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# Best Financial Management Practice Review

Manatee County School District

October 1998

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

*an office of the Florida Legislature*

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# The Florida Legislature

## OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**John W. Turcotte, Director**

October 27, 1998

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

I have directed that a Best Financial Management Practices Review be made of the Manatee County School District. The School Board of Manatee County School District voted unanimously to request this review. The results of this review are presented to you in this report. This review was made as a part of a series of best financial management practices reviews to be conducted by OPPAGA pursuant to Section 230.23025, F.S.

This review was conducted by staff of OPPAGA, the Auditor General and MGT of America Inc. OPPAGA staff included Robert Brunger, Sabrina Hartley, Ken Hawkins, Kim McDougal, Wade Melton, David Summers, Martha Wellman, Richard Woerner and Donald Wolf under the supervision of Jane Fletcher. Auditor General Staff included Sue Graham, Jim Kiedinger, and Rachel Sellers under the supervision of David Martin. MGT staff included Ed Humble and Dodds Cromwell under the direction of Linda Recio.

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

Sincerely,

John W. Turcotte
Director

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# *oppaga*

## Digest
## Best Financial Management Practice Review

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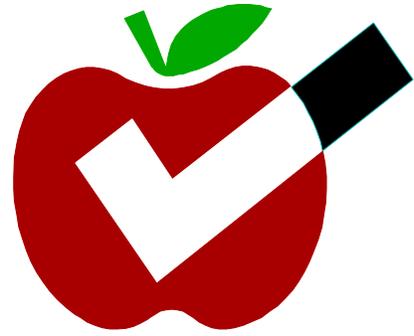
## *Results in Brief* —————————

If the Manatee County School Board agrees by a majority plus one vote to institute the action plans in the Best Financial Management Practice Review (OPPAGA Report No. 98-19), the district could be using the best practices within two years. It could then receive the Seal of Best Financial Management from the State Board of Education.

Currently, the district is using a little more than half of the best financial management practices and thus is not currently eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. (See Exhibit 1.) Improved delineation of the responsibilities of the board, central administrative staff, and principals; improved strategic planning; and an improved information system will enable the district to meet many more of these practices.

If the Manatee County School Board agrees to implement the action plan,

- the district would need to report annually on its progress toward implementing the plan and on any changes that would affect its use of best practices to the Legislature, the Governor, the SMART Schools Clearing House, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA), the Auditor General, and the Commissioner of Education; and

- OPPAGA would need to annually conduct a review to determine whether the district has attained compliance with best financial management practices in areas covered by the action plans.

*Exhibit 1*

**Overall the District Is Using About Half of the Best Practices**

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

In addition, by implementing report recommendations, the Manatee County School District could improve district operations, save money, and demonstrate good stewardship of public resources. As shown in Exhibit 2, in total, OPPAGA estimates that implementing the recommendations would have a positive fiscal impact of approximately $742,643 in Fiscal Year 1998-1999 and $35,318,243 over a five-year period.

## Purpose

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

The best practices are designed to encourage districts to

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

The Commissioner of Education adopted these practices on September 4, 1997.

Best Financial Management Practice Reviews are designed to help school districts educate their students in the most cost-effective manner. The reviews compare district practices to best practices based on research and work in many states. These best practices represent the state of the art in managing school districts. Districts with adequate practices still may fall short of reaching these best practices.

## Background

The Manatee County School Board requested a Best Financial Management Practice Review to provide the district with an external assessment of how its existing practices could be improved. Board members and administrative staff have indicated their desire to use the review to improve district operations.

In accordance with the law, OPPAGA and the Auditor General conducted the review. OPPAGA assessed management structures, performance accountability systems, personnel systems and benefits, use of lottery proceeds, student transportation, and food service operations. The Auditor General assessed cost control systems. OPPAGA contracted with MGT of America, Inc., to assess the use of construction funds, facilities construction, and facilities maintenance.

All three entities express their appreciation to members of the Manatee County School Board and district employees who provided information and assistance during the review.

The mission of the Manatee County School District is to educate and challenge every student by ensuring quality, equitable, and diverse experiences in an environment conducive to learning.

The district has 39 schools including 26 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 5 high schools, and 1 vocational technical center. In the fall of 1997, the district served 33,705 prekindergarten through twelfth grade students. The district employs over 4,000 full-time staff. In Fiscal Year 1997-98, its budget was approximately $410 million.

The district has experienced a decline in its financial position in the past two years. In Fiscal Year 1996-97, the district spent approximately $4 million more than it received, and it expects to spend approximately $4.6 million more than it receives in Fiscal Year 1997-98.

During the last three years, the district has had a number of notable accomplishments. These include constructing four new schools and renovating six, improving student test scores, developing a new curriculum, reconfiguring school zones, implementing a choice program for high schools, supporting the establishment of four charter schools, and resolving long-standing Office of Civil Rights issues.

## Conclusions by Best Practice Area

### Management Structures

The Manatee County School District's management structure needs to be improved. The division uses 4 of the 13 best practices for management structures.

The roles of the board and superintendent have become confused, with the superintendent at times resisting the policy direction of the board and the board at times becoming overly involved in district operations. This has led to tension between the board and superintendent and decreased staff morale.

In addition, the district has not clearly defined the responsibilities of staff in various positions. For example, the district has not clearly defined the authority of principals. Some principals are making decisions that are not consistent with district policy or adversely affect the school's ability to operate efficiently.

The district has examined its organizational structure and conducted a staffing study for school-based staff. However, it could reorganize to improve communications and eliminate duplication of effort. In addition, it has not conducted a staffing study of its central administrative and support staff.

The district's system for projecting enrollment is reasonable, but circumstances outside of this system led to a low estimate of its at-risk and exceptional students for Fiscal Year 1997-98. If the district improves future projections, it can receive an additional $3.6 million in state funds.

The district has not developed a strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives, nor has it formally evaluated its programs. Such a plan and evaluations could help focus district staff on activities that best attain district goals. It also could build board and public confidence in district administration.

The district periodically evaluates alternatives to reduce the cost of its services by comparing the cost of providing services in-house or through contract. However, it has not done so for some functions such as legal and food services.

We recommend that the board and superintendent work to resolve their differences. We also recommend that the district reorganize and clarify the roles of its staff, improve its forecast of at-risk and exceptional students, and be more

systematic in determining when to contract for services or provide them in-house. If implemented, these recommendations will increase the district's revenue by about $14.4 million and decrease its expenditures by about $577,000 over the next five years.

## Performance Accountability System

The district's performance accountability system needs substantial improvement. The district is not using six of the eight best practices for performance accountability systems.

For instance, the district has not established clearly stated goals and measurable objectives for most of its major educational and operational programs. When it does develop goals and objectives, the district does not clearly link them to budgetary decisions and daily staff activities. In addition, the district generally has not developed appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures and benchmarks it can use to evaluate its programs' progress towards achieving goals and objectives.

Even if the district developed performance measures, it may not be able to readily obtain the data it needs to assess performance. Although the district has controls in place to assess the reliability of its data, district administrators have difficulty extracting data in the format they need to monitor performance. Without this data, the district cannot adequately evaluate the performance or cost-efficiency of its major programs.

The district rarely performs formal evaluations of its programs. Furthermore, the evaluations it has performed generally do not contain information about program outcomes or recommendations for improvement.

No single entity in the Manatee County School District is responsible for assisting staff in developing a district-wide planning and evaluation system. Thus, staff efforts to develop such a system are uneven and fragmented.

Despite problems with district-level accountability, the district has an effective system for ensuring that school improvement plans are of high quality. However, school

advisory councils created to act as a link between schools and the local community and to assist in the development of school-level improvement plans do not always include required members.

We recommend that the district develop a more comprehensive planning and evaluation system for all of its major programs. The responsibility for overseeing development of the system should be assigned to a newly created planning, accountability, and evaluation unit. In addition, we recommend that the district implement procedures to ensure that district data is accurate and readily available and school advisory councils include required members. There is no fiscal impact associated with these recommendations.

## Personnel Systems and Benefits

The district generally needs to improve its personnel management system. Currently, the district is using three of the nine personnel best financial management practices. The district generally recruits and hires qualified staff, uses cost-containment practices for its Workers' Compensation Program, and formally evaluates employees to improve performance and productivity.

However, the district does not periodically evaluate its personnel practices. It does not compare the ethnicity of its staff to that of its students and the community or monitor absenteeism and turnover rates for its teachers and district administrators.

The Personnel Office's transactions generally are conducted inefficiently. The office's transactions are primarily conducted manually rather than electronically. This results in an inordinate amount of paper transactions for the office.

The district's personnel evaluation system needs to be greatly improved. Although it is routinely evaluating staff performance, the district has not recently terminated employment of any poorly performing school administrators and has terminated the employment of only a few poorly performing teachers.

To improve staff performance evaluation, we recommend that the district

- develop more specific job descriptions and specific performance expectations;
- develop evaluation criteria that is clearly linked to results, including student performance; and
- train staff on how to conduct personnel evaluations that are fair, accurate, and consistently conducted.

The district's staff development program is not comprehensive and is not focused to assist staff in achieving overall district goals and priorities. The district cannot maximize staff productivity through training without better identifying staff training needs, orienting all staff to district goals and priorities, coordinating staff development activities, and providing staff development opportunities to all staff.

The district does not formally determine whether its employee compensation is similar to that of peer districts or the private sector. The district adjusts compensation according to available revenue without considering cost of living, market value, or performance. Nevertheless, the district's starting and average salaries are comparable with the salaries paid by its peer districts, and its starting salaries are competitive.

The district's benefit package is generally more costly than the benefit packages offered by other peer districts. This is primarily due to the district's generous contribution rates for family health insurance and supplemental life insurance coverage. In addition, the district does not offer a health maintenance organization option. Districts which offer HMO options generally have lower health insurance costs. If the district changed its health care benefit to more closely resemble the benefits offered by peer districts, it could save an estimated $10.25 million over the next five years.

We recommend that the district develop a strategic plan for its personnel management office, formally communicate personnel expectations to employees, implement a comprehensive staff development plan, evaluate the personnel costs (salaries and benefits) associated with providing services,

and reduce the amount of paperwork the personnel office processes.

## Use of Lottery Proceeds

The district needs to improve its management of the lottery dollars it receives. Currently it is using only one of the five best practices for use of lottery proceeds.

The district uses lottery proceeds to develop and implement school improvement plans and to pay the salaries and benefits of school-based instructional support staff. However, it has not defined what constitutes educational enhancement. Furthermore it does not know how school advisory committees are using the lottery funds allocated to them for developing and implementing school improvement plans. Consequently it cannot determine whether the use of lottery funds is consistent with its concept of educational enhancement.

The district allocates lottery funds to school advisory councils as required by law. However, some school advisory council chairs were not aware that their councils had been allocated funds or what their fund balances were. In addition, the district has not provided the councils with information about how they may use the funds.

The district does not correctly account for its use of lottery funds because it does not reconcile its lottery fund expenditures with the allocations it receives. Consequently, its records show that it has spent more lottery dollars than it received.

The district does not evaluate the extent to which lottery fund expenditures have enhanced student education. In addition, it does not provide the public with quarterly reports showing lottery expenditures. Such reports are required by state law.

We recommend that the district develop a definition of what constitutes educational enhancement and take steps to ensure that lottery funds are used only for enhancement purposes. In addition, the district should provide school advisory councils with information about their lottery funds and how they may use those funds. The district should also reconcile the lottery dollars it receives with its expenditures of those dollars. Finally, it should determine the extent to which lottery expenditures have enhanced education and make quarterly reports of lottery expenditures to the public.

## Use of State and District Construction Funds

The Manatee County School District uses two of the four best practices for use of state and district construction funds. The district appropriately uses capital outlay funds for facility construction and uses operational funds for facility maintenance and operations. In addition, it properly accounts for and reports its use of construction funds. However, it does not use the remaining two best practices in this area.

The district does not use construction funds only after determining that the construction projects are cost efficient in comparison to other alternatives. The district's current practices fall short of best practice standards in three ways.

- First, although it uses the Florida Inventory of School Houses to determine the overall need for additional space, the district has not analyzed how using a year-round schedule might reduce the need for additional space. Implementing a year-round school program in 10% of its schools would save the district $4.4 million over the next five years.

- Second, although the district examines the relative cost efficiency of building new structures or renovating existing ones, it has not used value engineering to determine whether its proposed construction plans will result in the most cost-efficient structure. Implementing a value engineering process would save the district $730,000 over the next five years.

- Third, the district has not developed a facilities design manual to standardize the use of equipment such as lockers, toilet accessories, and plumbing equipment. Such standardization could reduce maintenance costs by lowering the district's inventory of parts and minimizing maintenance training needs. This would save an estimated $50,000 over the next five years.

When it designs new facilities, the district does not always include maintenance and

operations staff on its project team. Thus, the district does not always incorporate in its design process factors that would minimize the cost of maintaining and operating new facilities.

We recommend that the district examine the potential for adopting a year-round schedule for some of its schools. We also recommend that the district implement a value engineering process and develop a facilities design manual. Finally, we recommend that the district include maintenance and operations staff in the development of the facilities design manual and on construction project teams.

## Facilities Construction

The district needs to improve current practices for facilities construction. The district partially uses many best practice areas but needs to improve in order to provide quality facilities at the lowest cost. The district meets 16 of the 40 best practices for facility construction.

The district has allocated adequate resources to develop and implement a realistic long-range master plan. However, there has been confusion as to who is responsible for the facilities construction budget, as the district has not previously assigned budget oversight of each project or group of projects to a single project manager.

The district selects facility sites in advance of expected need and has implemented a system to ensure that the prices paid for sites reflect fair market value. It also has developed school site selection criteria to ensure that schools are located to serve the proposed attendance areas economically, with maximum convenience and safety. However it does not have a broadly representative site selection committee.

The district has not conducted a comprehensive evaluation of its facilities including structural design and integrity, technological system, finishes, life safety, educational suitability, utilization, and technological readiness. The study would need to be conducted once during the next five years and would cost approximately $150,000. The district should use the results of this evaluation to improve its

ability to prioritize projects in its five-year facilities plan.

The school board has considered alternatives to new construction, but is not thoroughly analyzing the long- and short-term cost implications and the advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives. It also has not established criteria for when relocatable classrooms will be placed at a site. By fully analyzing alternatives, the district should be able to save 2% of its construction budget or $3.7 million over the next five years.

Educational specifications are geared toward architectural components rather than educational components and programs. In addition, the district did not develop educational specifications for many of the smaller projects and renovations. Therefore, most projects did not have educational specifications describing the project's purpose, its rationale, and the institution's philosophy. Without this type of information, the project design may not best meet educational needs.

We recommend that the district

- clarify the responsibility for keeping projects or groups of projects within budget,

- use a representative site selection committee,

- conduct a comprehensive evaluation of its facilities and use the results in its five-year capital improvement plan,

- analyze the long- and short-term cost implications to alternatives to construction projects, and

- develop educational specifications for all construction and renovation projects.

## Facilities Maintenance

The district is generally operating the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations functions according to many of the best practices. For example, the district periodically examines the cost-effectiveness of alternative methods of obtaining services. It has established and uses guidelines for prioritizing maintenance needs. In addition, it uses its past experience and current market conditions to accurately project the costs of major maintenance projects.

However, the district is not using 10 of the 24 best practices for facilities maintenance. For example, the district's current custodial staffing level falls short of the best practice standard of one custodian for every 19,000 feet of gross floor space. If the district were to meet this standard, it would need to hire 14 more custodians. Hiring these custodians would cost the district about $1.36 million over the next five years.

In addition, the district has not clearly communicated performance standards to its Maintenance and Operations staff. It also has not developed a comprehensive staff development program for these staff in order to enhance their job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety. Such a program would cost about $33,600 over the next five years.

Because it does not currently have a software program that would enable it to track work orders and materials, the district has not established standards for frequently repeated operations and maintenance tasks. Performance standards would allow managers to more effectively schedule work and set clear expectations for staff.

The district is acquiring a new information system that will provide the information it needs to develop operations and maintenance standards. When this system is operational, the district should use it to develop the standards. The productivity gains resulting from these standards will save an estimated $593,000 over the next five years.

The district's annual budget does not address short-term objectives and long-term goals for maintaining and operating district facilities. In addition, the budget does not provide funding for annual on-going, preventive maintenance programs that will enable the district to avoid high repair or replacement costs in future years.

We recommend that the district develop performance standards for Maintenance staff to improve efficiency, develop a comprehensive staff development program for operations and Maintenance staff, and increase the custodial staffing to meet the best practice ratio.

## Student Transportation

The district generally uses 10 of 14 best practice standards for student transportation. It uses standards in its purchasing of vehicle maintenance equipment, staffing, recruiting, training, and safety procedures.

It also uses standards for the use of outsourcing, vehicle inspection and maintenance, vehicle storage and records management, service to exceptional students, and student routing. However, the district has not examined the cost-effectiveness of its current practices for some of these functions. In addition, the district could reduce its transportation costs if it changed some of its practices.

We recommend these improvements.

- When better information is available, the district should review the prospect of privatizing student transportation.

- When better information is available and workspace issues at the vehicle maintenance facility are resolved, the district should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of a preventive maintenance program.

- The district should improve coordination between the Offices of Student Transportation and Exceptional Student Education. Current efforts to collect Medicaid funding for some exceptional students could yield $365,000 over a five-year period.

- The district should charge school groups the full cost of activity trips, which would yield $185,000 over a five-year period.

- The district should discontinue bus service for students who can walk to school. This would save the district $805,000 over a five-year period.

The district does not use the best transportation practices in four areas. Three of the areas relate to the evaluation of transportation services. The district has no cost-comparison benchmarks for student transportation, nor does it regularly review and report on performance. Also, due in part to data limitations, it does not routinely analyze and control costs.

We recommend that the district adopt performance benchmarks for Student Transportation operations and vehicle

maintenance. The district should also implement a comprehensive management information system and use it to report Student Transportation performance. These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.

In the remaining area, the district's acquisition of school buses falls short of its plan to replace them; one of every six buses is older than school board standards allow. We recommend that, over the next three years, the district take steps to create a school bus fleet comprising an adequate number of buses that are no more than 15 years old. The five-year investment needed to implement this recommendation would be $1,662,000.

## Food Service Operations

The Manatee County School District is using 4 of the 15 best practices for Food Service. It has a system for receiving and storing goods, provides nutritional meals, has procedures to accurately provide a count of meals as required by the USDA, and follows safety and environmental health practices and regulations.

However, the district's Food Service program needs major improvement. The program has lost money for the past two years. A continual shift in program administration, poor food ordering choices, and failure to raise meal prices have all contributed to the loss. Unless changes are implemented, the program will likely continue to lose money, requiring the district to use reserve funds to meet the budget shortfall.

The district can increase Food Service revenue in several ways. We recommend that it increase meal participation rates by promoting school meals and soliciting and using customer feedback to improve services. We also recommend that, where feasible, the district implement a breakfast program in all schools, which would increase participation and revenue. Finally, we recommend that the district increase meal prices to the average price charged by its peer districts. If the district implements these recommendations, it should be able to realize $2.2 million in additional income over the next five years.

The district has not developed a strategic plan with measurable goals, objectives, and benchmarks for its Food Service program. In addition, it does not have an automated system that the food service supervisor can use to monitor program performance. The supervisor currently receives program data in hard copy form from each of the 38 cafeteria managers. This does not allow the supervisor to monitor program performance in a timely manner and make necessary adjustments to reduce costs and maximize revenue.

The district's inventory control system needs to be improved. Presently, the district has too much food in storage and could be fined $240,000 for USDA commodities that have exceeded their recommended shelf life and may no longer be palatable. Over the next five years, the district could reduce its food storage costs approximately $232,500 if it cut in half the amount of current inventory stored at the private contract warehouse. We recommend that schools maintain no more than a 10-day supply of on-hand inventory.

The Food Service supervisor has limited control over Food Service operations. Although the supervisor is held responsible for program performance, she has no input in evaluating the performance of cafeteria managers, who report directly to school principals. Also, because maintenance staff need access to freezers to check temperatures, the security of food supplies may be weakened.

To improve program control, we recommend that the Food Service supervisor and principals cooperate in the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of cafeteria managers. In addition, to improve food security, the district should install external thermometers on its freezers. This would involve a one-time investment of $2,100

The district has not reviewed Food Service purchasing practices. The Food Service supervisor develops bid specifications without receiving input from the purchasing department. To better assure that food-purchasing practices are cost-effective, we recommend that the Food Service supervisor work closely with Purchasing staff.

The district has not evaluated the cost-efficiency of its food delivery process. In an attempt to reduce costs, the district began having vendors deliver food directly to schools. The district estimated that direct delivery would save $3,860 annually.

However, it has not analyzed costs to determine whether this savings has been realized. We recommend that the district compare delivery systems to identify ways to improve the current direct delivery system or to determine whether to pursue a different delivery system.

The district needs to develop an equipment maintenance and replacement plan to maximize the life of food service equipment and reduce replacement costs. The Food Service supervisor has compiled anticipated equipment needs for the next three years, but this information has not been incorporated into a districtwide plan.

## Cost Control Systems

The Manatee County District School Board has generally established adequate cost control systems. It uses all best practices related to financial auditing, risk management, and purchasing. However, its purchasing practices could be improved if it used a computerized system for identifying and combining requisitions for similar items. District Purchasing personnel believe that the district's new accounting system, which will be operational by July 1999, will allow them to do this.

The district uses all but three of the best practices for asset management, financial management, and information systems.

In asset management, the district has reasonable controls over asset custody and acquisition. It also has established procedures for accurately accumulating costs related to specific assets in its accounting system. However, it may not be accurately reporting asset costs for management purposes because the reports are made using data from a stand-alone computer system in the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department and that data is not reconciled with data in the accounting system. District staff believe that this problem will be resolved when the new accounting system becomes operational.

In financial management, the district has generally established controls to ensure that its financial resources are properly managed. However it needs to improve its communication of these controls to district staff. We recommend that the district

- develop comprehensive, written procedures covering all of the district's financial operations;
- develop administrative procedures manuals for department heads and principals; and
- develop a system for employees to report suspected improprieties without fear of reprisal.

In Information Systems, the district maintains its major computer system in a manner that should ensure quality data. However, its procedures to limit access to data programs and files are not fully effective because the responsibility for maintaining its network resources is split between two departments and those departments are not always using compatible programs. We recommend that the district move all systems network technicians to the Information Services Department.

Finally, the district's internal auditing function needs improvement. The district is in the process of establishing an internal audit committee; however, specific committee guidelines have not been developed to specify the size of the committee and the qualifications of committee members. Also, the district has not developed a mission statement and long-range audit plan to guide audit activities. As a result, auditing resources may not be appropriately targeted to high-risk functions. In addition, the current internal audit department does not have an established system for reporting audit results.

We recommend that the district establish specific auditing committee guidelines that include guidelines for the size of the committee and qualification of its members. We recommend that the auditing committee develop a mission statement and auditing plan based on an analysis of risks. We also recommend that it develop a formal process for the auditors to use to communicate audit results to district managers and the board.

*Exhibit 2*

**The District Could Experience a Positive Fiscal Impact of Approximately $35 Million Over the Next Five Years by Implementing Recommendations**

| Recommendations by Best Practice Area | Projected Cost Savings [1] or (Investments) for Fiscal Year 1998-99 | Projected Five-Year Net Fiscal Impact [1] |
|---|---|---|
| **Management Structures** | **$33,000** | **$14,977,000** |
| Contract for a study of district-level management and support staffing levels (page 3-13) | (35,000)[2] | (35,000) |
| Reduce purchasing staff by five positions (page 3-13) | 73,000 | 657,000 |
| Provide training to board members (page 3-21) | (5,000) | (45,000) |
| Improve projections of the number of at-risk and exceptional students the district will serve (page 3-33) | 0 | 14,400,000 |
| **Personnel Systems and Benefits** | **0** | **$10,250,000** |
| Reduce cost of employer health benefits.  If district elects to pay 100% of single coverage, contribute no more than the highest peer district for family coverage, and split the costs for the other family options (page 5-57) | 0 | 10,250,000 |
| **Use of Construction Funds** | **$156,000** | **$5,180,000** |
| Implement year round programs to reduce need for new facilities (page 7-5) | 0 | 4,400,000 |
| Utilize value engineering to reduce the cost of construction (page 7- 6) | 146,000 | 730,000 |
| Standardize materials to lower future maintenance cost (page 7-7) | 10,000 | 50,000 |
| **Facilities Construction** | **$740,000** | **$3,550,000** |
| Complete facilities evaluation (page 8-5) | 0 | (150,000)[2] |
| Use construction alternative (page 8-5) | 740,000 | 3,700,000 |

(Exhibit 2 continues on next page.)

| Recommendations by Best Practice Area | Projected Cost Savings [1] or (Investments) for Fiscal Year 1998-99 | Projected Five-Year Net Fiscal Impact [1] |
|---|---|---|
| **Facilities Maintenance** | **$(150,000)** | **$(798,904)** |
| Develop standards to improve maintenance staff efficiency (Chapter 9) | 0 | 593,200 |
| Develop a comprehensive staff development program for maintenance staff (Chapter 9) | 0 | (33,600) |
| Increase custodial staffing to meet the best practices staffing ratio (Chapter 9) | (150,000) | (1,358,504) |
| **Student Transportation** | **$(283,000)** | **$(307,000)** |
| Replace school buses that exceed 15 years of age (page 10-22) | (554,000) | (1,662,000)[3] |
| Implement procedures to receive Medicaid reimbursement for a portion of the cost of transporting exceptional students (page 10-32) | 73,000 | 365,000 |
| Discontinue bus service to students who could walk to school (page 10-37) | 161,000 | 805,000 |
| Charge school groups for field trips to recover the full cost of the trip (page 10-37) | 37,000 | 185,000 |
| **Food Service Operations** | **$246,643** | **$2,437,147** |
| Implement breakfast programs in all district schools (page 11–9) | 0 | 152,928 |
| Implement a promotional campaign and use customer feedback to increase meal participation rates (page 11-16) | 0 | 233,628 |
| Raise selected meal prices (page 11-33) | 202,243 | 1,820,191 |
| Increase food security by installing external freezer thermometers (page 11-44) | (2,100)[2] | (2,100) |
| Reduce storage costs by decreasing on-hand inventory by half (page 11-53) | 46,500 | 232,500 |
| **Totals** | **$742,643** | **$35,318,243** |

[1] Fiscal impacts include estimated increases in revenue and cost avoidance associated with the implementation of report recommendations.

[2] Represents a one-time investment

[3] Over three years

# The Florida Legislature

## Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
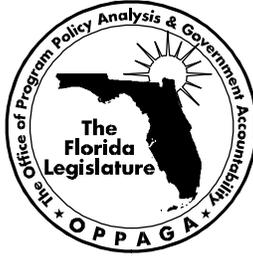
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- OPPAGA Publications and Contracted Reviews, such as policy analyses and performance reviews, assess the efficiency and effectiveness of state policies and programs and recommend improvements for Florida government.

- Performance-Based Program Budgeting (PB²) Reports and Information offer a variety of tools. Program Evaluation and Justification Reviews assess state programs operating under performance-based program budgeting.  Also offered is performance measures information and our assessments of measures.

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

- Best Financial Management Practice Reviews for Florida School Districts.  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.

# Executive Summary

## *Results in Brief*

If the Manatee County School Board agrees by a majority plus one vote to institute the action plans in Appendix A, the district could meet the best practices within two years and receive the Seal of Best Financial Management from the Commissioner. Currently, the Manatee County School District is using about half the best practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and, at this time, is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. If the Manatee County School District agrees to institute the action plans in Appendix A, the following would need to take place.

- The district would need to report annually on its progress towards implementing the plans and any changes that would affect compliance with best practices to the Legislature, the Governor, the SMART Schools Clearinghouse, OPPAGA (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability), Florida's Auditor General, and the Commissioner of Education.

- OPPAGA would need to conduct annually a review to determine whether the district has attained compliance with best financial management practices in areas covered by the action plans.

In addition, by implementing report recommendations, the Manatee County School District could improve district operations, save money, and demonstrate good stewardship of public resources. In total, OPPAGA estimates implementing these recommendations would have a positive fiscal impact of approximately $742,643 in Fiscal Year 1998-99 and $35,318,243 over a five-year period.

## *Purpose*

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

The best practices are designed to encourage districts to

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

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

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

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

The Commissioner of Education adopted these practices on September 4, 1997.

Best Financial Management Practice Reviews are designed to help school districts educate their students in the most cost-effective manner. The reviews compare district practices to best practices based on research and work in many states. These best practices represent the state of the art in managing school districts. Districts with adequate practices still may fall short of reaching these best practices.

# Background

The Manatee County School Board requested a Best Financial Management Practice Review to provide the district with an external assessment of how its existing practices could be improved. Board members and administrative staff have indicated their desire to use the review to improve district operations.

The mission of the Manatee County School District is to educate and challenge every student by ensuring quality, equitable, and diverse experiences in an environment conducive to learning. The Manatee County School District has 39 schools including 26 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 5 high schools and 1 vocational technical center. It employs over 4,000 full-time staff and serves about 34,000 students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. In Fiscal Year 1998-1999, the district's budget was approximately $410 million. During the last two fiscal years, the district has experienced budget deficits, with a shortfall of approximately $4 million in Fiscal Year 1996- 1997 and an anticipated shortfall of about $4.6 million in Fiscal Year 1997-1998.

In accordance with the law, OPPAGA and the Auditor General conducted the review. OPPAGA contracted with MGT of America, Inc., to assess the use of construction funds, facilities construction, and facilities maintenance. OPPAGA assessed management structures, performance accountability systems, personnel systems and benefits, use of lottery fund, student transportation, and food service operations. Florida's Auditor General assessed cost control systems.

All three entities express their appreciation to members of the Manatee County School Board and district employees who provided information and assistance during the review.

# Conclusions

Currently, the Manatee County School District is using about half the best practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and, at this time, is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. Below are our conclusions by best practice area.

- **Management Structures.**  The district needs to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the district's school board, superintendent, central administrative staff, and principals.

- **Performance Accountability System.**  The Manatee County School District needs to develop a comprehensive performance accountability system to ensure that its major programs are meeting their intended purposes in the most cost-efficient manner.

- **Personnel Systems and Benefits.**  The district generally needs to improve its personnel management system.  In particular, it needs to substantially improve its job descriptions, use of technology to reduce paperwork, communication of performance expectations, and use of salary and benefit comparisons when determining compensation.

- **Use of Lottery Proceeds.**  In general, the district needs to improve its management of lottery funds the Legislature appropriates to the district and the portion of those funds the district allocates to school advisory councils.

- **Use of Construction Funds.**  The district generally is using construction funds appropriately and for their intended purpose.  However, it could improve its exploration of construction alternatives such as year-round schools.  It also could plan construction projects in a manner that ensures cost efficiency both in its expenditures for capital outlay and future operation.

- **Facilities Construction.**   The district generally needs to improve on what is current practice in most areas of facilities.  Many of the best practice areas are being partially met but need to be improved in order to provide the best quality facilities at the lowest cost.  In particular, the district needs to implement the new construction services structure, include more stakeholders in the facilities planning process and develop facility standards and project educational specifications.

- **Facilities Maintenance.**  The district is generally operating the facilities maintenance, and operations functions according to best practices, but has room to improve.  The district needs to improve its long-range facilities plan to eliminate deferred maintenance.  Staff training needs to be comprehensive and supervisors need to make greater use of management tools in order to effectively use available resources.

- **Student Transportation.**  The district generally uses best practice for student transportation.  However, it has not developed systems to evaluate transportation activities and improve operations.  In addition, the district needs to systematically replace its aging buses.

- **Food Service Operations.**  The district's food service program has lost money for the past two years.  A continual shift in program administration, poor food ordering choices, and failure to raise meal prices have all contributed to the loss.  Several program changes are needed to avoid further losses.

- **Cost Control Systems.**  The district has generally established adequate cost control systems.  Its systems will be improved, however, when the district implements its new accounting system.  In addition, consolidating staff responsible for maintenance of its computer network into one organizational unit will improve control over data systems.

The Manatee County School District is using 87 of the 167 best practices. Exhibit 1 provides an overview of the Manatee County School District's use of best practices by area.

*Exhibit 1*

## Overall the Manatee County School District Is Using About Half of the Best Practices

| Best Practice Area | Is the Manatee County School District Using Individual Best Practices? | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Management Structures | 4 | 9 |
| Performance Accountability Systems | 2 | 6 |
| Personnel Systems and Benefits | 3 | 6 |
| Use of Lottery Proceeds | 1 | 4 |
| Use of State and District Construction Funds | 2 | 2 |
| Facilities Construction | 24 | 16 |
| Facilities Maintenance | 14 | 10 |
| Student Transportation | 10 | 4 |
| Food Service Operations | 4 | 11 |
| Cost Control Systems | 27 | 4 |
| **All Areas** | **91** | **72** |

If it implements the recommendations in the Best Financial Management Practice Review, the Manatee County School District will improve its effectiveness and reduce costs. As shown in Exhibit 2, implementing these recommendations will have a positive fiscal impact of $742,643 in Fiscal Year 1998-99 and $35,318,243 million over five years.

*Exhibit 2*

## The District Could Experience a Positive Fiscal Impact of Approximately $35 Million Over the Next Five Years by Implementing Recommendations

| Recommendations by Best Practice Area | Projected Cost Savings [1] or (Investments) for Fiscal Year 1998-99 | Projected Five-Year Net Fiscal Impact [1] |
|---|---|---|
| **Management Structures** | **$33,000** | **$14,977,000** |
| Contract for a study of district-level management and support staffing levels (page 3-13) | (35,000)[2] | (35,000) |
| Reduce purchasing staff by five positions (page 3-13) | 73,000 | 657,000 |
| Provide training to board members (page 3-21) | (5,000) | (45,000) |
| Improve projections of the number of at-risk and exceptional students the district will serve (page 3-33) | 0 | 14,400,000 |
| **Personnel Systems and Benefits** | **0** | **$10,250,000** |
| Reduce cost of employer health benefits. If district elects to pay 100% of single coverage, contribute no more than the highest peer district for family coverage, and split the savings for the other family options (page 5-57) | 0 | 10,250,000 |
| **Use of Construction Funds** | **$156,000** | **$5,180,000** |
| Implement year round programs to reduce need for new facilities (page 7-5) | 0 | 4,400,000 |
| Utilize value engineering to reduce the cost of construction (page 7-6) | 146,000 | 730,000 |
| Standardize materials to lower future maintenance cost (page 7-7) | 10,000 | 50,000 |
| **Facilities Construction** | **$740,000** | **$3,550,000** |
| Complete facilities evaluation (page 8-5) | 0 | (150,000) [2] |
| Use construction alternative (page 8-5) | 740,000 | 3,700,000 |

(Exhibit 2 continues on next page.)

| Recommendations by Best Practice Area | Projected Cost Savings [1] or (Investments) for Fiscal Year 1998-99 | Projected Five-Year Net Fiscal Impact [1] |
|---|---|---|
| **Facilities Maintenance** | **$(150,000)** | **$(798,904)** |
| Develop standards to improve maintenance staff efficiency (Chapter 9) | 0 | 593,200 |
| Develop a comprehensive staff development program for maintenance staff (Chapter 9) | 0 | (33,600) |
| Increase custodial staffing to meet the best practices staffing ratio (Chapter 9) | (150,000) | (1,358,504) |
| **Student Transportation** | **$(283,000)** | **$(307,000)** |
| Replace school buses that exceed 15 years of age (page 10-22) | (554,000) | (1,662,000)[3] |
| Implement procedures to receive Medicaid reimbursement for a portion of the cost of transporting exceptional students (page 10-32) | 73,000 | 365,000 |
| Discontinue bus service to students who could walk to school (page 10-37) | 161,000 | 805,000 |
| Charge school groups for field trips to recover the full cost of the trip (page 10-37) | 37,000 | 185,000 |
| **Food Service Operations** | **$246,643** | **$2,437,147** |
| Implement breakfast programs in all district schools (page 11–9) | 0 | 152,928 |
| Implement a promotional campaign and use customer feedback to increase meal participation rates (page 11-16) | 0 | 233,628 |
| Raise selected meal prices (page 11-33) | 202,243 | 1,820,191 |
| Increase food security by installing external freezer thermometers (page 11-44) | (2,100)[2] | (2,100) |
| Reduce storage costs by decreasing on-hand inventory by half (page 11-53) | 46,500 | 232,500 |
| **Totals** | **$742,643** | **$35,318,243** |

[1] Fiscal impacts include estimated increases in revenue and cost avoidance associated with the implementation of report recommendations.
[2] Represents a one-time investment
[3] Over three years

# 1 Introduction

*Best Financial Management Practice Reviews are designed to help districts meet the challenge of educating students in a cost-effective manner. The Manatee County School District was the first district to request one of these reviews to improve the efficiency of its operations.*

## Overview

Best Financial Management Practice Reviews are designed to help school districts meet the challenge of educating their students in a cost-effective manner. In these reviews a district's management and operational activities are compared to 'best practices' for school districts. These best practices represent the state of the art in managing school districts and are based upon published research and work in many states. Because a district's operations are compared to the state of the art, there may be many areas in which a district is not using the best practices. In such areas the review provides the district with a plan of action that, if implemented, will allow it to meet the best practices and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of district operations.

The Manatee County School Board was the first school district to request a Best Financial Management Practice Review. The school board requested a review to provide the district with an external assessment of how its existing practices could be improved to achieve a higher level of efficiency and effectiveness. Manatee County School Board members and administrative staff have both indicated a desire to work toward using the Best Financial Management Practices in managing and operating their school district.

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

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

A framework for conducting a Best Financial Management Practice Review is prescribed in Florida law. In order to receive a review school board members must vote unanimously to request a review and district must contribute 50% of the cost of a review. OPPAGA and the Auditor General jointly examine a district's operations to determine whether the district is using these best practices.

In addition, the law provides OPPAGA the authority to contract with a consultant for part of the review. The reviews must be completed within a six-month period and OPPAGA must publish a report within 60 days that indicates whether the district is using the best practices and identifies potential cost savings. Districts found to be using the Best Financial Management Practices will be awarded a "Seal of Best Financial Management" by the State Board of Education. Districts that are not using Best Financial Management Practices will be provided a detailed two-year action plan to provide assistance in meeting the best practices. The district school board must vote on whether to implement this action plan.

While OPPAGA is statutorily responsible for issuing a report to the district regarding its financial management practices and cost savings recommendations, other entities were involved in conducting this review. The Auditor General assessed the district's cost control systems, while MGT of America examined the district's use of construction funds and facilities construction and maintenance areas.

# *Scope*

Florida law provides that the best financial management practices are designed to enhance public confidence in school districts by addressing the following areas at a minimum:

- efficient use of resources, use of lottery proceeds, student transportation and food services operations, management structures, and personnel systems and benefits;
- compliance with generally accepted accounting principles and state and federal laws relating to financial management;
- use of performance accountability systems, including performance measurement reports to the public, internal auditing, financial auditing and information made available to support decision-making; and
- use of cost control systems, including asset, risk, and financial management; purchasing; and information system controls.

Refer to Exhibit 1-1 for a listing of the managerial and operational areas that are included in the Best Financial Management Practice Review of the Manatee County School District.

*Exhibit 1-1*

## Three Entities Evaluated 10 Areas for the Manatee Best Financial Management Practice Review

| Management and Operational Areas | Entity Primarily Responsible |
|---|---|
| Management Structures | OPPAGA |
| Performance Accountability System | OPPAGA |
| Personnel Systems and Benefits | OPPAGA |
| Use of Lottery Proceeds | OPPAGA |
| Use of State and District Construction Funds | MGT of America, Inc. |
| Facilities Construction | MGT of America, Inc. |
| Facilities Maintenance | MGT of America, Inc. |
| Student Transportation | OPPAGA |
| Food Service Operations | OPPAGA |
| Cost Control Systems:<br>    Internal Auditing<br>    Financial Auditing<br>    Asset Management<br>    Risk Management<br>    Financial Management<br>    Purchasing<br>    Information System | Auditor General |

## *Methodology*

In conducting this review OPPAGA, the Auditor General, and MGT of America used a wide variety of methods to collect information about the district's use of the Best Financial Management Practices. Review staff conducted numerous interviews with district administrators and staff, facilitated focus discussion groups with district staff, held a public forum, and conducted site visits to schools. Staff also gathered and reviewed many program documents, district financial data, data on program activities, and data on student performance. In an effort to put Manatee's programs and activities in context with other Florida school districts, staff gathered information from peer districts around the state. Review staff made eight site visits to the Manatee County School District. Refer to Exhibit 1-2 for a timeline of major project activities.

*Exhibit 1-2*

# Manatee County School District
# Best Financial Management Practice Review Timeline

| Activity | Date |
|---|---|
| **Preliminary Site Visit** | March 2-3 |
| OPPAGA and Auditor General staff made a formal presentation to the school board, and conducted individual meetings with board members, the superintendent and assistant superintendents. | |
| **Self-Assessment Site Visit** | April 1 |
| OPPAGA and Auditor General staff provided technical assistance to district staff on how to complete the self-assessment. | |
| **District Self-Assessment Due to OPPAGA** | April 15 |
| **OPPAGA Team Conducted First Site Visit** | May 17-22 |
| Team members reviewed the district's self-assessment with district staff, conducted numerous interviews, collected additional data, identified issues and potential cost savings. | |
| **Auditor General Team Conducted First Site Visit** | May 26-29 |
| Team members reviewed the district's self-assessment with district staff, conducted numerous interviews, collected additional data, identified issues and potential cost savings. | |
| **MGT of America Conducted First Site Visit** | June 15-18 |
| Consultants reviewed self-assessment with district staff, conducted numerous interviews, collected additional data, identified issues and potential cost savings. | |
| **OPPAGA Team Conducted Second Site Visit** | June 21-25 |
| Team members conducted a public forum (including Auditor General team) to obtain input from the community, focus groups to obtain information from school site and additional district staff, and numerous interviews to discuss preliminary findings and potential solutions. | |
| **Auditor General Team Conducted Second Site Visit** | July 6-8 |
| Team members conducted numerous interviews to discuss preliminary findings and potential solutions. | |
| **OPPAGA and Auditor General Team Conducted Third Site Visit** | August 10-11 |
| Team members shared the draft report with district staff for feedback and to collaboratively develop an action plan in instances where the district was not using a best practice. | |
| **MGT of America Conducted Second Site Visit** | September 16-17 |
| Team members shared the draft report with district staff for feedback and to collaboratively develop an action plan in instances where the district was not using a best practice. | |
| **OPPAGA and Auditor General Team Conducted Final Site Visit** | October 7-8 |
| Team members provided school board members and district staff an opportunity to review the final report before it was published. | |
| **Presentation of Final Report to Manatee County School Board** | November 9 |

## Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

To understand the Manatee County School District's practices and programs, the review team conducted numerous interviews. The team conducted approximately 250 on-site interviews with more than 100 people. The review team interviewed a wide range of district personnel representing all levels of staff. Interview participants included school board members, the superintendent, assistant superintendents, and various program directors and supervisors, principals and support staff. In addition, the team conducted approximately 10 on-site focus groups to identify issues and gather feedback from additional support staff, principals and district administrators.

## On-Site Observations

Team members conducted on-site observations of district operations. These observations included school facilities, transportation facilities, the district's warehouse, and school cafeterias. Team members also observed the private food storage facility under contract with the district.

## Public Forum

The review team conducted a public forum in Manatee County to allow citizens to express their concerns and to assist the team in identifying issues for review. At the forum citizens were invited to speak with or provide written comments to the team members reviewing each of the operational and managerial areas of the study about any concerns they had with the district's practices. Through the public forum team members identified numerous issues related to the best practice areas.

## Peer School Districts

OPPAGA identified five peer districts to use in comparing Manatee's activities to those of similar school districts. To gather information from the peer districts, the review team interviewed a variety of staff from each of the five peer districts for each managerial and operational area of the review. In addition, peer district staff provided documents and data for district comparisons and provided confirmation or changes to state collected data.

OPPAGA identified Alachua, Collier, Leon, Marion, and Sarasota county school districts as peer districts for the Manatee County School District. OPPAGA compared data from these districts to that of Manatee to better understand demographic characteristics, resources, expenditures, and performance. In identifying these peer school districts OPPAGA obtained input from Manatee County School District administrators and considered the factors listed below.

- County population
- Geographic location
- Total number of students
- Racial and ethnic composition of students
- Number and percentage of students in specialized educational programs (such as exceptional student education and dropout prevention)
- Percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch

## Other Sources of Information

As part of the review team members contacted additional entities to obtain a variety of information such as model district programs, statewide practices, federal and state requirements, the availability of statewide data, and technical assistance available to the school districts.  Team members contacted state agency personnel in the Department of Education, and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.  Several external organizations were also contacted for information, including the Florida Association of School Administrators and the *Bradenton Herald*.

## Review Staff Visited 17 District Schools

OPPAGA staff visited 17 district schools.  During these visits we spoke to school staff such as teachers and support staff such as transportation and food service staff to obtain a better understanding of issues confronting the district and to identify ways the district could improve.  Exhibit 1-3 identifies the schools the review team visited during on-site visits to the Manatee County School District.

*Exhibit 1-3*

## OPPAGA Visited 17 Schools
## in the Manatee County School District

| Elementary Schools | Middle Schools | High Schools | Technical Institute |
|---|---|---|---|
| Braden River | Johnson | Lakewood Ranch | Manatee |
| Daughterty | Haille | Manatee | |
| Duette | Sugg | Palmetto | |
| Harllee | | | |
| Orange Ridge-Bullock | | | |
| Palm View | | | |
| Palmetto | | | |
| Seabreeze | | | |
| Samoset | | | |
| Wakeland | | | |

# 2 Statistical Profile of Manatee County School District

*The mission of the Manatee County School District is to educate and challenge every student by ensuring quality, equitable, and diverse experiences in an environment conducive to learning.*
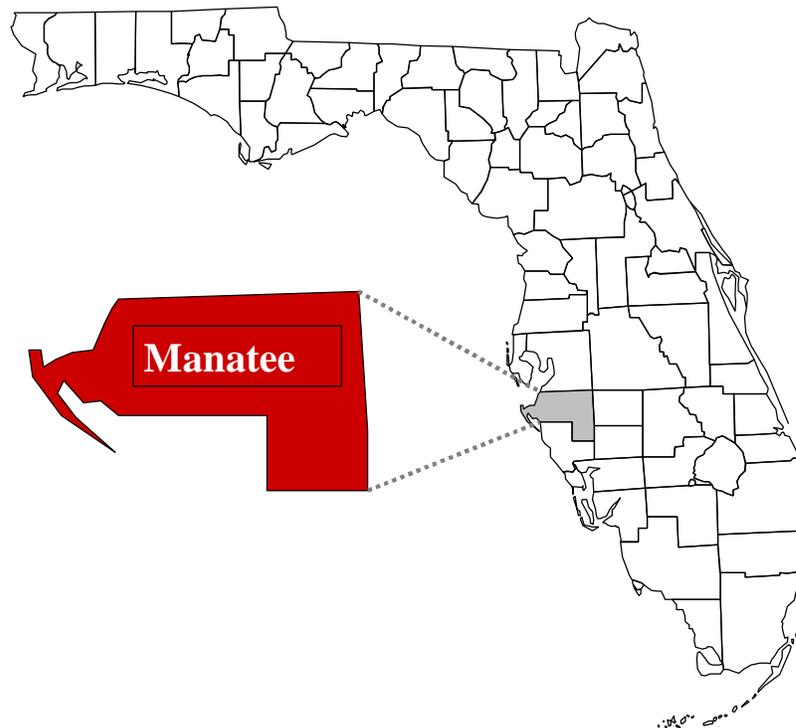


## County Profile

Manatee County is located in southwest Florida on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico between Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Sarasota counties. The county's primary sources of employment are local service industries and the retail trades. Both are supported in large part by a $250 million tourism industry and a sizable retirement community, which contributes more than $1.1 billion into the economy. Tropicana Dole Beverages, Staff Leasing, the Manatee County School Board, and the Manatee County government are the principal employers. In 1994 and 1995, the per capita income of residents ranged between $1,700 and $2,000 above the state average. (See Exhibit 2-1.)

Manatee County has six major population centers. The two largest incorporated communities are Bradenton and Palmetto. Bradenton is the county's largest city as well as the county seat. The school district offices are also located in Bradenton.

*Exhibit 2-1*

## The Per Capita Income of Residents
## Ranged Between $1,700 and $2,000 Above the State Average
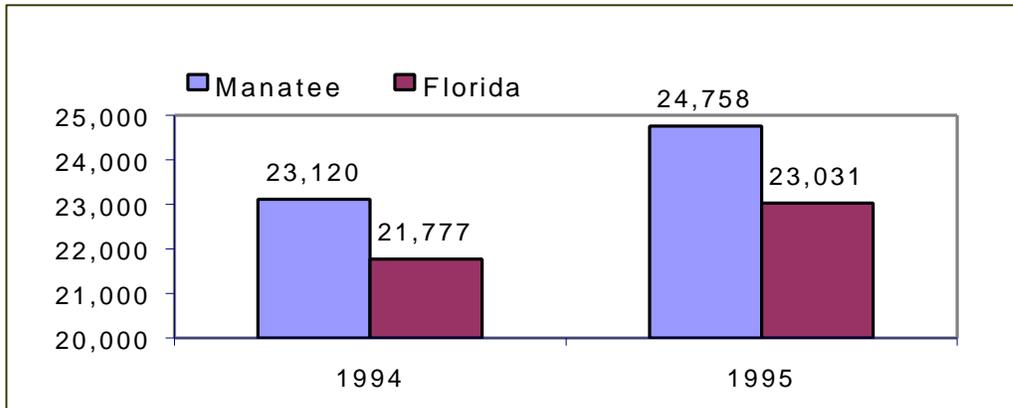


Source: *Florida Education and Community Data Profiles*

The population of Manatee County is characterized by a larger number of elderly residents. As Exhibit 2-2 shows, the median age of its population is 44 years; the state average is about 38 years. About 28% of the residents of Manatee County were 65 years or older in 1995. Exhibit 2-3 compares the ranges between the age groups of the county's residents with residents. In 1995, the most glaring difference between Manatee's residents and the state's was present in the over 65 group. The size of this group in Manatee was about 8% higher than the state average. In addition, the county population has more than doubled over the past decade. In 1995, its population was around 233,000. The projected population for the year 2000 is over one-quarter million people.

*Exhibit 2-2*

## The Median Age of Manatee County in 1995
## Was About Six Years Greater Than the State Average
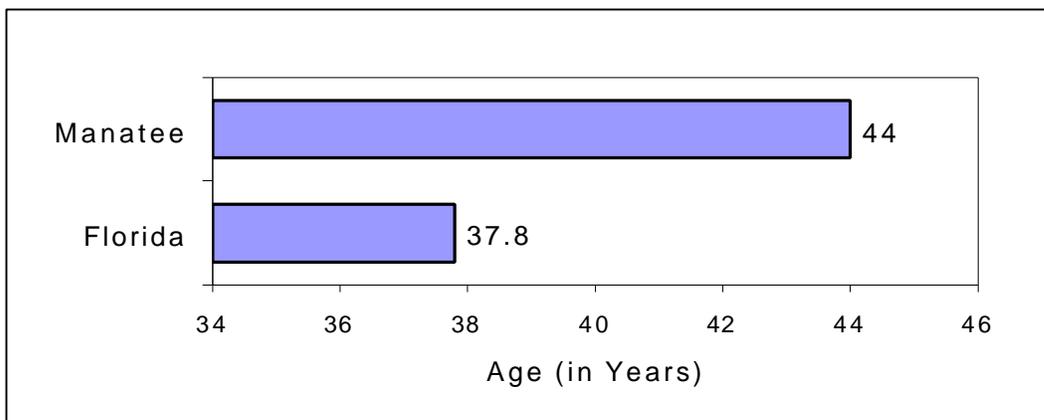


Source: *Florida Education and Community Data Profiles*

*Exhibit 2-3*

**In 1995, Manatee County Had a Smaller Proportion of School-Aged Children, but Its Over-65 Age Group Was 8% Greater Than the State Average**
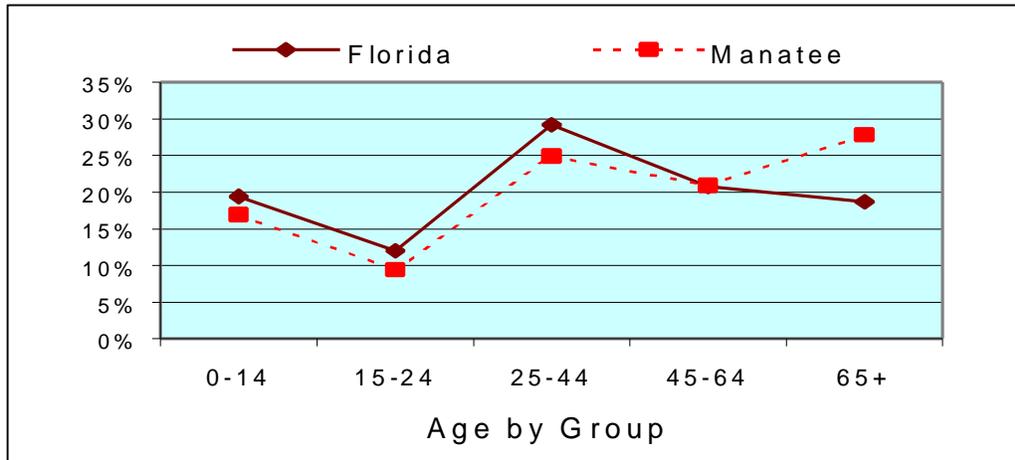


Source: *Florida Education and Community Data Profiles*

# District Profile

The following section provides a profile of the Manatee County School District in comparison with five of its peer districts, Alachua, Collier, Leon, Marion, and Sarasota county school districts. The peers were selected based on their similarities with the Manatee County School District across a number of categories including the size of the student population and geographic location. Information in this section is presented across four main areas:

- District Information;
- Student Performance;
- Student Characteristics; and
- Staff Characteristics.

## District Information

The Manatee County School District has 39 schools including 26 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 5 high schools, and 1 vocational technical center. The district employs over 4,000 full-time staff persons (instructional and support).

The Department of Education Profiles of Florida School Districts reports that the district had 33,705 students in the fall of 1997, grades prekindergarten through twelfth. In comparison to other Florida school districts, Manatee is considered a relatively medium-sized district. Exhibit 2-4 shows the fall 1997 population of Manatee and its peer districts. Since the 1992-93 school year, Manatee has grown

by about 1,000 students a year and a total of 15%. In fall 1993, its student population was 29,688, in fall 1995 it was 31,803, and in fall 1997 it was 33,705 (see Exhibit 2-5).

