formal policy for compliance or non-compliance with SMART school design philosophy. Even if the district continues with its decision not to follow SMART school design, the policy should be carefully considered and justified by the district.

Action Needed	Step 1. Evaluate whether the SMART school design philosophy is in line with district objectives.
	Step 2. Prepare a recommendation for compliance or non-compliance with SMART school design philosophy.
	Step 3. Adopt a written policy related to SMART school design.
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the direction of the executive director for facilities management, school board
Time Frame	April 2004

Action Plan 7-3

We recommend that the district adopt a school board policy for the consideration of life-cycle cost analyses.

Action Needed	Step 1. Determine the parameters to be measured in a life-cycle cost analysis.
	Step 2. Prepare a recommendation for life-cycle cost analysis policy in order to design, construct, select equipment for and furnish new facilities to minimize maintenance and operations costs.
	Step 3. Adopt a written policy related to life-cycle cost analysis.
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the direction of the executive director for facilities management, school board
Time Frame	April 2004

Action Plan 7-4

We recommend that the district adopt a school board policy for maximizing passive design and “green architecture” concepts and techniques.

Action Needed	Step 1. Identify the passive design and “green architecture concepts to be maximized.
	Step 2. Identify prevailing environmental influences that will impact the district.
	Step 3. Prepare a recommendation for green architecture policy.
	Step 4. Adopt a written policy related to green architecture to take advantage of, or minimize the negative impact of, the prevailing environmental influences.
	Step 5. Consider passive design when selecting new prototypes and when updating existing prototypes as a basis for new construction.
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the direction of the executive director for facilities management, school board
Time Frame	April 2004

Action Plan 7-5

We recommend that the district regularly assess and revise facility designs and construction practices to ensure it minimizes maintenance and operations costs based on appropriate standards from comparable school districts, government agencies and private industry.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Assess and revise facility designs and construction practices.</p> <p>Step 2. Determine the parameters to be tracked.</p> <p>Step 3. When changes to existing prototypes are considered or proposed, estimate the impact of the change on construction and/or operating costs.</p> <p>Step 4. Estimate operating costs when considering new prototypes. When new prototypes are considered, present estimated operating costs for the various designs under consideration.</p> <p>Step 5. Prepare a recommendation for the analysis of operating costs when considering new facilities design.</p> <p>Step 6. Adopt a school board policy related to the analysis of operating costs for new facilities.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the direction of the executive director for facilities management, school board
Time Frame	April 2004

Action Plan 7-6

We recommend that the district establish and adopt a formal program to 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.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Establish individual responsibility for the preparation of post occupancy evaluations. If district staff is unavailable, consider the use of third-party consultants with post occupancy evaluation experience.</p> <p>Step 2. If third-party consultants are to be used, make appropriate recommendations to the board and hire consultants.</p> <p>Step 3. Prepare format for post occupancy evaluations and develop data collection tools.</p> <p>Step 4. Collect data from all appropriate personnel for each school built within the last three years and for each school using current prototypes.</p> <p>Step 5. Prepare post occupancy evaluations.</p> <p>Step 6. Make recommendations for new school construction and updates to school prototypes based on the results of the post occupancy evaluation.</p> <p>Step 7. Present summary evaluations and recommendations to the board and other interested parties.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of facilities planning and construction under the supervision of the executive director for facilities management,
Time Frame	June 2004

Action Plan 7-7

We recommend that the district establish an accountability system that sets clear priorities and expectations for the construction program in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Establish individual responsibility for the development of an accountability system.</p> <p>Step 2. Develop appropriate goals and benchmarks for facilities construction to ensure the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the construction program. Establish objectives stated clear, measurable statements that in turn drive the data that should be collected and how “success” will be determined and reported.</p> <p>Step 3. Seek appropriate district approval of goals and accountability program.</p> <p>Step 4. Collect appropriate benchmark data for measurability of the goals established by the accountability program (see Action Plan 7-8).</p> <p>Step 5. Establish and adopt a regular periodic reporting system that will provide meaningful measurement of the department’s progress in meeting the goals of the accountability system.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for facilities management under the supervision of the associate superintendent for operational services.
Time Frame	April 2004 for initial presentation, annually thereafter.