*Exhibit 2-4*

## Manatee's Fall 1997 Student Population Was Greater Than Four of Its Five Peers

| School District | Student Population |
|---|---|
| Alachua | 30,063 |
| Collier | 29,261 |
| Leon | 31,455 |
| Manatee | 33,705 |
| Marion | 37,210 |
| Sarasota | 33,159 |
| Peer Average (without Manatee) | 32,223 |

Source: *Membership in Florida Schools*, Fall 1997, Department of Education

*Exhibit 2-5*

## The District's Enrollment Has Consistently Grown in the Past Several Years
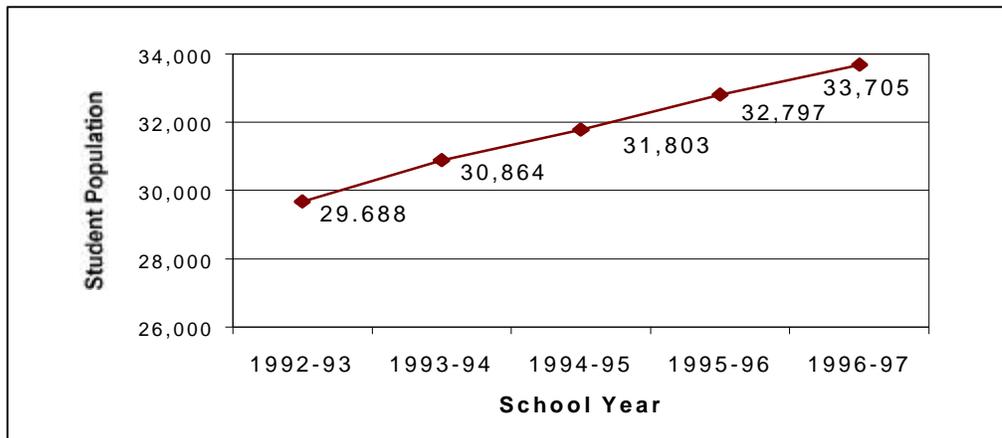


Source: *Membership in Florida Schools*, Fall 1997, Department of Education

## District Financial Information

The district has expended more funds than it received in the past two years. The Fiscal Year 1999 budget for Manatee county school district is approximately $410 million. Due to financial reductions within the General Fund, the district experienced budget deficits in the past two fiscal years. In Fiscal Year 1997, the district had expended approximately $4 million more than it had received in available revenue and the district expects it will experience a deficit of approximately $4.6 million in Fiscal Year

1998. This resulted in the general fund balance decreasing from a high of $17 million in Fiscal Year 1996 to the $8.4 million in July 1998.

The school district receives revenue from federal, state, and local sources. The major revenue source for district operations is the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). This funding source, established by the Legislature annually, prescribes state revenues for education as well as the level of ad valorem taxes (property taxes), which may be levied by each school district in the state. It also includes restricted funding called 'categoricals,' which are funds specified by the Legislature for selected district services, such as instructional materials (textbooks). The total increase in FEFP funding for Fiscal Year 1999 is approximately $10.4 million, which represents an increase of 6.85% over Fiscal Year 1998. Approximately $450,000 of the increase in FEFP funding is designated for categorical funding. Exhibit 2-6 provides a breakdown of district funds available.

*Exhibit 2-6*

# District Funds Include Federal, State, and Local Sources

### Summary of the Manatee School District Fiscal Year 1999 Budget

| Source | Total |
|---|---|
| Federal | $  17,910,000 |
| State | 129,257,000 |
| Local | 136,686,000 |
| Total Revenue Sources | $283,853,000 |
| Incoming Transfers | 22,138,000 |
| Beginning Fund Balance | 103,779,000 |
| **Total Funds Available** | **$409,770,000** |

Source: Manatee County School District

Personnel costs are the largest category of district expense and comprise 43% of the district's Fiscal Year 1999 budget. Capital outlay, which includes construction, remodeling, and renovation costs, accounts for 37% of budgeted expenses for Fiscal Year 1999. Compared to Fiscal Year 1998, personnel costs are expected to increase 2% while capital outlay expenses are expected to decrease approximately 21%. Refer to Exhibit 2-7 for a breakdown of district budget expenditures for Fiscal Year 1999.

*Exhibit 2-7*

# District Budgeted Expenditures Includes Personnel, Capital Outlay, and Operating Expenses
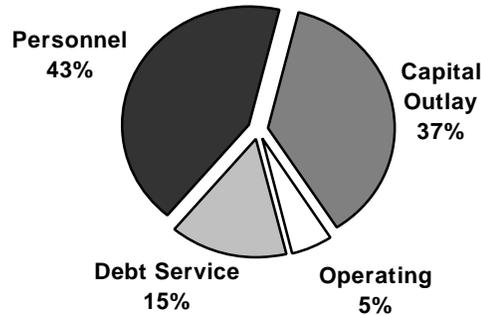


Source:  Manatee County School District

Manatee County School District's expenditures for 1996-97 are shown on Exhibit 2-8.  Manatee's expenditures from the General Fund and Special revenues at $182,628,862 were similar to those of its peer districts.  General Fund and Special revenues are the main funding source for operating the school district.  The large difference between Manatee's budget of over $400 million and these expenditures were the district's capital projects funds.

*Exhibit 2-8*

# Manatee's General and Special Fund Total Expenditures Were Similar to Its Peer Districts

| School District | General and Special Fund Expenditures for 1996-97 |
|---|---|
| Alachua | $154,719,301 |
| Collier | 177,747,481 |
| Leon | 179,176,856 |
| Manatee | 182,628,862 |
| Marion | 179,065,091 |
| Sarasota | 212,032,972 |

Source:  Florida Department of Education

# *Student Performance* ———————————————————

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

student achievement of the Manatee County School District, as well as performance information about its peer districts.

## Student Test Scores

Florida Writes! is an examination administered throughout each of the state's 67 school districts. The test is designed to measure student achievement in writing in grades 4, 8, and 10. Exhibit 2-9 provides 1998 Florida Writing Assessment results. Manatee's 1998 Florida Writes! scores were relatively consistent with those of its peers. For grade 4, Manatee's combined score was the highest amongst its peers. For grades 8 and 10, its combined scores marked the midpoint of its peers.

*Exhibit 2-9*

## Manatee's 1998 Florida Writing Assessment Results Appear Consistent With Its Peers' Results

| School District | Grade 4 Average Scores | | | Grade 8 Average Scores | | | Grade 10 Average Scores | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Writing to Explain | Writing to Tell a Story | Com-bined | Writing to Explain | Writing to Tell a Story | Com-bined | Writing to Explain | Writing to Tell a Story | Com-bined |
| Alachua | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.1 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 3.8 |
| Collier | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.3 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 3.3 | 3.4 |
| Leon | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 3.5 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.7 |
| **Manatee** | **3.1** | **3.2** | **3.2** | **3.3** | **3.3** | **3.3** | **3.6** | **3.3** | **3.5** |
| Marion | 2.8 | 3.0 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.3 |
| Sarasota | 3.1 | 3.3 | 3.2 | 3.6 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 3.8 |
| Statewide | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.6 | 3.5 | 3.6 |

Source: Department of Education

During the spring of 1997 all school districts in Florida administered nationally norm-referenced tests to students. A norm-referenced test is designed to indicate how any individual performs in comparison to others (such as grade level or age). The Manatee County School District administers the Stanford Achievement Test to all fourth and eighth graders. Exhibits 2-10 and 2-11 contain the following information regarding the results of the achievement tests for the Manatee County School District and all five peers.

- The number of students who were administered the test in the spring 1997 is shown.
- The median national percentile rank (NPR) is shown. An NPR indicates how a student did compared to students in the nation. NPRs range from 1 to 99. An NPR of 50 means that the student scored better than 50% of the students in the nation.
- The percentage of students with a NPR from 1-25 and the percentage with an NPR from 76-99 is shown. (This shows the lowest and highest quartile scores of students).

Manatee's scores for both the fourth grade and the eighth grade students were lower than its peers, while the mathematics sections were consistent with its peers.

*Exhibit 2-10*

# Grade 4 Norm-Referenced Tests (See Note)

| Spring 1997 | Reading | | | | Mathematics | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of Students | Median NPR | % in Each NPR Group | | Number of Students | Median | % in Each NPR Group | |
| | | | 1-25 | 76-99 | | | 1-25 | 76-99 |
| Alachua | 1,796 | 61 | 21 | 36 | 1,788 | 66 | 14 | 38 |
| Collier | 1,788 | 52 | 28 | 25 | 1,778 | 69 | 14 | 44 |
| Leon | 2,044 | 58 | 23 | 34 | 2,046 | 71 | 17 | 47 |
| **Manatee** | **2,015** | **48** | **26** | **24** | **2,000** | **65** | **14** | **37** |
| Marion | 2,290 | 56 | 18 | 27 | 2,298 | 58 | 19 | 32 |
| Sarasota | 2,052 | 72 | 8 | 41 | 2,040 | 74 | 9 | 46 |

Note:  The peer districts vary in their use of norm-referenced tests for students.  The Alachua County School District administers the Iowa Test of Basic Skills Test.  The Collier County School District administers the Stanford Achievement Test.  The Leon  and Marion county school districts administer the California Achievement Test.   And the Sarasota County School District administers the Comprehensive Assessment Program National Achievement Test.

Source:  Statewide Assessment Services Section, Department of Education

*Exhibit 2-11*

# Grade 8 Norm-Referenced Tests (See Note)

| Spring 1997 | Reading | | | | Mathematics | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of Students | Median | % in Each NPR Group | | Number of Students | Median | % in Each NPR Group | |
| | | | 1-25 | 76-99 | | | 1-25 | 76-99 |
| Alachua | 1,756 | 54 | 22 | 31 | 1,754 | 54 | 25 | 27 |
| Collier | 1,639 | 50 | 29 | 24 | 1,614 | 61 | 22 | 34 |
| Leon | 1,913 | 62 | 19 | 34 | 1,903 | 63 | 16 | 38 |
| **Manatee** | **1,781** | **48** | **26** | **21** | **1,733** | **55** | **21** | **28** |
| Marion | 2,036 | 59 | 19 | 31 | 2,043 | 49 | 26 | 25 |
| Sarasota | 1,771 | 58 | 17 | 32 | 1,763 | 60 | 12 | 33 |

Note:  The peer districts vary in their use of norm-referenced tests for students.  The Alachua County School District administers the Iowa Test of Basic Skills Test.  The Collier County School District administers the Stanford Achievement Test.  The Leon  and Marion county school districts administer the California Achievement Test.   And the Sarasota County School District administers the Comprehensive Assessment Program National Achievement Test.

Source:  Statewide Assessment Services Section, Department of Education

The 1976 Legislature created a competency test to be used as part of the requirements for a regular high school diploma.  All eleventh graders must take the High School Competency Test (HSCT) and must pass both parts of the test (reading and mathematics) to qualify for a diploma.  Exhibit 2-12 compares the percentage passing rate for the Manatee County School District and its five peers.  The percentage of Manatee students passing the communications portion of the HCST was higher than the state average, but lower than its peers' average.  The percentage passing the mathematics section was also higher than the state average.  This score was equal to the average of its peers.

*Exhibit 2-12*

## The Percentage of Manatee Students Passing the Communications High School Competency Test Was Lower Than Its Peers

| School District | Communications | | Mathematics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. Tested | % Passing | No. Tested | % Passing |
| Alachua | 1,608 | 84 | 1,624 | 78 |
| Collier | 1,369 | 79 | 1,363 | 81 |
| Leon | 1,601 | 81 | 1,614 | 76 |
| Manatee | 1,272 | 78 | 1,272 | 79 |
| Marion | 1,692 | 80 | 1,689 | 75 |
| Sarasota | 1,495 | 90 | 1,503 | 87 |
| State | 107,263 | 78 | 107,657 | 75 |

Source: Division of Public Schools, Department of Education

Another indicator of performance of its students is the results of the college placement tests as taken by twelfth graders. Students are likely to take either the SAT or the ACT test as they prepare to graduate high school. Exhibit 2-13 compares Manatee with its peers regarding the results of these tests. The average SAT score for Manatee students was higher than the state average, but lower than its peers' average. The percentage passing the ACT was also higher than the state average. This score was about equal to the average of its peers.

*Exhibit 2-13*

## Manatee Students' Average Score Was Lower Than Its Peers but Higher Than the State Average on Both the SAT and ACT Tests in 1996-97

| School District | SAT | | | ACT | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. Tested | % 12th Graders Tested | Mean Score | No. Tested | % 12th Graders Tested | Composite Score |
| Alachua | 771 | 49.9 | 1,065 | 468 | 30.3 | 20.5 |
| Collier | 548 | 44.0 | 1,063 | 589 | 47.3 | 21.5 |
| Leon | 763 | 47.1 | 1,058 | 611 | 37.7 | 20.8 |
| Manatee | 524 | 41.2 | 1,008 | 352 | 27.7 | 21.0 |
| Marion | 558 | 30.9 | 1,005 | 525 | 29.1 | 20.4 |
| Sarasota | 906 | 57.9 | 1,061 | 499 | 31.9 | 22.3 |
| Peer Average (without Manatee) | 709 | | 1,050 | 538 | | 21.1 |
| State | 46,635 | 44.2 | 997 | 32,602 | 30.9 | 20.6 |

Source: *Florida District Indicators Report*, Department of Education

# Graduation and Students Continuing Their Education

The Manatee County School District has had a consistently greater dropout rate than the state average and the average of the peer districts. The dropout rates and total number of diploma graduates, for the Manatee County School District's previous three school years are compared against its peers in Exhibit 2-14. The district's dropout rate has increased since the 1994-95 school year. During the same period of time the number of diplomas the district has granted decreased, while the peer districts increased the number of diplomas granted.

*Exhibit 2-14*

## Manatee's Dropout Rate Has Risen
## While the Number of Graduates Has Declined

| School District | Dropout Rate | | | Total Diploma Graduates | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1994-95 School Year | 1995-96 School Year | 1996-97 School Year | 1994-95 School Year | 1995-96 School Year | 1996-97 School Year |
| Alachua | 7.02% | 6.36% | 5.77% | 1,162 | 1,234 | 1,339 |
| Collier | 4.94% | 5.30% | 6.13% | 964 | 960 | 1,105 |
| Leon | 4.34% | 4.49% | 4.61% | 1,282 | 1,337 | 1,517 |
| **Manatee** | **5.96%** | **6.20%** | **7.01%** | **1,116** | **1,088** | **1,068** |
| Marion | 4.49% | 5.40% | 6.51% | 1,430 | 1,459 | 1,617 |
| Sarasota | 6.26% | 3.78% | 4.23% | 1,517 | 1,380 | 1,460 |
| Peer Average (without Manatee) | | | | 1,271 | 1,274 | 1,408 |
| State | 5.24% | 5.02% | 5.42% | 91,883 | 91,563 | 95,082 |

Source: Department of Education

The percentage of Manatee students that entered college and technical school was similar to the statewide average. Exhibit 2-15 provides information regarding the percentage of students entering postsecondary education for the Manatee County School District along with its peers.

*Exhibit 2-15*

## The Percentage of Manatee's 1995-96 Graduates Entering Postsecondary Education Is Similar to the State Average

| District | Percentage Entering Postsecondary Education |
|----------|---------------------------------------------|
| Alachua | 59% |
| Collier | 49% |
| Leon | 60% |
| Manatee | 51% |
| Marion | 41% |
| Sarasota | 50% |
| State | 50% |

Source: Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program, Department of Education

# *Student Characteristics*

This section provides a look at the student population of the Manatee County School District, as well as information about five of its peer districts. The size and demographics of a school district's student membership is an important consideration in understanding the challenges it faces. For instance, a different set of challenges exists for a district that is growing versus one that has a declining student body. Exhibit 2-16 gives a history of prekindergarten through twelfth grade membership from fall 1993 to fall 1997 for Manatee and its peers. Student membership has grown consistently over the last four years. This is consistent with the statewide trend as well as the average for the peer districts.

*Exhibit 2-16*

## Similar to Four of Its Peer Districts, Membership in Manatee Schools Has Grown Each of the Last Five Years

| School District | Fall 1993 | Fall 1994 | Fall 1995 | Fall 1996 | Fall 1997 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Alachua | 28,425 | 28,812 | 29,166 | 29,648 | 30,063 |
| Collier | 23,924 | 25,157 | 26,376 | 28,177 | 29,261 |
| Leon | 29,836 | 30,494 | 31,332 | 31,558 | 31,455 |
| Manatee | 29,688 | 30,864 | 31,803 | 32,797 | 33,705 |
| Marion | 32,681 | 34,020 | 35,527 | 36,244 | 37,210 |
| Sarasota | 30,214 | 30,431 | 31,035 | 31,951 | 33,159 |
| Peer Average (without Manatee) | 29,016 | 29,783 | 30,687 | 31,516 | 31,630 |
| State | 2,040,835 | 2,107,514 | 2,175,233 | 2,240,283 | 2,290,726 |

Source: *Florida District Indicators Report*, Department of Education

Exhibit 2-17 provides information regarding the percentage of the 1996-97 student population that was eligible for free or reduced lunch for Manatee and its peers. Manatee County School District's student population was generally consistent with the average of its peer districts in term of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. In addition, Manatee's proportion of students receiving free or reduced lunch was consistent with the state average.

*Exhibit 2-17*

## The Proportion of Manatee's Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch is Similar to Its Peer Districts for 1996-97

| School District | Student Population | Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch | Percent Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alachua | 29,647 | 13,477 | 45% |
| Collier | 28,177 | 11,997 | 43% |
| Leon | 31,569 | 9,422 | 30% |
| **Manatee** | **32,777** | **14,083** | **43%** |
| Marion | 36,242 | 18,442 | 51% |
| Sarasota | 31,912 | 10,685 | 33% |
| Peer Average (without Manatee) | 31,509 | 12,804 | 41% |
| State | 2,239,411 | 974,496 | 44% |

Source*: Profiles of Florida School Districts 1996-97*, Department of Education

Exhibit 2-18 provides information regarding the racial/ethnic make up of the fall 1997 student population of Manatee and its peers. Manatee County School District's student population was generally consistent with the average of its peer districts in term of racial/ethnic make up, except that it has a lower proportion of black students. Manatee had a higher proportion of white students than the state average.

*Exhibit 2-18*

# Similar to Four of Its Peers, Manatee Exceeds the State Percentage of White Students in Fall 1997

| School District | White | Black (Non-Hispanic) | Hispanic | Asian/ Pacific Islander | American Indian | Multi-racial |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alachua | 55.58% | 37.12% | 3.34% | 2.27% | .18% | .50% |
| Collier | 61.80% | 11.51% | 25.45% | .53% | .51% | .20% |
| Leon | 57.29% | 38.78% | 1.68% | 1.61% | .12% | .52% |
| **Manatee** | **68.75%** | **17.81%** | **11.90%** | **.81%** | **.15%** | **.59%** |
| Marion | 70.70% | 21.85% | 5.94% | .68% | .22% | .60% |
| Sarasota | 82.37% | 10.39% | 5.05% | 1.25% | .16% | .79% |
| State | 55.78% | 25.29% | 16.34% | 1.80% | .24% | .55% |

Source: *Membership in Florida Public Schools Fall 1997,* Department of Education

Exhibit 2-19 provides information on the membership of Manatee's fall 1997 student population by grade. Manatee had more students in its prekindergarten and kindergarten programs than any of the other peer districts. There were no other grade level groupings in which Manatee had the most students. For grades 1 to 5 and grades 6 to 7 Manatee County was slightly above the average, and for high school Manatee County had slightly fewer students than the peer district average.

*Exhibit 2-19*

# Manatee Had the Highest Number of Pre-K and Kindergarten Students in Comparison to Its Peers in Fall 1997

| School District | Prekindergarten-Kindergarten | 1st - 5th Grades | 6th - 7th Grades | 9th - 12th Grades |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alachua | 3,303 | 11,366 | 6,824 | 8,570 |
| Collier | 3,337 | 11,721 | 6,709 | 7,494 |
| Leon | 3,435 | 12,242 | 7,141 | 8,637 |
| **Manatee** | **3,624** | **13,998** | **7,661** | **8,422** |
| Marion | 3,433 | 14,918 | 8,514 | 10,335 |
| Sarasota | 3,276 | 13,327 | 7,458 | 9,098 |
| Peer Average (without Manatee) | 3,357 | 12,715 | 7,329 | 8,827 |
| State | 228,623 | 913,512 | 537,063 | 613,444 |

Source: *Membership in Florida Public Schools Fall 1997,* Department of Education

# *Staff Characteristics*

Staff Characteristics provides a look at the personnel employed by the Manatee County School District, as well as information about five of its peer districts.  Exhibit 2-20 provides information regarding the number of full-time staff (administrative, instructional, and support) employed by the district.  The Manatee County School District is generally consistent with its peers in regard to the number of full-time staff.

*Exhibit 2-20*

## The Manatee School District Lies in the Middle of Its Peers in Regard to the Number of Full-Time Staff in Fall 1997

| | *Full-Time Staff* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **School District** | **Administrators** | **Instruction** | **Support** | **Total** |
| Alachua | 131 | 1,954 | 1,830 | 3,915 |
| Collier | 126 | 1,856 | 1,576 | 3,558 |
| Leon | 132 | 2,105 | 1,793 | 4,030 |
| **Manatee** | **131** | **2,015** | 1,883 | 4,029 |
| Marion | 149 | 2,336 | 2,169 | 4,681 |
| Sarasota | 107 | 2,100 | 1,926 | 4,681 |
| Peer Average (without Manatee) | 129 | 2,070 | 1,864 | N/A |
| State | 8,740 | 140,163 | 106,404 | 255,307 |

Source:  *Membership in Florida Public Schools Fall 1997,*  Department of Education

Exhibit 2-21 provides information regarding the gender and race of all full-time staff in the Manatee County School District and its peers.  Manatee's teaching staff is 85% white, 15% higher than the state average.  Three percent of the district's staff are Hispanic.

*Exhibit 2-21*

# The Manatee School District's Fall 1997 Staff Is 85% White

| School District | Race | | | | | Gender | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Black (Non-Hispanic) | Hispanic | Asian/ Pacific Islander | American Indian | Male | Female | |
| Alachua | 2,747 (70%) | 1,093 (28%) | 60 (2%) | 12 (< 1%) | 3 (< 1%) | 938 (24%) | 2,977 (76%) | 3,915 |
| Collier | 2,840 (80%) | 255 (7%) | 451 (13%) | 9 (< 1%) | 3 (< 1%) | 925 (26%) | 2,633 (74%) | 3,558 |
| Leon | 2,449 (61%) | 1,507 (37%) | 46 (1%) | 19 (< 1%) | 9 (< 1%) | 978 (24%) | 3,052 (76%) | 4,030 |
| **Manatee** | **3,422 (85%)** | **490 (13%)** | **103 (3%)** | **12 (<1%)** | **2 (<1%)** | **959 (24%)** | **3,070 (76%)** | **4,029** |
| Marion | 3,535 (76%) | 971 (21%) | 138 (3%) | 22 (< 1%) | 15 (< 1%) | 1,004 (21%) | 3,677 (79%) | 4,681 |
| Sarasota | 3,738 (90%) | 338 (8%) | 35 (1%) | 16 (< 1%) | 6 (< 1%) | 1,109 (27%) | 3,024 (73%) | 4,133 |
| Peer Average (without Manatee) | 3,062 (75%) | 833 (20%) | 146 (4%) | 16 (< 1%) | 7 (< 1%) | 991 (24%) | 3,073 (76%) | 4,064 |
| State | 179,602 (70%) | 52,231 (20%) | 21,580 (8%) | 1,291 (1%) | 603 (< 1%) | 63,888 (25%) | 191,419 (75%) | 255,307 |

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data

Exhibit 2-22 provides information regarding the number of teachers by degree level for the Manatee County School District and its peers for fall 1997. The educational attainment of Manatee County's teachers was consistent with statewide averages. In comparison with the peer districts, Manatee had a larger proportion of teachers with a bachelor's degree and a smaller proportion of teachers with graduate degrees.

*Exhibit 2-22*

## In Fall of 1997 Manatee Was Consistent With the State Average in Regard to the Education Level of Its Teachers

| School District | Type of Degree (No. and % of District Total) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bachelor's | Master's | Specialist | Doctorate |
| Alachua | 752 (39.77%) | 971 (51.35%) | 119 (6.29%) | 49 (2.59%) |
| Collier | 945 (52.73%) | 794 (44.31%) | 32 (1.79%) | 21 (1.17%) |
| Leon | 1,065 (52.15%) | 890 (43.58%) | 56 (2.74%) | 31 (1.52%) |
| **Manatee** | **1,156 (59.99%)** | **707 (36.69%)** | **43 (2.23%)** | **21 (1.09%)** |
| Marion | 1,624 (69.46%) | 665 (28.44%) | 34 (1.45%) | 15 (.64%) |
| Sarasota | 915 (43.70%) | 932 (44.08%) | 227 (10.84%) | 29 (1.38%) |
| Peer Average (without Manatee) | 1,060 | 850 | 94 | 29 |
| State | 84,221 (61.58%) | 47,408 (34.67%) | 3,686 (2.70%) | 1,441 (1.05%) |

Source: Teacher Salary, Experience, and Degree Level (1997-98), Department of Education

# 3 Management Structures

*The Manatee County School District's management structure needs to be improved. One needed improvement is the clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the district's school board, superintendent, central administrative staff, and principals.*

## Conclusion

As shown below, the district meets four of the best financial management practices for management structures, but it falls short of meeting the nine remaining practices. The district periodically reviews its structure, staffing levels, and purchasing practices. It has a reasonable system for estimating future enrollment. It also considers local options to increase revenue.

However, the district has not developed clearly defined lines of authority and the roles of the board and superintendent need to be clarified. In addition, the district needs to clarify the authority principals have over school operations. The district also has not developed a strategic plan. Nor does it have a process for regularly assessing the performance of its major programs and tying performance to its budget. Below are OPPAGA's conclusions on the district's use of each management structure best practice.

### Is the District Using the Management Structures Best Practices?

**Organizational Structure and Staffing Levels**

*No.* The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units but does not have clearly defined lines of authority. (page 3-5)

*Yes.* The district periodically reviews its organizational structure and staffing levels to minimize administrative layers and processes. (page 3-8)

*No.* The board exercises oversight of the district's financial resources but sometimes becomes overly involved in district operations. (page 3-20)

*No.* The district has not clearly assigned authority to school administrators for the effective and efficient supervision of instruction, instructional support, and other assigned responsibilities, including consideration of site-based decision making and other organizational alternatives. (page 3-24)

## Decision Making and Resource Allocation

**No.** The district does not have a multiyear strategic plan with annual goals and measurable objectives based on identified needs, projected enrollment, and revenues. (page 3-27)

**Yes.** The district has a system to accurately project enrollment. Problems with the 1997-98 forecast of exceptional students were due to other factors. (page 3-29)

**No.** The district has not regularly assessed its progress toward its strategic goals and objectives. (page 3-33)

**No.** The district does not have an ongoing system of financial planning and budgeting linked to achievement of district goals and objectives, including student performance. (page 3-35)

**No.** The district's management information systems do not provide data needed by management and instructional personnel in a reliable, timely, and cost-efficient manner. (page 3-37)

**No.** The district does not periodically conduct formal evaluations of operations and use the results to improve the quality of education and reduce costs. (page 3-42)

**Yes.** The district considers local options to increase revenue. (page 3-44)

**No.** The district cannot readily identify all of its legal costs and therefore does not know whether its use of legal services is cost effective. (page 3-44)

**Yes.** The district periodically evaluates the prices it pays for goods and services and, when appropriate, uses state-negotiated contracts, competitive bidding, outsourcing, or other alternatives to reduce costs. (page 3-47)

# *Fiscal Impact of Recommendations*

Most of the recommendations in the management structures section will improve district performance, but are neutral in terms of their fiscal impact. However, as shown in Exhibit 3-1, four recommendations will have a fiscal impact. In Fiscal Year 1998-99, the net impact of these recommendations will be savings of $33,000. In the next four fiscal years, the district should be able to obtain an additional $3.6 million in state funding per year by improving projections of the number of at-risk and exceptional students it will serve. Over the next five years, the total fiscal impact of our recommendations is estimated to be a revenue increase of approximately $14.4 million and savings of $577,000.

*Exhibit 3-1*

# Implementing the Recommendations for Management Structures Should Enable the District to Obtain an Additional $3.6 Million Per Year

| Recommendation | Fiscal Impact |
|---|---|
| • Contract for a study of district-level management and support staffing levels. | • This will require a non-recurring investment of about $35,000. |
| • Reduce purchasing staff by five positions. | • This will result in savings of $73,000 in Fiscal Year 1998-1999 and annual savings of about $146,000 in subsequent fiscal years. |
| • Provide training to board members. | • This will require an annual investment of about $5,000 in Fiscal Year 1998-1999 and annual investments of about $10,000 in subsequent fiscal years. |
| • Improve projections of the number of at-risk and exceptional students the district will serve. | • The fiscal impact of this recommendation depends on the district's ability to improve its estimate of the number of exceptional or at-risk students it will serve. If Manatee improves the accuracy of its estimate, it should obtain an additional $3.6 million per year in state funding for these students. However, the district will not be able to obtain this additional revenue until Fiscal Year 1999-2000. |

# *Background*

The Manatee County School District has undergone a number of changes within the last four years. The district has an appointed superintendent, who is the first superintendent hired from outside of the community. The superintendent, who was appointed on November 1, 1994, has a contract that runs through June 2000.

After a period of observation, the new superintendent restructured the district. This restructuring resulted in a totally new management team for the district. Although the school-based managers remained relatively stable, nearly all of the central office administrators retired and new administrators were appointed.

The district's board has five members who are elected for four-year terms. All of the board members are relatively new. Exhibit 3-2 shows the length of time board members have served and their experience.

*Exhibit 3-2*

## Manatee's School Board Members Are Relatively New

| Board Member | Tenure | Experience |
|---|---|---|
| Harry Kinnan, Chair | • Elected in 1996; first term as board member. | • Community college faculty member. Manatee school system graduate. |
| Larry Simmons, Vice Chair | • Elected in 1994; reelected in 1998. | • Former principal for the Manatee School District. |
| Frank Brunner | • Elected in 1996; first term as board member. | • Businessman. Manatee school system graduate. |
| Joe Miller | • Elected in 1994; first term as board member. Will not serve a second term. | • Businessman and activist parent. |
| Chuck Wilhoite | • Elected in 1994; first term as board member. Will not serve a second term. | • Former support service supervisor for Manatee School District. |

Source: Manatee County School District

The district board and management team have had some notable accomplishments over the last three years. Exhibit 3-3 describes these accomplishments.

*Exhibit 3-3*

## Notable Accomplishments in Management Structures

- Constructed four new schools and renovated six schools
- Improved the performance of three schools sufficiently to get them off the Commissioner of Education's low performing schools list
- Improved student test scores
- Developed new curricula for its schools
- Reconfigured the zones for elementary, middle, and high schools
- Implemented a school choice program for high schools
- Conducted a staffing study for school-based staff and adopted a staffing plan for teachers
- Supported the establishment of four charter schools
- Contracted for improvements in the district's management information systems
- Resolved long-standing Office of Civil Rights compliance issues

Source: Manatee County School District

# *Are the Best Practices for Organizational Structure and Staffing Levels Being Observed?* ———

**Goal A: The district's organizational structure and staffing levels ensure that programs operate efficiently and effectively.**

# 1 Does the district have an organizational structure with clearly defined units and lines of authority?  Are the organizational structure and lines of authority reflected in the district's organizational charts and job descriptions that are reviewed periodically and updated as necessary?

*No.  Although the district has an organizational chart, it has not clearly defined lines of authority.  Furthermore, its procedures manual is badly out of date.*

## Lines of Authority Are Not Clear

The district does not have a functional organizational chart that depicts its organizational structure and the responsibilities of each unit.  The district has an organizational chart, but the chart does not show the functions performed by each organizational unit.  Although the district has written job descriptions that list the skills employees need and the positions they report to, the job descriptions do not clearly describe each employee's responsibilities and authority.  Furthermore, the job descriptions have not been updated recently.  (See page 5-12 for more information about job descriptions.)

District staff are not always certain what their authority and responsibilities are.  For example, staff in the Curriculum Department assumed they had authority to develop curriculum requirements for all students including exceptional and at-risk students.  However, staff in the Pupil Personnel Division believe that they are responsible for developing curriculum and instructional strategies for exceptional and at-risk students, some of whom probably will not be able to meet the standards for basic students.  Pupil Personnel staff subsequently began to work with exceptional student education teachers to develop separate report card standards for these students.

The confusion over who is responsible for what creates inefficiency and duplication of effort.  According to Pupil Personnel staff, they now have to create new instructional strategies for the new curriculum.  This task would have been easier if it had been done in conjunction with the development of the curriculum.

In addition, the lack of clearly defined responsibilities can lead to situations where no one feels responsible for ensuring the accomplishment of certain functions.  For example, the district has not designated a person to be responsible for coordinating the effort to periodically update the district's policies and procedures.  Such a coordinator can remind divisions when their procedures need updating and ensure consistency among the procedures different divisions develop.

## Policy and Procedures
## Have Not Been Recently Updated

With the exception of a few sections, the district's policies and procedures have not been updated since 1994.  Important new initiatives, such as school choice, are not addressed in the current manual.  The absence of up-to-date policies and procedures can create confusion over district expectations.  In addition, if the board does not update its policies and procedures it may not be able to comply with the state's Administrative Procedures Act, which was revised in 1996 and 1997 to narrow the rulemaking authority of state and local governments.  The act requires all rulemaking agencies, including school districts, to review and revise their rules in order to

- identify and correct deficiencies;
- clarify and simplify the rules;
- delete obsolete or unnecessary rules, and
- seek to improve efficiency, reduce paperwork, and decrease public and private costs.

Manatee County School District staff have identified numerous changes that need to be made to bring the district's policy and procedures in compliance with these standards.  According to the act, if these changes are not made by July 1, 1999, affected parties may challenge the rules.


# *Recommendations* ————————————————————————

- *The district should develop functional organization charts that clearly show the responsibilities of each of its organizational units.  When two or more units share responsibility for the same function, the district should develop written descriptions of the limits of each unit's authority and responsibility and how the units are to interact.  In addition, the district should update its policies and procedures manual.*
- *Action Plan 3-1 shows the action steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 3-1*

## Several Action Steps Are Needed to Implement Recommendations

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop functional organization charts and written procedures describing each unit's authority and responsibility. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  The superintendent should make the human resources department responsible for working with assistant superintendents, directors, and principals to develop a functional organization chart and procedures that describe the authority and responsibility of each organizational unit. |
| | Step 2:  The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review and revise the functional organization chart and procedures and present them to the board for approval. |
| | Step 3:  The board should review the functional organization chart and procedures to ensure that they are consistent with district policies, correct |

any inconsistencies, and approve the charts and procedures.

| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | The functional organization chart and procedures should be completed by the end of March 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 2

| Strategy | Update and distribute the district's policies. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: The board should direct the superintendent to conduct a full review of the district's policies. |
| | Step 2: The superintendent should create a new unit for planning and evaluation (see page 3-14) and assign lead responsibility for the review to this unit. |
| | Step 3: The new Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should work with all assistant superintendents and other stakeholders to identify policies that are duplicative or not needed and to assess the need for additional policies. In addition, the unit should consult with the Florida School Board Association about the policies used by other districts. |
| | Step 4: The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should write a report detailing the changes the district needs to make to its policies. The recommended changes should include a new policy that establishes timeframes by which the district will regularly review and update its policies. |
| | Step 5: The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review and revise the proposed policies and present them to the board for adoption. |
| | Step 6: The attorney should review the proposed policies and recommend any changes needed to ensure that they meet federal and state requirements. |
| | Step 7: The board should review and revise the proposed policies. |
| | Step 8: The board should adopt the proposed policies. |
| Who Is Responsible | The school board |
| Time Frame | The board should adopt new policies by July 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 3

| Strategy | Develop new procedures and distribute a policy and procedures manual. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: After the board adopts new policies, the superintendent should make the new Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation responsible for reviewing existing procedures and making any changes needed to make them consistent with the board's new policies. |
| | Step 2: The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should work with assistant superintendents and other stakeholders to develop a written report showing the changes the district needs to make to its procedures. |
| | Step 3: The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review and revise the proposed procedures. |
| | Step 4: The superintendent should approve the new procedures and direct the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation to include them and the newly adopted policies into a policies and procedures manual. |
| | Step 5: The superintendent should direct the Information Services Department to |

automate the new policy and procedure manual and to train district staff and board members on the uses of the automated manual.  In addition the superintendent may wish to consider publishing the policy and procedures manual on the Internet.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent |
| Time Frame | The new policy and procedure manual should be published by December 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 2 Does the district periodically review its organizational structure and staffing levels to minimize administrative layers and processes?

*Yes.  The district has periodically reviewed and made improvements to its organizational structure and staffing levels.  However, additional organizational changes could improve its functioning.*

## The District Has Reviewed and Streamlined Its Organizational Structure

The district has reviewed and made changes to its organizational structure.  In an effort to streamline and flatten its organization, the district underwent a major reorganization three years ago.  Since then, individual departments have also taken steps to improve their organizational structures and reduce staffing needs.  For example, the Special Programs Department combined the administration of programs that serve common purposes or students.  The Exceptional Student Services Department also streamlined its operations by creating regional ESE programs, consolidating the responsibilities of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) specialists, and reducing the number of specialists.

Despite its efforts to organize effectively, the district's organizational structure has in some instances impeded its ability to function smoothly and efficiently.  For example, as shown in Exhibits 3-4 through 3-8, the current organizational structure contains two divisions that are responsible for the educational performance of students: the Academics Division and the Pupil Personnel Division.  According to staff of the two divisions, this separation impeded effective communication and coordination between the staff who develop curriculum for all students and staff who develop instructional strategies for special populations of students such as at-risk or exceptional students.  In addition, some staff believe that the separation led principals, who report to the Academics Division, to believe that they are primarily responsible for basic students and have less responsibility for the special students served by the Pupil Personnel Division.

Exhibit 3-4

# Manatee County School District
# Existing Organizational Structure
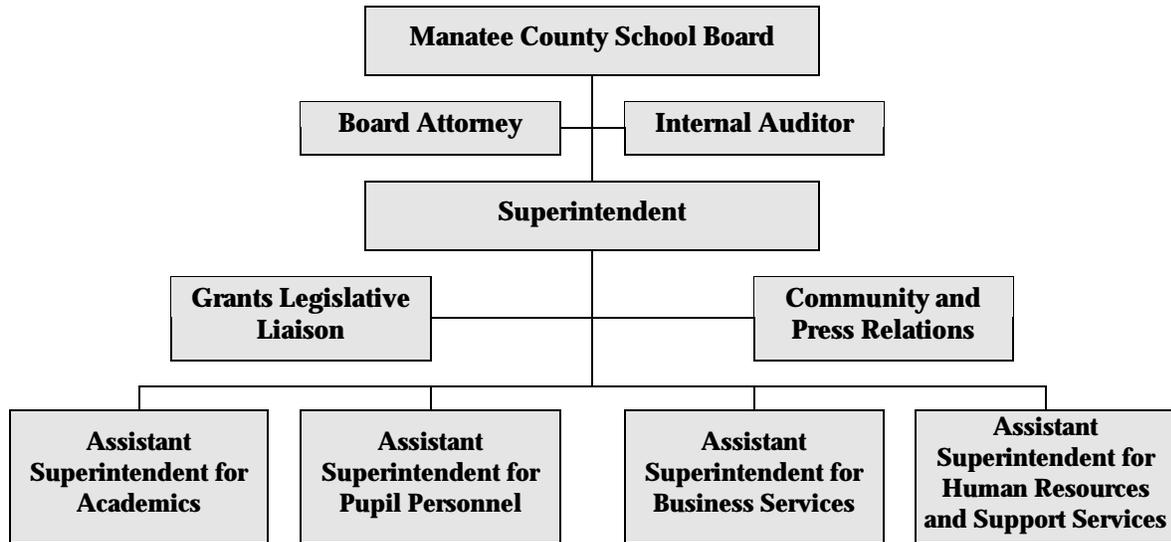


Source:  Manatee County School District

*Exhibit 3-5*

# Manatee County School District
# Existing Academics Division
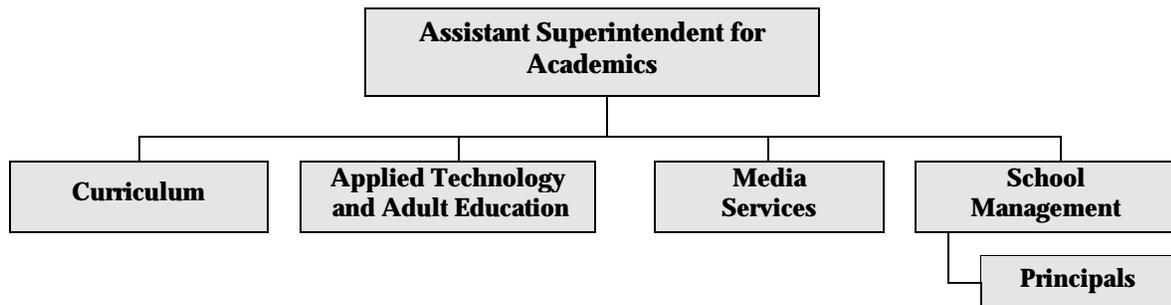


Source:  Manatee County School District

*Exhibit 3-6*

# Manatee County School District
# Existing Pupil Personnel Division

```
        ┌─────────────────────────────┐
        │ Assistant Superintendent for │
        │      Pupil Personnel         │
        └─────────────────────────────┘
                      │
         ┌────────────┴────────────┐
┌─────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐
│   Exceptional   │      │    Special Programs       │
│ Student Services│      │ • Dropout Prevention      │
└─────────────────┘      │ • Student Accounting      │
                         │ • Prekindergarten         │
                         │ • Compensatory Programs   │
                         └──────────────────────────┘
```
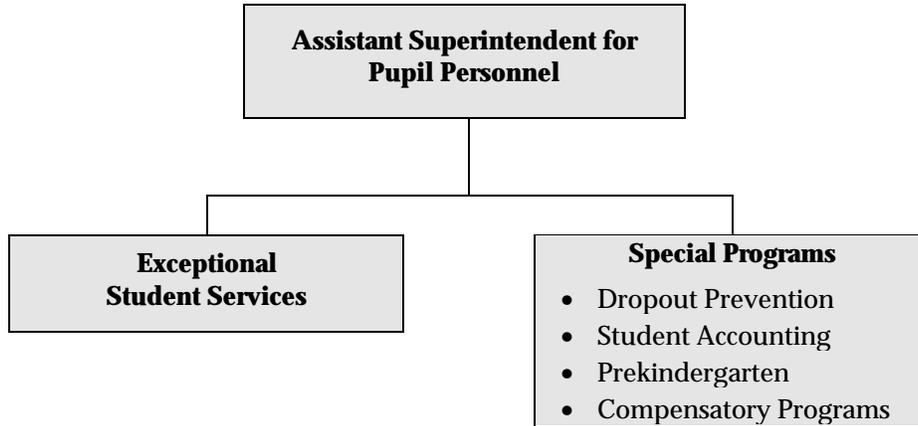
Source: Manatee County School District

*Exhibit 3-7*

# Manatee County School District
# Existing Business Services Division

```
              ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │ Assistant Superintendent for │
              │      Business Services       │
              └─────────────────────────────┘
                            │
  ┌──────────┬──────────┬───┴────┬──────────┬──────────┐
┌────────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│Finance │ │Informa-│ │Purchas-│ │Food      │ │Administrative│
│and     │ │tion    │ │ing     │ │Service   │ │Services      │
│Budget  │ │Services│ │        │ │Operations│ │              │
└────────┘ └────────┘ └────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────────┘
```
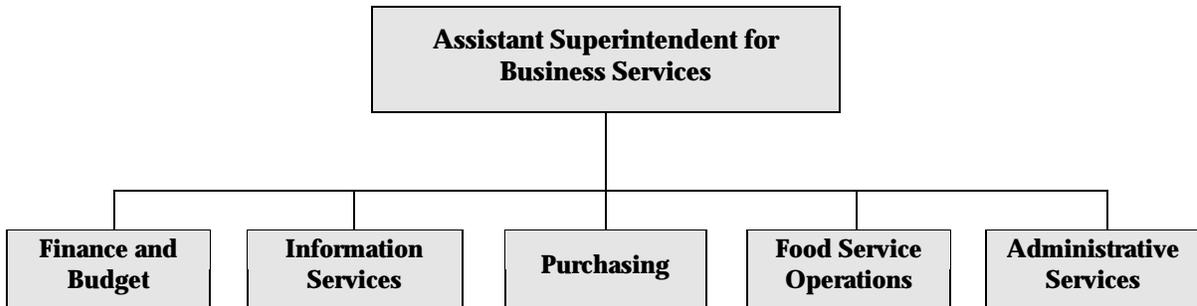
Source: Manatee County School District

*Exhibit 3-8*

# Manatee County School District
# Existing Human Resources and Support Services

```
              ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │ Assistant Superintendent for│
              │     Human Resources and     │
              │      Support Services       │
              └─────────────────────────────┘
   ┌───────────────┬───────────┴──────┬───────────────┐
┌─────────────┐ ┌───────────┐ ┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐
│ Facilities, │ │ Personnel │ │ School Bus  │ │    Risk     │
│Maintenance, │ │ Services  │ │Transportation│ │ Management  │
│     and     │ │           │ │             │ │             │
│ Operations  │ │           │ │             │ │             │
└─────────────┘ └───────────┘ └─────────────┘ └─────────────┘
```
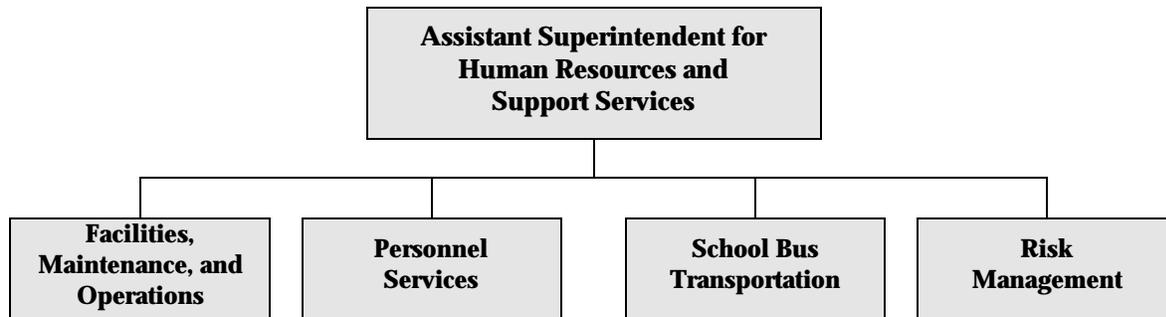
Source:  Manatee County School District

Similarly, the responsibility for the acquisition and maintenance of computer hardware is split among three divisions.  The Division of Business Services' Information Services Department handles computers used for district- and school-level administrative functions, including the student database; the Division of Academics' Media Services Department handles computer hardware used for teaching; and the Division of Support Services' Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department handles personal computer repair.  According to management information staff and the superintendent, this functional overlap resulted in the district's becoming dangerously close to acquiring two computer networks, one for district and school administration and one for teaching.  This unnecessary duplication would have probably more than doubled the district's cost to acquire and maintain the equipment used to link its computer systems.  Although management information and instructional technology staff have improved their coordination, the principals we interviewed said that computer functions needed to be handled by one entity.

## The District Has Examined School Staffing Levels

The district recently hired a consultant to study school-staffing levels and make recommendations for improvement.  The consultant used staffing patterns in other districts to develop benchmarks for the number of staff needed to teach students with different needs and in different grade levels, clean buildings of varying sizes, administer schools of varying sizes, and handle other functions carried out by school-based staff.  The board adopted the results of the study and is using it to guide its assignment of teachers to district schools.  According to Department of Education data, Manatee's average class sizes are close to the statewide average.  Exhibit 3-9 shows how Manatee's average elementary class sizes compared with those of its peer districts in Fiscal Year 1996-97.  In Fiscal Year 1997-98, Manatee reduced its average elementary class size to 22.1, a decrease of approximately one student per classroom.

*Exhibit 3-9*

## In Fiscal Year 1996-97, Manatee's
## Average Elementary Classes Were Larger Than
## Those of Some Peers but Smaller Than Those of Others
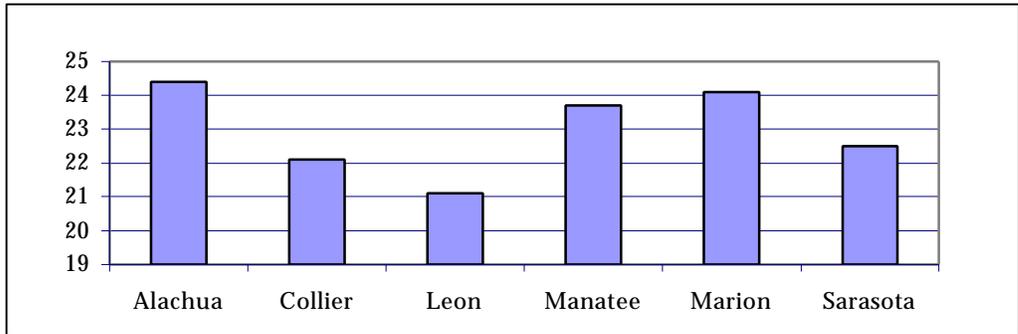


Source:  *Florida School Indicators Report,*  Department of Education

The Manatee school district has not conducted similar reviews of administrative and support staff that are not assigned to individual schools.  As a result, it does not know whether the number of staff it has assigned to perform these functions is reasonable when compared to other districts. Comparisons with peer districts indicate that the Manatee school district does not have an unreasonably high or low number of administrative staff.  As shown in Exhibit 3-10, the total staff to administrator ratio in Manatee is 30.76 while the ratios in other peer districts range from 28.24 to 38.63.

*Exhibit 3-10*

## Manatee's Staff-to-Administrator
## Ratio Resembles the Ratio of Peer Districts
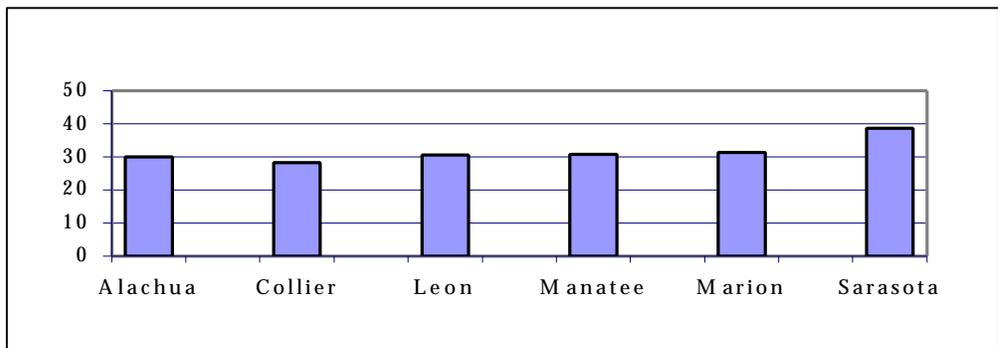


Source:  *Staff in Florida's Public Schools, Fall 1997,*  Department of Education

However, the district may be able to detect areas in which it has a higher number of staff than other districts by conducting a more detailed comparison of its administrative staff and the staff of other districts.  For example, as shown in Exhibit 3-11, the Manatee school district has more purchasing staff

than its peer districts.[1]  If the district reduced the number of purchasing staff it employs to the average number employed by its peers, it could save approximately $146,000 per year.

*Exhibit 3-11*

## Manatee Has More Purchasing Staff Than Its Peer Districts

|  | Number of Purchase Orders Processed | Number of Bids and Quotations Processed | Number of Professional Staff | Number of Clerical Staff | Total Purchasing Staff |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alachua | 17,000 | 145 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| Collier | 15,000 | 200 | 4.0 | 2.0 | 6.0 |
| Leon | 26,000 | 90[1] | 3.0 | 3.0 | 6.0 |
| Manatee | 16,500 | 370 | 5.0 | 7.0 | 11.0 |
| Marion | 18,000 | 125 | 1.0 | 3.0 | 4.0 |
| Sarasota | 12,000 | 140 | 2.0 | 6.0 | 8.0 |
| Average | 17,400 |  | 2.5 | 3.3 | 5.8 |

[1] Does not include quotations processed.

Source:  OPPAGA

# *R*ecommendations ————————————————

- *The district should organize in a manner that consolidates responsibility for similar functions and facilitates communication between different organizational units. Exhibits 3-12 through 3-16 contain our recommendations for reorganizing the district. The recommended organizational structure removes one assistant superintendent and places responsibility for all educational programs under an assistant superintendent for academics.  This will save an estimated $125,000 in salary and benefits.*

- *Within the Academics Division, a new executive director position would be created to oversee activities concerning the development of curricula and instructional strategies, contract monitoring, and compliance monitoring for all K-12 education programs, including programs for basic, exceptional education, and at risk students.  As shown in Exhibit 3-14, four directors should report to the executive director.  The first of these directors would oversee curricula and instruction for basic education programs.  The second would oversee exceptional student education programs, and the third would oversee special programs for at risk students. The fourth would oversee educational support functions such as instructional media, library, and counseling.  Although the director positions can be transferred from existing positions, the executive director position does not currently exist, and the addition of such a position will cost an estimated $112,000 in salaries and benefits.*

---

[1] Manatee has 11 purchasing positions, 2 of which were not filled as of October 1998.

- *The recommended structure also provides for closer supervision of schools by creating two instead of one director for K-12 school management. The current director supervises 38 principals, which is too great of a span of control for one individual. The creation of an additional director position is estimated to cost approximately $99,000 in salaries and benefits.*

  *The district can assign schools to the new director either by school level, such as elementary and secondary schools, or by geographical area, such as northern and southern schools. Both options have advantages and disadvantages.*

  *The primary advantage of organizing by school level is that this type of structure allows directors, who typically do not have both primary and secondary experience, to supervise the schools they know best. This enables them to provide better support to principals who have problems or information needs that are unique to elementary or secondary schools. The primary disadvantage is that organizing by level can inhibit communication between schools of different levels and impede articulation. In addition, this type of organizational structure often creates workload inequities because elementary schools usually outnumber secondary schools.*

  *The primary advantage of organizing by geographical area is that this type of structure encourages communication between elementary and secondary schools and can improve articulation. It also can serve as an impetus for the district to develop feeder school patterns that limit the number of elementary schools feeding into any one secondary school, which lessens the likelihood that children coming into secondary classrooms will have different skills. Its primary disadvantage is that directors may be less able to support principals of schools of different levels. In addition, if the schools in the areas are not balanced with respect to demographics or resources, organizing by geographical area may lead to perceptions that schools in the two areas are not treated equitably.*

  *Good planning and close cooperation between the two directors can mitigate against the disadvantages of both structures. For example, in a structure organized by levels, the directors can work with planning staff to develop feeder patterns and encourage communication between schools of different levels. In a structure organized by geographical areas, the assistant superintendent can appoint one director with an elementary background and one with a secondary background. The two directors can then support one another by providing advice and assistance in areas where one of them lacks expertise. In addition, they can encourage communication between all schools of the same level to address level-specific issues.*

- *The structure also provides for a director to supervise adult and alternative educational programs, such as the vocational-technical school, school for teenaged parents, and non-contracted dropout prevention programs that are not under the supervision of a principal. This position can be transferred from existing positions.*

- *The recommended organization adds three units that did not previously exist. One of these units would report directly to the superintendent and would be responsible for planning, accountability, and evaluation. As noted on page 3-27 and 4-8, the district does not have a strategic plan. Nor does it evaluate the performance of its programs. This is partly due to the lack of a unit that is primarily responsible for planning and evaluation functions. The creation of an Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should strengthen the district's ability to create strategies for improving performance and for evaluating the effect of these strategies.*

  *The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should be headed by an individual who has a background in business, public, or educational administration or related fields and significant planning or evaluation experience. In addition, the*

*individual should have a good working knowledge of school academic, support, and business functions. The cost of employing an individual with these qualifications should be comparable is to the average cost of similar positions in peer districts. All positions responsible for planning, evaluation, and enrollment and FTE projection activities should be transferred to the new Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation. This should provide the office with sufficient staff to carry out its new responsibilities.*

- *The other two units would report to the assistant superintendent for academics. One of these units would be responsible for the assessment of student performance. This function is currently divided between staff in the academics and pupil personnel divisions. Consolidating this responsibility could improve efficiency and facilitate its coordination with the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation.*

  *The student performance assessment unit should be headed by an individual who has a background in educational psychology or related fields and significant testing and measurement experience. The cost of employing an individual with these qualifications should be comparable to the average cost for similar positions in peer districts. The district should obtain any other staff for the new office by transfers from other divisions.*

  *The other unit would be responsible for reviewing and approving school improvement plans. As shown on page 4-28, the district is doing a good job reviewing these plans now. However, the need to coordinate school plans with the strategic planning and student assessment functions is likely to increase the time district administrative staff devote to these plans. In addition, the creation of a single unit responsible for reviewing the plans of all 39 schools will ensure that the plans are reviewed in a consistent manner.[2]*

  *The school improvement plan unit should be headed by an individual who has a background in educational leadership or related fields and significant experience as a school-based administrator. The cost of obtaining an individual with these qualifications should be comparable to the average cost of similar positions in peer districts.*

- *The proposed organizational structure consolidates responsibility for school support functions such as facility construction, facility maintenance, student transportation, and food service under one assistant superintendent. In addition it creates an additional director position to head facilities maintenance and operations. Currently, those functions are handled by a director who also supervises facility construction and renovation. However, as the district reorganizes its construction functions and assumes responsibilities formerly carried out by the state Department of Management Services, the span of control for this division may be too large. The new director position would replace an existing assistant director position at little or no additional cost.*

- *Districtwide support services, such as budget and finance, risk management, information systems, and purchasing, would be placed under a third assistant superintendent.*

- *In order to separate the sometimes conflicting personnel and financial functions, the Personnel Services Department should report directly to the superintendent, but would be headed by a director. Although the Personnel Services Department should continue to handle staff development, its role should be limited to coordinating and tracking training provided or arranged by the operating divisions and to conducting some districtwide training sessions, such as orientation or time management.*

- *As part of this reorganization, the district should try to consolidate responsibilities for similar functions. For example the district should consolidate staff that handle computer equipment by transferring positions that maintain the LAN system from the existing*

---

[2] One of the district's schools is a one-room classroom. This school does not have a principal.

> *Media Services Department to the Information Services Department and transferring positions that repair personal computers from the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department to the Information Services Department. In addition, the Media Services Department's print shop and warehousing staff should be transferred to the Printing, Purchasing, and Warehousing Department and its audiovisual repair staff to the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department. The remaining staff from the Media Services Department should be transferred to the Education Support Unit within the Educational Program Direction and Support Department. Although it supports the entire district, the print shop should continue to give schools priority for services.*

*Exhibit 3-12*

## Manatee County School District
## OPPAGA's Recommended Organizational Structure
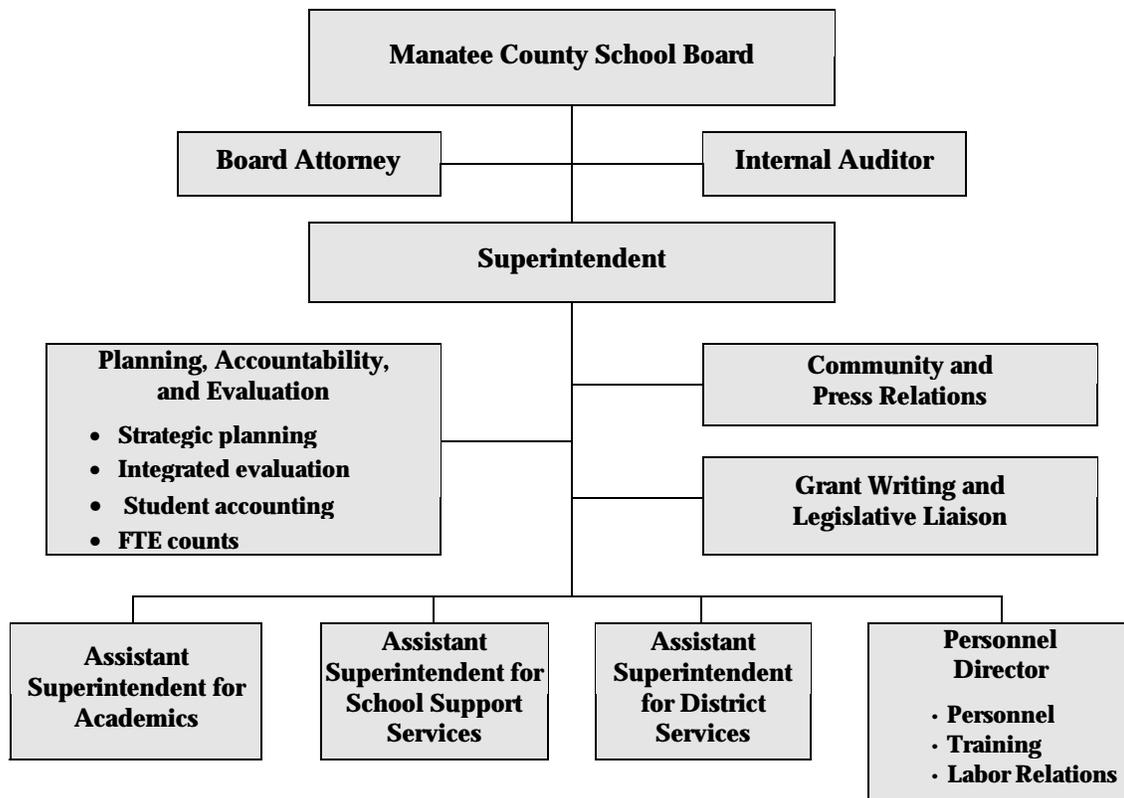
*Exhibit 3-13*

## Manatee County School District
## OPPAGA's Recommended Academics Division

```
                    Assistant Superintendent for
                            Academics

        Assessment                    School Improvement
                                         Specialist

  Educational         School            School            School
Program Direction   Management        Management        Management
  and Support        Division I        Division II       Division III

Basic, Exceptional, and   Principals       Principals    · Vocational/Technical
  At-Risk Programs                                        · Adult Education
· Curricula                                               · TAPP
· Instruction                                             · Phoenix
· Contract Management                                     · Charter Schools
· Compliance Monitoring                                   · Others
· Instructional Media
```

*Exhibit 3-14*

## Manatee School District
## OPPAGA's Recommended Educational
## Program Direction and Support Department

```
                    Educational
          Program Direction and Support

Curriculum and    Exceptional       At-Risk Student    Educational
 Instruction    Student Education     Education          Support
                                                       · Media
                                                       · Library
                                                       · Counseling
                                                       · Truancy
```
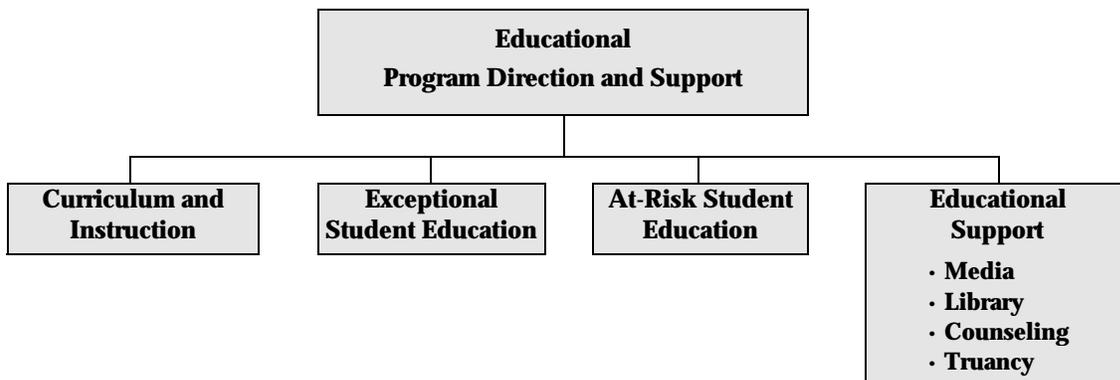
*Exhibit 3-15*

## Manatee School District
## OPPAGA's Recommended School Support Service Division

```
            ┌─────────────────────────────┐
            │  Assistant Superintendent for│
            │   School Support Services    │
            └─────────────────────────────┘
    ┌───────────┬──────────┴──────────┬───────────┐
┌─────────┐ ┌─────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│Facilities│ │ Facilities, │ │              │ │  School Bus  │
│Construction│ │Maintenance,│ │Food Services │ │Transportation│
│and       │ │  and        │ │              │ │              │
│Renovation│ │ Operations  │ │              │ │              │
└─────────┘ └─────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
```
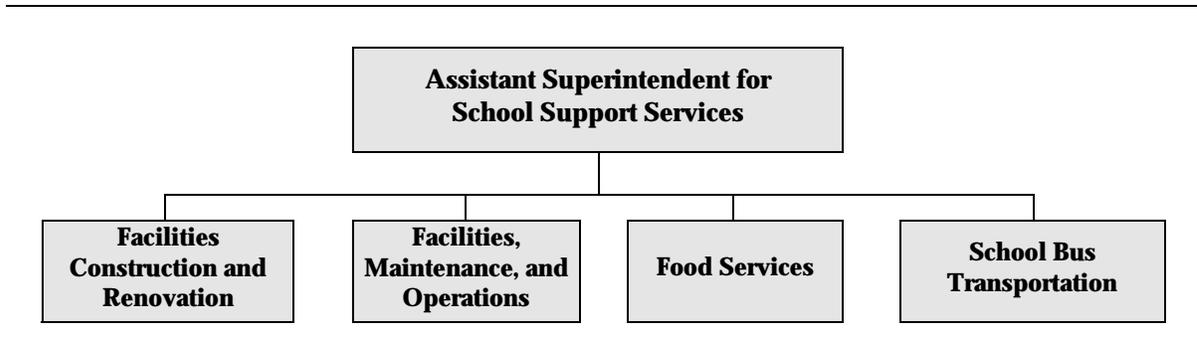
*Exhibit 3-16*

## Manatee County School District
## OPPAGA's Recommended Division of District Support Services

```
            ┌─────────────────────────────┐
            │  Assistant Superintendent for│
            │   District Support Services  │
            └─────────────────────────────┘
                   ┌──────────────────────────┐
                   │     Administrative       │
                   │   Building Services      │
                   └──────────────────────────┘
    ┌───────────┬──────────┴──────────┬───────────┐
┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│Budget and   │ │Information  │ │  Printing,   │ │    Risk      │
│Finance      │ │Services     │ │Purchasing, and│ │ Management   │
│             │ │             │ │ Warehousing  │ │              │
└─────────────┘ └─────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
```
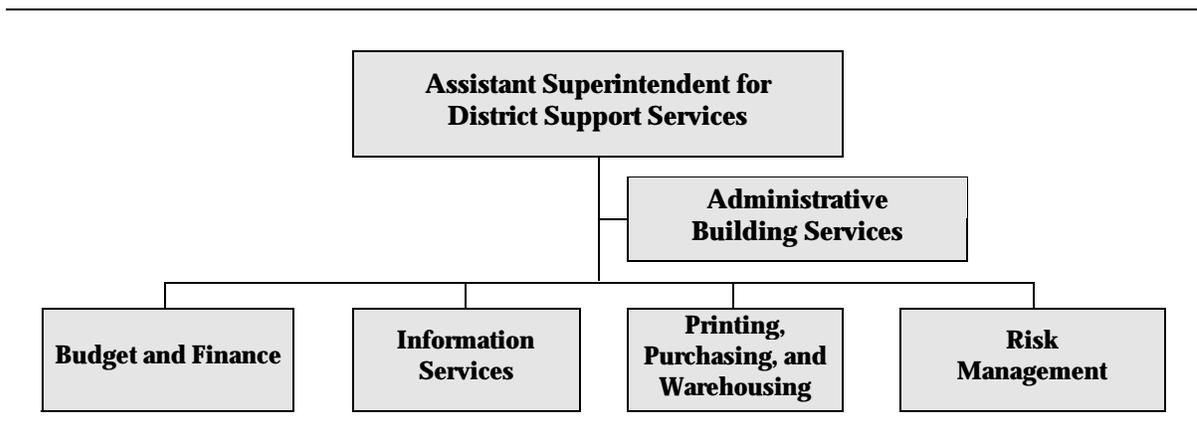
- *If the district added new positions to head all of the recommended new organizational units, the net fiscal effect of these recommendations would be approximately $345,000 per year. However, the district can reduce much of this cost by transferring some staff into the newly created positions. In addition, the district likely can offset the remaining cost by offering early retirement benefits to employees who have participated in the Florida Retirement System for 30 or more years or who have participated for 10 or more years and are 55 years old or older. Although the district should strive to retain as much of its productive senior staff as possible, some staff may choose to retire as an alternative to taking lower-ranked positions or moving into new organizational units.*

  *Offering early retirement benefits can save salary costs because the salaries paid to retiring senior employees are usually higher than the salaries paid to the more junior employees replacing them. The district offered such early retirement benefits when it*

*last reorganized three years ago. One hundred fifty-nine employees chose to take advantage of these benefits and retire. The average salary and benefits of the retiring employees were approximately $20,000 per year more than the salary and benefits of their replacements. Although providing the additional retirement benefits offset some of this savings, the net amount saved was approximately $13,000 per year for each person retiring under the early benefit plan. If the district offers a similar early retirement plan and approximately 26 people choose to retire, the resulting changes should pay for the staffing changes needed to implement the proposed organization. We therefore recommend that, as part of the reorganization, the district offer early retirement benefits to senior employees who choose to retire.*

- *In addition, we recommend that the district contract for a study comparing the number of staff it has for all central and administrative support functions to the number of staff comparable districts have for similar functions. According to an organization that conducts these studies, the district could obtain such a study for about $35,000. However, by identifying functions that are not properly staffed, the study could enable the district to save money or improve operations.*

- *In the interim, the district should streamline its purchasing practices and reduce its purchasing staff by five positions. Assuming that all positions would be filled, this should result in savings of approximately $146,000 per year.*

- *Exhibit 3-17 shows the estimated cumulative fiscal effect of the recommendations concerning organizational structure and staffing over the next five years.*

*Exhibit 3-17*

## By Implementing Recommendations to Reorganize and Study Staffing Levels the District Will Save Approximately $622,000 Over the Next Five Years

| | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Cost of Staffing Study | $( 35,000) | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 |
| Savings from Reducing Purchasing Positions | 73,000 | 146,000 | 146,000 | 146,000 | 146,000 |
| Cumulative Savings | $38,000 | $184,000 | $330,000 | $476,000 | $622,000 |

Note: Parentheses indicate costs.

# 3 Do district board members exercise appropriate oversight of the district's financial resources?

*No. The board reviews the district's financial resources carefully, but it is not focusing on policy as much as it should be. The relationship between the board and superintendent has been tense, but appears to be improving. However, parents, teachers, and principals have learned that they can get the board to reverse administrative decisions, even when those decisions are based on board policy or previously agreed upon criteria. These departures from policy or criteria frequently increase district expenditures.*

# Board Procedures Give It
# Sufficient Oversight Over Expenditures

The board has procedures giving it sufficient control of district expenditures. According to district policies and procedures, the board must review and approve the district's budget. During the budget approval process, district staff must describe the past functions and accomplishments of each cost center. Staff also must justify any requests for increased resources. After the board approves the budget, district staff cannot expend any more than the budgeted amounts without board approval. In addition, the board sets district salary levels, establishes regulations for staff to follow when purchasing supplies and equipment, and reviews and approves all land acquisitions and design and construction contracts.

Board meeting minutes indicate that the board has been involved in decisions involving capital improvements, including acquisition of the new computer system. In addition, the minutes and agendas of board meetings indicate that the board obtains public comment on proposed budgets and major expenditures. According to district policy and procedures, the board must hold public hearings on school budgets. In practice, the board accepts public comment on all agenda items.

Board members have different opinions about whether they receive sufficient information about proposed expenditures in their agenda packages. Dissatisfied members expressed the need for more summary information, information concerning whether proposed expenditures are planned for in the budget, and information concerning alternative actions the board could take. They have communicated their concerns to the superintendent.

## The Board Needs to Focus More on Policy

The Manatee school board's policy and procedures manual delineates the responsibility of the board and the superintendent. The Florida Statutes and the Florida School Board Association also provide guidance on the respective responsibilities of the school board and superintendent. Under these guidelines, the board is to provide policy direction for the district and leave the day-to-day administration of the district to the superintendent. In addition, the board should adopt and follow well-developed, written policies; act as a team rather than as individuals; try not to inject controversial issues into public meetings without advance notification; and follow appropriate administrative channels when dealing with district employees.

The Manatee school board currently consists of five first-term members. Not all of these members have received training in the responsibilities of the board and superintendent. Although four of the board members have received some training from the Florida Association of School Boards, one member has not. The board has discussed the possibility of receiving from the association the training it would need to qualify as a master board, but it has not been able to come to consensus about receiving the training.

Prior to the 1996 election, a majority of four board members worked together to set the policy direction for the district and the superintendent and management team followed that direction. The 1996 elections resulted in a new board majority that has different priorities and objectives than the previous board. According to the superintendent, he had difficulty adjusting to this change in policy direction. This led board members to believe that the superintendent was not following the board's direction and created tension between the board and superintendent. This tension attracted press coverage and decreased staff morale.

In an attempt to ensure that district operations adhered to its direction, the Manatee County School Board became very involved in the details of district operations. The current board wants more detailed information than the previous board did. It frequently questions the superintendent's recommendations. This has led to extremely lengthy board meetings, which sometimes have run as long as six to seven hours.

In its scrutiny of district operations, the board's actions were not always consistent with existing policies. In several instances, board minutes and materials indicate that the board overruled administrative decisions even though those decisions were based on board policy or previously agreed upon criteria. For example, board policy provides that parents are responsible for getting their children to the school bus stop. However, some parents have been able to appeal to the board and get the district to provide their children with door-to-door transportation services. Similarly, the board agreed that new construction projects were to stress functionality rather than aesthetics. In addition, the board reviews and approves all designs for these projects. But when parents complained that a newly constructed school had an unattractive entranceway, the board agreed to spend $510,000 for the design and construction of a new entrance.

Although the board can and should establish new policies when appropriate, piecemeal decisions that do not comply with existing policies have the potential to create disruptions and significantly increase district expenditures. Many of the district's policies are intended to enable it to operate in a cost-effective manner. Appeals to these policies frequently occur when individuals or groups would like the district to spend more money to address their special interests. When the board agrees with these individuals, it establishes precedents other individuals or groups can use to obtain similar treatment.

In addition, some school board members are frequently making individual requests for information or contacting district staff without going through the chain of command. These types of requests greatly reduce the time staff have to carry out their primary duties, particularly when the requested information falls outside of their normal responsibilities. In addition, board members who seek and obtain information without going through the chain of command could get information that is incomplete and misleading. District staff expressed their concern over the number of ad hoc information requests they receive from board members.

Two recent events appear to have improved the relationship between the board and the superintendent. First, the board decided to televise its board meetings. This led to greater awareness of the impressions citizens were getting by watching the meetings. Second, the district hired a public opinion research company to survey frequent voters about their opinions on the performance of the district, superintendent, and board members. When the survey showed that 67% of Manatee's voters gave the school district's performance favorable approval ratings, board members appeared to gain greater confidence in the district.

# *Recommendations*

- *Despite the recent progress, the board and superintendent still need to work on improving their communication and finding common ground. To accomplish this, the superintendent needs to develop and implement strategies for improving communication with the board. The superintendent has partly done this by implementing a Friday distribution of materials of interest to the board, but additional strategies may be needed. For example, the Leon County School District has official board meetings on Tuesdays, but the board also meets with the superintendent on the*

*Monday prior to the board meeting. At the Monday meeting, board members may ask for additional information about agenda items, but may not discuss or vote on these items. According to Leon School District staff, these Monday meetings have greatly reduced the length of the board's official meetings.*

- *In addition, the board needs to receive training describing its powers and responsibilities and the powers and responsibilities of the superintendent. One way the board could do this is to receive master board training from the Florida Association of School Boards. Exhibit 3-18 shows the estimated cumulative fiscal effect of the recommendations concerning training over the next five years.*

- *Board members need to focus more on policy matters. The board could do this by instituting a thorough review of existing board policies and by readopting them, changing them, or creating new policies if necessary. Once the board has adopted new policies, it should then try to adhere to these policies when making decisions.*

- *In addition, the board and superintendent should identify areas in which they agree and take positive action to pursue commonly held goals.*

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

*Exhibit 3-18*

## To Implement Recommendations to Provide the Board With Training the District Will Need to Invest Approximately $45,000 Over the Next Five Years

|  | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual training cost | $(5,000) | $(10,000) | $(10,000) | $(10,000) | $(10,000) |
| Cumulative Investment | (5,000) | (15,000) | (25,000) | (35,000) | (45,000) |

Note: Parentheses indicate costs or investment.

*Action Plan 3-2*

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

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | The board should focus on district policy and the superintendent on day-to-day operation. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Each board member should receive initial training on the role of the board and superintendent and annual continuing education. |
|  | Step 2: The board should adopt a policy for making requests for information from the district. The policy should require all of the board's requests for information to be channeled through the superintendent. |

|  | Step 3: | The board should direct the superintendent to disseminate information about its policy to all district staff. |
|---|---|---|
|  | Step 4: | Board members need to become thoroughly familiar with existing district policies.  When the board disagrees with current policy, it should direct the superintendent to draft a new policy for its approval.  Otherwise, the board needs to try to adhere to district policy when responding to requests it receives from the public or from district staff. |

| Who Is Responsible | The school board |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | The board should have a plan for receiving training and adopt a policy for making requests for information by March 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | The annual cost of training for school board members is estimated to be $10,000. This estimate assumes that each board member attends two training sessions a year at an average cost of $1,000 per session for registration fees, and travel, lodging, and per diem expenses. |

### Recommendation 2

| Strategies | The superintendent needs to identify and implement strategies for improving communication with the board. | |
|---|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The superintendent should work with the Florida Association of School Boards to identify strategies school districts use for meeting the informational needs of board members. |
|  | Step 2: | The superintendent should consult with the board to determine what strategies may meet their informational needs. |
|  | Step 3: | The superintendent should implement strategies most likely to be acceptable to board members. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent | |
| Time Frame | The superintendent should identify and implement strategies no later than March 1999. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

### Recommendation 3

| Strategy | The superintendent and board should take positive action to achieve common goals. | |
|---|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The superintendent and board need to identify and recognize district accomplishments, including student achievement, school choice, and the construction and renovation of many of the district's schools. |
|  | Step 2: | The superintendent and board need to identify the common goals they will pursue over the next five years. |
|  | Step 3: | The superintendent and board need to develop and implement strategies for implementing best financial management practices and keep Manatee citizens informed on the progress they've made towards implementing these practices. |
| Who Is Responsible | The board and superintendent | |
| Time Frame | The board should fully implement best financial management practices by October 1, 2000. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

# 4 Has the district clearly assigned authority to school administrators for the effective and efficient supervision of instruction, instructional support, and other assigned responsibilities, including consideration of site-based decision-making and other organizational alternatives?

*No. Although the district has given principals sufficient authority over school operations, it has not developed a comprehensive, accessible set of guidelines specifying the authority principals have. As a result, some principals are exceeding their authority and making decisions that adversely affect the district's ability to operate efficiently and effectively.*

## Principals Have Sufficient Authority Over School Operations

The district has delegated principals ample authority over their schools. For example, the district's school staffing plan allocates staff in employee units, such as teacher units. For all school-based staff except for exceptional student education teachers, principals may exchange allocated staff units for other positions. For example, a principal can exchange one full-time teacher unit for two full-time teacher aides.

The type of exchanges principals can make is subject to some limits. For example, principals may not exchange instructional staff positions for cafeteria worker positions. In addition, principals must have their proposed exchanges approved by the assistant superintendent for academics. Nevertheless the district's approach to school staffing gives principals a good deal of flexibility over the type of staff they hire.

All school-based staff report to principals. In addition, the district has increased the flexibility principals have over their budgets by giving them a discretionary fund and by consolidating funding categories. All of the principals we interviewed believed that they had sufficient authority to achieve school goals.

## The Authority of Principals Is Not Always Clear

The district has a number of methods for delineating the authority and responsibility of principals. For example, principals' authority to purchase goods and services for their schools is described in the district's policy and procedures manual. However, the policy and procedures manual only covers a small number of the functions principals perform. Although their authority for other functions is sometimes described in memoranda, the district has not developed a single accessible form of communicating the limits of their authority to principals.

Principals we interviewed said that they were not always clear on the scope of their authority. Although they knew that the limits of their authority had probably been described in written memoranda, they said that they rarely had the time to sift through these communications to find the answer to specific questions. In addition, they sometimes get conflicting information from staff in different departments. When principals are not sure what they are authorized to do, they either try to call someone in the central administrative office or act without consulting anyone.

# Some Principals Are Exceeding Their Authority

In some areas, principals are making decisions that adversely affect the district's ability to operate efficiently and effectively. For example, some principals are not following the districtwide schedule for administering standardized tests. When this occurs, questions arise about the fairness of the testing process, and district managers must take time to address these questions. In addition, some principals have made disciplinary decisions that do not comply with district policy and could place it at risk of legal action, particularly when the decisions affect exceptional or at-risk students. In addition, principals are not carefully conducting annual counts of full time equivalent (FTE) students or taking other steps to ensure that they comply with state funding requirements.

When principals are not following district policy and procedures, the district does not have an effective mechanism for bringing them into compliance. A district FTE audit showed that principals are continuing to make the same errors on FTE counts. Memoranda show that, despite repeated warnings, one principal continued to engage in questionable practices concerning the disciplining of exceptional students.

# *Recommendation* —————————————————————————————

- *When it develops the descriptions of lines of authority recommended on page 3-16, the district needs to clarify the principals' responsibility and authority and develop a guide principals can consult when they make decisions about their schools.*

- *Action Plan 3-3 shows the steps the district needs to take to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 3-3*

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

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Clarify the responsibility and authority of principals. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The superintendent should direct the assistant superintendent for Academics to develop a task force comprising the directors of Academic, Support Services, and Business Services divisions, representatives of elementary and secondary principals, and other key stakeholders. |
| | Step 2: | The task force should determine the authority principals need to effectively operate their schools as well as the limits that need to be placed on their authority to assure that the district operates in a consistent and cost-effective manner. |
| | Step 3: | The task force should develop a matrix showing when principals have the authority to take independent action and when they need to consult with other district staff and with whom they need to consult. |

Step 4:   When principals have line authority over staff who perform functions that are the responsibility of other departments, such as the food services or maintenance departments, the task force should recommend that principals involve the heads of those departments in the evaluation of those staff.

Step 5:   The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review and revise the matrix developed by the task force.

Step 6:   The board attorney should review the matrix.

Step 7:   The superintendent should submit the matrix to the board to ensure that it adheres to district policy.

Step 8:   The board should review and approve the matrix.

Step 9:   All principals and assistant principals should receive mandatory training about the matrix and the limits of their authority.

Step 10:  The superintendent should direct Information Systems staff to make the matrix available in electronic form and to train staff in how to access it.  This training should be mandatory for all principals and assistant principals.

Step 11:  The superintendent should adopt a procedure to ensure that the matrix is updated when needed.

Step 12:  The superintendent and board need to monitor to ensure that principals adhere to the matrix and take corrective action when they do not adhere to it.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent |
| Time Frame | The matrix should be developed and adopted by March 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | The matrix can be developed with existing resources. |

# *Are the Best Practices for Decision Making and Resource Allocation Being Observed?*

**Goal B:  The district makes decisions and allocates resources in a manner that ensures the quality of education and minimizes administrative and other costs.**

# 1 Does the district have a multiyear strategic plan with annual goals and measurable objectives based on identified needs, projected enrollment, and revenues?

*No. The district has not developed a districtwide strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives. It has identified some general goals and strategies that are based on identified needs. However, its goals and strategies are not comprehensive or based on measurable performance indicators or benchmarks.*

The district has not developed a strategic plan. The board has identified three general goals for the district: highest student achievement, safe learning environment, and efficient and effective operation. It also has developed some general strategies for meeting these needs. For example one strategy the district has identified for improving student achievement in the upcoming fiscal year is to "raise the bar" toward higher academic standards and expectations. The district also has produced a five-year capital improvement plan for facilities and a five-year technology plan.

The district bases some of its current goals, strategies, and plans on information about its current and future needs. For example, it can use student test scores to determine its need to improve academic performance. In addition, it has information on the condition of its current facilities and projected future enrollments. It uses this information to determine its need for capital improvement.

However, the district's current process falls short of meeting the best financial management practice because its goals and strategies are not comprehensive enough to coordinate and guide its efforts towards achieving overall goals. For example, the district's goals and strategies do not specifically address educational programs designed to serve exceptional or at-risk students, food service operations, or transportation. While the strategic plan need not contain the same level of detail as the goals, objectives, and benchmarks of each of its organizational units, it should contain key goals, objectives, and benchmarks for the district's major functions. (See pages 4-6 through 4-19)

Furthermore, the district has not developed measurable objectives and benchmarks it can use to assess its performance. For example, the strategy to "raise the bar" toward higher academic standards and expectations would be more meaningful if the district specified current expectations, such as test scores, and indicated how and by how much the expectations were to be raised.

In the absence of a districtwide strategic plan, some departments have created their own plans. However, according to staff of these departments, they are never sure whether their plans will meet district needs and will not conflict with the plans of other departments. Conflicts have occurred over the development of the new curriculum and the reorganization of the Exceptional Student Services Department.

## *Recommendations* ————————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district develop a districtwide strategic plan that contains measurable goals and objectives. Such a plan should help ensure that all district activities are directed toward commonly held goals and objectives and that each of its organizational units understands how its activities contribute to these goals and*

> *objectives. To develop such a plan, the district needs to create a single unit responsible for districtwide planning and evaluation. Without such a unit, the responsibility for planning and evaluation activities will remain with operational units, which are likely to give them lower priority than they give the day-to-day activities needed to run the district. (See page 3-27 and4-8) This unit should be charged with overseeing the development of a plan for the approval of the superintendent and school board. The plan should contain high-level goals and measurable objectives and benchmarks for the district and each of its major programs and departments. (See pages 4-6 through4-19 for a further discussion of goal, objectives, and benchmarks). It also should contain the strategies the district will use to achieve those goals and objectives, the units responsible for implementing these strategies, and the timeline for implementation. The plan should cover a five-year period and should be updated annually.*

- *Action Plan 3-4 shows the steps needed to develop a strategic plan.*

*Action Plan 3-4*

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

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a five-year strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The superintendent should appoint a steering committee to guide the strategic planning process. The committee should include representatives of the district's board, departments, and schools as well as community stakeholders. |
| | Step 2: The superintendent should direct the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation to serve as staff to the steering committee. |
| | Step 3: The steering committee, in conjunction with the board and superintendent, should hold public hearings to solicit community input on the district's goals and objectives. |
| | Step 4: The steering committee should hold a series of workshops to solicit input from the schools and their stakeholders. |
| | Step 5: The steering committee should solicit input from the board, central administrative staff, and school-based staff. |
| | Step 6: Based on the input it has received, the steering committee and Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should develop a draft of a strategic plan, including measurable goals and objectives and specific strategies, responsibility assignments, and timelines for the superintendent and assistant superintendents. |
| | Step 7: The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review the draft and present it to the board for comments. |
| | Step 8: The steering committee and Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should incorporate their comments into a final draft. |
| | Step 9: The superintendent should present the final draft to the board for approval. |
| | Step 10: The board should approve the plan. |
| Who Is Responsible | The board and superintendent |

| Time Frame | The plan should be completed by March 2000. |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | The plan can be created with existing resources. |

# 2   Does the district have a system to accurately project enrollment?

*Yes. The district generally makes reasonable estimates about the number of children that will be entering the Manatee school system. However, the district's estimate of its full time equivalent exceptional students was not accurate for Fiscal Year 1997-98. This was not due to the district's forecasting system. Instead it may have been caused by a change in the way that the state estimated full time equivalent exceptional students, problems with the way the district is classifying exceptional students, and over-identification of exceptional students. However the forecast error caused the district to exceed the limits the state places on the number of at risk and exceptional education students it will fund. More accurate projections or assessments of student needs and improved strategies of meeting those needs could enable the district to receive an additional $3.6 million a year in state funding.*

## Overall Enrollment Estimates Are Reasonable

The district's Student Accounting Office generally makes reasonable projections of the number of students enrolling in the district. To make these projections, the district uses demographic estimates of the county's future birth rates. It then uses new construction starts to estimate future migration rates. These projections are used to determine the boundaries for school zones and to assess facility construction needs.

The district works with staff in the Department of Education (DOE) in making enrollment projections. In Fiscal Year 1995-96, the district's projected enrollment fell short of actual enrollment by 2.3%. Since then, district staff have obtained technical assistance from the department, and the district's error rate for the overall number of students it will serve has dropped below 1%. DOE staff believe that error rates below 1% are acceptable. Exhibit 3-19 shows the district's projected and actual enrollment of full time equivalent students from 1994-95 through 1997-98.

*Exhibit 3-19*

## Manatee's Overall Enrollment Forecast Error Was Less Than 1% for Three of the Last Four Fiscal Years

| Fiscal Year | Projected Enrollment | Actual Enrollment | Difference | Percent Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994-95 | 30,777.63 | 30,816.74 | 39.11 | 0.13% |
| 1995-96 | 30,828.06 | 31,550.18 | 722.12 | 2.34% |
| 1996-97 | 32,598.75 | 32,484.13 | (114.62) | 0.35% |
| 1997-98 | 33,639.97 | 33,512.82 | (127.15) | 0.38% |

Source: *FTE Forecasting History,* Department of Education

## Estimates of Special Needs
## Students Have Not Been Accurate

However, projections of the number of exceptional and at-risk students the district will serve are not accurate. For example in Fiscal Year 1997-98, the number of students that would be enrolled in exceptional or at-risk education programs was underestimated by 377.33 full time equivalent students. When multiplied by the funding factors the state assigns to students with different educational needs, this resulted in an underestimate of the number of exceptional and at-risk students that would be eligible for additional state funding by 1,688.57 weighted full time equivalent students. (See Exhibit 3-20.)

*Exhibit 3-20*

## The Fiscal Year 1997-98 Forecast Error for ESE and At-Risk
## Weighted Full time Equivalent Students Was High

| | Forecast Error for Unweighted FTEs[1] | Cost Factor | Forecast Error for Weighted FTEs[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dropout Prevention | (346.49) | 1.438 | (498.25) |
| Educational Alternatives | 45.26 | 1.169 | 52.91 |
| English as a Second Language | (30.23) | 1.245 | (37.64) |
| Level 1 Exceptional | 51.06 | 1.341 | 68.47 |
| Level 2 Exceptional | 223.11 | 2.072 | 462.28 |
| Level 3 Exceptional | 295.62 | 3.287 | 971.70 |
| Level 4 Exceptional | 103.09 | 4.101 | 422.77 |
| Level 5 Exceptional | 35.91 | 6.86 | 246.34 |
| **Total Error** | **377.33** | | **1,688.57** |

[1] A positive forecast error means that actual enrollment exceeded forecasted enrollment.

Source: *FTE Forecasting History,* Department of Education

This underestimate reduced the amount of Fiscal Year 1997-98 funding the district received from the state for exceptional and at-risk students. According to DOE staff, the state uses each district's projection of full time equivalent exceptional and at-risk students to establish a cap for the number of these students the state will fund in that district. In Fiscal Year 1997-98, the district had 1,200 more weighted full time equivalent exceptional education and at-risk students than its cap. As shown in Exhibit 3-21, Manatee exceeded its exceptional and at-risk funding cap by more than any other of its peer districts. Since the district must provide higher cost services to all students it assesses as being exceptional and at-risk regardless of the availability of state-funding for those services, this cost the district about $3.6 million.

*Exhibit 3-21*

# In Fiscal Year 1997-98,
# the District Exceeded the State's At-Risk
# and Exceptional Student Cap More Than Its Peers
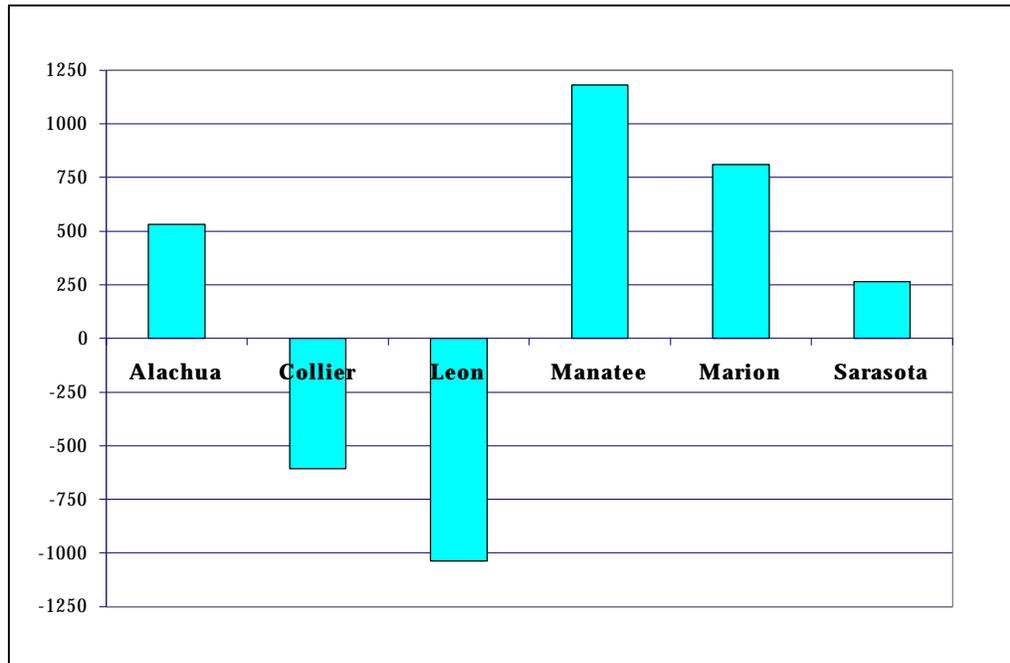


Source:  1997-98 FEFP Fourth Calculation, Department of Education

## The District Has Three Potential Estimating Problems

The district's underestimate of its exceptional and at-risk students could be due to the following three factors:

- problems arising from the change in methodology for calculating unweighted full time equivalent exceptional students,
- inaccurate classification of exceptional students into the state's new funding categories[3], and
- identification of some students as exceptional who could be served in other educational programs.

---

[3] The state recently developed a mechanism for classifying the exceptional students according to their functioning and the level of services considered necessary to maximize their educational potential.  Many districts have had trouble correctly applying this mechanism, which is frequently called "the matrix," to their exceptional student populations.

## Change in Methodology

One possible cause of Manatee's underestimate of its unweighted exceptional or at-risk students could be problems arising from the state's change in the methodology used for calculating full time equivalent exceptional students. To encourage districts to serve exceptional students in the least restrictive possible environment, the state changed the way in which they were to calculate full time equivalencies for these students. In prior fiscal years, districts were to calculate full time student equivalencies for exceptional students by counting the number of hours the students received instruction outside of the regular classroom. For Fiscal Year 1997-98, however, unweighted full time equivalencies for these students were based on the number of hours the students received instruction both inside and outside of the regular classroom. Since districts did not have any good way of estimating the number of hours exceptional students were taught inside the regular classroom, the state told them to submit their estimates using the previous methodology. It then used a statewide estimate to transform the districts' estimate into the new unweighted full time equivalent methodology. However, the statewide sample may not have been valid for the Manatee school district, and this could have caused Manatee's forecast error.

## Inaccurate Classification of Exceptional Students into the State's Funding Categories

Another possible cause of the underestimate could be problems with the way Manatee teaching and exceptional student education staff classify exceptional students into the funding categories the state has recently established. Prior to 1997-98, the state provided different levels of funding for students with different disabilities. Thus, a student diagnosed with a learning disability received one level of funding, while a student diagnosed with a developmental delay received another level of funding. However, the state determined that students with the same diagnoses could vary considerably in their functioning and the services they needed. Consequently, it changed the way it provided funding for exceptional students by classifying these students according to their functional level and needed services. This classification system, called the matrix, took effect in 1997-98.

According to Pupil Personnel staff, despite the training they provided, many district staff did not know how to correctly apply the matrix to their students. According to these staff, this lack of knowledge resulted in students being classified at higher disability levels than necessary. This could have caused Manatee's count of exceptional students to vary from the statewide sample used to make the forecast.

## Over-Identification of Students as Being Exceptional

A third possible cause of the district's underestimate of exceptional and at-risk students is that district staff may be over-identifying some students as exceptional or at risk. According to Pupil Personnel administrators and psychologists we interviewed, the district has a tendency to identify children who are simply misbehaving or not performing well in basic classrooms as exceptional or at-risk. A more careful evaluation of these students could reduce the number of children the district places in exceptional or at-risk student education programs. In addition, the district might be able to reduce the number of students it places in these programs if it developed better strategies for serving children before they became eligible.

# *Recommendations* ————————————————————

- *Although the district's projections of the number of students it will serve have improved, it needs to improve projections of weighted full time equivalent at-risk and exceptional*

*students. The district has recently hired a new finance director, who was responsible for making enrollment projections in the district for which he previously worked. According to Department of Education staff, the finance director could help improve the accuracy of the enrollment projections if he reviewed the projections and the processes for making them. Consequently we recommend that the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation work closely with the finance director in developing enrollment projections.*

- *In addition, the district needs to examine and improve its methods for assigning students to various functionality levels and assessing the needs of students who are referred for exceptional or at-risk student evaluations. To accomplish this, the district should consult with exceptional education and at-risk student education experts in the Department of Education.*

- *If the district is successful in resolving problems with the forecasting of exceptional students, it should not have more exceptional students than the state's cap. As shown in Exhibit 3-21, this should increase the district's annual revenues by $3.6 million. However, due to the time lag between making projections and the start of the fiscal year for which the projections are made, this increase probably will not take effect until Fiscal Year 1999-2000. Exhibit 3-22 shows the recommendation's potential five-year fiscal impact.*

*Exhibit 3-22*

## Improving Its Enrollment Projections Will Allow the District to Obtain an Additional $14.4 Million in State Funding Over the Next Five Years

| | Fiscal year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Revenue Increase (in millions) | $ 0 | $3.6 | $3.6 | $ 3.6 | $ 3.6 |
| Cumulative Revenue Increase (in millions) | 0 | 3.6 | 7.2 | 10.8 | 14.4 |

# 3  Does the district regularly assess its progress toward its strategic goals and objectives?

*No. The district does not regularly assess its progress toward its strategic goals and objectives.*

Since it does not have districtwide strategic goals and objectives, the district cannot assess its progress towards achieving them. The district does collect some performance data, such as average student scores on standardized tests. In addition it evaluates the performance of some of its special educational programs. However, it does not maintain performance data on its administrative and support functions. (See page 4-19 for more information about the district's use of performance information.)

Developing and collecting data on performance indicators for administrative and support functions may help the board better judge overall district performance. District board members use test score and class size data to judge the success of the district's educational programs. Board members are more comfortable with the district's performance in educating students than they are with its performance of other functions. In addition, board confidence in the district improved when the board obtained information about community satisfaction with district performance. Better performance data on administrative and support functions could improve board members' confidence in the district's performance of these functions.

# *Recommendations*

- *We recommend that the district begin a formal process for assessing its progress toward achieving its goals and objectives. To do this, the district needs to develop performance indicators and data it can use to track progress. These indicators should include measures of the district's performance in achieving its three primary goals: highest student achievement, safe learning environment, and effective and efficient operation. In addition they should include a measure of the community's satisfaction with the district's overall performance, as determined by periodic surveys of voters, parents, and other stakeholders. For example, the district could use test scores, dropout rates, graduation rates, remediation rates, and percentage of its graduates that become employed or enter higher education to judge the success of its educational programs. It could use number of school incidents per student and surveys of teachers, parents, and students to judge the success of its efforts to provide safe learning environments. In addition, it could use percentage of schools constructed within budget, comparisons of school construction costs, comparisons of transportation costs, comparisons of maintenance and custodial costs, comparisons of school lunch costs and participation rates, and a variety of customer satisfaction measures to determine its success at operating efficiently and effectively.*

- *Action plan 3-5 shows the major steps the district needs to take to implement this recommendation. A more detailed action plan is on page 4-22.*

*Action Plan 3-5*

## The District Should Develop
## Performance Measures to Enable It to
## Routinely Assess Its Progress Toward Achieving Its Goals

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | The district should routinely assess its progress towards achieving strategic goals and objectives. |
| Action plan | Step 1: The superintendent should direct the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation to work with assistant superintendents to develop strategic measures for each of the district's major programs and functions. |
| | Step 2: In looking at performance measures, the Office of Planning Accountability, and Evaluation needs to consider what programs |

and functions need to be included.  It should not combine performance measures for basic education programs with the measures for programs for exceptional and at-risk students.

Step 3:   The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation needs to determine what data the district is already collecting or will be collecting as it implements its new computer system.

Step 4:   The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation needs to determine if the district needs to collect additional data and the cost of obtaining that data.

Step 5:   The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should make written recommendations for the outcome, output, and input data the district needs to routinely collect to assess the effect of its major programs and functions and the cost of those programs and functions.

Step 6:   The superintendent and assistant superintendents need to review and, if necessary, modify the recommended performance measures.

Step 7:   The board should review, modify, and approve the measures.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent |
| Time Frame | A complete set of measures should be developed by December 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 4 Does the district have an ongoing system of financial planning and budgeting linked to achievement of district goals and objectives, including student performance?

*No.  The district does not link the achievement of district goals and objectives, including student performance, to its financial plans or budgets.  The school board has placed a high priority on reducing class size and has tried to focus its resources in the classroom.  However, it does not otherwise link performance to resources.  Furthermore, the focus on reducing class size may be working against other strategies to improve school performance.*

The district has not formally developed strategies and objectives to improve performance; therefore, it does not incorporate those strategies and objectives into its budgetary process.  The board has an informal strategy of reducing the number of students per classroom and this strategy has influenced budgetary decisions.  For example, when the board developed its budget for the last two fiscal years, it cut funds for central administration in order to move more funds into classrooms.

However, the emphasis on reducing class size may limit the resources the district invests in other strategies to improve performance.  For example, the district has invested heavily in obtaining computer technology for schools and classrooms.  The district's 5-year capitol improvement and technology plans both include approximately $32 million to be spent on school-based technology.  The effect of this new technology on student learning ultimately depends on teachers' knowledge and ability to use the technology to enhance student performance.  According to district information and media services staff and other experts, school-based technology staff are essential to providing

teachers with the training they need in order to use technological resources effectively.   Other districts are beginning to allocate funds to schools specifically for technology staff.

The Manatee school district does not include school-based technology staff in its school staffing formula. Manatee district principals can exchange teacher units for technology staff and some principals do so.  However, the directors of the Information Services and Media Services departments both expressed concerns that schools would eliminate school-based technology staff in order to hire more classroom teachers.  If this occurs, the district's investment in school-based technology is likely to be less effective than it otherwise could be.

# *Recommendations*

- *After the district develops its strategic plan, it needs to decide what investments are most needed to implement its strategies and obtain district goals.  If the district decides that obtaining school-based technology is a key strategy it wishes to use, it should probably invest enough in that strategy to make it fully effective.*

- *However, the district may wish to pilot some alternative strategies before making significant investments in personnel or equipment.  For example, the district could look at the change in student test scores and perceived teacher workloads in schools whose principals invest in school-based technology staff in comparison to schools whose principals use resources to decrease class sizes.  It could then use the result of the comparison to decide how it should invest its resources.*

- *Action Plan 3-6 shows the steps the district should take to implement this recommendation.*

### Action Plan 3-6

## The Manatee County School District Should Implement a Number of Actions to Link Performance to the Budget

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Link performance to the budget. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  During the strategic planning process, the superintendent needs to direct the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation to work with the assistant superintendents to identify the strategies they believe will be most effective in attaining the district's strategic goals and objectives. |
| | Step 2:  The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should work with assistant superintendents to determine the likely cost of implementing the strategies they deem will be most effective. |
| | Step 3:  In addition the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation and assistant superintendents should identify alternative strategies and the likely cost of those strategies.  They also should identify changes in current operations that would enable them to invest in the alternative strategies and the amount the district could save by implementing those changes. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Step 4: The Finance director should work with the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation to determine how much the district can afford to invest in the recommended strategies. |
| | Step 5: The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should incorporate the alternative strategies, their likely costs, and the amount the district can invest in the strategies in a written report.  It also should give its recommendations concerning which strategies should be implemented given budgetary constraints. |
| | Step 6: The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review the reports and, if necessary, modify the recommendations. |
| | Step 7: The superintendent should forward the report to the board for review and approval. |
| | Step 8: The board should review the report, modify the recommendations as needed, and adopt them.  It should then direct the superintendent to base the upcoming budget on the recommendations. |
| Who Is Responsible | The board and superintendent |
| Time Frame | The plan should be completed by March 2000, and the budget for Fiscal Year 2000-2001 should be based on the plan. |
| Fiscal impact | The district can link performance to the budget with existing resources. |

# 5 Do the district's management information systems provide data needed by management and instructional personnel in a reliable, timely, and cost-efficient manner?

*No.  Although the district's major system contains useful data, the data cannot be easily retrieved in a form that makes it accessible to decision-makers.  As a result, many of the district's managers and other staff keep their own databases or spend time creating their own reports.  The district has recently entered into a contract for new software and training that will improve its data systems and operating efficiency.  However, the planned improvements do not address the student database.*

## The District Does Not Have Readily Accessible, Accurate Management Information

District managers and instructional staff frequently cannot access the data they need to evaluate and improve educational and support programs.  The district's primary data system was designed to support operations and to provide data required by the state.  Staff can use the system to obtain routine reports, but they cannot create their own reports without obtaining the assistance of programming staff.  Programming staff have a five-year backlog of requests for special reports.

As a result, district staff frequently spend time maintaining on their personal computers separate databases that they can use to keep and obtain the information they most need to manage their programs.  For example, in addition to the data on the main computer system, data about exceptional students is maintained in separate databases at the School Bus Transportation Department, the

Exceptional Student Services Department, and the Special Services Department.  These peripheral databases are not connected or checked for data accuracy.

In addition, the district has not taken the steps needed to ensure the accuracy of the information on its main computer system.  (page 4-32)  For example, it has not developed a standardized system for principals to use to ensure the accuracy of information school-based staff input into the system.  Nor has it trained staff about the importance of obtaining accurate information.   As a result, it does not have ready access to accurate information about such things as the number of teachers it employs.

## The District Is Improving Its Information Systems

The district has a five-year plan to improve its data systems.  The Technology Implementation Plan reflects the district's short- and long-term management information needs.  The plan calls for implementing educational technology systems in all of the district's schools and acquiring the computer software and training needed to upgrade the information systems used by the district's Human Resources and Support Services Division and Business Services Division.

The Manatee school board has recently begun to implement a major element of the Technology Improvement Plan by approving a contract that will enable district staff to obtain the training and software they need to improve the district's major information system.  Under the terms of the contract, the district will pay $5.4 million over a three year period to obtain a computer upgrade, make the existing student information system year 2000 compliant, replace the finance and human resources system, and obtain the training needed to implement the new system.

According to district staff, this new system will allow them to streamline operations, improve operational effectiveness, and make better management decisions.  For example, the system will reduce much of the paperwork personnel staff currently handle.  (page 5-38)  It also will allow maintenance staff to maintain much better controls over their inventories.  (page 9-40)

However, the new system will not address problems with the student information system and the ability of administrative and instructional staff to access this system.  According to district information support staff, the new finance and human resources system includes a development tool that will provide district programmers the ability to create programs that administrative and instructional staff will be able to use to access the student information system and create their own reports.  However, it is not certain whether this improvement will resolve all of the problems concerning the usefulness of the student database or when it will be available.