Action Plan 7-8

We recommend that the district collect and report appropriate performance and cost-efficiency benchmark data from adjoining districts and/or the state and use this data to evaluate program performance and for management decision-making.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Establish individual responsibility for the collection of benchmark data.</p> <p>Step 2. Collect appropriate benchmark data for measurability of the goals established by the accountability program in Action Plan 7-7.</p> <p>Step 3. Prepare and present goals and performance measures to the board (see Action Plan 7-9).</p> <p>Step 4. Prepare annual updates.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for facilities management under the supervision of the associate superintendent for operational services.
Time Frame	April 2004 for initial presentation, annually thereafter.

Action Plan 7-9

We recommend that the district establish and adopt a policy to evaluate and where applicable improve construction operations, based on the results of measurement against the goals and performance measures established in Best Practice 23 above and report its progress toward meeting its goals, objectives and benchmarks on an annual basis.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Establish individual responsibility for the analysis of benchmark data.</p> <p>Step 2. When developing the presentation of goals and performance measures outlined in Action Plan 7-8, prepare recommendations and action plans where objectives are not being met</p> <p>Step 3. Prepare and present recommendations and action plans goals, along with the performance measures described in Action Plan 7-8.</p> <p>Step 4. Prepare annual updates.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for facilities management under the supervision of the associate superintendent for operational services.
Time Frame	April 2004 for initial presentation, annually thereafter.

Facilities Maintenance

Action Plan 8-1

We recommend that the district develop a performance appraisal system to assess productivity and tie the system to a formal process for tracking opportunities for improvement and measuring customer satisfaction on an incident level.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Identify potential appraisal processes, limitations and legal considerations.
	Step 2.	Identify the work order system productivity measures for supervisors and trades categories.
	Step 3.	Meet with trades' supervisors to select measurement factors and identify the best methods for collecting data on individual performance.
	Step 4.	Document the selected performance measures and communicate the program to employees that will be reviewed using the selected performance measures.
	Step 5.	Prepares summary of performance measures prior to each employee's review and benchmark employee performance against the selected standards.
	Step 6.	Identify solutions to underperforming employees during the performance appraisal and identify and document performance review benchmarks for follow-up.
Who Is Responsible	Director of maintenance	
Time Frame	January 2004 and ongoing	

Action Plan 8-2

We recommend that the district initiate a district wide custodial training program.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Managers and custodians Identify custodial training needs
	Step 2.	Contact peer districts to identify successful custodial training programs
	Step 3.	Develop an appropriate training program
	Step 4.	Schedule and provide training
	Step 5.	Participants provide evaluative feedback on the usefulness of classes
	Step 6.	Incorporate feedback as appropriate when developing and arranging future classes.
Who Is Responsible	Director of maintenance	
Time Frame	January 2004 and ongoing	

Transportation

Action Plan 9-1

We recommend the Collier County School District adjust bell times and develop and implement formal guidelines to assess the safety of walking conditions within the district to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's transportation system.

Action Needed	Step 1.	The director of transportation and the operations manager identify optimal bell times for the transportation department and prepare an estimate of the cost impact.
	Step 2.	The director of transportation submits the requested change and the cost impact to the associate superintendent of operational services to present to the superintendent and school board.
	Step 3.	The school board adopts the recommendation.
	Step 4.	School administrators send notices of the new bell times to parents for the coming school year.
	Step 5.	The new bell times become effective.
	Step 6.	The director of transportation, with the assistance of his staff, local law enforcement, and county and state transportation departments, develops and submits proposed unsafe walking criteria to the associate superintendent of operational services to present to the superintendent and school board for approval.
	Step 7.	The school board approves the proposed unsafe walking criteria.
	Step 8.	The director of transportation uses the approved criteria along with state hazardous walking criteria to determine the location of hazardous and unsafe walking conditions within the district.
	Step 9.	The director of transportation determines the number of students, within the two-mile limit, that are eligible for transportation, as well as potential changes in bus stops.
	Step 10.	The director of transportation submits the results and the cost impact to the associate superintendent of operational services to present to the superintendent and school board.
	Step 11.	On an annual basis, the school board evaluates and approves the transportation of students within the two-mile limit who meet the approved guidelines.