## *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

- *The district should continue to refine and implement the five-year Technology Implementation Plan.  Currently it needs to focus its efforts on implementing the new finance and human resources system.  This will require careful coordination and cooperation between the contractor and district staff.  The contractor has proposed a reasonable two-tier strategy for implementing the system, and the district should ensure that it and the contractor adhere to this strategy.*

- *In addition, the district needs to take steps to ensure the accuracy of information on its main computer system.  It also need to improve the student information system by identifying the information the system should contain, developing mechanisms for*

*obtaining that information, and making the information accessible to administrative and instructional staff.*

- *Action Plan 3-7 shows the steps the district needs to take to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 3-7*

# The District Needs to Take Several Actions to Implement Improvements to Its Information Systems

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Successfully implement the new finance and human resources system. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Business Services and Support Services and Human Resources staff should take a number of actions to carry out the current proposal for implementing the new financial and human resource management information system. These should include |
| | a. ensuring that staff having the authority to make decisions about financial and human resource issues continue to participate in the planning and implementation process for the new information system; |
| | b. insisting that the contractor for the new information system provide consultants who are well versed in the administration of K-12 school systems; and |
| | c. continuing to work well with the contractor's technical staff to ensure successful implementation of the information system. |
| | Step 2: Business Services and Support Services and Human Resources staff should implement additional strategies to ensure the success of the implementation process. These should include |
| | a. contacting staff of school districts that have gone through the contractor's implementation process to identify areas where they encountered the most difficulties; |
| | b. assigning the responsibility for accomplishing each implementation function to one individual; |
| | c. empowering these individuals with authority to make the decisions required to accomplish the function and hold them accountable for completing the function within the planned time frame, or when necessary, within an agreed upon extension of time; |
| | d. obtaining progress reports every two weeks for the superintendent, the head of Information Services, and the heads of applicable user departments; |
| | e. obtaining documentation about the new system that users will be able to understand; and |
| | f. cross-training Information Services personnel on the system in order to ensure that ongoing technical support will be adequate and effective. |

| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendents for Business Services and Support Services and Human Relations |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | These steps should be taken throughout the implementation process. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with allocated resources. |

### Recommendation 2

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Reduce programming backlogs by creating programs that allow administrative and instructional staff to access and analyze information in the student database. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Information Systems should ensure that the new information system contains tools district programming staff can use to create programs that will allow administrative and instructional staff to query the student database to obtain the information they need. |
| | Step 2: The Information Systems director should work with staff from the Academics department and schools to examine current programming requests and identify information needs and the types of queries that would meet those needs. |
| | Step 3: The Information Systems director should direct staff to develop programs that will permit users to make needed queries. |
| | Step 4: The Information Systems director should work with the assistant superintendent for Academics and Personnel director to train administrative and instructional staff on how they can access and analyze information in the student database without requesting assistance from Information Services for assistance. |
| | Step 5: In the interim, the director of Information Systems should work with staff of other departments to change the manner with which they make programming requests by adopting processes that Alachua and Collier school districts use to reduce the number of special programming requests. These processes include taking actions discussed below. |
| |     a. Develop a catalog or manual that specifies the general type of information available in all district-level management information systems and how staff can access this information. Staff should review this manual before requesting special reports from Information Services. This should reduce the number of requests for special reports. |
| |     b. Review the requests for special reports in the backlog and eliminate any that are no longer needed or are not deemed to be high priority. |
| |     c. Implement a policy requiring the heads of departments requesting information and the director of Information Services to sign off on any new requests for specialized reports. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Information Systems |
| Time Frame | The programs and training should be completed by June 2000. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Improve the reliability and accuracy of data contained in the district's management information systems |
| Action Needed | Academics staff should consult with Information Services staff to implement district-level procedures school staff must follow to check the accuracy of information in the student database. |
| | Step 1: Information Services staff should work with Human Resources staff to provide training to school-based clerks, secretaries, registrars, and others responsible for entering data into the main computer system. The training should include a review of all procedures put in place by district staff to ensure data accuracy. |
| | Step 2: Academics and Information Services staff should work with Personnel staff to provide training to principals to ensure that they understand the importance of maintaining accurate data. A key component of this is the collection of FTE information. |
| | Step 3: Academics and Information Services staff should work with Personnel staff to provide training to administrators, managers, principals, and teachers who use district information to emphasize the need for them to accept the responsibility for their data. All users should become the owners of the data and assume full responsibility for its accuracy and completeness. |
| | Step 4: To better ensure data accuracy, the Academics Department should implement measures to hold responsible parties accountable for incorrect data. The board should review and approve these measures. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Academics and director of Information Services |
| Time Frame | Training should begin in February 1999 and be ongoing. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 4 | |
| Strategy | Improve the reliability and accuracy of data contained in the district's management information systems by developing a process that would reduce the number of unconnected databases in the district. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Survey district staff in order to estimate the number of program-level databases that users have developed to supplement or substitute for information in the district's main information system. |
| | Step 2: Review the data elements the program-level databases contain and compare them to elements in the district's main information system. |
| | Step 3: Develop a plan that would eliminate unnecessary databases with the addition of the key data elements to the district's system. |
| | Step 4: Add these elements to the system and eliminate the unnecessary databases. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Information Services |
| Time Frame | Should be complete by July 2000. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with allocated resources. |

# 6

## Does the district periodically evaluate operations and implement actions to improve the quality of education and reduce administrative and other costs?

*No. The district does not have a formal process to evaluate its performance. As a result, some decisions are based on perception rather than objective analysis.*

Although district staff informally assess operations and look for ways to improve, the district does not have a formal process for evaluating the performance of most of its major programs and functions. The district has an internal auditor, but most of his efforts are directed toward routine financial work, such as examining school internal accounts. In addition, the district complies with requirements to periodically evaluate its federally-funded programs, such as dropout prevention. However, these reviews typically focus on compliance with federal laws. (See page 4-19)

Furthermore, because of its problems in obtaining data, some of the board's and administrative staff's decisions are based on perception rather than on evaluation. For example, the board recently decided that the district was going to discontinue its practice of using teachers-on-assignment. However, it did not base its decision on an evaluation of the effects of using teachers to perform other duties. Although this decision was probably appropriate for most of the ways the district had been using those teachers, it did not distinguish between teachers who had been temporarily assigned to other duties and those who had been permanently assigned to other duties. While it is doubtful that the district benefited from permanently assigning teachers to other duties, it may have derived some benefits from their temporary assignment. For example, although most departments used teachers who were permanently assigned to non-teaching duties to perform administrative duties, the Curriculum Department used teachers temporarily assigned to it to help develop new curricula. According to Curriculum Department staff, both teachers and the district benefited from this assignment. Teachers benefited by receiving leadership and mediation training and developing a districtwide perspective. The district benefited by having the expertise of real teachers when it developed curricula and by having teachers take new skills back to their classrooms.

In addition, the district does not have a formal procedure to encourage staff to recommend actions that result in cost-savings. According to principals we interviewed, principals who improve their schools' efficiency and reduce expenditures generally are not able to retain a portion of the savings for school-based projects. However, the district is piloting a project that would allow schools that decrease their use of energy to retain a quarter of the money they save.

District staff are aware of the lack of evaluative information and are looking for ways to conduct more evaluations. They are reexamining the district's organizational structure. Although the major objective of this reorganization is to improve communication between staff responsible for different education programs, staff are also seeking to use the new organizational structure to place greater emphasis on evaluation.

## *Recommendations* ─────────────────────────────────

- *If the district implements our recommendation on page 3-14, it will have an organizational unit dedicated to planning and evaluation. This unit should help other*

*district departments to develop performance measurement systems and to use those systems to periodically review their performance and make recommendations for improvement. In addition, the unit should conduct formal evaluations of district programs as directed by the superintendent. These evaluations should be used to confirm the analyses made by the individual departments and to provide more detailed information about the potential causes of good and poor performance. This will provide the district with independent information it can use to improve performance.*

- *Action Plan 3-8 provides the action steps needed to implement this recommendation*

*Action Plan 3-8*

# The District Needs to Develop Mechanisms for Guiding and Performing Formal Evaluations of Its Programs

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Conduct formal evaluations of programs and use the results to improve performance. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The superintendent and Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should develop an annual plan for the evaluations to be conducted by the office. |
| | Step 2: | In developing the plan, the superintendent and office should consider giving priority to evaluations of programs that have not performed according to expectations or are the subject of debate. In addition, the plan should be designed to ensure that all programs are evaluated with a reasonable timeframe. |
| | Step 3: | In developing the plan, the superintendent should seek input from assistant superintendents, board members, and other stakeholders. |
| | Step 4: | The superintendent should present the plan to the board. |
| | Step 5: | The board should review and approve the plan. |
| | Step 6: | The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should implement the plan. |
| | Step 7: | In carrying out the evaluations, the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should adhere to the Program Evaluation Standards promulgated by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent and the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation | |
| Time Frame | The first plan should be complete by March 1999 and evaluations should be conducted during that year. | |
| Fiscal impact | The district should be able to staff the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation through transfers from other departments. | |

# 7     Does the district consider local options to increase revenue?

*Yes. The district has developed a number of local options to increase revenue.*

The district has obtained additional local funding from an optional penny sales tax district voters approved in 1994. The tax was put on the ballot by the county commission, which gave 75% of the proceeds for the school district. This tax has raised a total of approximately $65.6 million for the district during the last four years. The district has used this funding to build and renovate educational facilities and to equip schools with instructional technology.

In addition to the local sales tax, the district has a foundation, which raised approximately $257,000 during the past fiscal year. It also has a staff position responsible for learning about and applying for competitive grant funding. During the last two fiscal years, this individual has secured $1.75 million in grants for the district.

The local sales tax expires in June 1999. The county commission will not ask for renewal of the tax on behalf of the school district. However, the school board is authorized to develop its own optional sales tax initiative, and the board has voted to place a one-half cent sales tax initiative on the November ballot. A survey of frequent voters has shown that a majority of them support the half-penny sales tax to help construct, renovate, and obtain new technology for district schools.

## *Recommendations* —————————————————————————————

- *The district should continue its plan to pursue the local optional sales tax. In addition, it should strive to implement the best financial management practices to further gain the confidence of local voters.*

# 8     Does the district use cost-efficient legal services to review policy and reduce the risk of lawsuits?

*No. The district has contracted for the services of an attorney to represent the board, and the attorney makes recommendations designed to reduce the district's risk of lawsuits or legal actions. However, it has not analyzed its costs of legal services to determine whether it could reduce them by hiring an in-house attorney and restructuring the terms of its contract. As a result, the district cannot demonstrate that it is getting cost-effective legal services.*

# The District Has Not
# Evaluated the Cost of Its Legal Services

The district has a contract for attorney services.  Under the terms of the contract, it pays its board attorney $100 per hour and provides him some benefits, office space, and secretarial support.  The attorney also has contracts with two small school districts.  He performs work for these two districts and other clients from his private office, which he keeps in addition to his district office.

According to a school board legal expert from outside of the Manatee district, Manatee's contract board attorney has a great deal of experience and expertise.  He frequently teaches classes for the Florida School Board Association and recently reached an out-of-court settlement with the Office of Civil Rights.  If this case had gone to court, the district's legal costs might have been substantially higher.

The attorney performs a number of legal services for the district, including providing legal advice to the board, representing the board in legal actions, and reviewing contracts.  He also provides advice and training designed to ensure that the board and district staff adopt and adhere to procedures designed to reduce the district's risk of lawsuit.  According to the attorney, he receives the board's agenda and supporting materials in a timely manner and has sufficient time before board meetings to review the agenda for legal concerns.

When he does not have the necessary expertise to represent the district on certain matters (such as risk management) or when his involvement might be construed as a conflict-of-interest, the attorney recommends that the board enter into contracts with other attorneys.  According to the attorney, he generally recommends that the board engage attorneys who he has seen practice and who have good track records.  He rarely recommends attorneys from large law firms because of their higher cost.  He is usually able to recommend attorneys who will accept the same hourly rate he gets for his services.

However, the district has not compared its legal costs to the legal costs of its peer districts.  Furthermore, since it does not segregate all of its costs for legal services for lawsuits from its costs for other risks, it cannot easily identify all of these costs.  Thus, it cannot demonstrate that it is getting cost-effective legal services.

The district appears to be getting its legal services at a competitive hourly rate.  However, its total costs could be high if its contract attorneys are putting in a lot of hours. Generally small school districts find that they do not need full-time attorneys and therefore have lower legal costs by engaging contract attorneys.  Larger districts begin to enter into enough legal work to make the use of in-house attorneys cost-efficient.  As a mid-sized district, Manatee needs to examine its legal costs and compare them to its likely costs if it did not rely exclusively on contract attorneys but used a staff attorney to perform its more routine legal work.  Although some of its peer districts still rely exclusively on contract attorneys, two of them, Alachua and Collier, have hired staff attorneys to perform some of their legal services.  Both of these districts continue to use contract attorneys to represent the board; however, Alachua found that adding an in-house attorney reduced its overall costs for legal services.

Another way the district could better control its legal costs is to develop a contract that provides a fixed cost amount, such as $3,000 per month, for routine district work, such as attending board meetings and reviewing contracts, and an hourly amount for other work, such as work on lawsuits.  The board can then require the attorney to obtain its approval before spending time on work that will be billed using the hourly rate.  Leon, Sarasota, and Marion school districts all have entered into these types of contracts with their contract attorneys.

# *Recommendations* ———————————————————————————

- *The board attorney's contract expires in November 1999.  In the interim, the board should identify and analyze its legal costs and develop mechanisms improving its ability to control these costs by ensuring that it is obtaining cost-effective legal services.*

- *Action Plan 3-9 shows the steps for implementing this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 3-9*

## The District Should Take Several Steps to Evaluate Its Legal Costs and Reduce Its Risk of Lawsuits

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | The district should evaluate its legal costs and, if necessary, take appropriate steps to reduce them. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The board should direct the superintendent to take steps to ensure that the district can readily identify all of its legal costs and whether these costs are due to lawsuits or routine legal work. |
| | Step 2: In breaking down these costs, the district should separate routine legal work, such as attendance at board meetings, from work performed in response to litigation or legal action. |
| | Step 3: The board should direct the superintendent to research comparable legal costs of similar-sized districts.  The research objective should be to see if the district can reduce its routine legal costs either by hiring an in-house attorney to do some of the more routine work now performed by its contract attorney or by changing the terms of its contract.  This research can be conducted in house or through a contract with an entity such as the Florida School Board Association. |
| | Step 4: The board should take steps to implement recommendations that result from this research. |
| Who Is Responsible | The school board |
| Time Frame | The district should segregate costs for legal services and identify the reasons for the costs by November 1998.  The study of other districts should be done by June 1999 and its recommendations implemented when the board attorney's contract ends in November 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. |

# **9**

## **Does the district periodically evaluate the prices it pays for goods and services and, when appropriate, use state-negotiated contracts, competitive bidding, outsourcing, or other alternatives to reduce costs?**

*Yes. The district has periodically evaluated the price it pays for goods and services and used other alternatives to reduce costs.*

The district has periodically examined whether privatization would be more cost-effective than the provision of services in-house. For example, it received bids from private sector firms for painting and custodial services and compared these bids to its in-house costs of providing those services. This type of analysis was recommended by the Manatee Chamber of Commerce.

However, the district has not developed a schedule for periodically obtaining bids on all of the services it provides that are commonly offered in the private sector. For example, it has not asked for bids to determine if it could reduce costs by contracting out its food services. Nor has it looked at whether the services it contracts out, such as its attorney's services, could be handled less expensively by district employees.

In addition, it is not clear whether the district's comparisons of its in-house costs with private sector costs have included all relevant costs. The Manatee Chamber of Commerce has criticized the district's cost comparisons. However the documentation for the district's comparisons do not describe how the district allocated costs to its in-house services.

The district has been making use of the state's facility construction management services. However, it has recently decided that it can perform this function more cost-effectively in-house. One assistant superintendent expressed interest in determining whether it would be cost-effective for the district to join with associations of other government agencies to purchase health insurance or other forms of insurance.

## *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

- *We recommend that the superintendent and assistant superintendents identify all services the district could reasonably provide through contract or in-house. To do this, the district should include all of the services it currently contracts for and all of the in-house services (such as maintenance or food services) that it could reasonably obtain through the private sector. The superintendent and assistant superintendents should then develop guidelines for the frequency with which departments should seek competitive bids for these services from private companies and in-house departments.*

- *In addition, the superintendent should direct the finance director to work with the departments who could become involved in competitive bids to develop a uniform way of determining the department's costs of providing the services in-house, and its potential in-house costs of contracting out the services. For example, the cost of in-house service provision should include all direct costs of providing a service, and any indirect*

*costs that could be reduced by contracting the service out.  Similarly, the potential cost of contracting out a service should include all of the district's contract-monitoring costs.*

- *The district can implement these recommendations with existing resources.*

# 4

# Performance Accountability System

*The Manatee County School District needs to develop a comprehensive performance accountability system to ensure that its major programs are meeting their intended purpose in the most cost-efficient manner.*

## Conclusion

The Manatee County School District is using two of eight performance accountability system best practices and is lacking in its use of best practices that address the performance of its major educational and operational programs. While the use of goals, objectives, performance measures, benchmarks, and evaluation varies by program, these activities should be greatly expanded. Improvements also should be implemented to increase the effectiveness of some schools' improvement plans and improve the timeliness and overall accuracy of information. OPPAGA's recommendations to bring the Manatee County School District into conformance with performance accountability system best practices can be implemented using existing resources if the school district implements recommendations made in Chapter 3 of this report. Below are OPPAGA's conclusions on the district's use of each performance accountability system best practice.

## Is the District Using Performance Accountability System Best Practices?

***No.*** The district generally has not established clearly stated goals and measurable objectives for its major educational and operational programs. (page 4-6)

***No.*** The district does not use appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures to evaluate its major educational and operational programs and has not used these in management decision-making. (page 4-11)

***No.*** The district has not set performance and cost-efficiency benchmarks for its major educational and operational programs that may include appropriate standards from comparable school districts, government agencies, and private industry. (page 4-16)

***No.*** The district does not regularly evaluate the performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs nor analyzed potential cost savings of alternatives, such as outside contracting and privatization. (page 4-19)

***No.*** District management does not regularly review and use evaluation results to improve the performance and cost efficiency of its major educational and operational programs. (page 4-22)

> ***No.*** The district does not report on the performance and cost efficiency of its major educational and operational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers. (page 4-24)
>
> ***Yes.*** The district does ensure that school improvement plans effectively translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives. (page 4-28)
>
> ***Yes.*** The district has established and implemented strategies to continually assess the reliability of its data. (page 4-32)

# *Fiscal Impact of Recommendations* —————————

There is no fiscal impact associated with recommendations to improve the district's use of performance accountability system best practices. However, responsibility for ensuring the implementation of several recommendations is assigned to a newly created planning, accountability, and evaluation unit. The costs associated with the creation of this unit are addressed in Chapter 3 of this report.

# *Background* ————————————————————————

Educational systems must be accountable to parents and other taxpayers for the performance and costs of their academic programs and support services, such as transportation, facilities construction and maintenance, food services, and safety and security. In addition, an effectively administered school district has a central office that provides leadership and accountability through a lean, responsive organizational structure that maximizes the allocation of funds to the instructional program. This requires the central office to provide district-level direction by establishing goals, objectives, and measures. Manatee County School District officials identified several notable accomplishments in its performance accountability system. Exhibit 4-1 describes these accomplishments.

*Exhibit 4-1*

## The Manatee County School District Has Accomplished a Number of Notable Things During the Last Three Years

- School district staff have received extensive training based on national standards for successful organizational performance.
- The school board has established three broad districtwide goal areas that emphasize the importance of high student achievement, safety, and cost efficiency and effectiveness.
- The district has no critically low-performing schools based on state minimum standards for student performance. However, several district schools have student performance approaching critically low status or at least one score below state minimum standards.
- Each school has a board-approved improvement plan consistent with state accountability requirements. Most school improvement plans focus on improving student performance.

Source: Manatee County School District

Since 1997, Manatee County School District staff received extensive training based on criteria established to help promote an understanding of the requirements for performance excellence and to promote sharing of information on successful performance strategies. These criteria are designed to provide organizations with an integrated, results-oriented framework for implementing and assessing processes for managing all operations. In addition, the Manatee County School Board has established three broad districtwide goal areas that emphasize the importance of high student achievement, safety, and cost efficiency, and effectiveness.

# State Initiatives Ensure
# Better Local Level Accountability

School improvement plans are required by state law as part of a 1991 state initiative to ensure greater local-level accountability. This initiative is designed to provide high standards of student performance and to decentralize public education so school districts and schools are able to design learning environments and activities to better meet the needs of each student. The Legislature established state education goals in eight areas (as provided in Exhibit 4-2) as a framework for the school improvement initiatives of individual schools.

*Exhibit 4-2*

## State Education Goal Areas

- Readiness to Start School
- Graduation Rate and Readiness for Postsecondary Education and Employment
- Student Performance
- Learning Environment
- School Safety and Environment
- Teachers and Staff
- Adult Literacy
- Parental Involvement

Source: Florida Statutes

While all schools must annually develop a plan that includes improvement initiatives, the specific state goals that schools include in their plans should reflect their particular needs. School advisory councils consisting of school employees and community members such as teachers, parents, students, and business and community citizens, assist schools in preparing and evaluating school improvement plans.

In 1997-98, 37 of the district's 38 schools had school board-approved school improvement plans.[1] Although plans in the Manatee County School District focused on a variety of improvements, they most often focused on improving student performance. For more information on the focus of 1997-98 school improvement plans, refer to Exhibit 4-3.

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[1] In 1997-98, the school district operated 38 schools. However, Haile Middle School, which opened in 1997-98, was not required by state law to have a school improvement plan.

*Exhibit 4-3*

# The Focus Areas of 37
# Manatee School Improvement Plans for 1997-98

| Area | Plans Focusing on This Area |
|---|---|
| Student Performance | 36 |
| Reading | 26 |
| Writing | 26 |
| Math | 21 |
| Kaleidoscope/Mosiac [1] | 7 |
| Other Student Performance Goals | 8 |
| Staff Training [2] | 23 |
| Discipline | 21 |
| Parental Involvement/Adult Literacy | 10 |
| Graduation Rate and Readiness for Postsecondary Education and Employment | 9 |
| Learning Environment | 8 |
| Safety | 8 |
| Readiness to Start School | 3 |

[1] Curriculum programs in elementary and middle schools

[2] All schools have staff development as part of their plan; however, some do not have it as a separate objective.

Source:  Manatee County School District

In 1995, the State Board of Education established criteria for schools with critically low student performance based on each school's performance on standardized assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics.  Using the two most recent years of data, the Florida Department of Education groups each school into one of the four broad categories shown below.

- Six data points below minimum criteria established by the department
- Four or five low scores
- One, two, or three low scores
- No scores below state minimum criteria

Schools that fall into the first group are referred to as "critically low-performing." Schools with four or five low scores are advised that student performance is "approaching critically low status."  While the Manatee County School District has no critically low performing schools, four of its schools are approaching critically low status and 15 have at least one score below state minimum standards.  Data available for the two most recent years, 1995 and 1996, is summarized in Exhibit 4-4 for the Manatee County School District and five peer school districts.

*Exhibit 4-4*

## Several Manatee Schools Have
## Student Performance Below State Minimum Standards

| Category | Alachua | Collier | Leon | Manatee | Marion | Sarasota |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "Critically Low" | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| "Approaching Critically Low Status" | 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Schools with 1, 2, or 3 Scores Below State Minimum Criteria | 17 | 10 | 10 | 15 | 28 | 16 |

Source: Florida Department of Education

# Information Systems
# Must Support District Accountability

District administrators and school board members need access to data and information to gauge district performance and to make critical decisions concerning issues such as resource allocation, program evaluation, development of alternative improvement strategies. Typically, this data is contained in district-level information systems. By centralizing information systems, a district ensures some level of consistency, accuracy, and reliability of information throughout the district. (The district's Management Information System also is discussed on pages 3-37 and 12-20 of this report.

In the Manatee County School District, information is generally entered into the district's databases by those entities responsible for gathering the information. Most financial and human resource information is entered and maintained by the individual departments. Student information generally is entered at the individual school sites. Information Services, which organizationally reports to Business Services, acts as facilitator for information requests and queries and transmits data to the Department of Education. Information Services is also responsible for the district's mainframe hardware and software systems and the local area network hardware and software. The district also has an Instructional Technology (IT) function that is responsible for the information technology hardware and software used for instructional services in the schools; IT staff report to the Division of Academic Services.

Manatee County School District's information infrastructure consists of hardware and software components that attempt to support the educational process through data processing and information delivery. All management information applications are handled on an IBM AS/400 platform. The software used in these applications is 10 to 15 years old. In May 1998, the AS/400 computers were upgraded to new Reduced Instruction Set Computer (RISC) systems designed for high-speed processing and capable of supporting new applications.

The district's finance and human resource systems are being replaced to more effectively handle data. The district has entered into a contract with a private computer systems provider, to upgrade these systems. This includes making the systems Year 2000

compliant.  During September 1998, the district was in the process of converting to this new system.  Full system implementation is scheduled for July 1999.  The district also is in the process of making the student database Year 2000 compliant.  All recent technological changes are part of the district's Information Systems Upgrade as highlighted in the District Technology Implementation Plan.  Presently, the district does not have plans to upgrade its student information system.

# *Are the Best Practices for Performance Accountability Systems Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district is accountable to parents and other taxpayers for its performance and efficiency and effectiveness in providing services.**

## 1 Does the district have clearly stated goals and measurable objectives for its major educational and operational programs?

*No, while some administrative units have developed goals and objectives for major programs, this practice is not widespread.  Thus, the district lacks a framework for many key decisions and actions regarding most major programs and services.*

The district has not developed overall goals or outcome-based objectives for major operational programs, although many of these programs have annual objectives to prioritize their activities.  (Refer to Exhibit 4-5, which lists the school district's 12 major educational and operational programs.)  In addition, goals and objectives should be refined for some major educational programs and developed for other educational programs.  Because no single entity assists staff in developing goals and objectives, their efforts to develop a program-level accountability system are fragmented.

*Exhibit 4-5*

## The School District Has 12 Major Educational and Operational Programs

| Major Educational Programs | Major Operational Programs |
|---|---|
| • Basic Education (K-3, 4-8, and 9-12)<br>• Exceptional Student Education<br>• Vocational<br>• At-Risk (Dropout Prevention, Educational Alternatives, English for Speakers of Other Languages) | • Facilities Construction and Facilities Maintenance<br>• Personnel<br>• Asset and Risk Management<br>• Financial Management<br>• Purchasing<br>• Transportation<br>• Food Services<br>• Safety and Security |

# Goals and Objectives Should Provide a Framework for Decisions

Goals and objectives establish a framework for key decisions and actions regarding programs. Without goals and objectives for each major operational and educational program, program staff can have difficulty establishing priorities for daily activities, identifying data to collect to assess whether a program or service is meeting expectations, and determining when they need to change strategies or program activities to better serve students. In addition, because each piece of a school district accountability system is interrelated, in the absence of an adequate set of program-level goals and objectives, it is difficult for program managers to provide needed direction and effective leadership that focuses on:

- continuously improving overall program performance;
- creating work processes that support efficient and effective accomplishment of performance objectives; and
- effectively communicating values, directions, and expectations as the basis for the district's key decisions and actions.

Program-level goals and objectives also enable senior district administrators, such as assistant superintendents who are responsible for overseeing numerous related programs, to review the performance of programs in their administrative units. This aspect of leadership is crucial, because reviews help to provide rationale for and build consistency behind critical decisions such as allocation of resources. Exhibit 4-6 summarizes the basic elements of program goals and objectives.

*Exhibit 4-6*

## Basic Elements of Program Goals and Objectives

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

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

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

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

Source: Literature review

# Operational Programs
# Do Not Have Goals and Objectives

The district has not developed overall goals for its major operational programs.  However, operational programs such as facilities construction, facilities maintenance, personnel, food services, risk management, transportation, and safety and security have developed annual objectives.  These objectives are stated as annual priority tasks for staff.  These tasks do not clearly tie together to indicate the specific overall program goals or outcomes the unit is trying to accomplish such as increased quality service, meeting statutory requirements, efficient operations, cost savings, etc.  For example, "assist in the reorganization of the Construction Services Department" does not describe what the district is trying to achieve with this reorganization such as decreased costs or increased timeliness.  (For examples of 1999 fiscal year annual priorities, refer to Exhibit 4-7.)

*Exhibit 4-7*

## Operational Programs Have Annual Priorities

Examples of Fiscal Year 1999 Priorities
- Balance workload within departments
- Assist in the reorganization of the Construction Services Department
- Prepare an operational procedures manual for this department
- Develop baseline data to measure process
- Update departmental procedures manual
- Work with Information Systems to perfect the Applicant Tracking System
- Provide means for certification and recertification

Source:  Manatee County School District

# Goals and Objectives for Educational
# Programs Should Be Expanded and Improved

The district has not developed districtwide goals and objectives for basic educational and exceptional student education programs.  Although it has developed goals and objectives for its vocational and at-risk programs, some of these can be improved.  Several of these at-risk programs (organizationally located in the district's Special Programs Department) are federally funded, such as Title I, and must establish goals and objectives to receive funding.  In addition, the district has established goals and objectives for other at-risk programs including dropout prevention.  However, at-risk program goals and objectives do not yet clearly link to district budgetary decisions and, according to program administrators, need to more closely drive daily staff activities.  Program administrators are in the process of clarifying and improving goals and objectives for all at-risk programs to ensure they are more measurable, link to district resource allocation decisions and staff activities, and include a process to assess progress. While the district is in the process of developing goals and objectives for basic education, which should be drafted by the fall of 1998, it has no time frame for developing goals and objectives for exceptional student education programs.

# Staff Need Assistance in
# Developing Goals and Objectives

No single entity in the Manatee County School District is responsible for assisting staff in developing goals and objectives for the district's major programs.  Thus, district efforts to

develop goals and objectives for major educational and operational programs are uneven and fragmented.  The degree to which staff have developed goals and objectives for programs not only is dependent on program requirements but also largely is a function of the organizational placement of the program.  For instance, operational programs under the Division of Human Resources and Support Services and Division of Business Services operate under annual priorities, which do not relate to program-level goals or outcome-based objectives.  Academic programs, such as at-risk programs, in the Division of Pupil Personnel Services have further developed goals and objectives than those for basic educational programs in the Division of Academics have.  In order to develop a comprehensive program-based accountability system, staff need training on how to develop specific accountability components, such as goals and objectives, and how to link accountability components to the district budget process.  In addition, to better ensure consistency across district administrative units, staff need a template that provides a format to guide them through the development of accountability system components.

# *Recommendations* ———————————————————————————

- *To better ensure the development of accountability system components, we recommend that the district develop a standardized accountability document to help guide staff through the process, provide accountability training to staff, and require that all major programs have clearly stated goals and measurable objectives.  Action Plan 4-1 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 4-1*

## Develop Goals and Objectives for Major Programs

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop an accountability framework for each program. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop an accountability framework for each program to guide staff through the development of the district's program-level accountability system.  The framework should contain a detailed format that includes the items listed below and instructions to guide the development of each item. |
| | • Program name |
| | • Program purpose |
| | • Unit administering the program |
| | • Person responsible for ensuring that the framework is completed and updated regularly |
| | • Program goals |
| | • Program objectives |
| | • Performance measures by program objective, including a short explanation of how each relates to the program objective |

- Processes by program objective—the answer to the question, "What processes will you put in place to accomplish this objective?" providing an overview of implementation strategies, the person responsible for implementation, resources needed, and target date

- Human resource development—the answer to the question, "What training is needed (and for whom) in order to accomplish this objective?"

- Performance evaluation methods—including how often a performance evaluation will be conducted, by whom, and the answer to the question, "How will you know you have progressed toward or successfully completed the objective (your evaluation criteria)?"

| Who Is Responsible | Planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 2

| Strategy | Provide training on accountability. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Using the concepts in Exhibit 4-6, "Basic Elements of Program Goals and Objectives," as a guide, develop a training program that covers the topics below.<br><br>• The basic concepts of program accountability including goal, objective, performance measure, and evaluation plan development<br><br>• The use of the district accountability framework<br><br>• The district budget development process including district budget priorities and the connection between program goals and objectives and the allocation of program resources<br><br>Step 2: Provide training to each department head and program staff to enable them to develop accountability systems for their programs. |
| Who Is Responsible | Planning, accountability, and evaluation unit, and budget director |
| Time Frame | February 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 3

| Strategy | Develop program level goals and objectives. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop 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. Major programs should, at a minimum, include the programs listed below.<br><br>• Basic Education (K-3, 4-8, and 9-12)<br><br>• Exceptional Student Education<br><br>• Vocational |

- At-Risk (Dropout Prevention, Educational Alternatives, English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- Facilities Construction and Facilities Maintenance
- Personnel
- Asset and Risk Management
- Financial Management
- Purchasing
- Transportation
- Food Services
- Safety and Security

Step 2: Identify the purpose of each major program (from federal or state law, grant specifications, etc.) and the primary services provided by the district.

Step 3: Review school improvement plans to identify school-based needs as they relate to specific programs.

Step 4: Using information in Exhibit 4-6, "Basic Elements of Program Goals and Objectives," as a guide, develop short-term and mid-term objectives for each program goal based on the specific, measurable outcomes the district would like program to achieve. Each objective should relate to the program's goals, the program's intent and resources, children served, school needs, districtwide goals, and the district's expectations for the program.

Step 5: Identify key strategies that the district will implement to achieve each program objective. Use these strategies to set priorities for staff members' daily work.

Step 6: Update goals and objectives annually based on legislative changes, changes in district goals, student needs, program resources, needs identified in school improvement plans, and program evaluation results.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Program directors, assistant superintendents, other appropriate program staff, and the planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
| Time Frame | March 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 2 Does the Manatee County School District use appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures to evaluate its major educational and operational programs and does it use these in management decision making?

*No.  The district has insufficient performance measures and no cost-efficiency measures and limited ability to extract data required to evaluate major programs.*

The district has not established performance and cost-efficiency measures for its operational programs and only limited measures to evaluate and improve its major educational programs. Thus, administrators are restricted in their ability to address basic questions about program performance and cost and assess progress toward program goals and objectives. In addition, the district's data system does not enable administrators to readily extract data in the format required to monitor trends. As a result, program staff indicate that they track performance on a limited basis.

## Measures Can Help the District Assess Programs

Performance measures provide information on program quality and performance. Cost-efficiency measures provide additional information that links performance and quality to cost. Without a comprehensive set of performance and cost-efficiency measures that link to each program's purpose, goals, and objectives, district administrators and school board members are restricted in their ability to assess programs to answer basic questions such as those given below.

- Should the district increase or decrease funds to a particular program?
- Are district services being provided in the most cost efficient manner?
- How could the district save money?
- What programs should be eliminated because of poor performance?
- Should the district implement a new program or service?
- Should the district contract for services?

Exhibit 4-8 summarizes the basic elements of program performance measures.

*Exhibit 4-8*

## Basic Elements of Program Performance Measures

A ***performance measure*** is data collected to indicate progress toward program goals and objectives and should be
- logically related to the program's primary purpose, goals, and objectives;
- comprehensive and easy to understand;
- able to be tracked over a long period of time;
- show a clear relationship to intended outcomes;
- related to the district's primary mission, goals, and objectives as stated in its strategic plan;
- assess whether the program is achieving its fundamental goals and objectives;
- used to evaluate program performance; and
- able to link program performance to program costs so they are useful for budgetary decisions.

## The District Has Insufficient Measures

The district has not established performance measures for its operational programs and has only limited measures to evaluate and improve its major educational programs. The school district and schools annually publish the *School Public Accountability Report* and distribute it to parents and the community. This report, which is mandated by Florida law, includes school progress on 16 performance measures relating to the state's eight education goals for public education (refer to Exhibit 4-9). It also describes the schools' progress in implementing their improvement plans and the use of lottery funds. The intent

of this report is to enable the public to obtain general information about school performance and management of lottery funds.  However, the *School Accountability Report* does not contain program-specific information on the performance and cost of district programs. The district has established performance-related measures only for programs for at-risk students.  These measures are generally identified in each program's evaluation plan.  However, at-risk program evaluations are just beginning to include recommendations to improve program outcomes.  In addition, the district has not established cost-efficiency measures for major educational and operational programs.

*Exhibit 4-9*

# The School Accountability Report Contains
# General Educational Program Performance Measures

| | State Goals | | Performance Measures |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Readiness to Start School | 1. | The number and percentage of students meeting the state expectations for school readiness as determined by a formal observation of each kindergarten student using an instrument that meets guidelines developed by the state Department of Education |
| 2 | Graduation Rate and Readiness for Postsecondary Education and Employment | 2. | The number and percentage of students who graduate from high school as defined by Florida law |
| | | 3. | The number and percentage of students 16 years or older who were reported as dropouts at the end of each school year |
| | | 4. | The number and percentage of students who meet the state levels in reading, writing, and mathematics for placement into college-level courses |
| | | 5. | The number and percentage of graduates who are employed, enrolled in postsecondary programs, or enlisted in the military using the most available data |
| 3 | Student Performance | 6. | Student performance results on state-designated external student assessments at various grade levels, including Florida Writes!, the High School Competency Test (HSCT), and locally administered norm-referenced tests at grades 4 and 8 |
| 4 | Learning Environment | 7. | Results of an annual locally administered school learning environment survey |
| | | 8. | The number and percentage of teachers and staff who are new to the school at the beginning of each school year |
| | | 9. | The number and percentage of students absent 11 to 20 days and 21 days or more each year |
| | | 10. | The average number of days teachers and administrators were not in attendance at the school for reasons classified as personal leave, sick leave, and temporary duty elsewhere |
| 5 | School Safety | 11. | The number of incidents of violence, vandalism, substance abuse, and harassment on the bus, on campus, and at school-sponsored activities |
| 6 | Teachers and Staff | 12. | The number and percentage of classes taught by out-of-field teachers |
| | | 13. | The number and percentage of teachers, administrators, and staff who receive satisfactory annual evaluations based on the district assessment system |
| | | 14. | The number and percentage of teachers in schools who have earned degrees beyond the bachelor's level |
| 7 | Adult Literacy | 15. | The number of adult students served by the district earning a State of Florida High School diploma either by earning credits and taking the High School Competency Test (HSCT) or taking and passing the General Education Development (GED) tests |
| 8 | Parental Involvement | 16. | The number and percentage of school advisory council members by membership type and racial/ethnic category |

Source:  Department of Education

# The District's Data System Limits
# Administrators' Ability to Effectively Manage Programs

In addition to lacking performance measures for many programs, the district's data system does not enable district administrators to readily extract data in the format required to monitor trends.  As a result, they track performance on a limited basis.  The district has tracked student test scores on norm referenced tests, Florida Writes!, the High School Competency Test, and college entrance tests from 1991-1997.  The district provided this data to school administrators but did not use it for in-depth evaluation of program performance. Some senior district administrators indicate that they track measures manually.  This includes extracting data from the district database and manually manipulating and tracking student academic scores by school in reading and writing to monitor program performance. Basic information such as test scores should be readily available and in a useable format for district administrators.  Manually manipulating and tracking performance data is time-consuming and inefficient.  (For more information on the district's data system, refer to pages 3-37 and 12-20)

# *Recommendations* ───────────────────────────────

- *We recommend that the district develop performance and cost-efficiency measures for major programs.  Developing these measures will better enable district administrators and school board members to address basic questions about program performance and cost and assess progress toward program goals and objectives.*

- *As part of performance measure development, we recommend that program staff identify and prioritize data needs.  This will better ensure that data is available to assess program performance and cost.*

- *Action Plan 4-2 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 4-2*

# Develop Performance and
# Cost-Efficiency Measures for Major Programs

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop program performance and cost-efficiency measures and identify data needs. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Review information in Exhibit 4-12, "Basic Elements of Program Performance and Cost Efficiency Measures," and use it as a guide in developing these measures. |
| | Step 2: Schedule periodic meetings to develop measures that indicate progress toward program goals and objectives. |
| | • Include program staff for input and assistance. |
| | • Include input and feedback stakeholders such as parents, community members, and appropriate school district employees (teachers, food service workers, bus drivers, etc.). |

- Use the accountability framework developed by the district's Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation unit.
- Identify detailed input and outcome measures and indicators of efficiency and effectiveness. Focus on desired results and outcomes not just on activities.
- Identify how performance measures link to the budget and the measures in the district strategic plan.

Step 3: Clearly define the measure (some measures such as "absenteeism" may mean something quite different, depending on who defines it) and make sure that it measures what is intended. Try to stay away from measures that could easily be misinterpreted.

Step 4: For each performance measure, identify the data needed and provide the information below.

- Who will collect performance data and how often?
- What is the source of the data, e.g., state or district reports?
- In what format is the data needed?
- How often should the data be collected?
- Who (program staff, department head, assistant superintendent, superintendent, school board) will the data be reported to and how often?
- How should the data be used?

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Program directors and appropriate program staff with the assistance of the planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
| Time Frame | August 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 2

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify data needs and develop a system for approving data requests. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify and prioritize data needs by classifying data into the two categories below. <br><br> • Data currently available, accessible, and in the format needed to determine progress toward program goals and objectives and <br><br> • Data currently either not available, accessible or in the format needed to determine progress toward program goals and objectives. <br><br> Step 2: Establish and implement a districtwide process for approving data requests made to the Information Systems unit. This policy may include review and signoff from department managers or assistant superintendents and how the data relates to program goals and objectives. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendents with the assistance of the management information systems unit |
| Time Frame | August 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 3 Does the Manatee County School District have performance and cost-efficiency benchmarks for its major educational and operational programs that may include appropriate standards from comparable school districts, government agencies, and private industry?

*No, the district has not established performance and cost-efficiency benchmarks for its major programs. Thus, district administrators cannot adequately assess program performance and cost.*

The district has not created a comprehensive set of performance and cost-efficiency benchmarks and compares performance and cost to entities such as other school districts, government agencies, and the private industry on a limited basis. Thus, administrators and the school board cannot determine whether program performance and cost are acceptable.

## Benchmarks Can Help the District Interpret Performance and Cost-Efficiency Data

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

- Where do we stand in relation to others delivering similar programs and services?
- Is current program performance adequate?
- Are program or service costs reasonable?
- Could staffing or resource levels be reduced?
- Who is doing something out there better than we are?
- What are others doing that we are not, and how can we change to mirror their performance?

Exhibit 4-10 summarizes the basic elements of benchmarks.

*Exhibit 4-10*

# Basic Elements of Benchmarks

***Benchmarking*** is comparing the actual performance and cost of major programs and services to acceptable standards, including the performance of other organizations, to identify differences and opportunities for improvement.  Benchmarks should

- include comparisons to other school districts, government agencies, and private industry that provide the same or similar services;
- include comparisons to best-in-class organizations (models), best practices, and generally accepted industry standards;
- be easy to understand and make sense;
- show a clear relationship to critical outcomes;
- be based on reliable and comparable data;
- be used to identify reasons for differences in performance or costs and to make improvements; and
- be developed at the same time as goals and objectives and updated annually.

Source:  Literature review

## The District Has Not Established Adequate Benchmarks

The district has not established benchmarks that would enable it to compare district program performance and cost to established standards.  The academics division is in the process of developing benchmarks as part of its *Strategic Direction* document, which will be completed in the fall of 1998.  Insufficient reliable data may have contributed to the lack of benchmark development, particularly for operational programs.  For example, the district does not collect data that would enable it to determine the average time to do certain routine jobs such as to change air conditioner filters.  Therefore, according to district administrators, they cannot reliably determine whether individual staff members take too long to perform these functions.  As a result, the district has limited data to determine how efficient and effective it is.

## The District Should Expand Its Use of Comparative Data

The district has conducted studies comparing selected district services to those in other school districts.  District staff members are collecting data to compare Manatee County School District staffing levels against other school districts.  According to district staff, 1997 data will be used to evaluate staffing levels for selected positions such as principals, assistant principals, and non-instructional staff.  In addition, district administrators conduct comparisons on individual issues such as the number of staff and costs of buildings compared to other school districts.  For example, in January 1996, the school board directed district staff to research outsourcing custodial services for a new middle school.  This research included surveys of seven Florida school districts (Brevard, Broward, Dade, Orange, Osceola, Sarasota, and Seminole) and cost comparisons with private cleaning service companies.  Based on staff research, in June 1997, the Manatee County School Board voted not to outsource custodial services at the school site.  However, district staff indicate that their use of comparative data on program performance and cost is limited.

# *Recommendations* ———————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district develop benchmarks for its major educational and operational programs. This will better enable the district to assess whether the performance and cost of these programs are acceptable. District administrators and school board members also could use this information in decision-making and to identify ways to improve.*
- *Action Plan 4-3 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

### Action Plan 4-3

## **Developing Benchmarks**

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop benchmarks. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Review information in Exhibit 4-9, "Basic Elements of Benchmarks," and use it as a guide in developing these benchmarks. |
| | Step 2: Determine which major programs would benefit most from benchmarking. |
| | Step 3: Identify key performance measures of cost, quality, and efficiency that should be compared. |
| | Step 4: For each program, identify a group of about 5 to 10 Florida school districts with which Manatee County School District could compare its performance and cost efficiency. Develop criteria that would help identify comparable school districts such as those listed below. |
| | • Availability of program |
| | • Location of school district |
| | • Number of students in district |
| | • Number of students served by program |
| | • Urban nature of district |
| | • Socioeconomic status of students |
| | Step 5: For each program, pick other model organizations. These would include government agencies or private companies that have similar programs with which Manatee County School District could compare its performance and cost-efficiency. |
| | Step 6: Contact the peer districts and other benchmarking organizations to ensure the that they |
| | • collect the needed performance data, |
| | • regularly update the data, |
| | • have confidence in data accuracy and reliability, and |
| | • define and report each data the same way as (or in a way that is useful to) Manatee County School District. |
| | Step 7: Identify other standards, such as trend analysis data, minimally acceptable performance, or generally accepted industry standards, to judge program performance or |

cost-efficiency (especially of commonly provided services such as square footage cleaned per custodian, how often preventative maintenance should be performed on a vehicle, etc.). Identify whether other stakeholders such as the public, teachers, school board members, etc., should be involved in developing these standards.

Step 8: Determine how the data will be used to draw conclusions about Manatee County School District programs. For example, establish standards by determining whether Manatee County School District program performance will be compared to the average of the peer districts, the highest performing organization, the organization with the lowest cost, etc.

Step 9: Set a schedule to collect performance data from benchmarking organizations. Determine the items below.

- Specific school district staff person(s)accountability for collecting benchmark data
- Source for school district and benchmark data
- Timelines for collection and reporting benchmarking data

Step 10: Collect the data from benchmarking organizations. Measure the performance of best-in-class organizations for each performance measure.

Step 11: Measure performance and identify gaps between Manatee County School District programs and those of the benchmarking organizations.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Program directors and appropriate program staff with the assistance of the planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
| Time Frame | October 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 4 Does the Manatee County School District regularly evaluate the performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs and analyze potential cost savings of alternatives, such as outside contracting and privatization?

*No, the district does not regularly evaluate the cost of its major programs or analyze the cost savings attributed to program alternatives. Increased evaluation would help the district identify ways to improve performance and reduce costs.*

Because the district lacks performance measures, baseline data, and benchmarks, it cannot adequately evaluate the performance or cost of many programs. While the district conducts program evaluations, these often focus on compliance with the law and not on overall program outcomes. In addition, district administrators do not conduct cost-benefit analyses of major programs and research alternative service delivery methods on a limited basis.

# Regular Evaluation Can Identify
# Ways to Improve Programs

Ongoing, routine program evaluations provide a means to pull together essential accountability information and make conclusions about the performance and cost of major educational and operational programs.  Without this information school board members and district administrators can have difficulty determining the extent to which programs are progressing towards stated goals and objectives and identifying ways to improve.  Program evaluations should help the school district

- demonstrate the merits of district programs and services;
- monitor and identify ways to reduce program costs; and
- identify areas in need of improvement and adjust curricula, instruction, and teaching materials better ensure that programs and services meet district expectations.

Exhibit 4-11 summarizes the basic elements included in program evaluations.

*Exhibit 4-11*

# Basic Elements of Program Evaluations

***Program evaluation***  is the periodic review of the worth or merit of a program or service.  These evaluations should report how well a program is accomplishing its goals and objectives and include the information below.

**General Background Information**

- Program purpose, goals, objectives, delivery methods, and program resources (dollars and staff)

**Performance Information Based on Performance Measures and Benchmarks**

- Amount of workload accomplished (outputs)
- Numeric indicators of program results that indicate quality, effectiveness, and amount of "need" that is or is not being served (outcomes)
- Amount of input related to (divided by) amount of output or outcomes (efficiency)

**Other Explanatory Information**

- Elements substantially out of the control of the school district or program that affect program accomplishments
- Elements over which the district has significant control, such as staffing patterns

**Recommendations for Improvement**

- Changes to improve a program or service including alternative strategies or delivery methods such as contracting out specific tasks or privatizing entire programs or services

## The District Cannot Adequately Evaluate Programs

Program evaluation is limited because the district lacks performance and cost-efficiency measures, baseline data, and benchmarks to evaluate many programs, particularly basic academic and operational programs. While the district conducts internal audits, these focus on internal control structures and generally not on the performance and cost-efficiency of district programs. The district has most extensively conducted program evaluations of At-Risk programs including Dropout Prevention, Title I, Accelerated Literacy Learning, Title I Media Productions, and English for Speakers of Other Languages. However, these evaluations often have not been based on pre-established performance measures or linked to program goals, objectives, and resources.

At-Risk Program staff members indicate that, while past evaluations focused on whether a program was in technical compliance with the law, future evaluations will better address program performance. The Special Programs Department developed a form that requires staff to pull together and track certain information and data related to program performance. While program managers collected some of this information in the past, in 1998, program managers will be required to formally collect more extensive program information that will enable them to evaluate program performance. For the 1998-99 fiscal year, At-Risk Program staff must indicate the program's goals, objectives, and activities and include an evaluation component and the person responsible for evaluation. According to division administrators, these changes are intended to better ensure that program staff members develop a comprehensive set of objectives and performance measures and collect baseline performance data needed to develop performance benchmarks and assess At-Risk Program performance.

## District Staff Research Alternatives on a Limited Basis

The district conducts research on alternative delivery methods of selected services on a limited basis. For example, a May 1998 district review of contracted occupational and physical therapist positions found that the district could save between $300,000 and $500,000 if it employed these individuals directly. According to district staff, the district has not made changes based on the findings of this review. In addition, the school board has directed staff to research the advantages of alternative service delivery methods on a selected basis for issues such as outsourcing custodial services. However, the district does not evaluate the potential benefits of alternative service delivery methods, including contracting out or privatizing, entire programs such as the Food Services Program or the district Transportation Program.

# *Recommendations* ———————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district expand the information included in program evaluations. This would provide information on the progress toward program goals and objectives using pre-established performance and cost-efficiency measures. This also would enable district administrators to project future resource and training needs.*
- *Action Plan 4-4 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 4-4*

## Evaluate District Programs

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop an evaluation schedule and expand program evaluations. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Conduct evaluations, at least annually, of major district programs. Use the list of major programs identified in Action Plan 4-1, page 4-9. |
| | Step 2: Each evaluation should be in writing and include an assessment of progress toward program goals and objectives developed as described in Action Plan 4-1, page 4-9, using data collected for performance and cost-efficiency measures developed as described in Action Plan 4-2, page 4-14, and benchmarks developed in Action Plan 4-3, page 4-18. |
| | Step 3: Use the results of annual evaluations to reassess program goals and objectives, revise performance measures and benchmarks (as needed), identify program resource needs for the upcoming year, and identify program staff training needs. |
| | Step 4: Implement recommendations for program improvement. |
| Who Is Responsible | Program directors and appropriate program staff with the assistance of the planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
| Time Frame | February 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 5 Does the Manatee County School District management regularly review and use evaluation results to improve the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational and operational programs?

*No, the district cannot demonstrate how it uses evaluation results to improve program performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational and operational programs.*

Evaluations of major district programs, when conducted, generally do not include recommendations for improvement. In contrast, internal audits often contain recommendations to improve internal controls. However, because no one position is responsible for overseeing and reporting on implementation of internal audit recommendations, district staff are unclear about the status of recommendation implementation. Thus, problems identified in internal audits may persist.

# Recommendations to Improve Programs
# Should Be Expanded and Implemented When Appropriate

As indicated on page 4-19, program evaluations, when conducted, generally focus on compliance with legal requirements and do not include improvement recommendations. However, internal audits often contain recommendations to improve internal control systems, such as establishing better procedures to ensure employees do not falsify timesheets or to control a dramatic increase in the number of companies providing fringe benefits to district employees.  District staff provided conflicting information as to whether internal audit recommendations had actually been implemented.  Some staff indicated that recommendations contained in internal audit reports generally are not implemented and often problems identified persist.  These staff provided specific information on a sample of audits that identified several recommendations to improve district operations had not been implemented.  For example, 10 of 14 recommendations made in an audit of payroll services issued in August 1996 had not been implemented as of May 1998.  However, other staff indicated that some of these recommendations had or were being implemented.  Staff confusion over the status of recommendation implementation may stem from the absence of one district-level position responsible for overseeing and reporting on the implementation of internal audit recommendations.

# School Board and Superintendent Receive
# Insufficient Performance and Cost-Efficiency Information

Assistant superintendents provide update packets to the superintendent each Friday. These 'Friday reports' contain information school board members specifically request or other information that staff may provide related to school district issues.  The superintendent distributes these packets to all school board members.  But, because the district lacks adequate performance measures, baseline data, and benchmarks, the performance and cost-efficiency data provided in these reports varies depending on the type of data requested by individual school board members and the additional performance information that staff members may provide.

# *Recommendations* ————————————————————————————

- *The district's implementation of recommendations for Accountability Systems Best Practices 1-4 should ensure additional performance and cost-efficiency information is available to the school board and superintendent.  This additional information also will enable staff to review program performance and cost-efficiency and to make recommendations for improvement.  However, to better ensure the use of evaluation results in district decision-making, we recommend the development of an annual performance and cost-efficiency report that summarizes this information.*
- *Action Plan 4-5 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 4-5*

## Increase Use of Evaluation Results

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop an annual report on performance and cost-efficiency of major district programs. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop an annual report on the progress toward district strategies plan, which should include a summary of evaluation results of each major program, recommendations for improvement, and future resource needs.  This report should be provided to the school board and superintendent. The report should be used to revise the district strategic plan, revise district goals, and develop the district budget for the upcoming year. For more information on the district's strategic plan, refer to page 3-27. |
| | Step 2: Adopt a district policy that requires the evaluation, accountability, and evaluation unit regularly (e.g., six months after an audit or the annual report is completed) report to the superintendent and school board on the status of recommendation implementation.  In cases in which recommendations have not been implemented, the unit should provide justification, such as alternative strategies have been implemented, or rationale when no action is taken. |
| Who Is Responsible | The planning, accountability, and evaluation unit and school board |
| Time Frame | November 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with the existing resources. |

# 6 Does the Manatee County School District report on the performance and cost-efficiency of its major educational and operational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers?

*No, the district has established various committees that act as liaisons to the public. The district provides these committees available performance and cost-efficiency information, but it lacks the information needed to be held fully accountable to parents and other taxpayers.*

The district has citizen committees in place to provide the public an opportunity for input and feedback on district issues.  While the district provides some information to school advisory councils, parents, and other taxpayers, it lacks adequate performance measures, baseline data, and benchmarks, to provide the complete performance and cost-efficiency information to the public.

# The District Has Established
# Committees for Public Input and Feedback

The Manatee County School District has established liaison committees that provide community input and feedback on a wide range of district-related issues and receive information on district performance. (Refer to Exhibit 4-12, for a list of the committees.) The largest of these committees, the Joint Parent Organization (JPO), is comprised of 76 members. The district established the JPO to improve communication between district administrators and the parent members of several school-based committees, such as school advisory councils and parent teachers' organizations. District administrators also indicated that the JPO provides the district a forum to publicly report on the performance and cost-efficiency of district programs.

According to district administrators, the JPO reviews topics such as sales tax increases, school district construction projects, school safety, and legislative issues affecting the school district and receives available information on the performance and cost-efficiency of the district's major educational and operational programs. This information includes the school district's annual budget, recent school safety reports, legislative issue updates, and any other information specifically requested by the JPO members. Generally, the superintendent or an assistant superintendent orally presents this information to JPO members.

JPO members we interviewed indicate that they would like more control over setting the agenda or having a non-school district employee chair the meetings with the superintendent acting as meeting facilitator. This would allow the meetings to focus more on parent concerns about the school district, which may include issues such as performance, cost-efficiency, etc. According to district staff, the district supports parents assuming a more active role in conducting JPO meetings including setting the agenda. However, district staff indicate that JPO members have not widely supported this concept in the past.

*Exhibit 4-12*

# The District Has Established Several Liaison Committees

| Name of Committee | Purpose of Committee | Meeting Schedule | Number of Members | Groups Represented | Reports Generated or Information Received |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Joint Parent Organization** | To strengthen the lines of communication between the SAC/PTO/PTAs and the administration office | Monthly during school year | 76 | SAC, PTO, PTA | Review topics such as sales tax, construction, safety, legislative issues, etc. |
| **Safety Committee** | To provide an administrative perspective on district safety needs; to review safety initiatives and recommend organizational approaches to improve student safety | Monthly during school year | 15 | School administrators, elected officials, business and community leaders | Review suspension incidences, weapons possessions, Safe School Funds, Risk Management, legislative issues, etc. |
| **CEO Roundtable** | To provide leadership, communication and coordination among agencies to ensure an integrated system to provide for local children and families | Every other month | 14 | Elected officials, government and community leaders | Legislative issues, district programs and initiatives |
| **Education Alliance** | To provide a coordinated effort to promote excellence in education throughout the community | Monthly during school year | 19 | Educators, business and community leaders* *Members represent all races and geographic areas of district | Information resource for parent involvement, safe learning environment |
| **Manatee County Schools Foundation** | To support and enhance education resources to maximize the students' potential for the community and beyond | Monthly during school year | 26 | CEOs, community leaders/members, education representatives | Review innovative education programs; Teacher of the Year input; principal and superintendent input |
| **Business Partners (Chamber of Commerce)** | To promote the enrichment of education through business/education partnerships | Monthly during school year | 22 | School business partners and community volunteers | Involved in Project Teach, Partners In Excellence Award, and Business Partners training seminar |
| **Budget Committee (Chamber of Commerce)** | To provide an external perspective on district budget issues; to share knowledge and resources to ensure an efficient and effective budget process | Monthly during school year | 17 | Administrators and business leaders | Involved in Technology Implementation Plan, Risk Management, review of employee benefits, advise on overall budget processes; issues recommendations to school board |

Source: Manatee County School District

## The District Annually
## Provides Information to the Public

As required by state law, by November 15 each year the district mails to each parent a copy of the school accountability report for their child's school. In addition, the *Bradenton Herald*, with a weekday circulation of 42,340 and Sunday circulation of 54,464, periodically runs stories on the individual schools, which include portions or all of the school accountability report. The school accountability report contains a variety of data including the items presented below.

- Graduation rates
- Florida Writing Assessment Test scores
- High School Competency Test Scores
- Training and placement rates
- Dropout rates
- Student attendance rates
- Teacher and administration attendance rates
- Violence on campus data
- Evaluation of teachers

## The District Should Provide
## More Information to the Public

While the school accountability report provides parents and other taxpayers generalized performance data at the school level, it does not provide similar information on operational programs and provides no cost-efficiency data. This stems from the fact that the district lacks adequate performance measures, baseline data, and benchmarks, to provide complete performance and cost-efficiency information to the public. This additional information would enable the public to hold the district more accountable by obtaining answers to questions such as those below.

- What is the public getting for its investment in public education?
- How efficiently is the district operating?
- How effective are district operations?
- Is the performance of particular district programs, such as transportation or facilities construction, acceptable?
- Should the district consider alternatives such as contracting out particular programs?

## *Recommendations* ──────────────────────────────

- *The district's implementation of recommendations for Accountability Systems Best Practices 1-4 should ensure the availability of additional performance and cost-efficiency information. However, to ensure this information is available to parents and to other taxpayers, we further recommend that the district provide information in the annual report to the various districtwide committees and to others upon request.*

- *Action Plan 4-6 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 4-6*

## Increase Public Reporting

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Publicly report additional information on the performance and cost-efficiency of major district programs. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Provide an annual report on progress toward the district strategic plan to the various districtwide committees and to others upon request. Refer to Action Plan 4-5, page 4-24, for more information on the annual report. |
| Who Is Responsible | The planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 7 Does the Manatee County School District ensure that school improvement plans effectively translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives?

*Yes, the district has established effective mechanisms that ensure school improvement plans translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives and clear implementation strategies.*

The district does an effective job of ensuring that school improvement plans are of high quality and contain measurable school improvement objectives and clear strategies. While the district generally meets this best practice, it should do more to ensure that all school advisory councils include required members so the councils act as an effective link between schools and the local community.

## Schools Receive Assistance to Develop Plans

The Office of School Management in the Division of Academics assists schools in developing their improvement plans. The office provides specific feedback to increase the measurability of school improvement objectives and to clarify and improve evaluation methods. In addition, to guide the school improvement process and ensure that all plans contain information to be effective, the Office of School Management has developed a format for all Manatee County School District improvement plans. (See Exhibit 4-13.)

*Exhibit 4-13*

# The Manatee County School District's
# Comprehensive School Improvement Plan Format

- A School Improvement Plan Summary that provides overview of the plan, in a table format, and lists each improvement objective included in the plan by state education goal and the target group affected
- Definitions of adequate progress for the entire plan and for each state education goal included in the plan
- The signatures of each school advisory council member
- A Needs Assessment Summary Conclusions table that provides the rationale for state education goals and improvement objectives included in the plan based on the school's needs assessment and data analysis
- A detailed format that requires school to indicate the information noted below for each objective
    1. **Aim** – the state education goal, standard, and outcomes addressed; the district goal addressed; whether the objective is new or continuing; and whether the school is requesting a waiver to state or district requirements to implement the objective
    2. **Goal** – the written school improvement objective
    3. **Leadership** – the person(s) responsible for managing the objective
    4. **Information Systems** – the answer to the question, "Why are you addressing this objective?" using specific needs assessment data
    5. **Processes** – the answer to the question, "What processes will you put in place to accomplish this objective?" providing an overview of implementation strategies
    6. **Human Resource Development** – the answer to the question, "What training will be provided (and for whom) in order to accomplish this objective?"
    7. **Measures and Results** – the answer to the questions, "If this objective is to end at the conclusion of the 1997-98 school year, how will you know you have successfully completed the objective (your evaluation criteria)?" or, "If the objective extends <u>beyond</u> the 1997-98 school year, how will you know you have made adequate progress at the end of the 1997-98 school year?"
    8. **Action Plan** – (in a table format) by action step, the person responsible for implementation, resources needed, target date, evidence of completion, and date completed.  (The last two items are to be entered when the action step is completed.)

Source:  Manatee County School District

We reviewed a sample of 13 of the district's 37 school improvement plans for 1997-98.[2] The sample contained a proportional representation of elementary, middle, and high schools and included the district's technical institute (postsecondary vocational school). All plans we reviewed were based on the individual school's needs, 10 contained measurable

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[2] The Manatee County School District operated 38 schools during the 1997-98 school year.  The school improvement plan for Haile Middle School is not included in our analysis because the school opened in 1997-98 and was not required to develop a plan.

objectives, and 11 contained clear implementation strategies. Exhibit 4-14 presents a summary of OPPAGA's findings regarding Manatee County School Improvement Plans.

*Exhibit 4-14*

## Manatee County School District
## School Improvement Plans Are of High Quality

| Description of Plans | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Based on needs? | 13 | 0 |
| Contains measurable objectives? | 10 | 3 |
| Contains clear strategies? | 11 | 2 |

## Plans Are Based on School Needs

Each school advisory council analyzes needs assessment data and determines which state education goals are of highest priority for the school to address by including improvement objectives in its plan. This information is presented in a summary table in the front of each school improvement plan. In addition, school improvement plans specify the needs assessment data that lead the school to include each improvement objective in their plan.

## Plans Generally Contain Measurable Objectives

The plans reviewed contained over 70 school improvement objectives. Overall, school improvement objectives are well written and define educational jargon, describe desired results and outcomes that are measurable, and contain timelines and benchmarks. However, some objectives, particularly those for the high schools and the technical institute, could be improved by better specifying what improvement is desired and by how much. For example, objectives that describe activities such as "develop and implement a policy addressing all forms of harassment" may cause someone not familiar with the plan, such as parents and community members, to be confused about what specifically the school is trying to improve, by how much, and by when. In some cases, additional information is available in other sections of the plan that clarifies the objective, but this information easily could be overlooked. In this example, for instance, the evaluation plans indicate that the school desires to reduce harassment and related offenses by 5% for the 1997-98 school year, which is the school's actual objective.

## Plans Generally Contain Clear Implementation Strategies

Overall, implementation strategies logically connect to objectives and are clearly described, someone is assigned responsibility to ensure strategy implementation, and timelines are established for the completion of each strategy. However, some schools could strengthen implementation strategies by taking the actions discussed below.

- Describe strategies in sufficient detail so that someone not involved in writing the plan can understand what actions the school will implement to achieve the objective. For example, "student parking permits," "National Vocational Honor Society," and "extend the Kaleidoscope Curriculum" do not provide an outsider, such as a parent or community member, or a new school advisory member, sufficient information to understand what needs to be done.

- By strategy, identify the specific materials, equipment, etc., needed for implementation; the cost of these materials; and the source of these funds. This will help ensure that implementation strategies are realistic and will help the school identify early on what may need to be done to raise additional funds through grants or special events.

# School Advisory Councils
# Generally Include Required Stakeholder Groups

School advisory councils (SACs) assist schools in preparing and evaluating school improvement plans. State law requires that each SAC include members representing the following stakeholder groups:

- principals,
- education support employees,
- teachers,
- parents,
- business and community citizens, and
- students (only area technical centers and high school advisory councils).

OPPAGA reviewed the membership lists of the district's 38 school advisory councils to determine whether they include members representing stakeholder groups required by state law. We found that 1997-98 school advisory councils, which ranged in size from 9 to 61 members, generally included groups required by state law. However, four SACs did not; two SACs did not include education support employees, a third did not include business/community citizens, and a fourth did not include teachers. The variety of groups specified for SAC membership helps provide an appropriately balanced and broad-based approach to school improvement and ensures that a link exists between schools and the local community. (For a breakdown of the membership of each SAC, refer to Exhibit 4-15.)

*Exhibit 4-15*

# Four 1997-98 School Advisory Councils
# Do Not Include Required Members

| Type School | Total Members | Admini-strators | Students | Teachers | Education Support Employees | Parents | Business and Community | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 50 | 2 | N/A | 3 | 0 | 31 | 9 | 5 |
| Elementary | 13 | 2 | N/A | 1 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| Middle | 61 | 2 | N/A | 3 | 1 | 55 | 0 | 0 |
| High | 26 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 19 | 2 | 0 |

Source: Manatee County School District

## Some Councils May Be
## Dominated by School Employees

Florida law also requires that a majority of members of each 1997-98 school advisory council be persons who are not employed by the school board.[3] While Manatee County School District administrators could identify 1997-98 SAC members by category (teachers, parents, business/community representative, etc.), they could not identify which members are school board employees. OPPAGA previously has found that school boards also may employ members representing parents or other non-school related stakeholder groups. Therefore, this information is needed to determine compliance with Florida law. However, to approximate the proportion of school board employees on 1997-98 SACs, we compared the number of administrators, teachers, and support staff to the total number of SAC members for each school. We found that administrators, teachers, and support staff comprise the majority of the SAC membership at two of the district's 38 schools. In addition, the number of administrators, teachers and support staff equals that of other members on a third school advisory council. Thus, the district may not be in compliance with Florida law regarding the composition of its 1997-98 school advisory councils. Starting in the 1998-99 school year, the Florida Department of Education will not release funds from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund (lottery funds) to school districts not complying with SAC membership composition requirements, including that a majority of members not be school employees. Thus, if the district does not comply with these requirements, it could lose $2.7 million in lottery funds in 1998-99. To ensure compliance, the district plans to collect employer data for future school advisory councils.

## *Recommendation* ———————————————————————

- *The district generally meets the best practice of ensuring that school improvement plans effectively translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives. However, school advisory councils do not always contain those members specified by state law. To ensure compliance, the district plans to collect employer data for future school advisory councils. We recommend that the district implement these plans and establish other mechanisms to ensure that all school advisory councils include required members so the councils act as an effective link between schools and the local community. This can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 8 Has the Manatee County School District established and implemented strategies to continually assess the reliability of its data?

*Yes, the district has controls in place to assess the reliability of its data. However, the district lacks adequate procedures to ensure that data is generally accurate and meets the needs of management.*

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[3] The 1998 Florida Legislature amended state law to require that a majority of school advisory council members must be persons who are not employed by the school.

The district has in place strategies to assess the reliability of its management information systems. However, procedures are needed to better ensure the accuracy of data throughout the district. Improvements in data accuracy and enhancements to the management information systems should improve the utility of information for administrators. Because computer-processed data are an integral part of the decision-making process, it is crucial that data are relevant and reliable. Data reliability exists when data are sufficiently complete and error free to be convincing for their purpose and context. It is a relative concept that recognizes that data may contain errors as long as they are not of a magnitude that would cause a reasonable person, aware of the errors, to doubt a finding or conclusion based on the data. (Further discussion of data is included on pages 3-37 and 12-20.)

## The District Tests Data Reliability

The district has in place edit checks to

- determine if the data entered matches the accepted or expected values of the data element;
- determine if an inappropriate relationship exists between data elements; and
- identify data that may or may not be inaccurate but needs further checking.

This was illustrated through Information Services reports regarding the Exceptional Student Program. The district uses a number of reports to help ensure the reliability of all management information. In addition, the district subjects all data to online edit reports as provided by the Department of Education (DOE). These reports specify when errors exist within the data, prior to the district completing the information surveys that are forwarded to DOE. Districts forward data to DOE at specific times of the year in the form of informational surveys.

## The District Relies on
## Edit Checks to Identify Data Errors

The district uses computer software to help ensure data reliability. This includes items such as validation reports that search for obvious errors within a specific database. This was illustrated by Information Service's use of the *Exceptional Student Verification Report*. District staff provided a variety of examples of reports run against the Exceptional Student Educational Program's (ESE) database that help to ensure reliability.

The district also uses a lengthy data verification process that precedes the transmission of survey data to the DOE. This begins with the district conducting a tentative survey of information reported by the schools. Changes are made by district staff to correct any errors. The official data survey process begins as the district captures a subset of information and subjects this subset to online edit reports. Reports summarizing data errors are sent to the schools for their review. Once the school has made the proper updates to the data (so that the data passes the initial edit checks), it is forwarded to the central office. The district then transmits this information to DOE. This process takes about three weeks to complete and is conducted several times during the year, before any information is transmitted to DOE.

Both the use of computer software and this data verification process offer some level of security regarding the reliability of this information. According to DOE staff responsible for uploading data from the district informational surveys, Manatee County School District is very conscientious about providing good data. In addition, they are not aware of any obvious problems with the district's data quality or integrity.

## The District Cannot Demonstrate Data Is Accurate

Because the district does not have adequate data entry procedures in place, it cannot be sure that data is accurate.  The district relies on its internal controls over its data processes to ensure data reliability and accuracy.  However, the district lacks the internal controls governing the entry of student data at the respective schools and the verification of the data once it has been entered against original information.  Without the proper internal controls, the district may be jeopardizing the accuracy of its data.  Presently, there is not a consistent set of procedures in place for schools to follow regarding how hard copies of information should be stored after entry or supervisory checks of entered information.  In addition, there are no procedures governing the personnel responsible for entering data.

Accountability for the information entered at each school lies with each school principal.  The result is a high level of variance in the documentation kept at each school, level of supervisory checks conducted, personnel authorized to enter data, and procedures in place on how data is entered at each school. These types of variances do not ensure that accurate data is entered at school sites and is consistent across schools.  The Auditor General has not made recommendations in its recent compliance reports pertaining to data accuracy and reporting.  However, these reports generally do not include a review of school data entry processes.

## District Staff May Use Inaccurate and Unreliable Data to Manage Programs

When data needed to manage programs is not available in the districtwide database, administrators use information in databases developed by individual program staff.  Information in these isolated databases is not submitted to the Department of Education and is not tested for errors.  Thus, this data has high potential to be inaccurate and unreliable. (For more information on data used to manage programs, refer to page 3-37.)

# *Recommendations*  ───────────────────────────

- *The district generally meets the best practice of establishing and implementing strategies to continually assess the reliability of its data.  However, the district lacks adequate procedures to ensure that data is generally accurate and meets the needs of management.*
- *We recommend that the district establish formal guidelines regarding the consistent storage of hard copy information at school sites.*
- *In addition, we recommend that the district develop guidelines to check the accuracy of data in its database.  To be cost efficient, this may require that the district first conduct a risk-based assessment or other sampling method to identify data most prone to error.  Then the district should focus its data checks on this data.  Data checks may include comparing hard copy information against information in the district's database.*
- *We also recommend the district establish formal guidelines specifying the position(s) responsible for data entry at school sites and its duties.*
- *These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 5 Personnel Systems and Benefits

*The district generally needs to improve its personnel management system. In particular, it needs to substantially improve its job descriptions, use of technology to reduce paperwork, communication of performance expectations, and use of salary and benefit comparisons when determining compensation.*

## Conclusion

The Manatee County School District is using three of the nine personnel best financial management practices. The district generally recruits and hires qualified personnel, formally evaluates its employees to improve performance and productivity, and uses cost-containment practices for its Worker Compensation Program. However, the district needs to develop a strategic plan for its personnel management office, formally communicate personnel expectations to employees, implement a comprehensive staff development plan, evaluate the personnel costs (salaries and benefits) associated with providing services, and reduce the amount of paperwork the personnel office processes. Below is presented each best practice and an indication whether the district was found to be using the best practice.

## Is the District Using the Personnel Systems and Benefits Best Practices?

*Yes.* The district recruits and hires qualified personnel. (page 5-8)

*No.* The district does not base employee compensation on the market value of services provided. (page 5-14)

*No.* The district does not use a comprehensive staff development program to increase productivity. (page 5-20)

*No.* The district does not communicate personnel expectations to each employee. (page 5-26)

*Yes.* The district formally evaluates employees to improve performance and productivity. (page 5-28)

*No.* The district does not periodically evaluate its personnel practices and adjust these practices as needed. (page 5-31)

*No.* The district does not properly and efficiently maintain personnel records. (page 5-38)

*Yes.* The district uses cost-containment practices for its Worker Compensation Program. (page 5-41)

> **No.** The district does not regularly evaluate employee salaries and benefits, using appropriate benchmarks that include standards derived from comparable school districts, government agencies, and private industry. (page 5-43)

# *Fiscal Impact of Recommendations*

The district should periodically evaluate its personnel practices to assess whether the district can reduce its cost for providing health benefits to its employees. As can be seen in Exhibit 5-1, the district could potentially save $10.25 million over the next five years by revising its contribution rates for health insurance to be more in line with its peer districts.

*Exhibit 5-1*

## Implementing the Recommendations for Personnel Systems and Benefits Should Enable the District to Save $10.25 Million Over the Next Five Years

| Recommendation | Fiscal Impact |
|---|---|
| • Reduce cost of employer health benefits. If district elects to pay 100% of single coverage, contribute no more than the highest peer district for family coverage, and split the savings for the other family options. | • This will result in an annual savings of approximately $2.0 million in Fiscal Year 1999-2000 and $2.75 million in subsequent fiscal years for a total of $10.25 million over the next five years. |

# *Background*

The mission of Personnel Management is to provide quality service to all customers through accuracy of information, timely workflow processing, and continuous improvement in an effective and efficient manner. The Personnel Office had some notable accomplishments during Fiscal Year 1997-98. Exhibit 5-2 describes those accomplishments.

*Exhibit 5-2*

## Notable Accomplishments in Personnel Systems and Benefits

- The office implemented the Personnel Applicant Tracking System (PATS).
- Personnel assistants were trained to use PATS.
- The office revised job descriptions of personnel assistants.
- Three pilot schools with PATS.
- Use of the Teacher Perceiver Interview System was expanded.
- Support staff previously 'grandfathered' were fingerprinted.
- Staff development offered its first video course.
- The district trained more teachers than ever before as more than 400 teachers successfully completed one or more ESOL courses.

Source: Manatee County School District

The Manatee County School Board spent $135 million on salaries and benefits for approximately 4,000 employees.  The district paid $101 million for salaries and $34 million for benefits during Fiscal Year 1996-97.  Salaries and benefits accounted for 82% of the district's $166 million expenditures for Fiscal Year 1996-97.  Refer to Exhibit 5-3 for a breakdown of the type and number of staff employed by the district.  The 1998 Legislature appropriated an increase of $10.4 million to Manatee County for Fiscal Year 1998-99.  Of this $10.4 million, Manatee County estimates it will use $1.7 million for the payment of incremental pay increase to district employees.

*Exhibit 5-3*
**Manatee County School District Employs Over 4,000 Staff**

| Staff Categories | Fall 1997, Number of Full-Time Staff |
|---|---|
| ***Administrative Staff*** | **131** |
| Officials, Administrators, Managers | 29 |
| Consultant, Supervisors of Instruction | 8 |
| Principals | 38 |
| Assistant Principals | 55 |
| Community Education Coordinators | 0 |
| Deans, Curriculum Coordinators | 1 |
| ***Teachers*** | **1,838** |
| Elementary Teachers | 839 |
| Secondary Teachers | 648 |
| Exceptional Education Teachers | 331 |
| Other Teachers | 20 |
| ***Other Instructional Staff*** | **177** |
| Guidance | 69 |
| School Social Workers | 14 |
| School Psychologists | 13 |
| Librarians/Audio Visual Workers | 38 |
| Other Professional Staff | 43 |
| ***Professional Support Staff*** | **141** |
| Noninstructional | 141 |
| ***Other  Support Staff*** | **1,742** |
| Aides | 558 |
| Technicians | 33 |
| Clerical/Secretaries | 303 |
| Service Workers | 724 |
| Skilled Crafts Workers | 118 |
| Unskilled Laborers | 6 |
| **Total** | **4,029** |

Source:  Department of Education

The school board, superintendent, and Office of Personnel Management have specific responsibilities related to the management of district personnel. The school board establishes personnel policies and procedures and authorizes positions, the superintendent oversees the personnel and recommends all polices to the board, and the Office of Personnel Management provides personnel services.  As shown in Exhibit 5-4 the school board and superintendent have distinct and separate responsibilities, and the Office of Personnel Management provides many services.  The Office of Personnel Management has developed goals and objectives to guide its operation as shown in Exhibit 5-5.

*Exhibit 5-4*

**The School Board and Superintendent Have Specific Personnel Responsibilities, and the Office of Personnel Management Provides an Array of Services**

| School Board Responsibilities | Superintendent Responsibilities | Major Services Provided by the Office of Personnel Management |
|---|---|---|
| • appoints personnel on recommendation of the superintendent<br>• adopts salary schedules for all personnel<br>• establishes employee positions in the school system after considering the recommendations of the superintendent<br>• determines minimum qualifications for new position classifications<br>• determines all policies relating to personnel including sick leave, leaves of absences, and special benefits, subject to the Florida statutes; determines the policies of general personnel management | • recommends, transfers, and takes any other established personnel action consistent with Florida law and board policy<br>• supervises the work of all employees of the school district<br>• recommends all personnel policies for board action and executes all personnel policies adopted by the board | • screens and processes all new employees for school board approval<br>• performs customer service for all personnel<br>• recruits new teachers<br>• provides employee assistance to support and instructional staff<br>• screens and secures substitute teachers<br>• negotiates with Manatee Education Association and AFSCME, local<br>• investigates and provides support in employee relations matters<br>• administers district salary manual<br>• coordinates all personnel matters including tracking all district personnel and applicants<br>• oversees unemployment compensation<br>• provides in-service training for all certificated persons (instructional)<br>• develops and coordinates the human resource management development plan<br>• coordinates training for all district personnel (support and instructional) |

Source:  *Manatee County School Board Policy Manual*  and district staff

*Exhibit 5-5*

# The Office of Personnel Management's Goals and Objectives

| Purpose of the Office | Fiscal Year 1997-98 Goals | Objectives for Fiscal Year 1998-99 |
|---|---|---|
| • Manage the personnel process through recruitment, processing of applications, position control, employment, induction, certification, performance assessment, staff development, employee counseling, employee discipline and termination. | • Use technology and training to increase efficiency and effectiveness.<br>• Ensure implementation of s. 231.17, F.S. (certification requirements).<br>• Provide a quality teaching staff. | • Work with the information services department to implement the personnel portion of the new management information software system and to perfect the Applicant Tracking System.<br>• Improve substitute services by securing substitutes for vacant positions, while planning for the automated substitute calling system.<br>• Work with Finance and other departments to ensure proper accounting of positions throughout the school district; develop baseline data to measure progress.<br>• Put two additional ESOL courses – Methods and Curriculum – into video format; offer one video and two regular classes each in the fall, spring, and summer. Delivery in this format will reduce the cost of continued ESOL training.<br>• Enable 75 or more teachers to enroll in each video course. |

Source: Manatee County School District

As shown in Exhibit 5-6, a majority of the district's employees are represented by one of two unions that negotiate contracts with the school board. The Manatee Education Association (MEA) is recognized by the board as the exclusive bargaining agent for all certified non-administrative personnel. The board has two contracts with MEA, one with the teachers and another with the paraprofessionals (teachers' negotiated agreement and paraprofessionals negotiated agreement). The Manatee County and Municipal Employees Local 1584 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), represents full-time, support employees including food service workers, regularly assigned bus drivers, and trade helpers. Bargaining teams from the district and the MEA and AFSCME negotiate terms, which include salary increments, for their respective contracts.

In Manatee County and one of its peer districts (Collier) the personnel director is responsible for both personnel management and labor relations. Manatee County's other peer districts [Alachua, Leon, Marion, and Sarasota] assign different staff to perform these

two functions and separate the responsibilities of the labor relations and personnel management.

*Exhibit 5-6*

# One Union, the Manatee Education Association, Represents 61% of the District's Employees

| Organizations | Number of District Employees | |
|---|---|---|
| Manatee Education Association | | |
| Teachers' Negotiated Agreement | 1,937 | 48% |
| Paraprofessional Negotiated Agreement | 499 | 13% |
| American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees | 853 | 21% |
| Non-Represented District Employees | 716 | 18% |
| **Total** | **4,005** | **100%** |

Source:  Manatee County School District

The Office of Personnel Management has undergone major changes over the past year.  The current organizational structure of the Personnel Office is shown in Exhibit 5-7.  A new personnel director was appointed in April 1998, after a five-month vacancy.  The director made several changes involving the positions of coordinator of support personnel, coordinator of personnel staffing, personnel assistants, and clerical persons during the year.  As a result, many persons assigned to the Personnel Office are either new to the school district or their particular job.

*Exhibit 5-7*

# Manatee County School District Office of Personnel Management Current Organizational Structure

```
                    Assistant Superintendent of
                  Human Resources and Support Services
                              (1 FTE)
                                 │
                   Director of Personnel Management
                              (1 FTE)
                                 │
                                 ├──────── Administrative Secretary
                                 │              (1 FTE)
```

| Staff Development Supervisor (1 FTE) | Teacher on Assignment (1 FTE) | Personnel Coordinator Instructional (1 FTE) | Personnel Coordinator Support Services (1 FTE) | Personnel Coordinator Staffing (1 FTE) |
|---|---|---|---|---|

- Staff Development Supervisor (1 FTE)
  - Personnel Assistant (1 FTE)
- Personnel Coordinator Instructional (1 FTE)
  - Secretary II (1 FTE)
  - Senior Personnel Assistants (5 FTE)
  - Personnel Assistant (1 FTE)
    - Clerical Assistant (1 FTE)
- Personnel Coordinator Staffing (1 FTE)
  - Position Control Specialist (1 FTE)
  - Sub Scheduling Clerks (3 FTE)

Source:  Manatee County School District

The Office of Personnel Management is composed of the Personnel Office and Staff Development Cost Centers. The primary expenditures were for substitutes and the salaries and benefits of staff in the Personnel Department, as can be seen in Exhibit 5-8.

*Exhibit 5-8*

## Office of Personnel Management
## 1997-98 Fiscal Year Expenditures

| Type of Expenditure | Expenditure Amount |
|---|---|
| Salaries and Benefits (21 FTEs) | $    964,233 |
| Substitutes | 734,702 |
| Expenses | 154,279 |
| Operating Capital Outlay | 58,717 |
| Total | $1,911,931 |

Source: Manatee County School District


# *Are the Best Practices for Personnel Being Observed?*

**Goal: The district recruits, hires, trains, and retains qualified staff to maximize productivity and minimize personnel costs.**

# 1 Does the district recruit and hire qualified personnel?

*Yes. The district generally recruits and hires qualified personnel.*

Manatee County's School Board policy is to select and retain employees as needed on the basis of merit, training, and experience. The district conducts background checks of personnel to ensure the safety of its students, uses detailed job postings and employment procedures that assure equal opportunities regardless of age, race, color, religion, sex, medical condition, and national origin. However, the district could improve its recruiting and hiring procedures for instructional staff by formalizing these procedures in writing and developing formalized written procedures for recruiting and hiring support personnel. It could significantly improve its job descriptions by updating and providing accurate detailed job descriptions.

# Recruiting Practices Could Be Improved

The district has developed recruiting procedures and plans for instructional and school administrative staff, but lacks such a plan for key administrative and support staff positions.  As shown in Exhibit 5-9, the board has developed policies to specifically address recruiting for instructional and support staff.  For the recruitment of instructional staff, the district has developed a recruiting schedule and assigned staff to a teacher recruitment team.  The 1997 and 1998 recruiting teams were specifically looking for minority candidates, prekindergarten majors, early childhood majors, media specialists, science, mathematics, speech, exceptional student education and counselors.  Manatee County recruiting team members visited several universities in the spring of 1998:  University of South Florida, Florida A&M University, Florida State University, and the University of North Florida.  The district has established a specific procedure to recruit minorities for teaching positions.  The district's Human Resource Development Plan outlines recruiting procedures for principals and assistant principals.

The district could improve its recruiting procedures by developing an evaluation mechanism to assess the effectiveness of its recruiting efforts for instructional and school administrative staff.  The mechanism should include annual and long-term recruiting goals and objectives.  The district should use the results of evaluating its recruiting efforts to improve the effectiveness of its recruiting.  The district also should develop procedures for recruiting key administrative and support staff.

*Exhibit 5-9*

## The Board Has Established General Recruiting Policies for Support and Instructional Staff

| Recruiting Policies for Support Staff | Recruiting Policies for Instructional Staff |
|---|---|
| • Persons who are interested in employment with the school system are encouraged to apply for a position. | • Names of prospective out-of-county teachers are solicited from administrative, supervisory, and instructional personnel. |
| • The local state employment office is asked for referrals when needed. | • Local citizens who are qualified are encouraged to consider teacher opportunities in the county school system. |
| • News stories in local newspapers and want ads are sometimes used. | • Replies to letters of application and inquiries concerning teaching positions include application forms, salary schedules, fringe benefits, and brochures. |
| | • The college placement offices are notified periodically of vacancies. |
| | • Interviews with colleges and universities are scheduled annually. |

Source:  *Manatee County School Board Policy Manual*

# Appropriate Hiring Procedures Are Generally in Place

The school board has established hiring procedures to help ensure that it hires qualified personnel. The procedures for instructional personnel include the systematic verification of whether applicants meet minimum qualifications and the use of an interview guide to assist in the identification of preferred candidates. The Manatee County School Board policies identify the employment procedures for support staff in Policy No. 304.01 and instructional personnel in Policy No. 304.03. As shown in Exhibit 5-10, the board's policy specifically addresses application procedures. The district utilizes the *Gallup Organization's Teacher and Principal Perceiver Interview Guides* when it screens candidates for these positions. Each principal is required to submit recommendations to the superintendent regarding the appointment of all personnel assigned to the school. Refer to page 5-32, for detailed information on the procedure the personnel office uses to ensure instructional staff and school administrators are qualified. All personnel recommended by the superintendent for employment are notified of their appointment after approval by the school board.

The district needs to develop an applicant tracking system for supervisor, managerial, and professional applicants similar to the tracking system the district utilizes for instructional staff. This would help to ensure that applicants hired for supervisor, managerial, and professional positions are treated consistently and meet the minimum requirements of the position.

*Exhibit 5-10*

# The Board Has Established General Hiring Procedures for Support and Instructional Staff

| Hiring (Application) Procedures for Support Staff | Hiring (Application) Procedures for Instructional Staff |
|---|---|
| • All applicants are processed through the personnel office.<br><br>• An applicant who contacts the director or supervisor of any of the departments and appears to be a good prospect for employment is asked to complete an application which is processed by the personnel office to verify experience, occupational competency and moral character. | • Applicants for a teaching position in Manatee County public schools are required to complete a standardized application from the personnel office.<br><br>• An official transcript of the applicant's college credits and degree attained is to be attached to the application.<br><br>• The completed application is processed for references from persons who can estimate the ability of the applicant as a teacher.<br><br>• A file of qualified applicants maintained in the personnel office is made available to administrators for consideration as vacancies occur or as additional staff is needed. |

Source: *Manatee County School Board Policy Manual*

# Job Postings Identify Employment Opportunities

The district uses detailed job postings to advertise vacant positions. The district's job postings provide detailed information. The job postings typically identify the position title, the position number, the type of position (instructional, support, etc.), the posting and expiration date, salary, the organizational or physical location of the position, terms of employment, minimum qualifications, application procedure, and a statement of non-discrimination and veteran's preference. Job postings are typically placed on a bulletin board in the district buildings and all school center buildings, advertised on a job line (instructional or support), and sometimes advertised in the newspaper.

In compliance with Manatee County School Board Policy No. 304.037, the district posts vacancies for six working days and does not fill a position until the end of the posting period. Manatee's peer districts (Alachua, Collier, Leon, Marion, and Sarasota) post vacancies from a range of 5 to 10 days as shown in Exhibit 5-11. According to district staff, the effect of posting job vacancies for 6 days speeds the hiring process and results in jobs being vacant for a short length of time; however, it could make it difficult to fill positions with persons from outside of the school district system.

*Exhibit 5-11*

## Manatee County's Peer Districts
## Post Most Job Vacancies Between 5 and 10 Days;
## However, Administrative Positions Are Usually Posted Longer

| District | Number of Days Vacancies Posted |
|---|---|
| Manatee | • Minimum of six working days<br>• Positions may be re-posted as needed. |
| Alachua | • Five working days for career service and instructional<br>• Fifteen working days for administrative positions; if a position is advertised in a statewide or larger publication, it is advertised for 30 days.<br>• Positions may be re-posted until the position is filled. |
| Collier | • Minimum of five working days; usually more, depending on the position |
| Leon | • Five working days<br>• Ten working days for some administrative positions<br>• Positions may be re-posted as needed. |
| Marion | • Five working days<br>• Ten working days for all administrative positions<br>• Positions may be re-posted for additional 5 or 10-day periods as needed. |
| Sarasota | • Minimum of 10 working days<br>• Thirty working days for some administrative positions<br>• Positions may be re-posted as needed. |

Source: Manatee County School Board and its peer districts

# Job Descriptions Need A Major
# Overhaul to Improve Their Quality

The district needs to improve the quality of and update and revise its job descriptions. The district's job descriptions are not up-to-date and do not accurately identify the knowledge, skills, and competency levels required for each position. School board policy previously required job descriptions to be developed for the various positions in the school district by the superintendent and kept on file in the county administrative office. New job descriptions and revised job descriptions were to be distributed to school centers and posted. The board substantially revised its policy in August 1998 by adding that

> Job descriptions and minimum qualifications for new positions will be recommended to the Board by the Superintendent at the time that the adoption of the new position is recommended. Upon approval of the new position, the Board will review the Superintendent's recommendations for minimum qualifications and job description, and put the recommendation on the agenda for the next Board meeting for Board approval prior to posting the position. For existing positions in administrative or supervisory capacity that are vacated, the Superintendent or his designee will review the qualifications and job description and make a recommendation for Board approval as to how the position should be posted to fill the vacancy. This will be done whether there are recommended changes or if the Superintendent wishes the position to remain unchanged.

The district's job descriptions are overall of poor quality. The current job descriptions generally lack information typically found in a job description such as general purpose of the position and primary job responsibilities. Refer to Exhibit 5-12 (teacher) for an example of a current job description used in Manatee County. The job description used for teachers is inadequate, as it does not identify the aforementioned tasks, such as performance expectations and minimum requirements. District staff concur that the job descriptions need to be greatly improved. The district's management of its human resources could be simplified if accurate job descriptions existed. Job descriptions should help employees understand the functions they are required to perform, identify who the employees report to as well as identifying any positions that report to an employee, establish the relationship of positions within an organization, and develop performance measures for the positions. The district's job descriptions at a minimum should include general purpose of the position, primary job responsibilities and major tasks; performance expectations; and minimum requirements (education and experience), including Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

*Exhibit 5-12*

## The District Uses a Generic Job Description for All Teaching Positions When Each Type of Teaching Position Should Have a Job Description

| Generic Job Description for a Teacher | |
|---|---|
| Directly Responsible to | Principal |
| Responsibilities | • To direct and evaluate the learning experience of the pupil in both curricular and outside extracurricular activities |
| | • To provide guidance to the pupil which will promote his or her welfare and proper educational achievement |
| | • To be responsible for student accounting |
| | • To maintain liaison with parents |
| | • To provide for the care and protection of school property |
| | • To participate in the activities of the faculty |
| | • To cooperate with and participate in the planning and evaluation of the school program |
| | • To take part in the in-service education program |
| | • Perform such other duties and responsibilities as the principal may from time to time assign |

Source: Manatee County School District

## Manatee County School Board Has an Equal Opportunity Policy

The Manatee County School Board prohibits discrimination. The Manatee County School Board's policy is to select and retain employees as needed on the basis of merit, training, and experience. It is the goal of the district to make sure that the most competent people, regardless of race, religion, age, gender, ethnic background, marital status, handicap, and medical condition staff the various employment positions in the school district. The intent of the district's Affirmative Action Plan is to reaffirm the district's commitment to equal employment opportunity and to assist in the refinement and implementation of existing policies by ensuring that recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, and personnel management practices are structured and administered in a manner which furthers the equal opportunity principles.

## All New Employees Are Required to Undergo a Background Check

District procedures require its employees to undergo a background check as required by law. The school board's policy requires that all new employees must be fingerprinted in the personnel department at no cost to the employee. The law requires instructional and support personnel who are hired to fill positions requiring direct contact with students in any district school system or laboratory school must be fingerprinted upon employment.

These fingerprints must be submitted to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for state processing and the Federal Bureau of Investigations for federal processing. The law states that school district employees found through the fingerprint process to have been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude shall not be employed in any position requiring direct contact with students. The law also states that by January 1, 1998, all personnel currently employed by any district school system who have not been fingerprinted and screened must be fingerprinted.

## *Recommendations*

- *We recommend that the district develop a system to annually evaluate the effectiveness of its recruiting efforts. Rather than continuing to recruit teachers using the same method year after year, the district needs to examine the effectiveness of the staff that are participating in recruiting, the results of site visits to universities, etc. Finally, the district also needs to develop procedures for recruiting personnel for key administrative positions and support staff positions.*
- *We recommend that the district implement an applicant tracing system for supervisory, administrative, managerial, and professional employees to help ensure that all applicants are treated consistently and meet the minimum requirements of the position.*
- *We also recommend that the director of Personnel Management develop guidelines for developing job descriptions, in consultation with the superintendent and assistant superintendents. These guidelines should require supervisors and managers to work collaboratively with staff to develop job descriptions.*
- *These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 2 Does the district base employee compensation on the market value of services provided?

*No. The district does not base employee compensation on the market value of services provided.*

The district has not formally and systematically assessed whether its compensation is similar to that of its peer districts and, where appropriate, the private sector. Currently, the district makes adjustments to salary schedules and overall to an annual salary budget based on available funding but neither considers the district's cost of living indices or the relationship of actual versus market salaries.

## Compensation Is Not Based on Market Value

The district cannot demonstrate that it considers market value of similar positions in comparable school districts when it determines compensation and, where appropriate, to the private sector. The district previously contracted, in 1987, with a management consultant firm to study all administrative, supervisory, managerial, clerical, and secretarial salary schedules and review AFSCME positions. However, the district has not updated this study, and it does not compare the market value of services in its district to other districts. OPPAGA staff conducted two analyses to provide the district initial

information needed to assess whether the district is paying the market value for staff. Refer to page 5-46 for detailed information on benefits provided and offered by the Manatee County School Board and its peer districts.

## Average Salaries Are Comparable With Peer Districts

Manatee County is generally comparable with peer districts in terms of average salaries, as we noted few exceptions when the district paid the lowest or highest amount for a particular service.  We compared the average salaries of Manatee County staff for selected positions in the 1997-98 school year to its peers and the state average.  Refer to Exhibit 5-13 for the comparison on average salaries and Exhibit 5-14 for the median teacher salaries by educational degree.  The difference in average salaries may be attributed to years of experience, education level, district cost of living, skills and knowledge, authority, etc.  Manatee County pays the least for its food service manager and computer programmers and the most for its assistant superintendents and middle school principals when compared to its peer districts.  Collier County generally pays the highest average salaries while Leon County pays the lowest average salaries for its staff.  We also found Manatee County is generally competitive in regard to average teacher salaries when compared to its peer districts.

## Starting Salaries Are Competitive With Peer Districts

OPPAGA found Manatee County is generally competitive among its peer districts in terms of starting salaries.  As shown in Exhibits 5-15 and 5-16 we compared the starting entry-level salaries of Manatee County to its peer districts for selected positions.  The few noted exceptions include Manatee County having the lowest starting salaries for accountants and high school principals and the highest for a mechanics.  Manatee County is also competitive in terms of starting teacher salaries.  As in other districts, teachers with advanced degrees are compensated at a higher rate than teachers with a bachelor's degree. However, Sarasota County's starting salaries for teachers with a master's degree is almost $2,000 more than Manatee County's starting salary.

*Exhibit 5-13*

## Manatee County School District's Average Salaries Are Generally Competitive With Its Peer Districts (School Year 1997-98)

| Position | Alachua | Collier | Leon | Manatee | Marion | Sarasota | State Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School board member | $25,838 | $25,675 | $25,860 | $26,330 | $26,233 | $ 27,223 | $22,962 |
| Superintendent | 113,000 | 109,558 | 95,688 | 116,996 | 95,054 | 120,822 | 93,178 |
| Assistant superintendent | 76,262 | 92,270 | 69,077 | 93,574 | 72,662 | 90,501 | 81,520 |
| Business/Finance manager | 72,985 | 80,387 | 64,054 | 75,596 | 65,988 | 85,385 | 65,565 |
| Management Information Services | 44,500 | 76,109 | 57,533 | 61,215 | 55,103 | 74,241 | 62,692 |
| Personnel manager | ---------- | 81,599 | 62,868 | 80,567 | 67,117 | 71,509 | 74,109 |
| Facilities manager | ---------- | 71,022 | 55,744 | 55,990 | 54,545 | 72,430 | 63,170 |
| Transportation manager | 60,510 | 77,098 | 57,034 | 55,441 | 45,414 | 72,430 | 53,881 |
| Food Service manager | 75,500 | 75,445 | ---------- | 48,266 | 52,402 | 69,644 | 53,918 |
| Media Service manager | 59,970 | 72,258 | 53,331 | 50,215 | 65,988 | 48,536 | 59,436 |
| Exceptional Student Education manager | 60,510 | 78,080 | 54,881 | 64,889 | 65,988 | 74,241 | 60,315 |
| Guidance | 32,564 | 44,405 | 36,334 | 38,234 | 35,635 | 44,898 | 39,585 |
| Librarian/media specialist | 34,206 | 49,580 | 34,109 | 38,351 | 33,374 | 43,799 | 38,512 |
| Teacher* | | | | | | | |
| Nurse (LPN/RN) | 17,271 | 30,650 | 15,669 | 26,353 | ---------- | 20,937 | 23,802 |
| Computer systems analyst | 43,707 | 56,185 | 35,517 | 47,913 | 46,580 | 55,739 | 45,042 |
| Computer programmer | 38,036 | 46,458 | ---------- | 28,119 | 38,817 | 35,341 | 34,262 |
| Accountant | 32,381 | 43,400 | 32,291 | 30,268 | 42,698 | 26,625 | 35,484 |
| Electrician | 22,781 | 31,210 | 24,428 | 28,379 | 27,764 | 30,286 | 33,955 |
| Mechanic | 25,076 | 28,300 | 24,161 | 27,974 | 26,025 | 26,928 | 27,588 |
| Carpenter | 24,769 | 27,632 | 26,092 | 28,498 | 35,630 | 27,882 | 30,264 |
| Food Service | 9,192 | 12,545 | 8,653 | 10,404 | 12,184 | 8,104 | 11,148 |

*See Exhibit 5-14 for average teacher salaries.

The following average salaries are prorated based on the number of months the employees for these positions are employed in Manatee County.  For example, Manatee County employs its high school principals for 11 months while its peers employee their high school principals for 12 months.  The average salaries reflect the cost the districts would pay for 11 months rather than the average salaries of their 12-month principals.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principal (H.S.) | $64,130 | $76,791 | $56,142 | $69,674 | $61,944 | $69,151 | $63,299 |
| Principal (M.S.) | 58,436 | 70,553 | 53,115 | 66,317 | 59,169 | 63,718 | 59,600 |
| Principal (E.S.) | 53,059 | 71,870 | 52,869 | 63,416 | 54,882 | 63,191 | 57,427 |
| Assistant principal (H.S.) | 45,022 | 57,030 | 45,799 | 50,031 | 45,868 | 55,926 | 52,189 |
| Assistant principal (M.S.) | 40,745 | 57,159 | 45,858 | 53,267 | 45,714 | 52,775 | 50,396 |
| Assistant principal (E.S.) | 42,284 | 55,389 | 44,735 | 51,153 | 44,975 | 54,842 | 48,789 |
| School psychologist | 40,762 | 56,498 | 32,977 | 46,272 | 43,384 | 57,045 | 44,498 |
| Secretary | 20,944 | 22,384 | 20,997 | 20,513 | 22,175 | 21,552 | 21,933 |
| Teacher aide | 8,062 | 13,795 | 8,151 | 11,738 | 9,785 | 14,211 | 11,491 |
| Bus driver | 10,016 | 13,775 | 8,914 | 8,358 | 10,380 | 7,509 | 11,039 |

Source:  Compiled by OPPAGA staff based on information obtained from the Department of Education and the districts

*Exhibit 5-14*

## Manatee County School District's Average Salaries for Teachers Are Almost the Same as the State Median and Generally Competitive With Peer Districts (School Year 1997-98)

| Position - Degree | Alachua | Collier | Leon | Manatee | Marion | Sarasota | State Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher – Bachelor's | $27,680 | $37,042 | $26,604 | $29,181 | $24,595 | $30,780 | $29,375 |
| Teacher – Master's | 31,674 | 45,480 | 34,503 | 39,945 | 37,409 | 36,617 | 38,253 |
| Teacher – Specialist | 33,500 | 56,610 | 38,651 | 45,474 | 40,688 | N/A | 45,465 |
| Teacher – Doctorate | 37,425 | 56,649 | 39,153 | 41,951 | 39,185 | 41,909 | 42,900 |
| Teacher – All Degrees | 29,525 | 41,397 | 31,484 | 33,947 | 31,484 | N/A | 33,035 |

Source: Compiled by OPPAGA staff based on information obtained from the Department of Education and the districts

*Exhibit 5-15*

## Manatee County School District's Starting Salaries Are Generally Competitive With Its Peer Districts (School Year 1997-98)

| Position | Alachua | Collier | Leon | Manatee | Marion | Sarasota |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Guidance | $25,000 | $27,750 | $24,207 | $27,348 | $24,180 | $25,126 |
| Librarian/Media specialist | 23,200 | 27,750 | 24,207 | 25,063 | 23,000 | 25,126 |
| Teacher | 23,200 | 27,750 | 23,681 | 25,063 | 23,000 | 25,126 |
| Nurse (LPN/RN) | 27,680 | 24,175 | 18,675 | 23,610 | N/A | 13,720 |
| Computer systems analyst | 45,500 | 43,920 | 28,329 | 29,993 | 39,691 | 44,896 |
| Computer programmer | 26,429 | 40,704 | 21,466 | 28,645 | 39,691 | 28,386 |
| Accountant | 30,000 | 40,704 | 19,427 | 16,224 | 37,887 | 24,282 |
| Electrician | 19,152 | 23,860 | 17,680 | 21,431 | 19,864 | 24,557 |
| Mechanic | 17,498 | 21,760 | 17,680 | 22,464 | 19,344 | 24,557 |
| Carpenter | 17,498 | 21,760 | 16,474 | 21,431 | 19,344 | 21,658 |

The following starting salaries are prorated based on the number of months the employees for these positions are employed in Manatee County.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principal (H.S.) | $55,697 | $60,379 | $44,597 | $46,911 | $59,536 | $65,629 |
| Principal (M.S.) | 50,197 | 55,400 | 41,336 | 44,206 | 56,228 | 60,698 |
| Principal (E.S.) | 50,197 | 57,593 | 41,698 | 44,206 | 56,228 | 59,370 |
| Assistant principal (H.S.) | 45,613 | 46,480 | 38,649 | 41,691 | 48,487 | 52,967 |
| Assistant principal (M.S.) | 44,394 | 45,308 | 35,178 | 37,038 | 48,697 | 52,016 |
| Assistant principal (E.S.) | 53,273 | 47,032 | 35,178 | 37,038 | 44,271 | 55,705 |
| School psychologist | 27,500 | 42,405 | 26,628 | 39,302 | 22,929 | 36,370 |
| Secretary | 15,869 | 16,899 | 14,913 | 16,224 | 21,265 | 13,945 |

Employees in the following positions work varying days and hours per day. The hourly wages exhibited below are the starting wages for the position in each peer district.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers aide | $5.82 | $7.25 | $5.72 | $7.43 | N/A | $7.97 |
| Bus driver | 7.58 | 9.84 | 8.03 | 9.26 | $8.40 | 9.58 |
| Food service | 5.70 | 6.94 | 5.16 | 7.44 | 6.05 | 5.74 |

Source: Compiled by OPPAGA staff based on information obtained from the districts

*Exhibit 5-16*

## Entry Level Starting Salaries for
## Manatee's Teachers Are Generally Competitive
## With Its Peer Districts for Teachers (School Year 1997-98)

| Position | Alachua | Collier | Leon | Manatee | Marion | Sarasota |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher – Bachelor's | $23,200 | $27,750 | $23,681 | $25,063 | $23,000 | $25,126 |
| Teacher – Master's | 25,000 | 29,550 | 24,207 | 26,851 | 24,180 | 28,607 |
| Teacher – Specialist | 26,500 | 30,650 | 25,609 | 29,029 | 25,620 | N/A |
| Teacher – Doctorate | 27,600 | 31,550 | 26,387 | 31,208 | 25,620 | 31,870 |

Source: Compiled by OPPAGA staff based on information obtained from the districts

## Salary Adjustments Are Not
## Based on the Market Value of Services

The district does not base salary adjustments on the market value of services, instead it calculates adjustments based on how much the district can spend on salary adjustments. Every position in the district has a unique market upon which the value of service is determined. For example, while custodians and ESOL teachers are both district employees the market value of the services is ascertained by the supply and demand for these positions. The district primarily uses available funding as its justification for adjustment to salary schedules and the overall annual salary budget. Little consideration is given to using district cost of living indices or the relationship of actual versus market averages. Historically, in the Manatee County School District annual salary increases for district employees have been determined by the negotiations with MEA for instructional staff. Paraprofessionals, non-instructional employees and non-represented district employees have received the same salary adjustments as the teachers. The Manatee County School District provides two types of salary increases each year, a step increase and an overall scale increase. A step increase is typically equivalent to an annual salary increase. The district needs to review its salary schedule to identify any inconsistencies that may exist. We conducted a file review of 20 personnel files and found that the district consistently documented the employee's wages in writing.

The 1998 Legislature placed an additional consideration upon the districts when adopting salary schedules for instructional personnel. The law now requires school boards to adopt and superintendents to recommend salary schedules that provide performance-based incentives for instructional personnel and requires the board to seek input from parents, teachers, and representatives of the business community in the development of the schedule. The district is currently conducting negotiations with the association that represents the instructional personnel in Manatee County and performance-based incentives are included in this negotiation.

## Plan Should Award Incentive Pay for Performance
## Rather Than for Advanced Degrees or Attendance

In order for the district to qualify for grant funds under the Florida School Recognition Program, the district must adopt a performance incentive pay plan by September 30 and an approved plan by December 1, 1998. At least two schools in Manatee qualify for these

grant funds.  The district and the Manatee Education Association's temporary proposal is a substitute for the final plan that will be developed  through the negotiations process.  The plan stipulates that teachers will be awarded performance incentive pay for advanced degrees.  The Memorandum of Agreement for performance pay between the school board and the Manatee Education Association states, "The parties agree to continue discussions regarding performance pay within the negotiated committee for that purpose.  Topics to be discussed will include but not be limited to attendance, school improvement plans, in-service credit, or other options as deemed appropriate by the parties."

# *Recommendations* ————————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district consider the market value of similar positions in comparable school districts when it determines compensation and use the results of its market value of services analysis when determining salary increases.  In addition the district  should identify the market associated with each position.  The markets range from within the school district to a national market.  The unique market should be used in determining the market value of services for each position.  We were unable to determine the fiscal impact of this recommendation, as we cannot predict salary adjustments the district may make in the future.  Action Plan 5-1 provides the steps necessary to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 5-1*

## Consider Market Value of Services
## When Determining Employee Compensation

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Consider the market value of similar positions in comparable school districts, and when appropriate, the private sector, when determining compensation. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  Conduct a general market value comparison of similar positions in comparable school districts.  The comparison should include, at a minimum, <br><br> a.  average salaries; <br> b.  starting salaries; <br> c.  the positions identified in Exhibit 5-13; and <br> d.  at least five peer districts. <br><br> Step 2:  Provide the assistant superintendent the written results of the analysis. <br><br> Step 3:  Periodically, on an as-needed basis, conduct a market value comparison of similar positions in comparable school districts before hiring staff for key administrative positions. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
| Time Frame | April each year |

| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
|---|---|

| **Recommendation 2** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Use the results of the market value of services in determining salary increments and bargaining positions. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop and implement a formal procedure to use annually in determining adjustments to salary schedules and the overall annual salary budget.  The procedure at a minimum should include an analysis of |
| | a. Available funding; |
| | b. district cost of living indices; and |
| | c. analysis of the market value of services provided by district staff |
| | Step 2: These three components should be used, at a minimum, to determine the feasibility of adjustments to salary schedules and annual salary increases |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
| Time Frame | April of each year |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 3 Does the district use a comprehensive staff development plan to increase productivity?

*No, the district does not use a comprehensive staff development program to increase productivity and achieve district goals and priorities.*

The district's staff development program is not comprehensive and is not focused to assist staff in achieving overall district goals and priorities.  The district cannot maximize staff productivity through training without better identifying staff training needs, orienting all staff to district goals and priorities, coordinating staff development activities, and providing staff development opportunities to all staff.  Thus, the district should change the way it provides staff development services to maximize its training efforts and to give those efforts more focus.