Who Is Responsible	Director of transportation and associate superintendent of operational services
Time Frame	August 2004

Action Plan 9-2

We recommend the district establish appropriate performance and cost-effectiveness measures and benchmarks for student transportation and provide an annual report card on all selected measures.

Action Needed	Step 1.	The director of transportation, operations manager, and services manager work together to develop appropriate measures of efficiency, effectiveness, and quality for student transportation. Two sets of measures should be defined: those that address day-to-day operations and annual measures. If necessary, the supervisors contact peer districts to research examples of performance measures.
	Step 2.	The operations and service manager develop monthly performance reports for the day-to-day measures and quarterly reports for the longer-term measures. The managers submit the reports to the director of Transportation. The director of transportation submits the reports to the associate superintendent of operational services.
	Step 3.	The director of transportation compiles an annual "report card" that contains the transportation department's performance on measures related to major aspects of the transportation function. The director of transportation submits the annual "report card" to the associate superintendent of operational services.
	Step 4.	The associate superintendent of operational services submits the report to the superintendent and school board for review.
Who Is Responsible	Director of transportation	
Time Frame	January 2004	

Food Service Operations

Action Plan 10-1

We recommend that the district institute a shared manager program.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Identify the kitchens that can be shared considering the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ schools must be located approximately five miles from each other; ▪ combined meals served at the two schools should be manageable; and ▪ manager should be willing to take on added workload and capable of doing so.
	Step 2.	Determine the number of additional hours that will be required for food service kitchen staff sharing managers.
	Step 3.	Offer position to managers that qualify.
	Step 4.	Phase in a shared manager program as managers leave the district.
Who Is Responsible	Director of food service	
Time Frame	January 2004	

Action Plan 10-2

We recommend that the district balance the amount of scratch menu items with convenience foods and move toward the industry standard meals per labor hour.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Establish the ratio of conventional to convenience food for the district's menu and the timeline to implement.</p> <p>Step 2. Increase the district's target MPLH to industry standards.</p> <p>Step 3. Phase out scratch bakery items from the menu.</p> <p>Step 4. Research additional available convenience foods and set-up taste tests.</p> <p>Step 5. Add convenience foods as menu changes occur until the target ratio is reached.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of food service and area supervisors
Time Frame	June 2005

Action Plan 10-3

We recommend that the district convert the central warehouse to house food items only and have warehouse staff report directly to the director of food service.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Restructure the reporting hierarchy for the central warehouse to have the warehouse supervisor report directly to the director of food service.</p> <p>Step 2. Work with the purchasing department to facilitate the warehouse conversion.</p> <p>Step 3. Re-establish delivery schedules to the cafeterias.</p> <p>Step 4. Develop departmental procedures for the warehouse.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services and the director of food service
Time Frame	June 2005

Cost Control Systems

Action Plan 11-1

We recommend that the district develop departmental staffing formulas and performance measures for financial services.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Survey districts similar in size to find the number of positions by functional section and if they use staffing formulas and performance measures for their financial services departments.</p> <p>Step 2. Meet to establish performance measures and staffing formulas using information they receive from the peer districts and identify measures they can use to measure performance.</p> <p>Step 3. Present the staffing formula and performance measures to the staffing formula committee.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services, accounting officer, budget officer, purchasing director and business services supervisors.
Time Frame	March 2004

Action Plan 11-2

We recommend that the district restructure the Business Services Department.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Determine staffing requirements based on the staffing formulas and other analysis performed.</p> <p>Step 2. Evaluate employees in each area to select individuals that have the appropriate qualifications for the opened positions.</p> <p>Step 3. Meet with staff affected by the move individually to notify them of the changes.</p> <p>Step 4. Meet with financial services staff and notify them of the changes.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Associate superintendent of operational services, executive director of business services, executive director of human resources
Time Frame	July 2004