## Training Is Not Aligned With District Goals

The district's training programs are not aligned with district goals.  While the district does have three broad goal areas (see page 3-27) district staff have no strategic plan to guide them in their efforts to achieve overall district goals.  Instead, the major focus of the staff development program is to provide a means for teacher certification and re-certification which does not meet the needs of half of the district's employees who are not teachers.  Although training programs are not aligned with district and school goals, the individual training courses in the district's Master Plan for In-service Education do have clear objectives that relate to improved productivity.  There are in-service components for

instructional and non-instructional staff, and the objectives clearly define what participants should be able to do upon completion of the activity.

The district has a multi-stakeholder body that helps guide the district's professional development system to provide the training necessary to achieve district and school-level improvement goals. The Manatee Council for Professional Development provides leadership and direction for the district's staff development program. The council works to fulfill the mandate of two state statutes. The first requires multi-stakeholder committees to assess the training needs necessary for district and school-level improvement goals and standards. The second requires that such committees guide staff professional development programs in providing training to meet those goals and standards. Staff indicate that the council will do this by conducting needs assessments of district staff, updating the district's Master Plan for In-Service Education and aligning district and school training programs with district and school improvement objectives in the 1998-99 school year. However, the district lacks specific goals and measurable objectives with which training activities may be aligned. (See pages 3-27 and 4-6 for additional information on setting goals and objectives.)

## The District Does Not Know How Much Training It Provides

The district has not identified or coordinated all of the training activities in the district. The Manatee Council for Professional Development cannot effectively align training with overall district goals and objectives unless it knows the extent to which the district is providing training. A major problem is that district administrators and program staff do not know how much training is being offered throughout the district or how many training resources are available at the district and school levels. Training opportunities in the district are fragmented and dispersed across district divisions.

Training funds come from different sources for a variety of purposes. The Academics Division conducts curriculum training. Exceptional Student Education funds come into the district and are coordinated from that division. Transportation, Food Service, and Facilities programs have their own training efforts. Each School Advisory Council is allotted funds for school improvement initiatives, a portion of which may be used for professional development training to implement their school improvement plans.

With 38 different school improvement professional development mandates, the district invites duplication of effort if these initiatives are not coordinated. Thus, the district cannot begin to offer a cohesive staff development program designed to achieve the district's desired outcomes without knowing what it has to work with.

## Staff Development Does Not Meet the Needs of All District Staff

Since the district has not identified all of the training opportunities and funds available, the staff development program has been unable to coordinate training opportunities that enable district staff to improve productivity and help the district achieve its overall goals. It has also been unable to meet the training needs of all district staff. Program staff admit the program is not sufficiently comprehensive to meet the needs of all district staff, so the program has geared its known resources towards training opportunities for instructional staff.

The district's Master Plan for In-Service Education focuses mostly on instructional staff, yet instructional training is not consistently tied to overall district goals, student achievement, and the Florida Education Standards Commission's Educator Accomplished Practices.  This focus on instructional training opportunities has also resulted in unmet needs for some support staff.  For example, facilities maintenance staff have not received training in skills development and efficiency, and food service workers below the supervisor level currently have no training in dietary guidelines, portion sizes, food safety or kitchen safety.  Program staff have attempted to compensate by offering alternative service delivery methods such as cadre training, CD roms and internet-based training.  The district opened all in-service activities which don't have certification prerequisites to support staff in the 1996-97 school year, such as Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.  Though the training was open to all staff, personnel in some departments reportedly did not participate.

Presently, the district's staff development office has five full-time positions that work to meet the district's training needs.  The office is responsible for planning and coordinating training programs, providing training services, identifying needs and assessing in-service evaluations, reporting to the Manatee Council for Professional Development, writing and distributing the district's training calendar, and developing the district's Master Plan for In-service Education and Human Resource Management Development plan.  The office is also responsible for maintaining in-service training records for all district staff, but program staff indicate that these records do not reflect all of the training that district staff receive.

*Exhibit 5-17*

## The Staff Development Program Has Five Full-Time Staff

- Supervisor of staff development
- Coordinator of instructional personnel
- Resource teacher for teacher assistance
- Two  secretaries
- The district also has a coordinator of support personnel, but this position is not in staff development.  It reports to the personnel director and its functions are limited to 0.2 FTE.

Source:  Manatee County School District

## Needs and Evaluation Data
## Are Not Used to Plan Future Training Activities

The district does not consistently assess the training needs of staff or the effectiveness of training provided.   The district does not identify training needs during the personnel evaluation process or consistently evaluate the effectiveness of training activities provided to meet long-term district and school goals and objectives.  This limits the district's ability to focus training on achieving desired district outcomes or gauge how well district staff are helping the district meet overall goals and objectives.

Currently, the staff development office collects needs assessments and participant feedback from in-service training for use in planning the next year's training activities.  However, program staff have not had the technological resources to aggregate data electronically.  Needs assessment and in-service evaluation results that have been aggregated have been tallied by hand, which is too time-consuming to be done consistently.  As a result, data is

collected, but is usually not aggregated in a form that can be utilized to plan future training activities.

## Orientation Not Provided for Support Staff

The district's lack of goals and objectives hinders the ability of program staff to provide new employees with information on their role in helping the district achieve desired outcomes and how the district expects them to perform in that process. The New Teacher Induction Program, which principals cite as a strength of the district, provides information to new instructional staff on applicable procedures, training and career opportunities, federal and state program requirements, professional standards, and expected instructional practices. The induction program also provides for follow-up activities for new staff to ensure the effectiveness of orientation training. It is designed to communicate district goals and values; but the district does not presently have overall goals and values, so the program cannot effectively communicate them. Without a strategic mechanism that can only be provided by district leadership, the district cannot lay out performance expectations for how new district staff will help achieve overall district goals and outcomes.

Though support staff need the same focus and overall purpose as instructional staff, the district's orientation training for these staff is limited to information on district benefits. Currently, new support staff are mailed information packets containing instructions for completing benefits forms prior to starting work. New employees also receive orientation information when they join their departments, but the district does not have any guidelines for departmental orientation, and it does not know if the orientation includes any information on applicable procedures, physical facilities, performance expectations, training and career opportunities or federal and state program requirements.

## Benefits of Training Expenditures
## Required for Authorization

Expenditures for training opportunities are justified in writing and include the benefits of the training to be received. A review of authorization memoranda and forms showed that the district provided a variety of staff with the opportunity to participate in workshops and seminars. They completed a form for authorization to attend training and an expense reimbursement form that required an explanation of the benefit of the activity to the district and its relation to improved student learning.

## *Recommendations* ─────────────────────────────

- *The district needs a comprehensive staff development program that is coordinated and aligned for the singular purpose of reaching overall district and school goals and objectives through increased productivity, including meeting the needs of all district staff. The district should increase staff productivity and improve student learning opportunities by maximizing training efforts and adding more focus to these efforts. To accomplish this, the district's staff development program needs to better identify needs and resources, provide orientation to all new district staff, coordinate service provision for all training activities, and evaluate the effectiveness of these activities toward overall district and school goals and objectives. To that end, we recommend that the district*

- – *include staff development as a means to increase productivity and achieve overall district goals and objectives in the district's strategic plan;*
- – *identify, coordinate, and align all district training programs and resources with overall district and school goals and objectives;*
- – *develop and implement a comprehensive orientation package for all district employees that clearly communicates their role in helping the district achieve desired outcomes and the performance the district expects of them in this role; and*
- – *identify the training needs of all district staff during personnel evaluations to help staff achieve desired district outcomes.*
- • *Action Plan 5-2 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 5-2*

# Improve Staff Development

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Include staff development as a means to increase productivity and achieve overall district and school goals and objectives in the district's strategic plan. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Include staff development as a means to increase productivity and achieve district overall goals and objectives in the district's strategic plan. |
| | Step 2: Appoint a member to the strategic planning steering committee that will represent staff development. |
| | Step 3: Staff development priorities in all departments should be determined based on the goals and priorities developed in the strategic plan. |
| | Step 4: The strategic plan should include measurable objectives and standards that evaluate how well staff development programs help the district reach its goals. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for District Support Services |
| Time Frame | March 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Identify, coordinate, and align all district training programs and resources with overall district and school goals and objectives. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The superintendent should direct all schools and departments to identify all training activities and resources being used in the district, including funds and programs earmarked for training purposes.  All district units should report this information to staff development personnel by March 1999.  Staff development personnel will then compile and disseminate this information to the assistant superintendent. |
| | Step 2: The Manatee Council for Professional Development, with input from program staff and the County Office Leadership Team, should evaluate how these training activities and resources align with district and school goals and prioritize future training |

| | based on current training provided, staff needs assessments, and overall district and school goals and objectives. |
| | Step 3: The council should evaluate gaps in training activities and use this process to identify which scarce training resources should be used to provide the training needed to meet the priorities and desired outcomes of the district. |
| Who Is Responsible | The County Office Leadership Team |
| Time Frame | August 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

<table><tr><td colspan="2" align="center"><b>Recommendation 3</b></td></tr>
<tr><td>Strategy</td><td>Develop and implement a comprehensive orientation package for all district employees that clearly communicates their role in helping the district achieve desired outcomes and the performance the district expects of them in this role.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Action Needed</td><td>Step 1: The personnel director and the Staff Development supervisor should develop a comprehensive orientation package for all district employees by August 1999.<br><br>Step 2: The focus of this orientation package should be to communicate to all new district employees a clear understanding of their role in helping the district achieve overall district goals and objectives, the performance the district expects of them in this role, and that employees will be evaluated on this performance.<br><br>Step 3: The orientation package should also include information on applicable procedures, physical facilities, federal and state program requirements, and how to access training and career opportunities.<br><br>Step 4: This information may be communicated to new employees together through the New Teacher Induction Program and through departmental or site orientation, but it must be communicated to all new district employees.<br><br>Step 5: The personnel director and the Staff Development supervisor should develop general guidelines for site-level orientation activities. The assistant superintendent for Support Services should report these guidelines to the superintendent and the County Office Leadership Team for implementation throughout the district by August 1999.<br><br>Step 6: Orientation activities should include a follow-up activity that ensures that new employees can apply the information they have learned. Site supervisors should ascertain if new employees are using orientation information in their jobs, provide guidance and the opportunity for employees to ask questions about their role in the district or about site-level orientation. This follow-up activity should take place no less than four weeks after staff begin employment.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Who Is Responsible</td><td>Assistant superintendent responsible for staff development</td></tr>
<tr><td>Time Frame</td><td>August 1999</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fiscal Impact</td><td>This can be implemented with existing resources.</td></tr></table>

| Recommendation 4 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify the training needs of all district staff through personnel evaluations, employee feedback, and supervisory input to help staff achieve desired district outcomes. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Supervisors should report the training needs of their employees based on the prior year's performance evaluations and other training needs identified. Employees should be provided an opportunity to identify the types of training needed to their supervisors. Supervisors should aggregate and summarize employee-training needs by June 1999. |
| | Step 2: Staff Development program staff will coordinate training for supervisors to identify training needs as part of personnel performance evaluation training, as recommended on page 5-30. |
| | Step 3: Beginning in the 2000-01 school year, supervisors will utilize the new processes and forms to identify training needs and evaluate employee contributions as part of the personnel evaluation process. |
| | Step 4: Supervisors will identify training needed to improve staff performance and meet overall district and school goals and objectives. Supervisors will then report these needs to division directors, who will share the information with staff development program staff. |
| | Step 5: Staff development program staff will aggregate and analyze needs assessment and in-service evaluation data to adjust current training programs and plan future training programs. Program staff have indicated that new scanning technology and the management information systems, coupled with new assessment and evaluations instruments, should bolster program analytical capacity by the 1999-2000 school year. Program staff will have more time to devote to analytical functions as part of their oversight role because they will no longer be involved in providing direct services. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for District Support Services |
| Time Frame | August 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 4 Does the district communicate personnel expectations to each employee?

*No. The district does not provide adequate performance expectations to district personnel.*

Although the school board has developed some general performance expectations, the board has not developed expectations specific to each employee's position. General

employee expectations are communicated to district staff by the school board in its policies and procedures and in the district's employee handbook.

## The District Lacks Position Specific Performance Expectations

The district does not provide written performance expectations specific to each employee position to staff; however, the district has identified some general professional responsibilities and duties of teachers and school staff. The district should provide employees specific written expectations for their positions. For example, the district should formally communicate to custodians, school secretaries, and computer programmers the expectations specific to their responsibilities. It is important to have and communicate both general and specific expectations for each position. The expectations should be directly linked to the position's job description. The job description should identify the responsibilities and duties for the position while the expectations should clearly describe the expected performance levels associated with the position. General personnel expectations are identified in the school board's policy manual and also identified in negotiated agreements with the Manatee Education Association and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. The district should use these general expectations in developing the expectations for each position.

## The Employee Handbook Has Recently Been Revised

The district recently revised its personnel employee handbook. District staff anticipate they will begin providing new employees an employee handbook which includes fringe benefits, general working requirements (work days, leave requirements, holidays, etc.), personnel evaluations, grievance procedures. However, the new personnel handbook does not contain information on employee rights and responsibilities or compensation polices. The district needs to solicit feedback from district staff on the usefulness and utility of the new employee handbook and make revisions accordingly.

# *Recommendations* ———————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district communicate general and specific performance expectations to all staff. We also recommend that the district incorporate general performance expectations into its personnel handbook and make the handbook available to all staff. Action Plan 5-3 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 5-3*

## Communicate Performance Expectations to Each Employee

| Recommendation 1 | |
| --- | --- |
| Strategy | Inform district staff of general performance expectations. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Communicate general performance expectations to staff using mechanisms such as the district's employee handbook, the school board's web site and new employee orientation (See page 5-23.) |

| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 2** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Communicate performance expectations specific to each position to staff. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop written performance expectations for each position. The expectations should<br><br>   a. be based on accurate and up to date job descriptions;<br><br>   b. be organized around key performance categories such as productivity, timeliness, quality of work, skills, and professional development;<br><br>   c. be developed by managers and supervisors with staff collaboration; and<br><br>   d. reflect major performance indicators for each key performance category.<br><br>Step 2: Communicate these expectations to staff.<br><br>Step 3: Train persons conducting evaluations on the utility of these performance expectations.<br><br>Step 4: Use these performance expectations in the evaluation of staff. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
| Time Frame | July 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 5 Does the district formally evaluate its employees to improve performance and productivity?

*Yes. The district formally evaluates its employees.*

Although the district formally evaluates its employees, the district could improve its evaluation system in several ways. An indication that the district needs to improve its evaluation system is that the district has not traditionally terminated poorly performing school administrators.

The school board has defined evaluation as a process whereby the effectiveness of a staff member is appraised in relation to the requirements for the position. The superintendent is responsible for establishing and administering a program of annual evaluation for all employees. Evaluations are made by the appropriate principal, director, or designated supervisor at least once each school year. The district has developed written procedures for performance evaluations of staff. It provides training to staff responsible for evaluating teachers, district staff receive a personnel evaluation at least once a year, and suggestions for improvement are communicated to employees in writing as part of the evaluation process, and it has terminated some poorly performing teachers.

# Evaluation Criteria Should Be Linked
# to Results, Including Student Performance

The district has developed written personnel evaluation procedures. The district has established written procedures for evaluating the performance of support employees, including supervisor, administrative, managerial and professional and AFSCME. These procedures identify progress review and re-appointment dates, and the progress review and performance summary forms. Written procedures for evaluating teachers and paraprofessionals are identified in detail in their respective negotiated agreements with the district. The district is in the process of revising its Instructional Personnel Assessment Plan to incorporate student performance into the evaluation as required by law.

School districts were originally given a July 1, 1998, deadline to submit their revised plans to the Department of Education. However, the department revised its timeline and gave the districts the 1998-99 school year to revise their plans. The negotiated agreement for non-instructional support staff identifies basic written procedures but does not stipulate the evaluation forms that must be used like other negotiated agreements. As mentioned above, the district uses the progress review and performance summary forms to evaluate these staff.

# Staff Need to Be Trained on
# How to Conduct a Personnel Evaluation

The district does not provide training to all persons conducting personnel evaluations to ensure they evaluate personnel properly. Currently, the district primarily provides the Florida Performance Measurement System training to district staff that evaluate teachers. However, the district does not provide formal training to staff that evaluate support staff. The district needs to provide staff that conduct performance evaluations training to help ensure evaluations are fair, accurate, and consistently implemented.

# Personnel Evaluations Need to Be Improved

The district's personnel evaluations suffer because of weak job descriptions and a lack of position specific performance expectations. The district needs to tailor its performance evaluations to relate to the responsibilities identified in its job descriptions. As mentioned previously in the report, the district needs to revise, update, and increase the overall quality of its job descriptions. The district is in the process of revising its Instructional Personnel Assessment Plan to comply with the 1997 Legislature's new requirements which include using data and indicators of improvement in student performance in evaluating an employee's performance.

The Department of Education is required to approve each district's instructional personnel assessment system. The district plans to pilot its revised Instructional Personnel Assessment Plan during the 1999-2000 school year and fully implement it in the 2000-01 school year. The district's personnel manager is also participating on a statewide task force that is developing performance measures that relate to student outcomes for school administrators. The district needs to continue its efforts to revise its Instructional Personnel Assessment Plan and to identify student outcome related performance measures that can be utilized in the evaluation of school administrators. The district needs to develop performance standards for each position in the district to communicate to the employees how their performance will be assessed. While the district has begun to develop

some student outcome related performance standards for instructional staff and school administrators other positions in the district lack general performance standards.

## Staff Receive Annual Evaluations

Immediate supervisors complete a performance evaluation of their employees at least once a year. The law states that, for the purpose of improving the quality of instructional, administrative, and supervisory services in the public schools of the state, the superintendent shall establish procedures for assessing the performance of duties and responsibilities of all instructional, administrative, and supervisory personnel employed by the district. OPPAGA staff conducted a file review of 20 personnel files and consistently found evidence that the employee had received an annual evaluation. We found that district supervisors completed annual performance evaluations and that the evaluations were signed by the supervisor and employee.

## Performance Deficiencies
## Are Required to Be Noted on the Evaluation

Suggestions for improvement are provided in writing to employees that must improve as part of the evaluation process. In May 1998, the superintendent reviewed the district's employee performance review and reappointment process. The review found that changes were needed and the superintendent directed staff to implement the changes. Specifically, the superintendent directed that deficiencies in a staff member's performance must be noted on a performance review and discussed with the staff member. The purpose of the notation is to send a signal to the staff member that improvement is needed prior to a decision on reappointment. If the staff member does not agree with any portion of the performance review, he or she has a right to submit a written statement. The statement will be attached to the performance review.

## The District Has Not Traditionally
## Terminated Poorly Performing School Administrators

The district has terminated a few poorly performing teachers; however, the district has not recently terminated any poorly performing school administrators. The district identified six teachers that were either dismissed or non-renewed because of performance during the past two school years. [1] District staff indicated they were not aware of any school administrators that were either dismissed or non-renewed because of poor performance. District staff indicated that the district should do a better job of terminating poorly performing school administrators but noted that school administrators would be less likely terminated for poor performance as they are usually hired from within the system and have proven track records. Our review suggests that poorly performing school administrators may not be terminated. As discussed on page 3-24 of this report, we concluded in some areas, principals are making decisions that adversely affect the district's ability to operate efficiently and effectively. The district should establish outcome measures, including student performance, and standards that clearly assess the effectiveness of an

---

[1] The Florida Legislature passed two pieces of legislation that impact poorly performing teachers. One provision is for an initial 97-day probationary period for all new teachers wherein they can be dismissed without cause or can resign without breach of contract. The second provision shortens the time period wherein a teacher on Continuing or Professional Services Contract can be dismissed following a 90-day performance probationary period. Included are memoranda to principals and other administrative personnel that outline the procedures to be followed in implementing both of these new laws.

administrator.  When a school administrator is found not to be meeting established standards, the school administrator should be terminated.  School administrators should be able to effectively manage the operation of their school and provide for successful educational achievements.  Clearly, once the district revises its instructional personnel assessment system to include student performance information, poorly performing teachers may be more readily identified.  The district needs to review the procedures it has in place to identify poor performing teachers and schools administrators to determine whether revisions are needed.

## *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district develop a formal training program to train staff that conduct personnel evaluations.  The training program should explain how the job description is linked to position specific performance expectations which are linked to performance evaluations which are tied to employee compensation.  The personnel director should coordinate the development of the training program.  We recommend that the district develop performance standards for each position to ensure that employees are provided information on how their performance will be assessed.  The district also needs to identify student outcome measures and other performance measures that can be used to evaluate school administrators.  The identification of performance measures to assess school administrators will provide the district an effective tool to use in identifying poorly performing school administrators.*
- *These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 6 Does the district periodically evaluate its personnel practices and adjust these practices as needed?

*No.  The district does not periodically evaluate its personnel practices.*

The district it does not adjust its personnel practices based on the result of an evaluation since it does not periodically evaluate its personnel practices.  Nor does the district compare the ethnicity of its staff to that of its students and the community.  District staff do not monitor absenteeism and turnover rates for its teachers and district administrators.

## The District Does Not Evaluate the Overall Efficiency and Effectiveness of Its Personnel Practices

The district does not have a strategy in place to evaluate the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the its personnel practices.  District staff indicated that it has been a long time since the district has taken an overall look at the efficiency and effectiveness of its personnel practices.  However, district staff have identified and addressed specific personnel issues such as employee orientation, substitute teacher pay, and assignment of temporary duty substitutes.  Several issues identified during the course of our fieldwork that should be examined include the current process used to reclassify positions, the number of work hours in a week for district administrators, and the practice of charging the cost of substitute teachers to the Personnel Office's cost center.

The district needs to develop a plan to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of its personnel practices.  The plan should include goals, measurable objectives, and strategies that will be implemented to achieve the objective, who is responsible for the activity associated with the strategy and benchmarks and targets.  The district then needs to make improvements to its personnel practices based on the results of its evaluation.  Refer to Action Plan 4-4, page 4-22, for information on how to develop a plan to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of a program.

## The Ethnicity of District Staff Will Likely Never Compare Favorably to Both Its Community And Students

The district has not conducted any studies to determine how the ethnicity of its staff compares to that of its students and community.  OPPAGA found the ethnicity of the district staff differs from its student and community.  District staff stated the district needs to do more work to help ensure the ethnicity of its staff is similar to its students and community.  The ethnicity of Manatee County's community, school district staff, and student populations vary to an extent; however, whites consistently represent the majority of these groups.  As shown in Exhibits 5-18 and 5-19 the county's population is primarily (91.6%) comprised of whites, while 85% of the school district staff is white and 68.7% of the student population is white.  Given the difference between the ethnicity of the overall community and the student population, the ethnicity of the district will likely never compare favorably to both the community and the district.  However, the district should take extra steps to help ensure the ethnicity of its staff compares to that of its student population.  It is generally believed the ethnicity of the school district staff should parallel that of its students, especially at the school sites. This is particularly true for school advisory councils, as the law requires the ethnicity of its members to represent that of it students.

*Exhibit 5-18*

## The Manatee County School District Staff Has More Minorities Than the Community and Fewer Minorities Than Its Student Population

| Manatee County | White | | Total Minority | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population | 221,105 | 91.6% | 20,317 | 8.4% | 241,422 | 100% |
| School District Students | 23,172 | 68.7% | 10,533 | 31.3% | 33,705 | 100% |
| School District Staff | 3,422 | 85.0% | 607 | 15.0% | 4,029 | 100% |

Sources:  Office of Economic and Demographic Research, Florida Legislature;
Department of Education Statistical Brief:  *Staff in Florida's Public Schools, Fall 1997,*  February 1998, Series 98-19B; Department of Education Statistical Brief:  *Membership in Florida Public Schools, Fall 1997,*  November 1997, Series 98-15B

*Exhibit 5-19*

## The District's Student Population Has a Greater Percentage of African-American and Hispanic-Americans Than the District's Staff

| Category | White | | African-American | | Hispanic-American | | Other Minority | | Total Minority | | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Employees:* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Administrative | 120 | 91.6% | 11 | 8.4% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 11 | 8.4% | 131 |
| Instructional | 1,870 | 92.8% | 114 | 5.7% | 26 | 1.3% | 5 | 0.2% | 145 | 7.2% | 2,015 |
| Support | 1,432 | 76.0% | 365 | 19.3% | 77 | 4.0% | 9 | 0.4% | 451 | 24.0% | 1,883 |
| *Total Employees* | 3,422 | 85.0% | 490 | 12.1% | 103 | 2.6% | 14 | 0.3% | 607 | 15.0% | 4,029 |
| Students | 23,172 | 68.7% | 6,002 | 17.8% | 4,010 | 11.9% | 521 | 1.5% | 10,533 | 31.3% | 33,705 |

Sources: Department of Education Statistical Brief: *Staff in Florida's Public Schools, Fall 1997,* February 1998, Series 98-19B; Department of Education Statistical Brief: *Membership in Florida Public Schools, Fall 1997,* November 1997, Series 98-15B

## Instructional Staff and School Administrators Possess Appropriate Credentials

Instructional staff is properly certified or licensed and school administrators have met appropriate requirements. The Personnel Office verifies that staff are properly certified or licensed and have met appropriate requirements. As shown in Exhibit 5-20 the Office of Personnel Management has established a process to ensure instructional staff and school administrators are qualified.

*Exhibit 5-20*

## Manatee County School District Has Developed a Detailed Process to Ensure That Teachers and School Administrators Are Qualified

| Certified Instructional Personnel | Certified School Administrators |
|---|---|
| 1. An applicant completes application, provides references, and has official transcripts sent to the district. <br> 2. A senior personnel assistant checks qualifications for certification. These include whether the applicant has an applicable major, an official transcript showing that a degree has been awarded, and a minimum of a 2.5 grade point average. <br> 3. A certified screening interviewer conducts a telephone screening interview using the Gallop Perceiver. <br> 4. If the applicant passes steps 2 and 3, the applicant goes into the qualified applicant pool. <br> 5. The principal at the school with an open position asks for a list of names from the qualified applicant pool. Sometimes the principal does not use the | 1. An applicant for a school administrative position must be in the administrative pool. To be in the administrative pool, an applicant must have <br> • a letter of application; <br> • a resumé; <br> • three letters of reference, including one from the principal of the school where the applicant has taught; <br> • two administrative references; <br> • three years of verifiable teaching experience; <br> • an appropriate master's degree in educational leadership or administrative |

| Certified Instructional Personnel | Certified School Administrators |
|---|---|
| qualified applicant pool, and qualifications must be checked at steps 8 and 9. | supervision from an accredited college or university; |
| 6. The principal interviews the applicant and makes a verbal offer to hire. | • taken a written screening based on the Florida Principal Competencies; |
| 7. The principal completes an employment form. | • been interviewed by a certified screening interviewer using the Gallup Principal Perceiver; and |
| 8. The employment form is sent to the position control specialist, who checks to make sure that a position at that school is allocated and open. | • passed the Florida Education Leadership Exam (FELE). |
| 9. The position control specialist gives the employment form to one of two senior personnel assistants for instruction. They check that all required materials are present in the applicant file, including references, transcript, and perceiver screener. They then determine the salary based on degree and experience and enter information into the AS 400 tracking system. | 2. An applicant must be employed to receive either a teaching certificate or a leadership certificate.<br>• To receive a Level II School Principal certificate, a person must successfully complete the two-year Preparing New Principals (PNP) program.<br>• An out-of-state certified and experienced assistant principal or principal is required to serve one year as an intern prior to receiving a Level II School Principal Certificate. |
| 10. The position control supervisor checks position allocation as a secondary check. | |
| 11. The personnel director reviews the file and signs the employment form. | |
| 12. Either of the senior personnel assistants for instruction tell the senior personnel assistant for certification that the applicant has been hired, and the senior personnel assistant for certification completes a request to issue a certificate to the Department of Education. | 3. Usually the applicant is already a teacher, will have a teaching certificate, and therefore must have the appropriate master's degree and pass the FELE. If the applicant is from out of state, the personnel director will review the application file and determine if the state is likely to issue a certificate based on the applicant's record and experience. |
| 13. The position control specialist distributes copies of the signed employment form to either of the senior personnel assistants for instruction, and Payroll Department, the appropriate assistant superintendent and the school principal or cost center supervisor. | 4. Once in the administrative pool, the applicant must apply for a position opening.<br>5. The applicant is interviewed by the principal or other appropriate officials. |
| 14. The senior personnel assistant for certification runs a list of which employees have had certificate issue requests done. These requests are done in June for existing employees, and the checklist is run in September. For new employees who start in August, the checklist is run in January, in order to give the Department of Education time to process the issue requests. | 6. The applicant is hired. |

Source: Office of Personnel Management, Manatee County School District

## District Absenteeism Data
## Needs to Be Verified for Accuracy

District staff recently conducted an analysis of absenteeism by school site and at the district level. However, staff have not used the results of the analysis to develop conclusions or strategies to reduce the absenteeism rate when warranted. OPPAGA staff conducted a preliminary analysis of the data and identified several data inaccuracies that greatly effect an analysis of absenteeism rate by school. For example, the data used by staff in their study purports that Manatee High only has 12.5 teachers and the study's count of custodians is inaccurate. In addition, the district's presentation of data does not define the employees included in its analysis as part-time or full-time. District staff have not compared absenteeism and turnover rates to other districts. Therefore, the district cannot demonstrate that it is similar to comparable school districts and, when appropriate, other government agencies and private industry in terms of absenteeism and turnover rates. It is important to maintain data and conduct trend analysis for staff positions to

identify types of positions that may have absenteeism and turnover problems. Solutions to decrease absenteeism and/or turnover rates should be developed once the positions are identified from the data analysis. The Department of Education collects statewide data on absences but not turnover rates. Therefore, the district needs to develop a plan to obtain turnover rate data.

## Manatee's Staff Absences
## Are Comparable to Its Peer Districts

The average number of absences for Manatee County teachers and district administrators are generally comparable to its peer districts. OPPAGA staff conducted an analysis of the average number of teacher and administrator absences and found that Manatee County teachers use more sick leave days and fewer personal leave days than teachers and administrators use more temporary duty leave than its peers. However, it should be noted that these conclusions are based on only one year of data and some inaccuracies in the data were identified. However, the accuracy of data at the district level is better than the school level analysis. The Department of Education recently began collecting data on teacher and administrator absences for the School Advisory Council Report. This information is available for each school and is currently included in each school's Public Accountability Report. We obtained districtwide 1996-97 data from the Department of Education to compare Manatee County's teacher and administrator absences to its peer districts. The 1997-98 data will be available at the end of October 1998. Exhibits 5-21 and 5-22 represent the average number of days teachers and administrators were not in attendance at the schools for reasons classified as personal leave, sick leave, and temporary duty elsewhere.

*Exhibit 5-21*

## Manatee County Teachers
## Take Fewer Personal Leave Days and
## More Sick Leave Days Than Teachers in Peer Districts

| | *Average Days of Teacher Absences (1996-97)* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **School District** | **Personal Leave** | **Sick Leave** | **Temporary Duty** | **Other** | **Total Absences** |
| Alachua | 2.2 | 3.8 | 1.8 | 0.1 | 7.9 |
| Collier | 2.1 | 4.9 | 1.1 | 1.3 | 9.3 |
| Leon | 2.2 | 4.2 | 3.6 | 0.7 | 10.7 |
| Manatee | 1.3 | 5.3 | 2.3 | 0.6 | 9.5 |
| Marion | 1.9 | 5.0 | 2.8 | 0.2 | 9.8 |
| Sarasota | 2.3 | 4.6 | 2.6 | 0.2 | 9.7 |

Source:  Department of Education

*Exhibit 5-22*

## Manatee County's Administrators
## Have a Greater Number of Temporary Duty
## Absences Than Administrators in Peer Districts

| | *Average Days of Administrator Absences (1996-97)* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **School District** | **Personal Leave** | **Sick Leave** | **Temporary Duty** | **Other** | **Total Absences** |
| Alachua | 2.7 | 1.1 | 1.5 | 0.1 | 5.4 |
| Collier | 1.6 | 1.4 | 2.6 | 0.1 | 5.7 |
| Leon | 1.8 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 7.5 | 15.4 |
| Manatee | 0.8 | 3.8 | 4.2 | 0.5 | 9.3 |
| Marion | 0.8 | 1.3 | 4.0 | 2.9 | 9.0 |
| Sarasota | 2.2 | 6.2 | 2.8 | 7.9 | 19.1 |

Source:  Department of Education

# *Recommendations*———————————————————

- *We recommend that the district develop and implement a plan to assess the effectiveness of the district's personnel practices, design a plan to monitor the ethnicity of district staff in comparison to the students and the community, and compare the absenteeism and turnover rates of Manatee County employees to staff in its peer district.  Action Plan 5-4 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 5-4*

# Periodically Evaluate Personnel Practices

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's personnel practices. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a system to assess the effectiveness of the district's personnel management office, including the effectiveness of its personnel practices. Develop goals, objectives, standards, and benchmarks to assess performance. |
| | Step 2: Evaluate the Office of Personnel Management. |
| | Step 3: Report, in writing, the results of the evaluation to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources. |
| | Step 4: Use the results to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of Personnel Management. Refer to the action plan for evaluating district programs on page 4-22, (Action Plan 4-4) in the Performance Accountability section, for detailed step by step directions. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director and Office of Personnel Management staff |
| Time Frame | October 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 2 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Determine if the ethnicity of district staff compares to that of its community and students. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Annually, conduct a written analysis of the ethnicity of the school districts staff compared to that of its community and students. Data for the analysis is available from the Department of Education's "Staff in Florida's Public Schools" statistical brief and the Florida Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic research. |
| | Step 2: Provide results of the analysis on an annual basis to the school board and appropriate district staff. Utilize the results to focus future recruiting efforts. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify the absenteeism rates for teachers and school site administrators and compare Manatee County to peer districts. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Verify accuracy of data collected and submitted to the Department of Education. Develop a formal process to ensure data is verified at the school site when appropriate. |

|  | Step 2: Use information, which is available from the Department of Education, to identify the average days of school site teacher and administrator absences in Manatee County and its peer district. |
|---|---|
|  | Step 3: Compare the absenteeism rates to Manatee County's peer districts. |
|  | Step 4: Develop conclusions and report, in writing, to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources. |
|  | Step 5: Conduct an analysis of teacher and administrator absenteeism by school to identify schools with staff that have the highest number of absences and develop a strategy to reduce the number of absences. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director and principals |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

|  | **Recommendation 4** |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify the absenteeism rate of district administrative positions and compare Manatee County to peer districts. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify key administrator positions, such as the positions identified in Exhibit 5-13, and determine the absenteeism rate in Manatee County. |
|  | Step 2: Define absenteeism to ensure consistency of data collected. |
|  | Step 3: Collect similar data from peer districts and compare absenteeism rates. |
|  | Step 4: Identify positions with high absenteeism rates based on comparison to peer districts and develop a strategy to reduce high absenteeism rates. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director and principals |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

|  | **Recommendation 5** |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify the turnover rate of district administrator positions and compare Manatee County to peer districts. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify key administrator positions, such as the positions identified in Exhibit 5-13, and determine the turnover rate in Manatee County. |
|  | Step 2: Define turnover to ensure consistency of data collected. |
|  | Step 3: Collect similar data from peer districts and compare turnover rates. |
|  | Step 4: Identify positions with high turnover rates based on comparison to peer districts and develop a strategy to reduce the high turnover rates. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director and principals |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 7 Does the district properly and efficiently maintain personnel records?

*No.  The district does not properly and efficiently maintain personnel records.*

The district does not have a sufficient, automated record-keeping system and the district does not microfilm its personnel files in a timely manner.  However, the district maintains its personnel records in accordance with statutes and regulations and updates its personnel records in a timely manner.

## Personnel Records Are Maintained in Compliance With the Law

The district maintains its personnel records in accordance with statutes and regulations in a timely manner.  Florida school law requires that school districts maintain individual personnel records for all employees.  The primary reason for keeping personnel records is to maintain a work history of the employee.  Records kept include application and reference data; verification of years of service; performance evaluations; leaves of absence data; commendations; disciplinary communications; and termination data.  Manatee School Board Policy No. 304.011 requires that the personnel department keeps employment records of both certificated and support personnel.  The records of instructional personnel include, but shall not be limited to, application, references, college transcripts, certification, verification of prior teaching experience, retirement application, contracts, leaves, and evaluations.  The records of support personnel include, but shall not be limited to, an application, references, retirement application, leaves, and evaluations.

## Personnel Records Are Accessible and Complete

Based on our fieldwork we found that the district's personnel files were maintained in an accessible manners and contained the required information.  We also found that the district updates its personnel records in a timely manner.  However, we found that a majority of the records in the personnel files were leave slips.  The district has a practice of filing approved leave slips in personnel records as required by school board policy.  This practice resulted in the district's personnel files requiring a large storage space and yielding several personnel files for an individual.  During our review the district discontinued filing leave forms in the personnel files; however, the district had not developed an alternative plan to store the leave forms other than in a separate file in the personnel office.  The school board should change this requirement and identify an alternative method of retaining leave information.

## Personnel Transactions Generally Are Conducted Inefficiently

The district's personnel transactions are primarily conducted via paperwork and not electronically,  resulting in an inordinate amount of  paper transactions for the personnel office.  The district does not have an automated record-keeping system; however, it microfilms and archives some of its records (student permanent records, complete personnel records, and school board minutes) to ensure efficient use of space and staff time, but the district does not microfilm these records in a timely manner.  Personnel

records are not maintained in a timely manner because the district does not have a formal record management program.  District staff identified the following types of forms that are manually processed by personnel office staff that should be electronically available forms or maintained in a data base: leave, evaluation, appointment acceptance forms, reprimands, change of status, new hire forms, position request forms.  As shown in Exhibit 5-23, currently a position control form is touched physically 14 different times by district staff from the time the board approves the position to the actual creation of the position.

*Exhibit 5-23*

*Position Control Form Flowchart*

- School allocates new position, board approves

- Principal completes position request

- School sends position request to position control specialist

- Position control specialist verifies accuracy

- Position control specialist sends position

- Courier takes form to assistant superintendent for signature

- Courier takes form back to position control

- Position control enters into AS 400 which assigns position control number

- Position may now be filled

- Principal completes personnel employment form for new hire or

- School sends form to position control, who verifies accuracy and that position

- Position control specialist sends form to appropriate senior personnel assistant, who works up salary and completes file

- Senior personnel assistant sends form to

- Personnel director sends form to position control, who distributes white, yellow,

Source:  Compiled by OPPAGA staff based on information provided by the Office of Personnel Management

## A Formal Records Management Program Is Needed

The district is in the process of developing a formal records management program. The establishment of a formal records management program would help ensure records throughout the district are appropriately maintained and stored in a timely manner. Currently the Office of Personnel Management sends personnel files that have been closed for two years to the records management office. This office microfilms the records. A copy of the microfilm is kept and the original film is sent to the Department of State's Bureau of Archives and Record Management (BARM). The district is currently behind on microfilming personnel records. Personnel records through 1994-95 have been microfilmed but records for 1995-96 and 1996-97 are currently stored in boxes. The board has approved the purchase of services from a vendor to assist in microfilming records. The district has not utilized the vendor as it is contemplating using technical assistance services provided by the Bureau of Archives and Records Management to establish a formal records management program. The bureau offers compliance assistance, training, and consulting services. Compliance assistance services are available the district at no cost other than travel related expenses, while additional costs are associated with training and consultant services.

# *Recommendations* ———————————————————

- *We recommend that the school board change its policy that requires leave forms to be included in the personnel files, continue to increase the use of technology to reduce and eliminate paper forms and processes, and evaluate the districts record management program. There may be a minimal fiscal impact if the district requests assistance from the Department of State's Bureau of Archives and Records Management to assist in establishing a formal records management program. Action Plan 5-5 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 5-5*

## Properly and Efficiently Maintain Personnel Records

| Recommendation 1 | |
| --- | --- |
| Strategy | Identify an alternative method to retain leave records. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Determine where leave forms should be maintained or if paper leave forms are necessary. |
| | Step 2: Develop and submit revised policy for board consideration and approval. |
| | Step 3: Develop procedures to implement board policy. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director and Finance director |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 2 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Increase the use of technology to reduce and eliminate unnecessary paperwork. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The new management information system should be designed to<br><br>  a. reduce the flow of paper work;<br>  b. integrate personnel and payroll;<br>  c. tie in with the applicant data system;<br>  d. eliminate the need to keep state required information on personal computers;<br>  e. eliminate the double entry of certain personnel information; and<br>  f. link to the student data base (i.e., course numbers). |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services and Personnel director |
| Time Frame | September 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 3 | |
| Strategy | Develop a formal records management program that includes personnel records. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Determine whether services need to be required from the Bureau of Archives and Record Management to improve the districts record management program.<br><br>Step 2: Implement decision in Step 1 to improve the district's records management.<br><br>Step 3: Implement recommendations of review. |
| Who Is Responsible | Warehouse manager and records specialist |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 8   Does the district use cost-containment practices for its Worker Compensation Program?

*Yes. The district uses cost-containment practices for its Worker Compensation Program.*

## Background

During the period of August 1,1997, through April 1, 1998, the Manatee County School District had 317 worker compensation claims resulting in a cost of $371,853 to the district. The average cost per claim was $1,173. As shown in Exhibit 5-24, workers' compensation

expenses have been slightly decreasing in terms of the percentage of payroll. The district uses a third-party administrator to manage its workers' compensation claims and expenses and its property liabilities. Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc., currently serves as the district's claims administrator. The primary responsibilities of the third-party administrator include to determine the compensability of claims, file the state First Report of Injury form, maintain original claim files, manage field investigations, process payments, set up reserves, manage litigation and settlements, and control and evaluate medical care.

*Exhibit 5-24*

## Workers' Compensation Expenses Have Been Decreasing Slightly in Terms of the Percentage of Payroll

|  | Fiscal Year | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1994-95** | **1995-96** | **1996-97** |
| Total Expenses | $ 1,146,192 | $ 1,026,929 | $ 1,107,468 |
| Payroll | 98,580,446 | 102,938,889 | 111,634,164 |
| Percentage of Payroll | 1.16% | 1.00% | 0.99% |

Source: Manatee County School District

The district reviews its worker's compensation program to evaluate the claims and expenses and uses the results of these evaluations to reduce workers' compensation claims and expenses. However, the district is continually identifying its data needs to improve its evaluation of workers' compensation claims and expenses. The district could improve how it assesses its workers' compensation expenses by comparing its expenses to other Florida school districts.

## Quest for Better Worker Compensation Data Continues

The district reviews its Workers' Compensation Program to evaluate workers' compensation claims and expenses. District staff evaluate claims on a quarterly basis and expense loss runs on a monthly basis. District staff request and review reports from the third-party administrator to evaluate claimant eligibility and identify errors. During the last several years, district staff have experimented with several different software packages in an attempt to collect detailed data. The need for better data and reports was one factor in the districts decision to switch claims administrators last year. Types of reports reviewed by district staff include source of injury, number of injuries per cost center, and expenses per cost center. During the past year, risk management staff has focused its priority on claims involving lost time and work restrictions. These claims are logged on a database. The information is used to track progress for return to full duty work. District staff have been identifying means to facilitate employees' return to work. District staff consistently analyze claims and are in the process of exploring the possibility of obtaining claim data on-line and downloading to their computers so they can conduct additional analysis.

## Results of Evaluations Are Used to Make Changes

The district uses the results of its evaluation of workers' compensation claims and expenses to reduce these costs, as practical. District staff cited a number of examples of how it uses the results of its evaluation of the district's workers' compensation claims and expenses.

- A review of the claims indicated a time lag in work sites completing the Notice of Injury resulting in a lag before the claims administrator became involved.  To improve the efficiency of claims management, staff developed an accident reporting form and implemented a telephone reporting process.

- As a result of the review of the district's accident database, a floor in an elementary school was replaced due to the number of severe falls.  Three claims were filed prior to the elementary school's floor being fixed, during the period from January 1996 through April 1996, with total claim expenses to date of $37,839.  After the floor was fixed, the district has not had any reported accidents.

- Monitoring lost time and restricted work claims resulted in the claims administrator and health care providers working more closely with district staff to return employees to work.  The district's goal is to reduce costs and to return staff to work as soon as possible.

- District staff utilized an outside specialist to develop detailed, physical job descriptions for several positions that historically had problem claims.  Staff believe the use of these job descriptions will conclude return to work problems more quickly and therefore reduce costs.

## Comparison to Other Districts Is Needed

The district does not know whether it is similar to comparable school districts and, when appropriate, applicable government and private industry standards in terms of its workers' compensation expenses.   However, the district recently compared its workers' compensation expenses to two boards of county commissioners.  The district needs to continue its efforts to compare the cost of its workers' compensation expenses to applicable government entities, however the comparisons should include similar school districts such as the peer districts used in this review.

## *Recommendations*——————————————————————————————————

- *We recommend that district staff continue to identify data it needs to improve its monitoring of workers' compensation claims and expenses.  The district also needs to compare its workers' compensation expenses to other districts and applicable government and private industry standards.*

- *These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 9 Does the district regularly evaluate employee salaries and benefits, using appropriate benchmarks that include standards derived from comparable school districts, government agencies, and private industry?

*No.  The district does not regularly evaluate employee salaries and benefits, using appropriate benchmarks that include standards derived from comparable school districts, government agencies, and private industry.*

The district cannot demonstrate that employee benefits are appropriate and consistent with comparable school districts and, where appropriate, to government agencies and private industry. The district has not conducted a comprehensive benefit analysis in many years. Thus it cannot demonstrate whether the board is offering its employees a cost-effective benefit package. OPPAGA found that the district's benefit package is generally more costly than the benefit packages offered by other peer districts. Primarily this is due to the high cost of family health insurance and the generous contribution rate by the district for family coverage.

## Background

Currently, the district provides all eligible employees a benefits package that includes health insurance, life insurance, retirement, social security, and leave benefits. Employees eligible for benefits are those who are contracted to work a minimum of 20 hours per week. These employees range from teacher assistants and bus drivers who work four hours per day to district administrators, secretaries and maintenance workers, who are contracted to work eight hours per day year round. For more information on the evaluation of salaries in the Manatee County School District, see pages 5-16 through 5-18.

Health insurance and prescription drug coverages are administered respectively by the McCreary Corporation and Consultec, Inc. The district has a contract with Manatee Health Network and SunHealth Network to provide medical services at discounted fees. These Employees may select single coverage, family coverage, or waive coverage entirely. Both the board and the employee contribute to the cost of single and family coverage. If the employee elects to waive health coverage, the board will contribute $11.73 per month toward an elective coverage (e.g., dental insurance, long-term disability insurance) of the employee's choice.

The district also offers life insurance with a benefit equal to the employee's annual salary, at no cost to the employee. The employee may elect to receive additional coverage that is double or triple his or her salary. The board shares the premium cost for double salary coverage with the employee. For triple salary coverage, the board's share is the same as for double the salary coverage and the employee must pay the full cost of the additional insurance.

The district offers a sick leave package whereby employees earn one sick day per month worked of their contract, four of which may be used for personal reasons. Employees on 12-month contracts also earn one to one and one-half days of vacation leave per month, depending on longevity. The above benefits are considered in the negotiations for the employee's union contract. In addition to Social Security, retirement benefits are earned through the Florida Retirement System.[2] The Florida Retirement System had a mandated employer contribution rate of 17.43% in the 1997-98 school year, and this amount was revised downward to 16.45% effective July 1, 1998. The current employer contribution for Social Security is 7.65%.

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[2] Two employees currently participate in the old Teacher's Retirement System which was closed to new members in 1970.

# Manatee's Contribution Rate
# for Family Health Insurance Is High

Manatee County School Board has the highest contribution rates for family coverages among its peer districts.  Two factors may contribute to its high contribution rate.

- Manatee offers a relatively high cost policy providing Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) coverage.
- Manatee contributes more towards the costs of family coverage than its peers.

The total annual cost of health insurance per employee in Manatee County is generally higher than its peer districts.  This is primarily due to the generous benefits that have been negotiated by the collective bargaining units.  Specific health insurance provisions are included in the negotiated contract.  For example, the negotiated contract addresses deductibles, waivers of coinsurance, as well as prescription fees for generic and name brand drugs.  According to a Florida School Board Association representative, most school boards do not include these specific health insurance provisions in their contracts.  These past negotiating practices may make it difficult to reduce or limit existing benefits.  Exhibit 5-25 shows that the total annual cost of family health coverage in Manatee County is higher than its peer districts and that the total annual cost of its single coverage is the next to the highest among the peers.  Most of the peer districts offer HMO coverages which are generally less expensive than PPO coverages.

Manatee County also contributes more for family coverage than its peers.  As shown, the amount that Manatee contributes toward family health coverage ($4,330.32 year) is 43% higher than Leon County's contribution ($3,024.10), which had the highest contribution rate among the peer districts for family coverage.  Leon County is the only peer district that contributes more for family coverage than single coverage.  The other peer districts contribute the same amount for family coverage as they do for single coverage.  Manatee's contribution rate for single health coverage is generally comparable to its peer districts, but Manatee employees must each contribute $312.60 annually for single coverage.  The Leon County School District is the only other peer district where employees electing to receive single health coverage must contribute a portion of the cost.   The Alachua and Marion school districts offer more than one plan, and these counties require the employee to bear the additional costs if the plan selected costs more than their lowest priced plan.

Manatee offers its employees the option of single or traditional family health coverages.  Several of the peer districts, however, offer other health coverage options that are less expensive than the traditional family coverage.  As shown in Exhibit 5-25, Collier, Leon, and Sarasota counties provide optional family coverages such as employee plus 1 coverage plans or employee plus spouse which cost less than their respective family coverage plans.  Leon County is the only peer district that contributes more than single coverage but less than family coverage.  The other two peer districts require the employee to bear the additional costs of the plan above the amount of the board's share for single coverage.  These coverage options could be attractive to Manatee because these options cost less to provide and they could provide potential cost savings to the district and many of its employees.

*Exhibit 5-25*

**Manatee Contributes More Towards the Costs of Family Coverage Than Its Peer Districts**

| District Plan | Single Coverage | | | Family Coverage | | | Employee +1 Coverage | | | Employee + Spouse Coverage | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total Annual Cost | Board Share | Employee Share | Total Annual Cost | Board Share | Employee Share | Total Annual Cost | Board Share | Employee Share | Total Annual Cost | Board Share | Employee Share |
| **Alachua** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Plan 1 | $1,231.20 | $1,231.20 | $ 0 | $2,844.00 | $1,231.20 | $1,612.80 | | | | | | |
| Plan 2 | 1,477.20 | 1,231.20 | 246.00 | 3,166.56 | 1,231.20 | 1,935.36 | | | | | | |
| Plan 3 | 1,231.20 | 1.231.20 | 0 | N/A | N/A | N/A | | | | | | |
| Plan 4 | 1,231.20 | 1,231.20 | 0 | 2,844.00 | 1,231.20 | 1,612.80 | | | | | | |
| **Collier** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Plan | $2,326.00 | $2,326.00 | $0 | $5,246.00 | $2,326.00 | $2,920.00 | $3,426.00 | $2,326.00 | $1,100.00 | $4,426.00 | $2,326.00 | $2,100.00 |
| **Leon** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital | $1,792.80 | $1,402.30 | $390.50 | $5,199.60 | $3,024.10 | $2,175.50 | $3,675.60 | $1,695.60 | $1,980.00 | | | |
| Southeast | 1,847.00 | 1,402.30 | 444.70 | 5,320.20 | 3,024.10 | 2,296.10 | 3,777.40 | 1,695.60 | 2,081.80 | | | |
| ***Manatee*** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Plan | $2,078.64 | $1,766.04 | $312.60 | $6,075.24 | $4.330.32 | $1,744.92 | | | | | | |
| **Marion** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Plan A | $1,518.00 | $1,518.00 | $ 0 | $3,861.40 | $1,518.00 | $2,343.40 | | | | | | |
| Plan B | 1,777.40 | 1,518.00 | 259.40 | 4,332.60 | 1,518.00 | 2,814.60 | | | | | | |
| **Sarasota*** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PPO | $2,076.24 | $2,076.24 | $ 0 | $6,013.44 | $2,076.24 | $3,937.20 | $3,922.32 | $2,076.24 | $1,846.08 | $4,314.48 | $2,076.24 | $2,238.24 |
| HMO | 1,774.56 | 1,774.56 | 0 | 5,139.60 | 1,774.56 | 3,365.04 | 3,353.28 | 1,774.56 | 1,578.72 | 3,687.60 | 1,774.56 | 1,913.04 |

*Sarasota County also offers vision and dental coverage free to all employees, with family coverage options.

Source: Manatee County School District and its peer districts

# Life Insurance Contribution Rates for Optional Coverages Could Be Reduced

Exhibit 5-26 shows that the monthly cost per $1,000 of life insurance in Manatee County is generally comparable to its peer districts.  Two of the peer counties pay a higher rate, one pays the same rate, and two peer districts pay less than Manatee County.  Leon County is the only district whose monthly cost per $1,000 of coverage is substantially lower.  However, Leon County offers only one coverage amount ($15,000) which is generally lower than the other peer districts.  Manatee County also offers supplemental coverages and it contributes towards the cost of these supplemental coverages.  Manatee is the only district among the peers that helps pay for supplemental life insurance.  Although the total cost per $1,000 of life insurance coverage is generally comparable to its peer districts, its contribution rate is towards the high side because it helps pay some of the costs of optional coverages.

*Exhibit 5-26*

## Manatee County Contributes Towards the Cost of Supplemental Life Insurance Coverages Where Its Peer Districts Do Not

| District | Coverage Amount | Monthly Cost Per $1,000 of Coverage | Board Paid Premium Per Employee Per $1,000 Coverage | Employee Paid Premium Per $1,000 Coverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alachua | $20,000 at or above Pay Grade 18 | 24¢ | 24¢ | None |
|  | $10,000 below Pay Grade 18 | 24¢ | 24¢ | None |
| Collier | Annual Salary or $30,000, whichever is greater | 16¢ | 16¢ | None |
| Leon | $15,000 | 12¢ | 12¢ | None |
| Manatee | Annual Salary | 17¢ | 17¢ | None |
|  | Double Annual Salary (supplemental option) | 17¢ | 17¢ Annual Salary<br>10¢ Towards double tier | None<br>7¢ Towards double tier |
|  | Triple Annual Salary (supplemental option) | 17¢ | 17¢ Annual Salary<br>10¢ Towards double tier<br>None towards third tier | None<br>7¢ Towards double tier<br>17¢ Towards third tier |
| Marion | 1.5 times Annual Salary or $20,000, whichever is greater | 20¢ | 20¢ | None |
| Sarasota* | $50,000 | 17¢ | 17¢ | None |

Board premium rates include accidental death indemnity, which all districts except Sarasota pay.
*Sarasota County also pays $109 per employee annually for long-term disability insurance.

Source:  Manatee County School District and its peer districts

Life insurance costs vary widely by district because the various peer districts provide significantly different life insurance coverage benefits. To compare Manatee's cost to its peer districts, OPPAGA determined the average annual salary rate for Manatee County employees and we applied this salary rate ($27,045) to the peer districts. As shown in Exhibit 5-27 the cost to provide life insurance by the peer districts varies widely with Manatee's cost for annual salary coverage being near the middle of the group. However, two-thirds of Manatee's employees elect to receive supplemental coverages. The added cost of supplemental coverages brings Manatee's costs to be closer to the highest two peer districts (Marion and Sarasota).