Action Plan 11-3

We recommend that the district provide Business Services Department staff adequate professional development and training to ensure that they are kept abreast of any state or federal regulatory changes, obtain certifications in their designated areas, learn or improve their skills in software applications, and provide opportunities to enhance technical skills to allow for career advancements.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Meet with the office of accountability staff and school renewal staff to discuss opportunities for in-house training.</p> <p>Step 2. Determine the type of courses that will be offered in-house or the courses that will be taken outside of the district.</p> <p>Step 3. Develop course material if course is offered in-house.</p> <p>Step 4. Determine the required number of hours of professional development employees should take annually.</p> <p>Step 5. Update financial services procedures to state the number of required hours of professional development that each employee must take per year.</p> <p>Step 6. Inform staff of the new procedures. Professional development will be included in the employee performance evaluation.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of finance, executive director of human resources, and executive director of accountability & staff and school renewal
Time Frame	January 2004

Action Plan 11-4

We recommend that the district develop training programs for school and department bookkeepers and provide assistance when needed.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Create and conduct mandatory training classes for all new bookkeepers.</p> <p>Step 2. Incorporate training for new principals during their orientation.</p> <p>Step 3. Conduct refresher courses for all principals and bookkeepers during orientation at the beginning of each school year to help reacquaint them with the procedures and help them get off to a good start.</p> <p>Step 4. Create cluster teams and identify senior bookkeepers within each team to assist in providing training to new and the other bookkeepers in the cluster.</p> <p>Step 5. Provide one-on-one training with new bookkeepers by either the senior bookkeeper or business services employees.</p> <p>Step 6. Hold quarterly meetings with all the bookkeepers to discuss any problems that they might be experiencing and provide training for either changes to procedures or for problematic areas that they see are reoccurring.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Budget officer
Time Frame	November 2004

Action Plan 11-5

We recommend that the district develop job descriptions for school and department bookkeepers that require them to have a minimum of two years experience in bookkeeping with at least one year in an educational setting.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Revise the bookkeeper position description to include a requirement of two years of previous bookkeeping experience with one year in an educational setting.
	Step 2.	Notify principals and department heads of the new job requirements.
	Step 3.	Hire bookkeepers that have experience in bookkeeping.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services and budget officer	
Time Frame	November 2004	

Action Plan 11-6

We recommend that the district develop comprehensive written procedures for each section in the Business Services Department and for the internal activity accounts processes.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Instruct the associate superintendent of operational services and executive director of business services to develop comprehensive financial management and internal activity accounts procedures for all financial processes.
	Step 2.	Organize a procedures task force consisting of representatives from accounting, payroll, budget, accounts payable, Investments, and other financial departments in the district.
	Step 3.	Direct the task force to conduct a search for best practices and to identify the best model for the district.
	Step 4.	Review existing procedures and develop comprehensive financial management and internal activity accounts procedures manuals for the district.
	Step 5.	Present a draft copy of the procedures manuals to the associate superintendent of operational services for review and comment.
	Step 6.	Present the procedures manuals to the superintendent for review and approval.
	Step 7.	Instruct the associate superintendent of operational services and executive director of business services to publish the manuals and distribute them throughout the district and make them available on the district's web site.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, associate superintendent of operational services and executive director of business services	
Time Frame	March 2004	

Action Plan 11-7

We recommend that the district implement board-approved written ethics policies and develop procedures for confidential reporting of suspected improprieties.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Draft written ethics policies.
	Step 2.	Present policies to the board for approval.
	Step 3.	Draft procedures for confidential reporting of suspected improprieties.
	Step 4.	Present the procedures to the superintendent for approval.
	Step 5.	Notify all district staff.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and associate superintendent of operational services	
Time Frame	March 2004	

Action Plan 11-8

We recommend that business services administrators meet with MIS and the new accounting system representatives to perform a comprehensive needs assessment to identify manual processes that can be automated to ensure that the department is operating as efficiently as possible.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Perform a needs assessment and requirements study to identify manual processes that can be automated that will significantly improve efficiencies.</p> <p>Step 2. Prepare a proposal that prioritizes and establishes a timeline of the areas that will be customized, the description of the efficiency provided with each modification, and a fiscal impact that will show the net cost savings of implementing each customization to the accounting system.</p> <p>Step 3. Submit the proposal to the associate superintendent of operational services and superintendent for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Associate superintendent of operational services, executive director of business services, budget officer, accounting officer, and coordinator of enterprise systems and programs
Time Frame	September 2004

Action Plan 11-9

We recommend that the district establish detailed financial reports for the board that compare actual versus budgeted revenues and expenditures every month, as illustrated.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Prepare a draft of the revised reports to be presented at the board meeting and submit to the executive director of business services for review so that any necessary revisions can be completed three days before the board meeting.</p> <p>Step 2. Submit board packet to board members to review two days before the board meeting.</p> <p>Step 3. Present the report to the board.</p> <p>Step 4. Address any questions from the board or the public about the finance report.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services and budget officer
Time Frame	March 2004

Action Plan 11-10

We recommend that the district require that two employees be present in the manual check signing process.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Develop new procedures for the manual check signing process.</p> <p>Step 2. Notify staff of the change in procedures.</p> <p>Step 3. Appoint an employee to team with the accounts receivable clerk in signing manual checks.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Accounting officer
Time Frame	January 2004

Action Plan 11-11

We recommend that the checks be secured in the Business Services Department safe at all times.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Notify the cash receipts bookkeeper that she needs to keep checks and deposits in the safe at all times.</p> <p>Step 2. Keep checks and deposits in the safe instead of storing them in a desk.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Accounting officer and accounts receivable clerk
Time Frame	January 2004

Action Plan 11-12

We recommend that procedures are established to ensure that each grant is closely monitored to ensure all moneys are used, and require that the accounting section oversees the financial process of the grants.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Meet with director of federal and state grants to discuss the monitoring role of the accounting office.</p> <p>Step 2. Request that the executive director of business services prepare procedures for monitoring and overseeing the grant programs.</p> <p>Step 3. Write the procedures and submit to the associate superintendent of operational services for review for approval.</p> <p>Step 4. Meet with the federal & state grants staff to present the procedures and set the ground rules.</p> <p>Step 5. Begin monitoring the grant programs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Associate superintendent of operational services, director of federal and state grants, executive director of business services, and grants accountant
Time Frame	March 2004

Action Plan 11-13

We recommend that the district enforce the procedures to resolve missing property.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Request that the accounting officer and inventory specialist track schools and departments that are not properly following procedures or have missing and stolen items that were not properly secured by the property custodian.</p> <p>Step 2. Meet with the property custodian to discuss the discrepancies and request written responses including the action plan necessary to correct the issue and avoid future occurrences.</p> <p>Step 3. Forward the information to the assistant superintendents.</p> <p>Step 4. Establish procedures requiring property custodians that continue to receive exceptions to develop written corrective action plans that describe how issue(s) will be resolved and, if followed, will prevent future occurrences.</p> <p>Step 5. The appropriate assistant superintendent periodically monitors the property custodian's efforts to prevent future occurrences.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services, appropriate assistant superintendents, accounting officer, principals, bookkeepers, inventory specialist, and property custodians
Time Frame	March 2004

Action Plan 11-14

We recommend that the district develop an action plan that increases the general fund balance to 2% by the end of the 2003-04 fiscal year and 4% within the next three to five years.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Prepare an agenda item requesting the board to approve developing procedures and a schedule to rebuild the district's general fund balance.</p> <p>Step 2. Approve developing procedures and assign the task to the associate superintendent of operational services and the executive director of business services.</p> <p>Step 3. Prepare a report for the board that presents the general fund balance at year-end and compares it against the historical ten-year trend and a five-year projection of the fund balance. The report should allow for various budget scenarios and timelines for reestablishing the district's policy requiring the fund balance to be 4% of the budgeted revenue.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, associate superintendent of operational services, executive director of business services, accounting officer and budget officer
Time Frame	January 2004