*Exhibit 5-27*

## Costs for Life Insurance Vary Widely With Manatee County's Share for Annual Salary Coverage Being Near the Middle of the Peer Districts

| District | Annual Salary | Coverage Amount | Total Cost Per Employee | Board Share | Employee Share |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alachua | $27,045 | $20,000 | $ 57.60 | $ 57.60 | $ 0 |
| Collier | 27,045 | 30,000 | 57.60 | 57.60 | 0 |
| Leon | 27,045 | 15,000 | 21.60 | 21.60 | 0 |
| Manatee | 27,045 | 27,045 | 55.20 | 55.20 | 0 |
|  | 27,045 | 54,090 | 110.40 | 87.60 | 22.80 |
|  | 27,045 | 81,135 | 165.60 | 87.60 | 78.00 |
| Marion | 27,045 | 40,568 | 97.32 | 97.32 | 0 |
| Sarasota | 27,045 | 50,000 | 102.00 | 102.00 | 0 |

Source: Manatee County School District and its peer districts

Manatee County's costs for life insurance are higher than most of its peer districts for higher paid employees. Exhibit 5-28 illustrates how coverages and costs go up for higher paid employees in Manatee County. The salary of $50,000 per year approximates the salary of an assistant principal in most districts. Manatee's costs in this example are higher than its peer districts except for Marion County. Although Manatee's costs are higher than most of its peer districts, the amount of life insurance coverages provided are significantly higher than its peers. This occurs because employees help pay the cost of the supplemental coverages. We estimated the district could save about $86,000 annually if it contributed only to the cost of basic coverage.

*Exhibit 5-28*

## Manatee County School Board's Costs for Life Insurance Are Higher Than Most of Its Peers for Higher Paid Employees; However, These Employees Receive More Coverage Because They Help Share in Its Cost

| District | Annual Salary | Coverage Amount | Total Cost Per Employee | Board Share | Employee Share |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alachua | $50,000 | $ 20,000 | $ 57.60 | $ 57.60 | $ 0 |
| Collier | 50,000 | 40,000 | 96.00 | 96.00 | 0 |
| Leon | 50,000 | 15,000 | 21.60 | 21.60 | 0 |
| Manatee | 50,000 | 50,000 | 102.00 | 102.00 | 0 |
|  | 50,000 | 100,000 | 204.00 | 162.00 | 42.00 |
|  | 50,000 | 150,000 | 306.00 | 162.00 | 144.00 |
| Marion | 50,000 | 75,000 | 180.00 | 180.00 | 0 |
| Sarasota | 50,000 | 50,000 | 102.00 | 102.00 | 0 |

Source: Manatee County School District and its peer districts

## Leave Benefits Are Reasonable

Exhibit 5-29 shows the leave policy for Manatee County and its peer districts. Manatee's leave policy is generally comparable with its peer districts, and it allows fewer sick days that may be used for personal reasons.

*Exhibit 5-29*

**Manatee County School District's Leave Policy
Is Generally Comparable to Its Peer Districts**

| District | Number of Sick Days Per Month | Number of Sick Days That May Be Used for Personal Reasons | Number of Vacation Days Per Month for 12-Month Employees | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alachua | 1 | 6 | = | 2.00 |
| Collier | 1 | 6 | 1 day per month + Up to 6 days per year for years of service | |
| Leon | 1 | 4-6 | 0 - 5 years service<br>5 < 10 years service<br>> 10 years service | = 1.00<br>= 1.25<br>= 1.50 |
| Manatee | 1 | 4 | 0 - 5 years service<br>5 < 10 years service<br>> 10 years service | = 1.00<br>= 1.25<br>= 1.50 |
| Marion | 1 | 5 | 0 - 5 years service<br>5 < 10 years service<br>> 10 years service | = 1.00<br>= 1.25<br>= 1.50 |
| Sarasota | 1 | 6 | 0 - 5 years service<br>5 < 10 years service<br>> 10 years service | = 1.00<br>= 1.25<br>= 1.50 |

Source:  Manatee County School District and its peer districts

## Manatee's Benefits Package Is Generally More Costly Than Packages Offered By Peer Districts

We concluded that the district could save money if it revised its policies and coverages relating to health and life insurance.  Potential savings can be achieved by reviewing its health insurance benefits packages and offering other alternatives to its employees.  The district also needs to consider revising the amount it contributes to health insurance.  Furthermore, the amount of life insurance it subsidizes is higher than most of its peer districts.  These benefits are part of collective bargaining package that the district negotiates with its employees.

# *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district develop a policy that directs staff to regularly evaluate its employee benefits package including health insurance, life insurance, leave policies, and any other benefits it offers.  Specifically, the board should*

> *consider strategies to reduce the cost of its health insurance benefit offered to its employees.*

- *Action Plan 5-6 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 5-6*

# Ensure That Employee Benefit Costs Are Reasonable

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Implement procedures to periodically review the cost of employee benefits insurance. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop procedures requiring staff to regularly review employee benefits that, at a minimum, include developing appropriate benchmarks and standards; identifying and comparing benefits to comparable peer school districts; if appropriate, identifying and comparing benefits to other government agencies or private industry; comparing both the benefits and the costs to provide the benefits, including board and employee shares when applicable; and preparing an analysis of benefits along with staff recommendations regarding appropriateness of benefits offered. |
| | Step 2: The district should identify options to reduce the cost of its health insurance coverages to be more in line with its peer districts. The average peer district's cost for single coverage is $1,814.46 per year, which is 13% less than Manatee's total cost for single coverage. The average peer districts costs for family coverage is $4,636.94 per year, which is 24% less than Manatee for family coverage. To reduce these costs, the district will need to revise its benefits and consider providing other health care plans such as those offered by HMO providers. If the district elects to continue its current coverages in addition to HMO coverages in addition to HMO coverages, employees should be allowed to select this option and to pay the additional cost. |
| | Step 3: The district should consider expanding its coverage options to include employee plus spouse and employee plus one plans. These options allow the employer and employee to recognize that these coverages cost less than the regular family option. These coverage options provide employees an option to obtain coverages that better meet the size and composition of their families. |
| | Step 4: The district should consider revising its contribution rate for single and family coverages to be more in line with its peer districts. Contribution rates would also have to be developed for employee plus spouse and employee plus one coverages. Such revisions should be developed in conjunction with a new benefits package. If the district elects to pay 100% of single coverage for all employees, the net savings to the district would be approximately $4.25 million annually. However, if the district elects to pay 100% of single coverage and contribute no more than highest peer district for family coverage and split the savings for the other family options, this option would save the district about $2.75 million annually. |
| | Step 5: Present results to the board for consideration. |

| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | April of every year |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources.  However, the district could save about $10.25 million over five years if the district implemented OPPAGA's recommendations identified above. |

# Fiscal Impact of Revising Health Insurance Benefits

To determine the fiscal impact, it is assumed that the number of employees receiving health insurance remains the same as it was for the 1997-98 school year.  We assumed that the district could implement new policies and coverages effective October 1, 1999.  This scenario assumes that the district would agree to pay the full cost of single coverage at a rate equal to the average of its peers.  In addition, it would contribute for family coverage no more than the amount contributed by the highest peer district.  This scenario also assumes that the district would offer employee plus one and employee plus spouse coverages.  The employee breakdown for these optional family coverages was assumed to be the same ratio as for Sarasota County.  Savings for these new family coverage options would be shared evenly between the board and the employee over the regular family coverage.  Implementing these changes would collectively save about $2.0 million the first year (nine months of savings) and $2.75 million annually thereafter.  (See Exhibit 5-30.)

*Exhibit 5-30*

# Revising Its Contribution Rate for Health Insurance Will Save the District $10.25 Million Over the Next Five Years

|  | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1998-1999 | 1999-2000 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 |
| Annual Savings (in millions) | 0 | $2.00 | $2.75 | $2.75 | $2.75 |
| Cumulative Savings (in millions) | 0 | 2.00 | 4.75 | 7.50 | 10.25 |

# 6 Use of Lottery Proceeds

*In general, the district needs to improve how it manages lottery funds appropriated by the Legislature to the district and lottery funds allocated to school advisory councils by the district.*

## Conclusion

The Manatee County School District is using only one of the five best practices for the use of lottery proceeds from the state.

In regard to lottery funds spent by the district, the district needs to

- define educational enhancement with input from stakeholders;
- improve its accounting procedures; and
- report to the public on a quarterly basis in what manner the funds are being spent.

As to lottery funds spent by school advisory councils (SACs), the district needs to

- ensure that all SACs are involved in the expenditure of their lottery funds;
- report how SACs spent their funds; and
- explain how these expenditures have enhanced student education at their school.

## Is the District Using the Best Practices in the Expenditures of Its Lottery Proceeds?

*No.* The district has not defined 'enhancement.' (page 6-3)

*No.* The district cannot demonstrate that it uses lottery money consistent with its definition of 'enhancement.' (page 6-6)

*Yes.* The district allocates lottery funds to SACs as required by law. (page 6-12)

*No.* The district does not account for the use of lottery money in an acceptable manner. (page 6-15)

*No.* The district does not annually evaluate and report the extent to which lottery fund expenditures have enhanced student education. (page 6-17)

# *Fiscal Impact of Recommendations*

These recommendations to improve the district's management of its lottery funds can be implemented with existing resources.

# *Background*

The Legislature intends that the net proceeds of lottery games be used to support improvements in public education and that such proceeds not be used as a substitute for existing resources for public education.

Each fiscal year at least 38% of the gross revenue from the sale of lottery tickets and other earned revenue, excluding application processing fees, is deposited in the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund which is administered by the Department of Education. The Legislature apportions moneys in the trust fund among public schools, community colleges, and universities. The 1998 Legislature appropriated $183,975,000 of enhancement funds to school districts. These funds are allocated to the districts by prorating each district's K-12 base funding to the amount of the appropriation.

In Fiscal Year 1998-99 the Manatee County School District was allocated $2,716,202 in lottery funds and in Fiscal Year 1997-98 it was allocated $6,045,378. This represents a 55% reduction in the amount of lottery funds allocated to the district by the Legislature between these two fiscal years. This significant reduction is attributed to an increase in lottery funds being used by the Legislature to support the Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

## School District Lottery Fund Expenditures

Each district is required, by law, to establish policies and procedures that define enhancement and the types of expenditures that are considered consistent with that definition. Each district is also required to use a unique fund source code for accounting for the receipt and expenditure of all lottery monies. District expenditures are to be reported to the Department of Education within 60 days following the end of the fiscal year. Each school district is also required, on a quarterly basis, to make available to the public and to distribute, in an easy-to-understand format, a report on the expenditures of lottery funds.

## School Advisory Council Lottery Fund Expenditures

The law requires that a portion of the lottery funds be allocated to the SACs at each school. In Fiscal Year 1998-99, $330,393 in lottery funds were distributed to the district's 39 schools. Each school received $10 per unweighted full-time equivalent (FTE) student as required by law. Allocations to schools ranged from $210 to an elementary school with 21 unweighted FTE to $23,332 to a high school with 2,333 unweighted FTE. The 1997 Legislature directed that the school's lottery funds are to be spent as the SACs direct. The state law also stipulates that funding for use by the SACs should be allocated directly to the councils, should be clearly earmarked for their use, and is not subject to override by the principal or interim approvals by school district staff. A portion of the money should be used for implementing the school improvement plan which must be based on the needs of the school.

# *Are the Best Practices for Using Lottery Proceeds Being Observed?* ⸺⸺⸺⸺⸺

**Goal:  The district uses lottery funds to enhance educational programs.**

# 1 Has the district defined 'enhancement'?

*No.  The district needs to define enhancement, involve stakeholders in developing its definition of enhancement, and develop procedures that relate to the use of its Educational Enhancement (lottery) funds.*

According to the law, prior to the expenditure of educational enhancement (lottery) funds each school district is required to

- establish policies and procedures that define enhancement,
- identify the types of expenditures that are considered consistent with its definition, and
- provide the Department of Education a copy of all procedures that relate to the use of enhancement funds.

## The School Board Has Not Defined Educational Enhancement

The Manatee County School Board needs to define educational enhancement.  Although the board has identified types of appropriate lottery fund expenditures, it has not indicated why these types of expenditures are considered enhancements.  This is a common problem in Florida as many of Manatee County's peer districts have similarly not established adequate definitions.  Refer to Exhibit 6-1 for Manatee County and its peer districts' definitions of enhancement.

*Exhibit 6-1*

## Manatee County's Peer Districts Generally Do Not Define Enhancement and Only Identify Types of Board Approved Expenditures Like Manatee County

| School District | Educational Enhancement Definition |
|---|---|
| Alachua | • to continue to develop and implement school improvement plans and to maintain existing programs previously funded through state categorical funds or through state grants |
| Collier | • the expenditure of funds to increase the instructional opportunities and to improve the behavioral patterns of students in grades prekindergarten through the postsecondary level as well as to preserve these activities with limited funding sources |
| Leon | • programs that were previously funded through state categorical funds which are no longer mandated <br> • a supplement to partially funded state categorical or mandated programs <br> • the enrichment of existing programs through cultural activities, academic competitions, computer and other equipment, and supply acquisitions <br> • innovative programs such as magnets, alternatives, compacts, or special projects <br> • aides and instructional assistants to support the educational program <br> • art, music, and physical education activities <br> • activities and/or programs designed to improve the safety of schools <br> • increases in employee compensation |
| Manatee | • to develop and implement school improvement plans and to fund salaries and benefits of school-based instructional support services personnel |
| Marion | • to include, but not be limited to, instructional activities, instructional materials, salaries, fringe benefits, equipment, etc., which are associated with (a) the continuation of implementation of pilot programs which were not previously funded by the state and (b) the continuation of existing programs when state or local revenues are inadequate to finance the existing program |
| Sarasota | • used to fund all educational programs whose costs exceed the minimum financial effort required by the Florida Education Finance Program |

Source: Manatee County School District and its peer districts

## Stakeholders Need to Be Involved in Defining Educational Enhancement

The district needs to involve stakeholders when developing its definition of enhancement. The district needs to obtain input from stakeholders, such as SAC members, parents, and other district taxpayers, when it defines educational enhancement. The district needs to provide its stakeholders an opportunity to review and provide suggested revisions to the district's current definition of educational enhancement.

# The District Lacks Procedures for the Use of Lottery Funds

The district has identified the types of lottery fund expenditures it deems are appropriate. However, it needs to develop procedures that relate to the overall use of lottery funds by the district as well as the SACs and provide a copy of these procedures to the Department of Education. Once the board defines enhancement, the district should revisit the types of expenditures it deems appropriate for the use of its lottery funds to ensure consistency with its definition of enhancement. According to district staff, the district has not developed any procedures that relate to the use of lottery funds beyond its identification of approved expenditures. The district needs to develop procedures to ensure appropriate use of its lottery funds. The lack of procedures has resulted in lottery funds and general revenue funds being mixed, a failure to identify the benefits derived from lottery expenditures and an unorganized approach to inform SACs about their role in the expenditure of lottery funds.

# *Recommendation*

- *We recommend that the district define educational enhancement, involve stakeholders in developing its definition of enhancement, and develop procedures that relate to the use of its Educational Enhancement (lottery) funds (refer to Action Plan 6-2, page 6-10, for a detailed action plan related to developing procedures).*
- *Action Plan 6-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 6-1*

# Define Educational Enhancement

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Define educational enhancement. |
| Action Needed | Implement a coordinated broad-based effort to develop a definition of educational enhancement. The district's finance director should coordinate steps 1-3. |
| | Step 1: The county office team, director of school management, and other interested school district staff should develop a definition of enhancement based on document input from stakeholders outside the district school system [joint parent organization (JPO), chamber of commerce, etc., and school site-based staff, SAC members, teachers, parents, etc.]. Input should be obtained from stakeholders in the form of formal meetings. |
| | Step 2: The district's Finance director should present the definition developed by the stakeholder to the school board during a meeting or workshop to provide board members an opportunity to be involved in developing the district's definition of enhancement. |
| | Step 3: The school board needs to adopt a definition of educational enhancement that clearly defines enhancement and goes beyond identifying types of appropriate lottery fund expenditures. |
| Who Is Responsible | School board |
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 2   Is the district's use of lottery money consistent with its definition of enhancement?

> *No. The district needs to define enhancement before it can determine if its lottery expenditures are consistent with its definition. SACs need to provide district staff information on how they spend their lottery funds.*

The district has not defined educational enhancement; therefore the district cannot demonstrate that its expenditures are consistent with its definition. The district needs to establish a mechanism to ensure that its lottery fund expenditures are consistent with its definition of enhancement, once the board defines enhancement.

The district uses lottery funds for two types of expenditures, to develop and implement school improvement plans (these are funds allocated to its SACs), and to fund salaries and benefits of school-based instructional support services personnel. As shown in Exhibit 6-2, over the past three years the district has spent its lottery funds primarily on salaries and benefits for school-based personnel. An analysis of Manatee County's allocations and expenditures shows that for the past three fiscal years the SACs have not spent about half of the funds they were allocated. As can be seen in Exhibit 6-3, in Fiscal Year 1996-97 the SACs did not spend 60% of their funds. A comparison of Manatee County's lottery fund expenditures to its peer districts for Fiscal Year 1996-97 is shown in Exhibit 6-4.

*Exhibit 6-2*

## Manatee County School District Primarily Spends Its Lottery Funds on Salaries for School-Based Personnel

|  | Fiscal Year | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1995-96** | **1996-97** | **1997-98** |
| Salaries and Benefits for School-Based Personnel | $6,787,196 | $6,533,470 | $5,707,910 |
| School Improvement Plans | 56,634 | 51,828 | 152,993 |

Source: Manatee County School District staff

*Exhibit 6-3*

## Over the Past Three Years School Advisory Councils on Average Have Not Spent Over Half of the Funds Allocated for Their Use

|  | Fiscal Year 1995-96 | | | Fiscal Year 1996-97 | | | Fiscal Year 1997-98 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **Allocated** | **Expended** | **Difference** | **Allocated** | **Expended** | **Difference** | **Allocated** | **Expended** | **Difference** |
| School Improvement Plans | $133,139 | $56,634 | 57% | $128,991 | $51,858 | 60% | $337,610 | $152,993 | 55% |

Source: Manatee County School District staff

*Exhibit 6-4*

## The Majority of Lottery Funds in Manatee County and Its Peer Districts Are Spent on Salaries and Benefits

| School District | District Discretionary Lottery Fund Expenditures in Fiscal Year 1996-97 | Amount Expended |
|---|---|---|
| Alachua | Prep [Primary Education Program – adds a curriculum resource teacher in all elementary schools (K-5)] | $1,944,891 |
| | Dropout Prevention | 255,033 |
| | Student Development | 673,309 |
| | Seventh Period Day | 2,319, 781 |
| | Implementation of School Improvement Plans | 246,615 |
| | Total | $5,439,629 |
| Collier | District classroom salaries and benefits  (assistant principals, high school teachers, middle/junior high school teachers, art teachers, music teachers, physical education teachers, teacher aides) | $5,973,724 |
| | School Improvement plan expenditures | 79,743 |
| | Total | $6,053,467 |
| Leon | Supplements to partially funded state categorical programs and/or state mandated programs | $2,405,734 |
| | Enrichment of existing programs through cultural activities, academic competitions, equipment and supply purchases | 606,633 |
| | Innovative programs, i.e., magnets, compacts, special projects | 348,999 |
| | Aides and instructional assistants | 3,399,627 |
| | School Improvement Plan expenditures | 123,098 |
| | Total | $6,884,091 |
| Manatee | Salary and Benefits for School Based Personnel | $6,533,470 |
| | School Improvement Plans | 51,858 |
| | Total | $6,585,328 |
| Marion | School Improvement Plans | $  175,958 |
| | Prep (reduces teacher-student ratio in elementary schools) | 3,215,050 |
| | Seventh Period Day | 1,155,386 |
| | Prime 4-5 (learning specialists in elementary schools) | 286,537 |
| | Prime 6-8 (learning specialists in elementary schools) | 198,404 |
| | Compensatory Education | 103,382 |
| | Comprehensive Health | 35,948 |
| | Student Development Services | 932,310 |
| | Silver River Museum (maintained for outdoor and environmental education) | 78,314 |
| | Computer Enhancement | 410,883 |
| | Total | $6,592,172 |
| Sarasota | Teacher Salaries and Benefits – used to decrease student-teacher ratio, most of these funds are used for middle school teachers. | $7,001,059 |
| | School Improvement Activities | 97,453 |
| | Total | $7,098,512 |

Source:  Manatee County School District and its peer districts

## SACs' Use of Lottery Funds Is Generally Unknown

A portion of the SAC lottery funds should be used for implementing school improvement plans which must be based on the needs of the schools. SACs do not report to the school communities or to the district staff how they spend their funds. District staff does not know whether SACs are using a portion of their lottery funds to implement their school improvement plans. The district does not maintain information on how SACs are using their lottery funds. While the Legislature intentionally provided SACs a great amount of flexibility in how they spend their lottery funds, the SACs should be held accountable for how they spend their funds. This can be accomplished by providing school board members and appropriate district administrators a quarterly summary of SACs' expenditure statements. The district needs to develop a standardized SAC expenditure statement with categories such as purpose of expenditure, description of expenditure, who benefits from expenditure, and amount of expenditure.

## It Is Not Clear Whether Lottery Funds
## Are Used to Implement School Improvement Plans

Each SAC should identify which funds were specifically used to implement its school improvement plan. This can be achieved by identifying the goals and objectives in the school improvement plan that funds were used to implement. This will provide district staff a mechanism to determine whether the SACs are using a portion of their lottery funds to implement their school improvement plan as previously required by the General Appropriations Act and now also required by Ch. 98-271, Laws of Florida. This will also provide district staff a mechanism to monitor the expenditure of funds by the SACs.

## SACs Are Not Typically Spending All of Their Funds

As shown in Exhibit 6-5, some of the SACs we reviewed did not spend all of their available lottery funds in Fiscal Year 1997-98. According to the principals we interviewed, all the funds were not spent because the SACs held back some funds for pre-determined future needs. However, district staff stated that some school staff were not aware of unspent school improvement funds.

## The Majority of SAC Funds Are
## Used to Provide Training to Teachers and Staff

OPPAGA analyzed the amount and expenditures of lottery funds during Fiscal Year 1997-1998 for five SACs. Refer to Exhibit 6-6 for a breakdown of the types of purchases made by these five SACs during Fiscal Year 1997-98. The majority of funds spent were used to provide training to teachers and staff. Schools either sent staff and teachers to seminars or conferences or hired a consultant to provide training and in-service education to school staff.

*Exhibit 6-5*

## Three of the Five SACs We Reviewed Spent
## Less Than Two-Thirds of Their 1997-98 Allocation

| School | 1997-98 SAC Allocation | 1997-98 SAC Expenditures | Percentage of Allocation Spent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Braden River Elementary | $ 9,220 | $ 5,170 | 56% |
| J.P. Miller Elementary | 8,960 | 4,960 | 55% |
| Palm View Elementary | 6,200 | 6,206 | 100% |
| L.R. Johnson Middle | 9,450 | 9,730 | 103% |
| Southeast High | 25,660 | 16,443 | 64% |

Source: Manatee County School District

*Exhibit 6-6*

## These School Advisory Councils
## Spent a Majority of Funds on Teacher Training

| School | Type of Expenditure | Expenditure |
|---|---|---|
| Braden River Elementary ($5,170) | Consultant fees (Power Team Building) | $1,370 |
| | Cost associated with sending teachers to seminars or conferences | 1,287 |
| | Substitutes for teacher time on school improvement plan implementation | 1,901 |
| | Cost associated with sending staff to seminars or conferences | 454 |
| | Materials | 158 |
| J.P. Miller Elementary ($4,960) | Cost associated with sending teachers to seminars or conferences | $ 718 |
| | Additional teacher time for training on school improvement implementation | 3,178 |
| | Substitutes for additional teacher time on school improvement plan implementation | 1,064 |
| L.R. Johnson Middle School ($9,730) | Cost associated with sending teachers to seminars or conferences | $ 905 |
| | Supplies | 458 |
| | Computer hardware/software | 5,985 |
| | Additional teacher time for training on school improvement plan implementation | 2,382 |
| Palm View Elementary School ($6,206) | Costs Associated with sending all staff to attend "Discipline with Dignity" Workshop | $2,350 |
| | Writing Process Workshop | 3,506 |
| | Workshop Registration-Preparing for Florida Writes! | 350 |
| Southeast High School ($16,443) | Supplies | $2,299 |
| | Cost associated with sending teachers to attend seminars or conferences | 6,335 |
| | Cost associated with sending staff to seminars or conferences | 2,208 |
| | Florida High School Competency Test Site License/Software | 3,150 |
| | Membership dues for Florida League of International Baccalaureate Schools | 150 |
| | Additional teacher time for training on school improvement plan implementation | 1,732 |
| | Substitutes for teacher time on school improvement plan implementation | 569 |

Source: Manatee County School District

# *Recommendations*

- *We recommend that the district develop a procedure to ensure its expenditures of lottery funds are consistent with its definition of educational enhancement, after the district defines enhancement. We also recommend that the district develop a standardized SAC expenditure statement in order to improve its tracking of expenditures made by these councils. Finally, we recommend that the district implement a formalized procedure to inform each SAC of the available funds, including new allocations and any carry forward funds.*

- *Action Plan 6-2 provides the steps necessary to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 6-2*

## Ensure That the District Uses Its Lottery Funds Consistent With Its Definition of Enhancement

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a procedure to ensure that lottery fund expenditures are consistent with the district's definition of enhancement after the district defines enhancement. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The Budget Office needs to develop a procedure to ensure that its allocation of district discretionary lottery funds is consistent with the districts definition of enhancement. At a minimum, the procedure should include the following elements: |
| |     • a form which identifies the districts expenditures and the rationale for each type of expenditure as to how it is consistent with the districts definition of enhancement; |
| |     • the signature of the Finance director; and |
| |     • approval by the county office team. |
| | Step 2: Develop procedures that relate to the expenditure of lottery funds by district staff and that at a minimum include |
| |     • a process to ensure lottery funds allocated in the budget do not exceed the district's appropriation of lottery funds; |
| |     • proviso requirements (define enhancement and identify types of expenditures that are considered consistent with its definition of enhancement); |
| |     • a rationale for why the expenditures are consistent with the districts definition of enhancement; and |
| |     • benefits derived from various types of expenditures. |
| | Step 3: Develop procedures that relate to the expenditure of lottery funds by SACs, that at a minimum include |
| |     • the SAC's requirements regarding the expenditure of funds; |
| |     • accounting guidelines; and |
| |     • reporting requirements. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Step 4: | Include the procedures that relate to the expenditure of lottery funds by SACs in the school's business practice manual that is currently being developed by the Finance director. |
| Step 5: | Submit the procedures identified above to the state Department of Education as required in proviso language. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Finance director |
| Time Frame | March 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 2

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a mechanism to collect and report information on how the SACs spend their lottery funds |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a standardized SAC expenditure statement that at a minimum includes<br><br>• types of expenditures;<br><br>• amounts of expenditures;<br><br>• who benefits from expenditures;<br><br>• indication whether an expenditure is directly related to implementing the school improvement plan (cite the goal and objective(s) the funds are being used to implement and how the expenditure is expected to assist towards meeting the goal);<br><br>• indication whether an expenditure is new or recurring from prior year; and<br><br>• SAC chair signature to validate that SAC elected to spend its funds on the expenditures identified on the form.<br><br>Step 2: Require SACs to bi-annually submit an expenditure statement to the Finance director in May and December.<br><br>Step 3: Create a summary of SAC expenditure statements. Provide this summary to appropriate district staff including staff that supervise principals, the assistant superintendent of support services, and the school board. |
| Who Is Responsible | Finance director |
| Time Frame | March 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Inform SAC of available funds (new allocations and carry forward). |
| Action Needed | Develop and implement a strategy to ensure that SAC members are aware of available funds to be used at the discretion of the council.<br><br>Step 1: In writing, communicate to the principal and the SAC chair the funds available to the SAC.<br><br>Step 2: The SAC and/or principal should communicate the information about the available funds to each SAC member during an appropriate meeting at the beginning of each new school year. |
| Who Is Responsible | Finance director |

| Time Frame | March 1999 |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 3 Does the district allocate lottery funds to SACs as required by law?

*Yes. The district allocates funds to each SAC as required by the Florida Legislature. However, the district needs to develop a procedure to ensure all SAC members know how lottery funds may be spent.*

## Each School Has an Approved School Improvement Plan

The school board has approved a school improvement plan for each school in the Manatee County School District. The department may not release funds from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund to any district in which a school does not have an approved school improvement plan after one full school year of planning and development or does not comply with SAC membership composition requirements. Section 230.23(16), F.S., requires school boards to annually approve and require implementation of a new, amended, or continuation school improvement plan for each school in the district. The plans should be designed to achieve the state education goals and student performance standards. The district has established effective mechanisms that ensure school improvement plans translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives and clear implementation strategies. Refer to page 4-28, for further information regarding our assessment of the district's school improvement plans.

## Each SAC Receives $10 Per Student

The district allocates $10 per unweighted student FTE to be used at the discretion of the SAC in Fiscal Year 1998-99. As shown in Exhibit 6-7 the schools received $10 per unweighted FTE. Since the number of unweighted FTE students varies by school, the amount of lottery funds allocated to elementary schools ranged from $210 (Duette) to $9,140 (Braden River), allocations to middle schools ranged from $8,899 (Johnson) to $12,391 (King), and high school allocations ranged from $8,252 (Lakewood Ranch) to $23,332 (Manatee).

*Exhibit 6-7*

## The Manatee County School Board Projects $330,393 in Lottery Funds Will Be Allocated to SACs in Fiscal Year 1998-99

| Schools | | SACs Projected Allocations Fiscal Year 1998-99 |
|---|---|---|
| Elementary Schools | Anna Maria | $  3,856 |
| | Ballard | 4,930 |
| | Bayshore | 8,347 |
| | Duette | 210 |
| | Manatee | 5,395 |
| | Miller | 8,414 |
| | Myakka | 3,451 |
| | Oneco | 6,821 |
| | Orange Ridge/Bullock | 8,710 |
| | Palm View | 5,680 |
| | Palma Sola | 6,319 |
| | Palmetto | 8,835 |
| | Prine | 7,700 |
| | Daughtrey | 7,570 |
| | Samoset | 5,609 |
| | Tillman | 5,307 |
| | Blackburn | 7,410 |
| | Wakeland | 5,453 |
| | Moody | 8,170 |
| | Abel | 6,770 |
| | Stewart | 4,890 |
| | Bashaw | 7,809 |
| | Braden River | 9,140 |
| | Sea Breeze | 6,241 |
| | Tara | 8,050 |
| | Witt | 6,450 |
| Middle Schools | Lincoln | 9,226 |
| | Sugg | 11,754 |
| | Harlee | 11,316 |
| | King | 12,391 |
| | Braden River | 9,453 |
| | Johnson | 8,899 |
| | Haile | 9,102 |
| High Schools | Bayshore | 16,754 |
| | Lakewood Ranch | 8,252 |
| | Manatee | 23,332 |
| | Palmetto | 12,989 |
| | Southeast | 17,317 |
| | MAVTC | 12,071 |
| Total | | $330,393 |

Source:  Manatee County School District

## Majority of SAC Chairs Were Aware of Lottery Funds

We interviewed 10 SAC chairs and found the majority of SACs were allocated lottery funds. These funds are to be used at the discretion of the SACs and a portion of these funds must be used to implement their school improvement plan.

However, three SAC chairs communicated the following situations at their schools regarding the use of lottery funds:

- one SAC chair was informed the lottery funds allocated to the SAC were to be used at the discretion of the principal;
- one SAC chair was not aware of the total amount of funds allocated to the SAC; and
- one SAC chair resigned due to perceived improprieties in the SAC bookkeeping records.

## SAC Members Need to Know Legal Requirements Pertaining to Use of Lottery Funds

The district has not ensured that SAC members are provided information regarding the legal expenditure of lottery funds designated specifically as SAC appropriations. District staff indicated SAC members may not be consistently provided information regarding the legal expenditure of lottery funds. District staff have provided some information to principals regarding the expenditure of lottery funds by staff; however, district staff do not know whether SAC members have received this information. The district needs to develop a procedure to annually inform SAC members of the legal requirements that pertain to the lottery funds allocated to their council. The General Appropriations Act states that a portion of these funds should be used for implementing the school improvement plan. The district should develop procedures to ensure that SAC members are informed of their roles and responsibilities as SAC members including their responsibilities that pertain to the expenditure of lottery funds. This is critical as the 1998 Legislature directed the SACs be the final decision-making body at the school relating to school improvement, and beginning in 1999-2000, each plan must also address issues relative to budget, training, instructional materials, technology, staffing, student support services, and other matters of resource allocation, as determined by the school board.

# *Recommendations*

- *At the beginning of each new school year the district should provide SAC members information or training regarding their roles and responsibilities as SAC members and the requirements associated with the expenditure of lottery funds. The district also needs to develop some policies and procedures that relate to the expenditure of lottery funds by SACs. At a minimum, the district needs to develop and implement the following two procedures.*
  - *Adopt a procedure to ensure that principals use lottery funds as determined by the SAC. SAC members should be provided a copy of the principals proposed budget that identifies the amount of lottery funds allocated to the SAC and the proposed expenditures of the SAC. The proposed budget and any budget amendments that pertain to the use of the SAC's lottery funds should be signed by the SAC chair to verify that the proposed budget includes the items agreed upon by the SAC. The*

> *budget and budget amendments with the SAC chair's signature should be submitted to the Finance director.*
>
> – *A procedure to hold principals accountable when the SAC is not informed of the lottery funds or provided discretion in spending the lottery funds.*
>
> • *These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 4 Does the district account for the use of its lottery funds in an acceptable manner?

> *No. The district needs to improve its accounting procedures for the use of its lottery funds. Specifically, the district needs to reconcile its lottery fund expenditures to its allocations.*

## The District Uses a Unique Funding Code for Receipt of Lottery Funds

The school district has a unique funding source code to account for the receipt of its Educational Enhancement Funds, but not its expenditures. The district uses the Department of Education's uniform account number for the receipt of its lottery funds. Account number 3344 is used to record money allocated from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund pursuant to appropriation by the Legislature. The district uses project numbers 802 (SAC expenditures) and 806 (lottery expenditures) to track its lottery expenditures. However, project number 806 includes lottery funds and funds from other sources within the district.

## The District Does Not Use a Unique Code for Its Expenditure of Lottery Funds

The district's recorded lottery fund expenditures exceed the amount of lottery funds allocated to the district. The district has not reconciled its lottery fund expenditures to its allocations. The district does not have a unique project number to record lottery fund expenditure. The district submitted its 1996-97 annual expenditure report for the discretionary lottery to the Department of Education and reported $6,661,833 in expenditures. However, the district's internal Projects Expenditures Report indicates that $8,458,082 was spent to support project number 806 (lottery funds-salaries and benefits). Therefore, the district's internal lottery account expenditures exceed its lottery expenditures reported to the Department of Education by about $1.8 million. The reason for this difference is the way the district budgets for the use of its lottery funds. The district identifies specific positions it plans to support using lottery funds. If the lottery funds appropriated to the district by the Legislature are less than the amount needed to fund the earmarked positions the district supplements the lottery funds in order to fully fund the earmarked positions. District staff stated the reason for the historical discrepancies is that the Legislature has annually reduced the amount of lottery funds allocated to the district and district staff has not adjusted the number of positions earmarked to be supported by lottery funds.

The district has begun to improve how it accounts for the use of lottery funds by generally reconciling the receipt and expenditure of its lottery funds. The district needs to use project number 806 to track only its lottery fund expenditures and not all expenditures associated with supporting positions that were earmarked to be supported by lottery funds. For Fiscal Year 1998-99 the district has earmarked

lottery funds, equal to its allocation, to support teachers, teacher aides, media specialists, and guidance counselors.

# *Recommendation*

- *We recommend that the district develop and implement written guidelines to ensure appropriate management of its lottery funds.  These guidelines should specifically identify procedures that eliminate the occurrence of lottery fund expenditures exceeding the amount of lottery funds allocated by the district.*
- *Action Plan 6-3 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 6-3*

## Improve the Process by Which
## District Accounts for the Use of Its Lottery Funds

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Use written guidelines to ensure the appropriate management of lottery funds. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  Develop written guidelines that, at a minimum, include |
| |     a.  the requirement to allocate lottery funds from the budget equal to the appropriation from the state; |
| |     b.  a procedure to ensure the district uses a unique project number for the expenditure of its lottery funds; |
| |     c.  a procedure to ensure expenditures are consistent with the district's definition of enhancement – describe how the expenditures are consistent with the definition; |
| |     d.  a process to evaluate the benefit the district is receiving as a result of how the district is spending its lottery funds; and |
| |     e.  a procedure to provide the results of the benefits analysis to the public, school board, and appropriate district staff. |
| Who Is Responsible | Finance director |
| Time Frame | February 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 5 Does the district annually evaluate and report the extent to which lottery fund expenditures have enhanced student education?

*No. The district needs to annually evaluate the extent to which lottery fund expenditures have enhanced student education and communicate to the public on a quarterly basis how it has used its lottery funds.*

The district annually submits lottery expenditure reports to the Department of Education. As required by the law, the district submits an annual report to the state department that identifies the actual expenditures of its enhancement funds. District expenditures should be reported to the department within 60 days following the end of the fiscal year.

## Benefits of Projects Supported by Lottery Funds Are Unknown

Neither the district nor the SACs evaluate the benefits of projects implemented with lottery funds. The district does not have a process in place to ensure that the district or SACs evaluate the specific benefits of projects implemented with lottery funds and the extent to which lottery fund expenditures enhanced student education. Since lottery funds are appropriated to enhance student education, the district should determine whether the expenditures have yielded desired results. The district and the SACs should have a process in place to assess the overall effectiveness of the programs and activities purchased with lottery funds. If a specific expenditure is not achieving the desired results, an alternative method should be utilized to achieve the desired goals.

## The District Does Not Report Its Lottery Expenditures to the Public on a Quarterly Basis as Required by Law

Each school district is required by law, on a quarterly basis, to make available to the public and to distribute, in an easy to understand format, the expenditure of lottery funds. The district needs to comply with the law and report to the public, beyond the school community, on a quarterly basis how it is using its lottery funds. The district can not demonstrate that on a quarterly basis it makes available to the public and distributes, in an easy to understand format, the use of lottery funds allocated to the school district. The district should use existing mechanisms, such as the *Manatee Educator* publication and the *Perspectives* newsletter, to report its quarterly expenditures. The *Manatee Educator* is printed monthly (except in June, July, and August) and distributed to all district employees. *Perspectives* is the superintendent's newsletter printed quarterly and distributed to all students and parents. The newsletter is sent home to elementary students in the student's report card envelope. Secondary students report cards and newsletters are mailed.

## *Recommendations* ───────────────────────────────

- *We recommend that the district and each SAC evaluate the benefits derived from the use of its lottery funds. The district needs to develop goals and objectives for the activities*

*funded with its lottery funds while the school districts need to use the goals and objectives in their school improvement plans to assess the effectiveness of their use of funds. In addition, we recommend that the district comply with the law by reporting on a quarterly basis how it is using its funds. This report should be distributed beyond school district staff and parents of students. Distribution should include other stakeholders such as the general public and the community at-large who reside in Manatee County.*

- *Action Plan 6-4 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 6-4*

# Annually Evaluate and Report the Extent to Which Lottery Fund Expenditures Have Enhanced Student Education

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Annually evaluate the benefits of projects and activities supported with lottery funds. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Develop a procedure for district staff to use to ensure that the projects and activities supported by district discretionary funds are evaluated and the benefits identified. These procedures, at a minimum, should include |
| | | • a written document from the district that identifies the methodology and results of its evaluation; |
| | | • a clear communication in writing of the goals and measurable objectives the district has established for how it uses its lottery funds and a determination whether the goals were achieved; and |
| | | • the results of the evaluation to be annually reported to the school board and the public. |
| | Step 2: | Develop a procedure for SACs to use to ensure that the projects and activities supported with its lottery funds are evaluated and the benefits identified. |
| | | • The SAC should document the methodology it used to assess the effects of its lottery-funded programs or activities and identify the SAC members involved in the assessment. |
| | | • The SAC should report its evaluation results in writing to its members and other interested parties. |
| | | • The SAC should report its evaluation results in its school improvement plan. |
| | | • The SAC should submit its evaluation results together with its expenditure statement (refer to recommendation 2, page 6-11) to the Finance director. |
| | | • The SAC should use the results of its evaluation in determining future lottery fund expenditures. |
| Who Is Responsible | School improvement specialist | |
| Time Frame | May 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

| Recommendation 2 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Communicate to the public, on a quarterly basis, how the district is using its lottery funds, including the benefits derived from the use of these funds. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a process to inform the school district community and the general public, on a quarterly basis, how the district is using its lottery funds and the benefits associated with using these funds. The community relations coordinator for the district needs to ensure lottery expenditures and benefits are reported quarterly<br><br>• in the Manatee Educator publication to inform school district staff;<br><br>• in the Perspectives newsletter to inform parents and students; and<br><br>• in press releases to inform the general public and community of the Manatee County School District. |
| Who Is Responsible | Finance director |
| Time Frame | November 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 7 Use of State and District Construction Funds

*The district is generally using construction funds appropriately and for the intended purpose. The district could improve by exploring all avenues of construction alternatives and plan in such a manner that ensures cost efficiency both in the capital outlay expenditures and with future operations.*

## Conclusion

The Manatee County School District utilizes the standards in two of the four best practices regarding the use of state and district construction funds. In general, capital outlay funds have been spent for appropriate purposes and the accounting and reporting of such funds has been done in a proper manner. However, the district is not using best practices to insure that

- alternatives to construction have been fully explored before committing capital funds for a project,

- projects are planned in the most cost efficient manner, and

- new and/or modernized facilities will be operationally efficient.

## Is the District Using the Use of State and District Construction Funds Best Practices?

**No.** The district does not approve the use of construction funds after determining that the project(s) are cost efficient and in compliance with the designated purpose of the funds. (page 7-4)

**Yes.** The district uses capital outlay funds for facilities construction projects and uses operational funds for facilities maintenance and operations. (page 7-9)

**No.** When designing and constructing new educational facilities, the district does not incorporate factors that minimize the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility. (page 7-10)

**Yes.** The district uses, accounts for, and reports the use of educational facilities construction funds in a proper manner. (page 7-11)

### Additional Finding

Provide a process for regular communication between the facilities and finance departments.

# *Fiscal Impact of Recommendations*

- The district could reduce the need for new facilities by 2.5% if year-round programs are implemented in 10% of the new facilities needed. Based on $176,000,000 of need over the next five-year period this would result in an annual savings of $880,000 totaling $4,400,000 over the five-year period.
- Value engineering has been shown to reduce the cost of construction by an average of .5%. The savings is often achieved through the development of more efficient circulation patterns, dual use of spaces that still meet the goals of the educational specifications, and reduction in the cost of mechanical systems. Assuming the cost of the value engineering process to be $15,000 per project, the savings annually will be $146,000 with a total over the next five-year period of $730,000.
- The development of a facilities design manual that emphasizes consistency and standardization should result in a savings of $4,000 - $5,000 for each major project. Assuming 10 major projects over the next five-year period, the annual savings could equal $10,000.

*Exhibit 7-1*

**Implementing the Recommendations for
Use of State and District Construction Funds
Should Enable the District to Save $956,000 Per Year**

| Recommendation | Fiscal Impact |
|---|---|
| • Implement year-round programs in 10% of the district's schools | • This will result in an annual savings of $800,000 in Fiscal Year 1999-2000 |
| • Implement a value engineering process for major construction projects | • This will result in an annual savings of $146,000 over the next five years |
| • Utilize a facilities design manual (standardized products, etc.) | • This will result in an annual savings of $10,000 over the next five years |

# *Background*

State of Florida requirements for the use of capital funds are included in the *State Requirements for Educational Facilities* which provides the basis for the use of construction funds, the types of funds available and the associated eligibility criteria, and the types of investments and purchases that are allowable. Eight Manatee County School District policies have a direct effect on the use of construction funds (as indicated in the 1996-2001 school plant survey).

- School size
- Elimination of the use of wooden buildings
- Use of relocatable buildings
- Amount of space required by type of student station
- Desirable student capacity

- Initial and ultimate student capacity
- Utilization factors
- Use of state and local funds

In the Manatee County School District the responsibility for the development and implementation of the above policies is within the superintendent's office while the management of the capital budget is coordinated through the Finance director's office. The development of the capital budget and the five-year plan is completed within the office of the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Support Services with specific assistance from the director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations and the assistant director of Construction Services.

The result of the recent facility planning in the Manatee County School District is that there recently have been extensive facility improvements, and there are plans for a great deal more over the next five-year period. Over the past five years the district, with construction management services provided through the Department of Management Services (DMS), has completed construction or major renovations at five high schools and three middle schools as well as numerous upgrades at other facilities. While final cost data is not yet available for all projects, the overall costs appear to be high. For example, in 1996, the district completed the construction of the new Carlos Haile Middle School at a total cost of $18,400,000. With a total square footage of 151,936, the cost per square foot was $121. This can be compared to the average cost for middle schools nationwide in 1996 (as reported by American School & University) of $108.59. The five high school projects are currently in the final stages and final cost information is not available.

Complete data is available for projects completed from 1990-1994. Exhibit 7-2 below provides outlines the costs associated with projects during that time period. This can be compared to the average cost in 1994 of $95.12 per square foot for elementary schools and $95.08 for middle schools.

*Exhibit 7-2*

# Facilities Department Projects

| Year | Project | Total Cost | Square Foot | Cost Per Square Foot |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1990 | Sea Breeze Elementary School | $ 6,007,000 | 84,596 | $71 |
| 1990 | Tara Elementary School | 5,647,212 | 105,556 | 54 |
| 1991 | Louise Rogers Johnson Middle School | 10,956,000 | 156,556 | 70 |
| 1993 | Gene Witt Elementary School | 6,969,000 | 96,699 | 72 |
| 1993 | Oneco Elementary School | 7,348,000 | 105,655 | 70 |
| 1994 | James Tillman Elementary School | 7,982,000 | 98,755 | 81 |

Likewise the planning for the next five-year period totals over $360,000,000 in planned expenditures including the addition of two new elementary and one new middle school. In addition, the five-year capital plan shows over $140,000,000 in unfunded needs that include the replacement of three elementary schools and other needed improvements to current facilities.

With this degree of facilities construction being planned for the next five-year period, the utilization of best practices in the use of state and local construction funds is a critical area for the Manatee County School District.

# *Are the Best Practices for Use of State and Local Construction Funds Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district uses state and local educational facilities construction funds to meet its construction and renovation priorities in a cost-effective manner.**

## 1  Does the district approve use of construction funds only after determining that the project(s) are cost efficient (in comparison with other feasible alternatives) and in compliance with the designated purpose of the funds?

*No.  The district approves use of construction funds after determining that the project(s) are cost efficient and in compliance with the designated purpose of the funds by utilizing Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) data and the services of DMS to assist with cost control. They do not, however, have other cost-efficiency procedures in place.  In order to achieve greater cost savings the district needs to examine and partially implement year-round schedules, implement a value engineering process and develop a facilities design manual.*

## Cost Savings Alternatives Could Be Implemented

The overall result of the examination of this best practice results in a partial yes and no answer.  The district uses FISH data for determining unmet needs and has utilized the services of DMS to assist with cost control.  There are not, however, process in place to evaluate cost efficiency (e.g., alternatives to construction, value engineering, standardization of projects, etc.).

The district has analyzed alternatives primarily utilizing FISH data to determine overall need and initial budgets.  The district has adopted space and utilization criteria and has an inventory by school and type of space.  This data is included in the 1996–2001 Educational Plant Survey.  Also documented is the use of temporary buildings to deal with enrollment highs and lows.  Once the facility priorities have been established the district has extensively examined the cost differences regarding modernization as opposed to replacement of a given facility utilizing the Castaldi generalized formula for school modernization.  This methodology examines educational program needs, health and safety improvements, useful life of the facility and site issues in determining the most cost-effective alternative.  The formula for comparisons using this method adds the total costs of modernizations

(including educational, health and safety improvements), subtracts this total from the cost of a replacement school, compares this with the estimated life of a replacement school and develops an index for making judgments. Utilizing this methodology for assistance with the determination to replace rather than remodel the Bayshore Middle School proved to be a reasonable decision.

The district included a brief analysis of year-round schools within the 1996-2001 educational plant survey but little has been done regarding its possible implementation. In districts similar to Manatee County that are experiencing rapid growth, the use of a year-round program in selected schools on a voluntary basis has often proven successful. While a previous committee unilaterally rejected this option, it has not been examined on the basis of a voluntary program. This is an alternative that the Manatee County School District should examine.

The Manatee County School District should implement a value engineering process in order to examine all construction alternatives prior to commencing construction. With the amount of projects that are underway and/or in the planning stages the Manatee District should be realizing construction savings (as well as creative design alternatives as discussed in Chapter 8 of this report) through a value engineering process. While the district contends that value engineering has been conducted, in fact there has been a cost reduction process completed on each project. Commonly projects have been designed, a budget developed, and then a percentage of the budget reduced. The process has been done by the same individuals that have been involved throughout the project.

In fact, a value engineering process should be conducted by an independent consulting team comprised of architects, mechanical and electrical engineers, landscape architects, educational specialists, cost estimators and other professionals. The value engineering process should be conducted early in design development when enough design information is available to determine costs accurately. The purpose of this process is to review the proposed design and provide suggestions from professionals that take a fresh look at the project. The process includes an independent study of systems and materials that are proposed with the goal of reducing costs without reducing quality. It is conceivable, however, that a valid value engineering process could increase initial costs if a long term value is generated.

The Manatee County School District should develop a facilities design manual that emphasizes consistency and standardization. Again, with the number of projects planned in the Manatee district the district should provide all contractors with a design manual that (where practical) allows either one or two manufacturers of products for selected items (i.e., lockers, toilet accessories, plumbing fixtures, mechanical units, bleachers, food service equipment, etc.). This standardization will save costs over time because excessive parts stocking will not be required and training on the repair of multiple types of equipment will not be necessary. Portions of the construction requirements manual currently in existence could be incorporated in the revised design manual, but the purpose is not primarily for the conduct of construction practices (as is the focus of the current manual) but to standardize materials in order to lower future maintenance costs.

# *Recommendations*

- *Based on the above, we recommend that the district thoroughly examine year-round schedule opportunities, implement a value engineering process and develop a facilities design manual.*
- *Action Plan 7-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

# Fiscal Impact of Implementing
# Multi-Track Year-Round Education

To determine the fiscal impact, it is assumed that 10% of the schools will be converted to year-round education programs. Since a typical four-track system reduces the space need by 25%, the actual reduction in space need would be 2.5% districtwide. Carrying this over to the expected construction need over the next five years totaling $176,000,000, the total reduction will be $4,4,000,000 or an average of $880,000 per year. Since the implementation could not occur until the 1999-2000 year the savings is shown over a four-year period. This is reasonable due to the fact that the construction reduction would occur in projects started after that date.

*Exhibit 7-3*

# Implementing Year-Round Programs
# in 10% of the District's Schools Will Save
# the District $4,400,000 Over the Next Five Years

|  | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Savings (in millions) | $0 | $1.1 | $1.1 | $1.1 | $1.1 |
| Cumulative Savings (in millions) | 0 | 1.1 | 2.2 | 3.3 | 4.4 |

# Fiscal Impact of Implementing Value Engineering

To determine the fiscal impact, it is assumed that value engineering will cost an average of $15,000 per project and result in a 0.5% savings due to the implementation of value engineering recommendations. Also assuming 10 projects with a total cost of $176,000,000 the savings will total $146,000 per year for a five-year total of $730,000. The savings is calculated as 0.05% of $176,000,000 less the $150,000 cost of the value engineering process.

*Exhibit 7-4*

# Implementing a Value Engineering Process
# for Each Major Construction Project Will Save
# the District $730,000 Over the Next Five Years

|  | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Savings | $146,000 | $146,000 | $146,000 | $146,000 | $146,000 |
| Cumulative Savings | 146,000 | 292,000 | 438,000 | 584,000 | 730,000 |

## Fiscal Impact of Development of a Facilities Design Manual

To determine the fiscal impact, it is assumed that implementing the recommendations included in a facilities design manual (standardized products, etc.) will result in an avenge savings of $5,000 per major project. Also assuming 10 major projects over the next five-year period (or two per year) the total savings will be $50,000.

*Exhibit 7-5*

## Developing a Facilities Design Manual and Implementing the Recommendations Will Save the District $50,000 Over the Next Five Years

|  | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Savings | $10,000 | $10,000 | $10,000 | $10,000 | $10,000 |
| Cumulative Savings | 10,000 | 20,000 | 30,000 | 40,000 | 50,000 |

*Action Plan 7-1*

## Improve Cost Efficiency in the Use of Construction Funds

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Examine the year-round schedule opportunities. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Form committee of educators and parents to examine year-round schedules and make a recommendation to the board regarding the possible implementation in Manatee County. This committee should look at programs that have been implemented in other districts and evaluate the possibility of creating pilot programs in Manatee County. |
| | Step 2: Develop multi-track year-round schedules for use in the selected schools. The schedule should reflect at least a four-track system so that the capacity of the facility will be increased by 25% (one-quarter of the students are on break at any given time). |
| | Step 3: Present results of the committee findings and possible multi-track year-round schedules for the board's consideration. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | Form Committee - Fall 1998<br>Report to board - Spring 1999<br>Implement year-round schedule (if approved) – 1999–2000 year |
| Fiscal Impact | This could reduce the need for facilities by 2.5% resulting in an annual savings of $880,000. |

| Recommendation 2 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Implement value engineering. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Form value engineering teams consisting of educators and design professionals. |
| | Step 2: | The team will then perform a value engineering analysis on all major projects (new schools and remodeling in excess of 25% of total value). This process should be completed at the completion of the schematic design phase so there is sufficient information regarding the project but it is not too late to make cost saving changes. |
| | Step 3: | Implement cost savings recommendations as appropriate. The cost savings will be based primarily on the examination of systems and materials proposed. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities Planning | |
| Time Frame | Implement value engineering design savings – January 2000 year | |
| Fiscal Impact | This could reduce construction costs by an average of 0.5% resulting in an annual savings of $146,000. | |

| Recommendation 3 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop facilities design manual. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Develop a design manual that will increase standardized materials and maintenance standards for all new and/or renovated schools. Specifically, the design manual, where practical, should allow only two or three manufacturers of products for items that are used regularly throughout the district. (i.e., lockers, toilet accessories, plumbing fixtures, food service equipment, etc.) This standardization will save costs over time because excessive parts stocking will not be required and training on the repair of multiple type of equipment will not be necessary. |
| | Step 2: | Products approved for inclusion in the design manual should be proven products of performance that have been reviewed and approved by both facilities construction and operations. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities Planning | |
| Time Frame | Develop and Implement design manual standards – July 1999. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This could result in an annual savings of $10,000. | |

# 2 Does the district use capital outlay funds for facilities construction projects and operational funds for facilities maintenance and operations?