Action Plan 11-15

We recommend that the district hire a lead internal auditor and an internal auditor that report directly to the board and administratively to the superintendent.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Develop a job description for the positions of the lead internal auditor and internal auditor.</p> <p>Step 2. Submit the position descriptions to the board for review and approval.</p> <p>Step 3. Advertise for the positions.</p> <p>Step 4. Interview prospective candidates.</p> <p>Step 5. Select and approve a lead internal auditor and internal auditor.</p> <p>Step 6. Discontinue the external audit services for the internal accounts.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Board, superintendent, associate superintendent of operational services, and executive director of human resources
Time Frame	July 2004

Action Plan 11-16

We recommend that the district develop formal procedures for addressing audit findings of the internal accounts.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Forward audit finding to responsible campus administrator and bookkeeper.</p> <p>Step 2. Direct accounting officer to review internal account audit findings.</p> <p>Step 3. Draft report detailing the status of all audit findings and the district's response.</p> <p>Step 4. Develop formal procedures for handling audit findings of the internal accounts. The following elements should be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Global analysis of findings to identify district wide issues. ▪ Step-by-step procedures of the response process, including the action plan to correct and avoid future problems. ▪ Follow-up procedures to ensure action plans have been implemented. ▪ Tracking process that will show outstanding responses and identify reoccurring problems. <p>Step 5. Submit the plan to the executive director of business services for review and make modifications if necessary.</p> <p>Step 6. Meet with the school and department bookkeepers to inform them of the new procedures.</p> <p>Step 7. Implement the procedures.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services and budget officer
Time Frame	January 2004

Action Plan 11-17

We recommend that the district arrange to have payees with recurring payments with large dollar amounts to wire transfer payment to the district's bank account.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Identify recurring payees with payments totaling more than \$5,000 per check.</p> <p>Step 2. Arrange with these payees to electronically wire transfer payments.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Accounting officer
Time Frame	January 2004

Action Plan 11-18

We recommend that the district develop tangible asset procedures that provide consequences when property custodians do not effectively manage property under their care and ensure that these procedures are enforced.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Direct the executive director of business services to develop tangible asset procedures that include consequences for property custodians that are not safekeeping property.</p> <p>Step 2. Research how other districts are controlling the number of items that are missing or stolen.</p> <p>Step 3. Develop tangible property procedures.</p> <p>Step 4. Submit the procedures to the superintendent for approval.</p> <p>Step 5. Introduce to all assistant superintendents and property custodians the new tangible property procedures.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, associate superintendent of operational services, executive director of business services, inventory specialist, assistant superintendent, principals and department heads
Time Frame	March 2004

Action Plan 11-19

We recommend that the district early implement the planned purchase of a bar-coding system to track fixed assets.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Research bar-coding systems to find those compatible with the district's ERP system.</p> <p>Step 2. Develop request for proposals (RFPs) to solicit bids for a bar-coding system.</p> <p>Step 3. Advertise the RFPs and send out to all interested vendors.</p> <p>Step 4. Tally bids and submit recommendations to the superintendent and the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 5. Develop formal procedures for the receipt and tracking of existing fixed assets and new purchases using the new bar-coding system.</p> <p>Step 6. Contract for the purchase of a bar-coding system, required supplies, and fixed asset valuation services.</p> <p>Step 7. Tag the existing fixed asset inventory.</p> <p>Step 8. Conduct physical inventory of all fixed assets.</p> <p>Step 9. Review the process and ensure that all fixed assets have been tagged.</p> <p>Step 10. Ensure that inventory specialist conducts annual inventories.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of business services, purchasing director, management information systems department, inventory specialist, principals, and department heads
Time Frame	January 2005

Action Plan 11-20

We recommend that the district transfer the vehicle inventory to the individual departments that have custody of the vehicles.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Reconcile the vehicle inventory to the general ledger at year-end.</p> <p>Step 2. Complete transfer forms for the department and campus vehicles.</p> <p>Step 3. Obtain appropriate department head and campus administrators' signatures on transfer forms.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of transportation, parts manager and inventory specialist
Time Frame	March 2004.

Action Plan 11-21

We recommend that the district develop a plan to improve the district's image in the financial market.	
Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Meet with district's financial advisor to review available options and share plans that have been successful in other districts.</p> <p>Step 2. Review district's ten-year capital plan and determine if adequate funding is in place.</p> <p>Step 3. Prepare documents to be taken to the capital market in an effort to improve the market's confidence in the district.</p> <p>Step 4. Present documents to the board. Include in the presentation the impact on the district's ability to secure debt capital at a reasonable borrowing rate if the plan is not followed.</p> <p>Step 5. Take the plan to the financial market.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Associate superintendent of operational services, executive director of business services, and financial advisor
Time Frame	October 2004

Action Plan 11-22

We recommend that the district develop a risk management policy and associated procedures.	
Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Draft a policy statement and detailed procedures related to risk management. Include specific targets and benchmarks for containing costs.</p> <p>Step 2. Present the draft policy statement and procedures to the insurance committee and make the necessary revisions.</p> <p>Step 3. Draft a board policy that includes the committee approved recommended plan and prepare an agenda item for board approval of the policy and the plan.</p> <p>Step 4. Adopt the policy and the plan.</p> <p>Step 5. Distribute the final board approved plan to all campus administrators and department heads as well as risk management staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of risk management
Time Frame	July 2004

Action Plan 11-23

We recommend that the district research industry standards, peer district solutions, and programs developed by other risk managers to ensure the effectiveness of its own risk management program.	
Action Needed	<p>Step 1. Select two members from the insurance committee to oversee industry research project.</p> <p>Step 2. Develop a questionnaire that can be sent to peer districts to request information regarding their risk management plan, insurance coverages in force and premium costs, and any special programs that have been initiated to reduce costs.</p> <p>Step 3. Distribute materials received in FERMA workshops to all members of the insurance committee.</p> <p>Step 4. Invite the district's insurance broker to present industry trends to the insurance committee.</p> <p>Step 5. Incorporate innovative solutions into the district's annual risk management plan.</p> <p>Step 6. Reevaluate industry trends and peer district plans annually.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of risk management
Time Frame	July 2004

Action Plan 11-24

We recommend that the district appoint the safety manager to the insurance committee.	
Action Needed	Step 1. Appoint the safety manager to the insurance committee. Step 2. Incorporate safety initiatives into the committee meeting discussions.
Who Is Responsible	Director of risk management
Time Frame	October 2003

Action Plan 11-25

We recommend that the district develop report specifications to help track the effectiveness of the risk management plan and ensure that the district is adequately protected.	
Action Needed	Step 1. Request that the district's insurance broker provide examples of risk management reports from industry. Step 2. Identify the data elements to include in the district's reports. Include, at a minimum, the following data items by insurance line: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Claims history for prior five years and percent change; ▪ Loss run summary for prior five years and percent change; ▪ Five-year premium history and percent change; ▪ Five-year history of program cost per student and percent change; ▪ Compare between the district and its peer districts; and ▪ Compare between the district and the state of Florida. Step 3. Ensure that a complete inventory of the district's assets is maintained. Step 4. Define benchmarks for the district's risk management program. Step 5. Compile data and present statistics to insurance committee. Step 6. Repeat steps 3 through 5 annually.
Who Is Responsible	Director of risk management
Time Frame	March 2004 and annually thereafter

Action Plan 11-26

We recommend that the district strive to improve communication between the Purchasing Department and district staff.	
Action Needed	Step 1. Develop a Lunch-n-Learn presentation that covers such topics as purchasing policies and procedures, quote thresholds and requirements, competitive bid processes, uses of the Purchasing Department Web site, direct pay guidelines, and purchase order account codes Step 2. Send a Group-wise (E-mail) to all administrators and department heads identifying the program. Step 3. Generate a schedule for three sessions during the year and provide the opportunity for participants to sign up. Step 4. Investigate the feasibility of incorporating the development of a departmental Web-page into a student project. Step 5. Determine what items should be posted to the departmental Web page, such as purchasing policies and procedures and purchase authorization requirements. Step 6. Verify with MIS that the items can be posted and that the necessary programming staff is available. Step 7. Post the information to the Web page. Step 8. Send Group-wise (E-mail) to all staff notifying them that the information is available on the Web page. Step 9. Update the information on the Web page as necessary.
Who Is Responsible	Director of purchasing
Time Frame	March 2004 and updated as needed

Action Plan 11-27

We recommend that the district pilot a procurement card program and reduce the number of blanket purchase orders.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Establish control guidelines and limits for the plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single transaction limit; ▪ Monthly purchase limit; ▪ Monthly report by account code; ▪ Rejection report (purchases attempted by a cardholder that are not pre-assigned); ▪ Online review of transactions; ▪ Random cardholder audits; ▪ No authorized transactions for liquor, food, or cash withdrawals; and ▪ Zero-tolerance policy for abuse.
	Step 2.	Define abuse of plan and establish recommended policy to deal with each type of abuse.
	Step 3.	Meet with banking institution and MIS staff to identify system requirements.
	Step 4.	Select the Transportation Department and high school principals as the pilot participants.
	Step 5.	Prepare agenda item to present recommended policy to the board.
	Step 6.	Approve pilot program and adopt policy.
	Step 7.	Create a user manual for the plan.
	Step 8.	Train pilot participants on the use of the procurement card including the penalties for abuse and the district's zero tolerance policy.
	Step 9.	Ensure system requirements and interface with ACCOUNTING SYSTEM are in place.
	Step 10.	Initiate the pilot program.
	Step 11.	Phase in procurement cards over the next fiscal year.
	Step 12.	Establish strict limitations for using blanket purchase orders.
	Step 13.	Post the procedures and limitations for blanket purchase orders on the department's Web page.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, executive director of business services and director of purchasing	
Time Frame	Pilot program initiated by March 2004 and district wide by June 2005	

Action Plan 11-28

We recommend that the district examine the vendor database to purge duplicate, idle, and unacceptable vendors prior to going live with the new accounting system.

Action Needed	Step 1.	Request MIS run a current vendor report with the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vendor name; ▪ Vendor address; ▪ Vendor number; ▪ Date of most recent purchase; and ▪ Total purchases for fiscal year.
	Step 2.	Export accounting system data into spreadsheet.
	Step 3.	Sort vendors by name.
	Step 4.	Highlight duplicate vendors, vendors not used for two or more years, and vendors with annual purchases less than \$500.
	Step 5.	Remove or inactivate highlighted vendors from accounting system database.
Who Is Responsible	Director of purchasing	
Time Frame	March 2004	

Action Plan 11-29

We recommend that the district develop benchmarks to evaluate the per-unit cost of warehousing.

Action Needed	Step 1. Develop criteria to calculate per-unit cost.
	Step 2. Research peer districts to determine their per-unit costs.
	Step 3. Compile results and develop benchmarks for per-unit cost.
	Step 4. Compare current costs with warehouse.
	Step 5. Eliminate non cost-effective inventory and purchase it directly off existing bid.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for business services, warehouse supervisor
Time Frame	August 2004.

Action Plan 11-30

We recommend that the district consider establishing a central receiving department to serve the entire district and develop an interface with the financial computer system to effectively receive items.

Action Needed	Step 1. Set the standards for which items should be received out of the central warehouse facility. For example, all technology purchases over a certain dollar threshold and all capital items.
	Step 2. Determine what programming would be required to include a central receiving capability in the accounting system.
	Step 3. Assign a programmer to the project.
	Step 4. Test the interface to ensure it meets departmental needs.
	Step 5. Establish receiving process and develop written procedures.
	Step 6. Move asset management staff into new facility.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for business services and executive director for MIS.
Time Frame	July 2005