*Yes. All items included in the five-year plan (and budgeted as capital outlay) are appropriate capital expenditures. In addition, there is no indication of capital funds being used for maintenance and operations and, conversely, maintenance and operations funds being used for capital.*

# District Procedures and Practices Verify that Capital Funds Are Used Appropriately

A review of the financial records regarding capital expenditures districtwide and a detailed examination of the construction of the new Lakewood Ranch High School show the funds utilized are appropriate uses for capital funds.

Exhibit 7-6 shows the anticipated capital expenditures for the next five-year facilities plan. The categories of expenditure are appropriate for the capital budget and the breakdown by percentage of the total expenditures is reasonable.

*Exhibit 7-6*

## Anticipated Capital Expenditures, 1998-2003

| Expenditure Category | Anticipated Expenditures | Percentage of Total Capital Plan Expenditures[1] |
|---|---|---|
| Major school construction | $160,587,839 | 44% |
| Other facility projects | 41,083,371 | 11% |
| Technology improvements | 47,151,894 | 13% |
| Equipment/buses | 29,106,243 | 8% |
| Fund transfers | 8,053,626 | 2% |
| Debt service | 75,870,505 | 21% |

[1] Does not equal 100% due to rounding

Source: Manatee County School District, Five-Year Capital Plan

# The District Uses the DOE Projections, the Survey Process, and FISH to Determine Whether Facilities Needs Are Met

The district FISH data is up to date and included as an appendix to the school plant survey. This data has been analyzed in the development of the long-range plan and when the district questioned the data an independent analysis was completed and submitted to the state. State officials subsequently accepted this data.

# 3 When designing and constructing new educational facilities, does the district incorporate factors to minimize the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility?

*No. Maintenance and operation cost control is generally not a factor in the design of new and/or modernized facilities. The district does not have a design manual and, while some individuals have been included on project teams, there is no formal process for including maintenance and operation personnel in the planning process.*

## Future Maintenance and Operations Cost Factors Could Be a Part of the Planning for New and Renovated Facilities

The district has not identified factors related to the maintenance and operations costs of new facilities, used the factors when designing and constructing new facilities, used the factors when selecting equipment and furnishings, or regularly revised the factors.

In addition to the development of a design manual (Recommendation 6-3 above) the Manatee County School District should include maintenance and operations personnel in the development of the design standards manual. Maintenance and operations personnel, including district supervisors, site supervisors and site staff all have experience with the different products and materials. Their experience will be a valuable resource in the development of the design standards.

The Manatee County School District should regularly include maintenance and operations personnel on the project design teams. The project design teams (which is discussed in Chapter 8 of this report) should regularly include maintenance and operations personnel. Their experience and expertise will be a valuable resource in the development of a specific project and will help to ensure that the design reflects a commitment to minimizing future maintenance and operation costs.

## *Recommendations* ———————————————————————

*Action Plan 7-2*

## Minimize Maintenance and Operations Costs in New Facilities

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Include maintenance and operations personnel on the committee to develop a design manual in order to better identify standardized materials that are cost effective from the users point of view. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Appoint maintenance and operations personnel to the design manual committee. |
| | Step 2: | Include personnel representing both districtwide and site level maintenance functions. |

| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities Planning |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | Form committee - fall 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This could be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 2** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Include maintenance and operations personnel on all facility project teams. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | When facility project teams are created, for both the development of educational specifications and the project team, include personnel that are currently involved in the maintenance and operations aspect of the facility. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities Planning | |
| Time Frame | Begin with any new committees formed. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This could be implemented with existing resources. | |

# 4 Does the district use, account for and report the use of educational facilities construction funds in a proper manner?

*Yes. Capital expenditures have been properly accounted for.*

## Construction Funds Are Used for Appropriate Purposes

An examination of the capital budget and district policies indicates that the use of construction funds is consistent with established policies, appropriate funding codes are in place, policies and procedures that relate to the use of construction funds are in place, and submits an annual report to the Department of Education showing expenditures of all facilities construction funds.

As with the examination of the use of construction vs. operational funds, an examination of the reporting regarding the new Lakewood Ranch High School and the overall budgeting for capital expenditures demonstrates proper accounting.

## *Additional Finding* ───────────────────────

As discussed in the background section above, the Facilities Planning and Financial Accounting are housed in separate administrative departments. While this is often the case, there is usually a regular process for communication between the departments. In Manatee County the Facilities Department develops capital budgets but there is little evidence of input from the Finance Office. Regular communications between the departments would result in a better understanding of the need and of possible finance alternatives. It is therefore recommended that a regular communications process be established for the development of the five-year capital plan, that the plan be regularly updated, and that representatives of both the Facilities and Finance Departments be included.
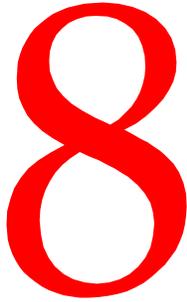
# 8 Facilities Construction

*The district needs to improve current practices for facilities construction. Many best practice areas are partially met but need to be improved in order to provide quality facilities at the lowest cost. The district needs to implement its new organization structure, include more stakeholders in the facilities planning process, and develop facility standards and educational specifications.*

## *Conclusion*

Facilities construction in the Manatee County School District has recently been in a period of rapid growth with the completion of five new high schools, two new middle schools, and numerous renovations over the past five-year period. While the need for the secondary schools was apparently great, there is no way of systematically determining if those were, in fact, of the highest priority. The district has not conducted a comprehensive facility condition assessment or prioritized projects based on the identified greatest needs. Notwithstanding, the new schools are operating, were completed within budget, and have been generally well received. The challenge for the future is to continue on a more modest schedule and ensure that the highest priorities are being met at the lowest reasonable cost. Decisions will need to be made regarding the method of construction (i.e., construction management, design-build, traditional approach), the organization of the construction services staff, and the prioritization of projects. In addition, there will need to be a regular working relationship established between the facilities and finance departments.

In summary, it would appear that the district is generally not utilizing facilities construction best practices. They are, however, using pieces of the best practices throughout the facilities department. The following recommendations are intended to assist with this process of providing direction and organization to the facilities issues. Perhaps foremost is the need for the development of a framework for long-range facilities planning. The director of Facilities Construction has recently developed a new framework that was adopted by the board in May 1998. The implementation of this framework should be given a high priority, as it should facilitate the district's use of facilities construction best practices. Once this issue is thoroughly discussed, amended, and put in place, the foundation will exist for a quality construction program.

## *Is the District Using the Facilities Construction Best Practices?*

### Long-Range Facilities Planning

**No.** The district has not established authority and assigned responsibilities for educational facilities planning. (page 8-8)

***Yes.*** The district has allocated adequate resources to develop and implement a realistic long-range master plan for educational facilities. (page 8-12)

***No.*** The district has not established a standing committee that includes a broad base of school district and community stakeholders. (8-14)

***No.*** The district has not assigned one person with the authority to keep facilities construction projects within budget. (8-15)

***No.*** The district has not assigned budget oversight of each project or group of projects to a single project manager. (8-17)

## Facility Needs, Costs, and Financing Methods

***Yes.*** The district uses a capital planning budget based on comprehensive data collected in early stages of the master plan. (8-18)

***Yes.*** In developing the capital planning budget, the district considers innovative methods for funding and financing construction projects. (8-19)

***Yes.*** The capital planning budget accurately lists facility needs, costs, and recommended financing for each year of a five-year period. (page 8-20)

## Selection and Acquisition of School Sites

***No.*** The district starts school site selection well in advance of expected need, but has not established a broadly representative site selection committee. (page 8-21)

***Yes.*** The district has developed school site selection criteria to ensure that schools are located to serve the proposed attendance area economically, with maximum convenience and safety. (8-22)

***Yes.*** The board considers the most economical and practical locations for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as need to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to development, and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties. (page 8-23)

***Yes.*** The district has a system to assess sites to ensure prices paid reflect fair market value. (page 8-24)

***Yes.*** For each project or group of projects, the architect and district facilities planner develops a plan to serve as a decision-making tool for future facilities needs. (page 8-24)

## Site and Facility Needs Identified

***Yes.*** The district can demonstrate that its identified facilities needs are based on thorough demographic study. (page 8-25)

## Existing Facilities--Alternatives to New Construction

***Yes.*** The district uses the official Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) inventory to analyze student capacity and classroom utilization. (page 8-26)

*No.*    The facilities planning leader, in cooperation with the instructional leader and the director(s) of maintenance and operations, does not conduct an evaluation of the physical condition and education adequacy of existing facilities and ensure that school facilities' inventories are up-to-date.  (page 8-26)

*Yes.*    The district considers alternatives to new construction such as year-round education, extended-day schools, changes in grade-level configuration, changes in attendance boundaries, and use of relocateable facilities (portables) to help smooth out the impact in peaks and valleys in future student enrollment.  (page 8-28)

## Facility Planning and Construction

*Yes.*    The district uses an architect selection committee to screen applicants and identify and evaluate finalists.  (page 8-29)

*Yes.*    The district involves architects in all key phases of the planning process.  (page 8-30)

*No.*    The architect selection committee does not review and evaluate the architects' performance at the completion of projects and refer findings to the board.  (page 8-31)

## Educational Specifications Developed

*No.*    The district does not develop a general project description that includes a brief statement as to why each facility is being built, where it will be located, the population of students it is intended to serve, its estimated cost, the method of financing, the estimated time schedule for planning and construction, and the estimated date of opening.  (page 8-32)

*Yes.*    The district develops educational specifications before the architect begins to design a facility.  (page 8-34)

*No.*    The specifications do not include an educational program component relating the curriculum, instructional methods, staffing, and support services and also do not include a statement of the school's philosophy and program objectives.  (page 8-34)

*Yes.*    The specifications include a description of activity areas that describe the type, number, size, function, special characteristics, and spatial relationships of instructional areas, administrative areas, and services areas in sufficient detail that the architect will not have to guess at what will occur in each of these areas.  (page 8-36)

*No.*    The district does not communicate general building considerations, including features of the facility and the school campus in general, to the architect.  (page 8-37)

*No.*    The district does not use the educational specifications as criteria for evaluating the architect's final product.  (page 8-38)

*No.*    The school board-approved program requirements are not necessarily communicated to the architect before final working drawings are initiated.  (page 8-39)

*Yes.*    The board minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to minimize project costs.  (page 8-40)

## Architectural Planning and Financial Management Practices

***No.*** The board has not determined whether each new facility will be constructed using the traditional system of public works or by using some innovative system such as design/build or a construction manager. (8-41)

***Yes.*** The architect prepares the building specifications document. (page 8-43)

***Yes.*** The architect coordinates plans, specifications, and questions concerning the project. (page 8-43)

***Yes.*** After bids are opened and tabulated, they are submitted to the board for awarding the contract. Legal counsel makes certain that bid and contract documents are properly prepared and that the award is properly authorized. (page 8-43)

***Yes.*** The district has required the contractor to submit a signed owner-contractor agreement, workers' compensation insurance certificates, payment bond, performance bond, and guarantee of completion within the time required. (page 8-44)

***Yes.*** The architect recommends payment based on the percentage of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project. (page 8-44)

***Yes.*** The district requires continuous inspection of all school construction projects. (page 8-45)

***Yes.*** Buildings are not occupied prior to the notice of completion. (page 8-45)

## Evaluating New Facilities

***Yes.*** The district conducts a comprehensive orientation to the new facility prior to its use so that users better understand the building design and function. (page 8-46)

***No.*** The district does not conduct comprehensive building evaluations at the end of the first year of operation and periodically during the next three to five years to collect information about building operation and performance. (page 8-46)

***No.*** The district does not analyze building evaluations to determine whether facilities are fully used, operating costs are minimized, and changes in the district's construction planning process are needed. (page 8-47)

***No.*** The district does not analyze maintenance and operations costs to identify improvements to the district's construction planning process. (8-48)

# *Fiscal Impact of Recommendations*————————————

- *The cost of a complete evaluation of facilities is approximately $150,000 over the next five years.*
- *The savings through construction alternatives should equal at least 2% of construction costs or $3,700,000 over the next five-year period. This is in addition to the savings noted in Chapter 7.*
- *All other recommendations in this section can be completed with existing resources.*

*Exhibit 8-1*

## Implementing the Recommendations for Facilities Construction Should Enable the District to Save Over $3 Million During the Next Five Years

| Recommendation | Fiscal Impact |
| --- | --- |
| • Conducting a complete evaluation of facilities | • This would cost the district approximately $150,000 over the next five years |
| • Use of facilities construction alternatives to reduce costs | • This should save the district at least 2% of construction costs or $3,700,000 over the next five-year period |

### *Additional Findings*

- *The appointment of site administrators should be completed at the beginning phase of a new school project.*

# Background

The mission of the typical construction department is to provide new and modernized facilities that meet the needs of the students at the lowest possible cost. The specific goals of a construction department may include those enumerated below:

- to establish a policy and a framework for long range facilities planning;
- to provide valid enrollment projections on which to base estimates of future needs for sites and facilities;
- to select and acquire proper school sites and to time their acquisition to precede actual need while trying to avoid wasting space;
- to determine the student capacity and educational adequacy of existing facilities and to evaluate alternatives to new construction;
- to develop educational specifications that describe the educational program and from which the architect can design a functional facility that matches the needs of the curriculum with the potential to enhance and reinforce the education the district desires for its students;
- to secure architectural services to assist in planning and constructing facilities;
- to develop a capital planning budget that balances facility needs, expenditures necessary to meet those needs, and how expenditures will be financed;
- to translate satisfactorily the approved architectural plans into a quality school building and to do so within the budget and time scheduled; and
- to establish and carry out an orientation program so that users of the facility can better understand the design rationale and become familiar with the way the building is supposed to work.

As will be demonstrated in the review of each best practice area, the Manatee County School District has many of the above goals in place, but without a well-organized approach.  This is not uncommon in rapidly growing districts such as Manatee County.  However, due to such rapid growth, it is even more essential that a sound organizational plan be developed.  The following recommendations are intended to help provide this organizational direction.

In order to better understand the facility need, it is important to get a basic understanding of the current facilities.  Exhibit 8-2 below shows each school, the total square footage, the current enrollment, and the square footage per student.  It is difficult to draw comparisons with the Florida state requirements for educational facilities, which have been adopted by the Manatee County School District Board, since they are expressed in net square feet per student space rather than total gross square feet.  This total net square footage by school type (as reported in the Manatee School Plant Survey) is shown below.

| School Type | Total Net Square Feet | Total Student Stations | Net Square Feet Per Student |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 84,741 | 822 | 103 |
| Middle | 119,000 | 1,145 | 104 |
| High | 196,756 | 1,839 | 107 |

In order to provide a basis for comparison with gross square footage figures, it is necessary to assume the amount of space necessary for unassignable functions (i.e., corridors, mechanical, etc.) which is expressed as the net to gross ratio.  Assuming a net to gross ratio of 1.30% (the school plant survey lists the ratio in terms of "up to" figures that total 32 at middle schools and 34 at high schools) the total square footage standard adopted by the district would be 134 for elementary schools, 135 for middle schools, and 139 for high schools.

It is also possible to compare the Manatee gross square footage with the generally accepted ranges of 100-125 square feet per student at elementary schools, 125-150 square feet per student at middle schools and 150-175 square feet per student at high schools.  These ranges are based on the 1998 survey of public school construction published in *American School and University*  and recommendations suggested by the Council of Educational Facility Planners, International.

When examining the following data, it is also important to keep in mind that the district currently houses over 6,000 students in over 350 portable classrooms.

*Exhibit 8-2*

# Manatee County School District, 1998-99 Facility Data

| Site | Square Footage | Enrollment | Square Footage Per Student | Generally Accepted Ranges |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bayshore High | 265,000 | 1,713 | 155 | 150-175 |
| Lakewood Ranch High* | 298,000 | 870 | 343 | 150-175 |
| Manatee High | 302,000 | 2,350 | 129 | 150-175 |
| Manatee Technical** | 226,235 | 700 | 323 | ** |
| Palmetto High | 224,511 | 1,131 | 199 | 150-175 |
| Southeast High | 266,249 | 2,416 | 110 | 150-175 |
| **High Total (square footage per student does not include Lakewood Ranch or Manatee Technical)** | **1,581,995** | **9,180** | **148** | **150-175** |
| Braden River Middle | 165,113 | 842 | 196 | 125-150 |
| Haile Middle | 155,207 | 936 | 166 | 125-150 |
| Harlee Middle | 130,300 | 1,152 | 113 | 125-150 |
| Johnson Middle | 158,326 | 895 | 177 | 125-150 |
| King Middle | 118,441 | 1,279 | 93 | 125-150 |
| Lincoln Middle | 136,192 | 1,038 | 131 | 125-150 |
| Sugg Middle | 137,578 | 1,192 | 115 | 125-150 |
| **Middle Total** | **1,001,157** | **7,334** | **137** | **125-150** |
| Abel Elementary | 72,363 | 704 | 103 | 100-125 |
| Anna Maria Elementary | 39,122 | 387 | 101 | 100-125 |
| Ballard Elementary | 54,163 | 509 | 106 | 100-125 |
| Bashaw  Elementary | 88,941 | 807 | 110 | 100-125 |
| Bayshore Elementary | 94,177 | 858 | 110 | 100-125 |
| Blackburn Elementary | 98,684 | 775 | 127 | 100-125 |
| Braden River Elementary | 90,125 | 913 | 99 | 100-125 |
| Daughtrey Elementary | 85,828 | 812 | 106 | 100-125 |
| Duette Elementary | 6,196 | 20 | 310 | 100-125 |
| Manatee Elementary | 86,721 | 529 | 164 | 100-125 |
| Miller Elementary | 95,022 | 900 | 106 | 100-125 |
| Moody Elementary | 74,137 | 815 | 91 | 100-125 |
| Myakka Elementary | 58,346 | 398 | 147 | 100-125 |
| Oneco Elementary | 105,655 | 694 | 152 | 100-125 |
| Orange Ridge/Bullock Elementary | 117,071 | 861 | 136 | 100-125 |
| Palm View Elementary | 85,519 | 636 | 134 | 100-125 |
| Palma Sola Elementary | 86,800 | 700 | 124 | 100-125 |
| Palmetto Elementary | 101,481 | 911 | 111 | 100-125 |
| Prine Elementary | 74,202 | 793 | 94 | 100-125 |
| Samoset Elementary | 61,899 | 601 | 103 | 100-125 |
| Seabreeze Elementary | 84,596 | 677 | 125 | 100-125 |
| Stewart Elementary | 58,748 | 508 | 116 | 100-125 |
| Tara Elementary | 106,173 | 833 | 127 | 100-125 |
| Tillman Elementary | 107,388 | 586 | 183 | 100-125 |
| Wakeland Elementary | 89,246 | 659 | 135 | 100-125 |
| Witt Elementary | 96,829 | 667 | 145 | 100-125 |
| **Elementary Total** | **2,119,432** | **17,553** | **121** | **100-125** |

*Lakewood Ranch is a new school (opened in 1998) that was designed for 1,800 students.  The upper grades are being phased in over a two-year period.

**Manatee Technical is a specialized vocational school where typically square foot per student standards do not apply.

Source:  Manatee County School District

## *Are the Best Practices for Long-Range Facilities Planning Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district has a framework for long-range facilities planning to meet the needs of the district in a cost-efficient manner.**

# 1  Has the district established authority and assigned responsibilities for educational facilities planning?

*No.  The district does not have an adequate framework for long-range facility planning due to the following:*

- *the lines of authority and responsibility are unclear;*
- *no established standing committee exists;*
- *the budgetary responsibility is unclear; and*
- *the five-year plan has left significant projects unfunded.*

## Roles and Responsibilities Need to Be Clarified and Understood by All Parties

No written procedures exist for establishing authority and responsibility for facilities planning.  For the major projects included in the recent five-year plan, the services of the Department of Management Services (DMS) have been utilized.  However, there are also district project managers for each project but the division of roles is unclear.  Also, the organizational chart for facilities planning has been recently altered and is not fully understood by all parties.  This lack of understanding has resulted in misunderstandings of what is expected and the possibility for "passing the buck" when things go wrong.

Exhibit 8-3 below shows the prior organizational chart that was in place for the conduct of the recent five-year facilities plan.

*Exhibit 8-3*

# Prior Organizational Structure for Facilities Management
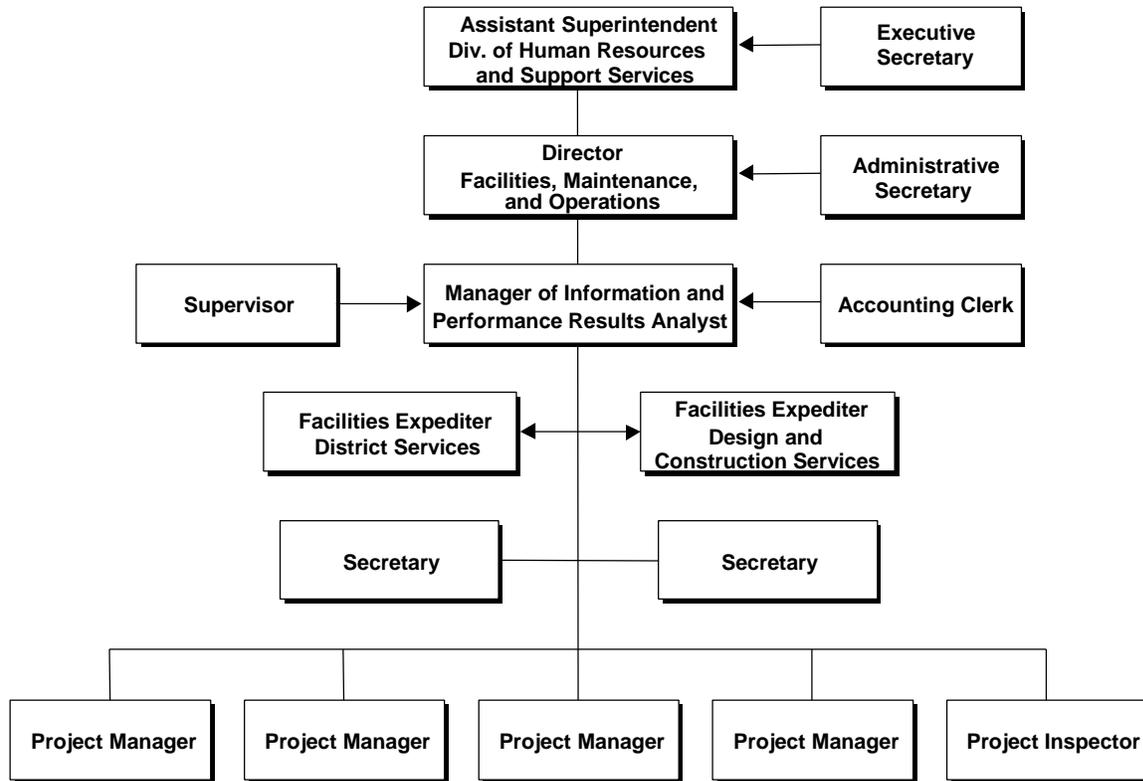


Source:  Manatee County School District

Under this organizational chart, the primary responsibility for the conduct of the facilities planning function was with the position of manager of information and performance results analyst.  Reporting to this position are the construction supervisor, facilities expeditors, and all project managers.  How each of these positions relate to the function of DMS is unclear.  District facilities personnel indicate that the initial concept was for DMS to work directly with a project manager assigned to the project.  In fact, DMS worked directly with district administrators which made the role of the project manager even more unclear.

In preparation for the next five-year plan implementation the board has adopted the organizational chart shown in Exhibit 8-4 below.

*Exhibit 8-4*

# Current Organization for Facilities Management in the Manatee County School District

```
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │ Assistant Director  │
                        │ Existing Position   │
                        └─────────────────────┘
          ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
          │ Facilities Expediter│      │ Accounting Clerk    │
          │ New Position        │      │ Existing Position   │
          └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
```

| Project Director (Projects<$500K) New Position | Project Director New Position | Staff Architect New Position | Project Director New Position | Project Director Existing Position |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facilities Expediter Existing Position | | Plan Room Specialist New Position | Facilities Expediter Existing Position | |
| Secretary II Existing Position | | | Secretary II Existing Position | |
| Clerk of the Works New Position | Clerk of the Works New Position | | Clerk of the Works New Position | Clerk of the Works New Position |

Source: Manatee County School District

This organizational chart is meant to be a flexible model where teams of project directors, clerks of the works, a facilities expediter and a secretary could be added or deleted as the workload dictates. Additional new positions including a staff architect and a plan room specialist, have been added to serve the department as a whole. As of September 1998 the board has adopted this organizational chart and one project team along with the staff architect have been staffed. In addition, the title of the clerk of the works position has been changed to project representative.

The concept behind the flexible organizational chart is sound. As the number of projects increase, the staffing level can easily adjust. It will be critical that the assistant director have the authority to quickly fill positions as the need requires. This also requires that the assistant director keep ahead of the personnel needs and plan accordingly. The facilities department has estimated that full implementation of the flexible organizational chart will require an increased budget of $145,000 due to the additional positions. It must be pointed out, however, that there will be a savings due to the elimination of the services of DMS.

Since no written procedures are in place, the district does not periodically review to see that non-essential procedures are eliminated.

# *Recommendations* ————————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district establish written procedures for carrying out the facilities function as provided for in the new organizational chart and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each position.*
- *Action Plan 8-1 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 8-1*

## Establish Written Procedures for Educational Facilities Planning

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | The district should provide written procedures that will allow for full implementation of the flexible organizational chart and provide a strong framework for carrying out the facilities planning function of the district. The facility needs are well documented within the five-year plan and, since the amount of actual construction will depend on the funding availability, the procedures will need to allow for a reasonable process to be utilized as the needs and resources change. |
| Action Needed | Provide written procedures that will do the following:<br><br>• Determine positions within the organizational chart that need to be immediately filled in order to carry out the first year of the five-year plan;<br><br>• Plan the number of positions (and corresponding funding level necessary) for each year of the facility plan;<br><br>• Provide for annually budgeting according to the facilities need; and<br><br>• Streamline the hiring process so positions can be filled quickly. |
| Who Is Responsible | School board – funding and approvals<br>Assistant facilities director – development of procedures |
| Time Frame | Development of procedures – immediately<br>Funding of positions – as workload dictates |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Procedures and guidelines need to be developed and implemented that will guide the personnel involved with the facility planning process. The implementation of the new organizational chart will require that both new job descriptions and facility planning procedures be developed. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Clearly define the responsibilities that are associated with each position included in the flexible organizational chart. This needs to include a clear definition of responsibility for each project, including financial responsibility. |

| | Step 2: | Thoroughly develop the policies and guidelines, with input from department staff. |
|---|---|---|
| | Step 3: | Submit policies and guidelines to the assistant superintendent for review and ultimately to the board for approval. Clearly define the role that any construction management process will have in the facilities process. |
| | Step 4: | Periodically review policies in order to keep them current and eliminate any that are outdated. |
| Who Is Responsible | | Assistant director of Facilities Construction |
| Time Frame | | Development of policies and procedures – Fall 1998<br>Adoption and Implementation – Spring 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 2  Has the district allocated adequate resources to develop and implement a realistic long-range master plan for educational facilities?

*Yes. The district has allocated adequate resources to develop and implement a realistic long-range master plan. The recent five-year period has seen all high schools rebuilt or significantly renovated, two new middle schools built and other significant renovations and additions. In order to implement the aggressive plan the services of DMS were utilized to coordinate construction activities during the last three years of the projects.*

## The District Has Been Aggressive With Its Funding for Facilities Improvements

The district has used staff time and resources to develop a long-range plan. The five-year plan is kept up to date and the resources necessary to complete the plan have been identified and presented to the board for its review.

The district data in the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) is kept accurate and up to date. The most recent School Plant Survey was completed in 1996 with revisions for new and/or renovated facilities completed as recently as the spring of 1998. The data included in the school plant survey and in the five-year capital plan addresses the requirements of Florida law for the use of construction funds. The time frames have been somewhat unrealistic due to the decision to complete the major high school projects in a short time period.

The district is not necessarily utilizing all existing capacity to the fullest extent. As shown in Exhibit 8-3, the square footage per student averages 121 at elementary schools, 137 at middle schools and 172 at high schools. As Exhibit 8- 5 below indicates, this is on the upper end of generally accepted ranges as discussed above.

*Exhibit 8-5*

## Square Footage Per Pupil

| School Type | Manatee County | Generally Accepted Ranges of Square Footage Per Pupil |
|---|---|---|
| Elementary | Average - 121<br>Lowest − 91 (Moody)<br>Highest − 183 (Tillman)<br><br>Duette Elementary is higher but should be considered as an anomaly due to its small size and remote location. | 100 − 125 |
| Middle | Average - 137<br>Lowest - 93 (King)<br>Highest − 196 (Braden) | 125 − 150 |
| High | Average - 148<br>Lowest - 110 (Southeast)<br>Highest − 199 (Palmetto) | 150 − 175 |

Source:  Manatee County School District

It should be pointed out that the average square footage is at elementary schools is less than that adopted by the district, the middle schools are at the adopted level and high schools are significantly over.  However, within each category certain specific schools exceed the standards.  It may be possible to review attendance boundaries, grade level configurations, and other alternative programs to alleviate some of the facility needs.

While building capacity and needs are kept up to date in the school plant survey, there is no policy regulating the use of temporary facilities.  Temporary facilities are a regular part of high growth school districts and Manatee County is no exception.  In fact, site plans for new and renovated facilities are planned for temporary classroom placement.  There needs to be, however, a policy in place providing guidance regarding the maximum number of temporary classrooms and the decision making criteria that will be utilized to both place and remove temporary classrooms.

There is also no district procedure in place regarding the necessity of small and remote schools.  Duette Elementary School has an enrollment of only 20 students, resulting in over 300 square feet per pupil.  While small schools have historically been necessary in remote locations, improved transportation systems have minimized this need.  In the case of Duette, the students could likely be transported to other facilities in approximately 30 to 45 minutes with little cost effect in addition to the transportation costs.

## *Recommendations*────────────────────────────

- *Conduct a thorough capacity and utilization analysis to determine where the most overcrowded conditions exist (and will exist in the future) and use the data to assist with*

> *the development of the five-year plan and guide discussion regarding possible alternative solutions.*

- *Consider closing Duette School. The cost per student (as reported by the district Finance Department) is more than double the districtwide average. The number of students is extremely small (20 in 1998), so the cost of transporting the students to nearby schools will be minimal.*

# 3 Has the district established a standing committee that includes a broad base of school district and community stakeholders?

> *No. The district has not established a standing committee for school facility planning.*

Since there is no established facilities committee, the district does not have a committee that

- is broadly representative of the community with members that are free from conflict of interest;
- has its role established in writing with district goals, procedures, and processes fully explained;
- has board-established goals and interim reporting targets;
- has an established mechanism for documenting decisions and reporting to the board;
- addresses future business needs and the resulting future educational program needs;
- addresses alternative program solutions and the feasibility of each; and
- periodically reviews the status of work on the long-range plan for the previous year, considers any changing parameters, and makes recommendations to the school board for adjustments to the long-range plan.

There currently exist committees for each project (which should be continued with the role clearly defined), but there needs to also be a districtwide standing committee formed. Typically a districtwide committee includes representation from the business community, parents groups, city and county authorities, and district staff. Such a committee will provide a broad base of support for the long-range plan and help with the overall community understanding of district facility needs.

## *Recommendation*

- *The district should form a facilities standing committee while continuing the existing project committee process for each major project. The roles and responsibilities for each committee are noted below.*

| Standing Committee | Project Committees |
|---|---|
| • Review of the five-year plan<br>• Review of the School Plant Survey<br>• Districtwide perspective with recommendations to the board (in order to provide districtwide perspective committee members should represent all geographic areas and be free from conflict of interest)<br>• Alternative solutions to facility issues<br>• Long term educational program needs | • Project based educational specifications<br>• Program needs for a specific project<br>• Work with the project director and the architect as the project progresses<br>• Site issues related to the specific project |

- *Action Plan 8-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 8-2*

## Establish a Standing Facilities Committee

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Establish a facilities standing committee. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Assistant superintendent should develop criteria for the committee and present to the board for approval. At that point, solicitations should be made for staff and community members to serve.<br><br>Step 2: Superintendent should appoint facilities committee members.<br><br>Step 3: Facilities director should coordinate committee activities. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Support |
| Time Frame | Development of criteria - Fall 1998<br>Board approval – January 1999<br>Committee appointed and in operation – Fall 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 4 Has the district assigned one person with the authority to keep facilities construction projects within budget?

*No. Within the prior organizational chart there is confusion as to who is responsible for the facilities construction budget. The new organizational chart is clearer but not yet fully understood.*

## Financial Responsibility for
## Construction Projects Has Been Unclear

Depending on the project, the budget responsibility has rested with the director of Facilities, the assistant director, the Facilities supervisor, the project manager, or with DMS. In addition, there has been some degree of budget oversight from the Finance Office, but the specific roles are unclear. As with the overall responsibility for facilities planning, the new flexible organizational chart will more clearly define roles and responsibilities.

The district has not established the credentials and construction related experience of the individual responsible for the implementation of the long-range plan, assigned the authority to a specific individual, or has necessarily had one position held accountable. However, the assistant director position within the new organizational chart has a more clearly defined role and job description that will include these roles and responsibilities.

# *Recommendation* ───────────────────────────

- *The district should clearly define the individual responsible for the construction budget and establish the credentials and experience required for the implementation of the long-range plan.*
- *Action Plan 8-3 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 8-3*

## Assign One Person With the Responsibility to
## Keep Construction Projects Within Budget

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Assign one person with the responsibility and authority to keep construction projects within budget. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Assign the responsibility of keeping construction projects within budget to the assistant director for Facilities within the new flexible organizational chart. |
| | Step 2: Clearly define the role of the assistant director within the new organizational chart, with the responsibility for the overall construction budget, and communicate this to all district personnel. |
| | Step 3: Define, within the position description for the assistant director, the qualifications necessary. These should include experience in both educational facility planning and construction process. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities |
| Time Frame | January 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 5 Has the district assigned budget oversight of each project or group of projects to a single project manager?

*No.  The district has not assigned budget oversight to a single project manager.*

## The Role of Project Managers Needs Clarification

In some cases, budget oversight has rested with the project manager.  However, the budget oversight has also been at times with the assistant director, the Facilities supervisor, DMS, and with the director of Facilities.  As with the lack of overall clarification of the roles and responsibilities for the department, the confusion regarding budget oversight has allowed for a lack of accountability.

Since there is not a formal designation for the individual(s) to be assigned for budget oversight of each project, the district has not established the credentials or assigned the responsibility to an individual that meets the criteria.  In many cases, however, this has been done through the utilization of project managers for individual projects.

Each project manager has reported directly to the person responsible for the implementation of the long-range plan.  Under both the previous organizational chart and the new flexible chart, project managers report to the assistant director for Facilities Construction.

## *Recommendation* —————————————————————————————

- *The district should clearly define the role of project managers within the new organizational chart, give them responsibility for the oversight of the budget for their assigned projects and see that they are accountable to the assistant director.  The implementation of this recommendation has not occurred but the structure is in place to see that it does.*
- *Action Plan 8-4 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 8-4*

## Assign the Budget Oversight for Each Project or Group of Projects to a Single Project Manager

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Assign the budget oversight for each project or group of projects to a single project manager. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Clearly define the role of the project manager within the new organizational chart with the responsibility for budget oversight. |
| | Step 2: | Define the qualifications necessary to carry out the role of project manager. |
| | Step 3: | Communicate the responsibilities and qualifications to district staff. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities |
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Are the Best Practices for Using a Capital Planning Budget Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district balances facility needs, costs, and financing methods through a capital planning budget.**

## 6 Does the district use a capital planning budget based on comprehensive data collected in the early stages of the master plan?

*Yes.  Through the use of the school plant survey and the five-year plan, the district develops and budgets for needed facility improvements.*

### A Prioritization Process Is in Place for the Development of the Capital Planning Budget

Projects are budgeted as funding is available according to eight categories of prioritization.

1.  Major projects
2.  Elimination of portables
3.  Academic support facilities
4.  Core facility needs
5.  Site improvements
6.  Other school requests
7.  Technology upgrades and replacements
8.  Athletic program needs

While the prioritization categories may need to be discussed and confirmed by the facilities committee (as recommended above), within the current framework projects are categorized within these parameters and budgets are developed accordingly.  These budgets are then utilized to develop the

budget for the five-year plan and the corresponding funding requests.  Funding for the five-year plan has utilized local sales tax revenues as well as appropriate state sources.

The district can demonstrate that a capital budget was prepared and was based on assessment of demographics and projected enrollment.  The capital budget is included in the district budget submitted to the board and is reflected annually in the five-year plan.  The demographics and projected enrollment are included in the school plant survey that has been kept up to date.  In addition, the Office of Pupil Accounting keeps accurate data regarding projected enrollments and changes in district demographics.

The district can demonstrate that the scope of projects included in the local sales-surtax revenue were spelled out in the resolution advertisement.  The advertisement for the last sales tax referendum included the list of projects to be completed.  Bond referendum proceeds have not been used so the indicator in not applicable.

# 7   In developing the capital planning budget did the district consider innovative methods for funding and financing construction projects?

*Yes.  The district has utilized a variety of local and state resources for the funding of capital projects.*

The district considers innovative, non-traditional methods for funding and financing construction projects.  The district has utilized the common methods of sales tax revenues, COPS, etc., and has also worked with the Department of Education for specific state approvals.

The district has evaluated the financial impact on current and future capital budgets.  The financial impact on current and future budgets is analyzed and presented with the five-year plan.  The board has utilized this information to determine the need for and type of proposal to be submitted to the district voters.

The district has not assessed each proposed project, evaluated the sizes of spaces and documented the elimination non-essential programs.  By so doing, the district can further refine its standards for facilities construction and eliminate any wasted spaces.  This should be corrected with the implementation of the utilization review recommended above.

## *Recommendations*

- *As recommended above (page 8-13), conduct a thorough capacity and utilization analysis to determine where the most overcrowded conditions exist (and will exist in the future).  As well as utilizing the data to assist with the development of the five-year plan also use the information to evaluate the size of spaces necessary for each program area and to eliminate spaces used by non-essential programs.*
- *This can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 8 Does the capital planning budget accurately list facility needs, costs, and recommend financing for each year of a five-year period?

*Yes. The district regularly updates the five-year plan and includes recommendations for annual implementation in the budget proposal submitted to the board.*

## Deferred Maintenance Has Not Been Included in the District's Capital Budget

The capital budget reflects the facility needs with the exception of deferred maintenance. The five-year capital plan includes the projected projects for each year (updated annually) and the recommended funding sources. The budget reflects site purchases, new construction, renovations, and site improvements. It does not, however, reflect the costs of deferred maintenance.

The budget itemizes the cost of each project that is included in the five-year plan and the annual budget submitted to the board. That budget amount, when adopted by the board becomes the not-to-exceed total budget amount. There is not, however, a not-to-exceed cost per square foot amount associated with each project.

The budget document identifies the revenue sources (COPs, PICO, Sales Tax, etc.) that are to be utilized, but does not set the priorities and delineate step-by-step implementation procedures for project funding in accordance with the master plan.

## *Recommendation* ─────────────────────────────

- *Include deferred maintenance in the district's capital improvement (five-year) plan.*
- *Use the facilities evaluation process and the district facility committee to assist with the setting of priorities and list them within the five-year plan.*
- *This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.*

## *Are the Best Practices for Selecting and Acquiring School Sites Being Observed?* ─────────────────

**Goal: The district uses a proactive system to select and economically acquire proper school sites in a timely manner.**

# 1 Does the district start school site selection well in advance of expected need with the establishment of a broadly representative site selection committee?

*No. Site selection is completed in advance but there is no broadly represented site selection committee.*

## Site Selection Has Been Primarily an In-House Function

No site selection committee exists. The Facilities planner has the responsibility to review potential school sites and present information to the board. The board generally defines the areas to be examined for potential sites. The planner researches the alternatives and presents alternatives for the board to consider. Public input is taken at that time.

As no site selection committee exists the timing and responsibilities of the committee are not applicable. The district can demonstrate, however, that site acquisition occurs prior to the projected need through the current inventory of sites and site analyses that have occurred. The district currently owns two sites in the rapidly growing sections of the east county for future elementary schools, a southwest site for a future elementary or middle school, and one north county site.

The site analyses presented to the board have included site acquisition and facilities requirements of Florida law. The most recent site acquisition study, for a central elementary site, included the demographic data for numerous sites, the transportation and safety issues associated with each, the cost factors applicable to each alternative, testing data, and attendance boundary issues that may arise with the selection of a specific site.

No architects and/or local government planners have been included in the site selection process. District staff includes a planner with local government experience and (since implementation of the new organizational chart) a staff architect. It is still critical, however, that local government officials be included in the process due to the constantly changing demographics, political structure, and community needs.

## *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

- *The Manatee County School District should form a districtwide site selection committee (or include this responsibility with the district facilities committee) to assist with the site selection process. Overall, the site selection process is well done and the district deserves to be commended. The addition of a site selection committee will solidify the process and serve to increase community awareness of the issue and build support for the final decisions.*

- *Action Plan 8-5 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 8-5*

# Form a Districtwide Site Selection Committee

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Form a districtwide site selection committee. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Development of criteria for the committee along with a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities. |
| | Step 2: Secure board approval and solicit committee members based on the adopted criteria. The criteria should include the community representation, who will work with the committee and that all members will be free from conflict of interest. |
| Who Is Responsible | Superintendent for the formation of the committee, the site and planning manager for the assistance to the committee. |
| Time Frame | January 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Include an architect and local government planner on the site selection committee. |
| Action Needed | In the development of criteria for the committee, include the need for architectural and community planner representation. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 2 Has the district developed school site selection criteria to ensure that schools are located to serve the proposed attendance area economically, with maximum convenience and safety?

*Yes. There is evidence that site selection criteria exist and that site selection is completed in advance of the projected project schedule. In addition, appraisals are conducted to ensure prices reflect fair market value and site plans are developed to assist with future planning.*

## Manatee County Has a Five-Step Site Selection Process

In general, the site selection process in the Manatee County School District consists of the steps described below.

• The site and planning manager works with pupil accounting and the Facilities Department to determine where growth in the district is likely to occur and where replacement facilities will likely be needed.

Facilities Construction

- The site and planning manager works with county officials and local real estate professionals to determine possible sites in the growth areas and where replacement schools will likely be needed.
- Possible sites are identified for a specific project and/or high growth area.
- Each of the possible sites are mapped and evaluated according to the school boundaries that will be affected, the number of students that live within a mile radius of the site, access to the site, ease of construction, cost factors, minority percentage, environmental issues, and other factors as appropriate.
- The site and planning manager narrows the site choices to the three or four that best meet the need and presents his findings to the board which makes the final decision.

Examples of site selection analyses that have been presented to the board verify that the criteria were established prior to the identification of potential sites and include future consideration of construction costs. Possible operational costs have not been as well developed.

The site selection criteria includes such general categories as safety, location, environment, soil characteristics, topography, size and shape, accessibility, site preparation, public services, utilities, costs, availability, political implications, transportation of students, and integration.

Environmental tests are conducted after the initial review has narrowed the list of potential sites but prior to acquisition.

# 3 Does the board consider the most economical and practical locations for current and anticipated needs, including such factors as need to exercise eminent domain, obstacles to development, and consideration of agreements with adjoining counties?

*Yes. Recent site analyses include all criteria.*

## Site Analysis in Manatee County Has Been Thorough

A review of June 1998 site analyses presented to the board regarding possible elementary school sites includes a description and evaluation of transportation alternatives, zoning, environmental concerns, and neighborhood concerns for each site considered.

The board has been reluctant to use eminent domain but in rare cases has been willing to as evidenced at the Southeast High School expansion.

The board uses the selection criteria outlined above to evaluate several sites. The June 1998 elementary site analysis began with an analysis, using the district criteria, of 11 possible sites. This was then narrowed to the three most probable sites for which a complete analysis was conducted.

The site selection analysis includes of the most economical sites both in terms of initial capital cost and ongoing operational costs.

# 4 Does the district have a system to assess sites to ensure prices paid reflect fair market value?

*Yes. District procedures call for independent appraisals of sites that are included in those that are taken to the board after the first review (Item 5 of the site selection procedure).*

## Appraisals Are Completed for Final Sites Being Considered

Prices paid for sites reflect fair market value because they are ultimately selected are based on an independent appraisal as specified in Florida Statute. Appraisals are completed only for the sites that are included in the final recommendations to the board.

# 5 For each project or group of projects, has the architect and district facilities planner developed a plan to serve as a decision-making tool for future facilities needs?

*Yes. All facility plans include a proposed site plan for future development, including the proposed siting for future additions and temporary classrooms, expanded parking facilities, etc.*

## Project Plans Include Provisions for Future Changes and Additions

The district Facilities Department has on file plans for all facilities that include existing conditions (including buildings and grounds) and, for all recent projects, plans for future additions. The plans include the proposed layout of buildings and grounds, parking and roads, playfield areas, and proposed future additions and the expansions that will be necessary to accommodate the sites maximum proposed enrollment. All plans have been completed by architects.

# *Are the Best Practices for Identifying Site and Facility Needs Being Observed?*

**Goal: The district identifies future needs for sites and facilities based on an analysis of valid enrollment projections.**

# 1 Can the district demonstrate that its identified facilities needs are based on thorough demographic study?

*Yes. The district utilizes state enrollment data as well as district demographic information to assist with the development of the facilities plan.*

## The Manatee County School District Facilities Plan Is Based on District and State Demographic Data

The district indicates that it utilizes the state enrollment data as included in the School Plant Survey. However, it subsequently took issue with the state enrollment projections and requested a waiver which was granted. The waiver was based on enrollment projections completed in the district by the Student Accounting Department which has proven to be more accurate. In addition, the district has based facility needs on the current utilization as published in the School Plant Survey.

The district periodically conducts a districtwide demographic study. Such a study has been conducted within the past five years. Enrollment projections have been based on the state data and district computations utilizing a cohort survival method, and this information has been updated within the past five years. The district conducted demographic study is an ongoing process utilizing information obtained through state and national statistics along with local land use decisions. This information is available and utilized by the Facilities Department, the site planner and the individual schools. These projections are periodically updated and reviewed by the board. The district has not, however, compared enrollment projections to 100% capacity at grade level.

Changes to school boundaries have come as a result of facility changes rather than as a basis for school planning.

City and county comprehensive plans have been utilized in the development of the long-range plan both in the decision-making process regarding possible sites and in the process of developing enrollment projections. These enrollment projections have been interpreted based on the changes in land use, geographical limitations, and local ordinances.

The district's budget regularly includes funds to support demographic studies through the support of the Demographics Department within the Office of Pupil Accounting.

## *Recommendation* —————————————————————————

- *Utilize the capacity data developed through the utilization review recommended above and compare the projected student data with 100% capacity. Utilize this information to assist with the development of the five-year facilities plan.*
- *This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

# *Are the Best Practices for Systematically Determining the Student Capacity and Educational Adequacy of Existing Facilities and Alternatives to New Construction Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district systematically determines the student capacity and educational adequacy of existing facilities and evaluates alternatives to new construction.**

# 1   **Does the district use the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) inventory to analyze student capacity and classroom utilization?**

*Yes.  The FISH data is kept up to date in the School Plant Survey and is used to analyze student capacity.*

## FISH Data Is Reported in the School Plant Survey

The FISH data was last verified in April 1998 and includes the determination of satisfactory and unsatisfactory spaces.  The FISH data is used to inventory instructional areas or teaching stations and the criteria agrees with Florida Rules.  Floor plans for each facility are used in making this determination and are kept in the office of the district planner.

The FISH data corresponds with district floor plans that are kept in the Facilities Department office.

The number of students assigned to each teaching station is included in the FISH data and is in accordance with current law.

# 2   **Does the Facilities planning leader, in cooperation with the Instructional leader and the director of Maintenance and Operations, conduct an evaluation of the physical condition and education adequacy of existing facilities and ensure that school facilities inventories are up to date?**

*No.  There is no scheduled evaluation of existing facilities.*

## The Manatee County School District
## Should Regularly Evaluate All Facilities

The district utilizes the FISH data to determine capacity and utilization but has not conducted an analysis of the physical condition and educational adequacy of existing facilities. A review of current facilities shows a wide range of conditions that are evaluated primarily by the school staff and reported to the Facilities Department. Projects are then included on the five-year plan without being based on a formal system of determining the physical or educational condition. The physical condition analysis should include site observations of the external condition, internal condition, mechanical systems condition, and specific health and safety issues (fire control capability, emergency systems, etc.) The evaluation of educational adequacy should include an analysis of the facility's capability of providing spaces for the adopted program at that school and, if not, the design implications of adding the appropriate spaces.

Since no capacity and utilization study has been conducted, no uniform checklist was used.

The inventory is included in the FISH data.

## *Recommendation*

- *The Manatee County School District should conduct a complete evaluation of facilities using a comprehensive evaluation format. The evaluation should consider structural design and integrity, mechanical systems, electrical systems, finishes, life safety, ADA requirements, educational suitability, utilization, technological readiness, and site adaptability. Upon completion of the districtwide evaluation all facilities should be prioritized based on their districtwide ranking for replacement and/or renovation and place accordingly on the five-year plan.*

- *Exhibit 8-6 shows the fiscal effect of this recommendation.*

- *Action Plan 8-6 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Exhibit 8-6*

## Conducting a Thorough Review of All Facilities
## Will Cost Approximately $150,000 Over the Next Five Years

| | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Cost | $0 | $150,000 | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 |
| Cumulative Cost | 0 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 |

*Action Plan 8-6*

## Conduct a Thorough Review of All Facilities

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Conduct a thorough review of all facilities to determine and rank physical condition, educational condition, technological readiness, and utilization rate. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  Determine the standards to be utilized.  Base the facility condition on the program needs.  Include in the standards a physical condition analysis, educational suitability analysis, and technological readiness analysis. |
| | Step 2:  Board approval of condition assessment |
| | Step 3:  Conduct condition assessment based on criteria developed. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities and Construction |
| Time Frame | September 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | The district's cost to implement this recommendation will be approximately $150,000. |

## Fiscal Impact of Conducting a Thorough Review of All Facilities

A thorough review of all district facilities which includes an evaluation of the interior condition, exterior condition, health and safety concerns, mechanical systems, and the educational suitability will cost approximately three cents per square foot.  With just over 5,000,000 square feet districtwide, the total cost will be approximately $150,000.

# 3 In determining actual space needs, do planners consider alternatives to new construction such as year-round education, extended day schools, changes in grade level configuration, changes in attendance boundaries, and use of relocatable facilities to help smooth out the impact in peaks and valleys in future student enrollment?

*Yes.  The district has reviewed year round education possibilities and has implemented extended day programs, changes in grade level configuration, changes in attendance boundaries, and utilizes portable classrooms as alternatives to new construction*

## Alternatives to New Construction
## Should Go Beyond Portable Classrooms

Alternatives to new construction include the extensive use of portable classrooms, changes in attendance boundaries as new projects are planned, and a discussion of year-round programs is in written form and is included in the school plant survey. There has not been, however, a discussion of the long- and short-term cost implications and/or the overall advantages and disadvantages.

The district can demonstrate that relocatable classrooms are used to alleviate overcrowding, but there are no guidelines in place to govern under what conditions they will be placed on a site.

## *Recommendation* ———————————————————————

- *The Manatee County School District should, upon completion of the utilization review and demographic study, thoroughly examine the alternatives to new construction including an analysis of the short- and long-term cost implications and the overall advantages and disadvantages. The alternatives should include establishing the criteria under which relocatable classroom will be placed at a site. This criteria should include site size, the percentage of students that can be house in relocatables, and the conditions under which they will be removed from a site. This analysis could be included within the goals established for the standing facilities committee as recommended above.*
- *This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

## *Are the Best Practices for Architectural Services for Facility Planning and Construction Being Observed?* ————————————

**Goal: The district secures appropriate architectural services to assist in facility planning and construction.**

# 1 Does the district use an architect selection committee to screen applicants and identify and evaluate finalists?

*Yes. An in-house architect selection committee is utilized for the appointment of architects for all major construction projects.*

## Architect Appointment Has Been Conducted Through the Use of In-House Committees

The documentation shown below exists to verify the appropriate appointment of architects.

| Best Practice | Documentation |
|---|---|
| • Appointment by selection committee | • Records of committee interviews and recommendations for appointment |
| • Written applications (proposals) screened by the selection committee | • Written records of proposal evaluations |
| • Selected candidates interviewed | • Interview schedules |
| • Interviewers considered experience, adequacy of technical personnel and availability of particular individuals for the project, proximity of the architect's office to the district, thoroughness, creativity within the context of sound construction practices and wise expenditures of public funds, adequacy of supervision, business procedures and record keeping on the job, financial responsibility, suitability of size and type of organization and methods of operation, willingness of the architect to make changes in plans at various points in the process, ability and inclination of the architect to protect the district's interests in his or her dealings with the contractor, and that references were contacted. | • Interview tabulation sheets, records of site visits and discussions with interviewers |
| • Finalists were evaluated based on personal interviews; visits to examples of their work; interviews with previous clients; examination of typical documents such as plans, specifications, and change orders; and visits to the architects' offices. | • Interview tabulation sheets, records of site visits and discussions with interviewers |
| • Contracts include district requirements and comply with current law | • Review of actual contracts |

# 2 Does the district involve architects in all key phases of the planning process?

*Yes. Architects are selected early in the planning process and involved throughout the project and into the building commissioning.*

## The Manatee County School District Involves Architects in All Phases of Planning and Construction

Minutes of planning committee and construction meetings verify that architects are involved with all phases of planning and construction except site selection, which is addressed in item 2 above.

- Architects are selected early. In fact, architects are normally selected in order to coordinate the development of the educational specifications (discussed below).

- Architects help define the project goals through their involvement in the educational specification process.
- Architects normally are not involved in the site selection process.
- Architects help clarify educational specifications as they work with the education specifications committees.
- Frugal and life cycle cost analysis is conducted when the project is designed, rather than throughout the process.

# 3 Does the architect selection committee review and evaluate the architects performance at the completion of projects and refer findings to the board?

*No. No written documentation exists to show that architects are formally evaluated.*

## Formal Architect Evaluation Needs to Be Implemented

While no written documentation exists, the parties agree that evaluation is done privately. Since the written process is not done, there is no verification that the findings are referred to the board or that the information is used when making future selections of architects.

# *Recommendation* ———————————————————————

- *The Manatee County School District should develop a process for formal architect evaluation. In a district with the amount of new construction and major renovations that has been (and will continue to be) the case in Manatee, it is important to have a formal evaluation process in order to utilize the information to ensure quality with future projects.*
- *Action Plan 8-7 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 8-7*

## Development of a Process of Architect Evaluation

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a formal process for architect evaluation. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a process within each project team for formal architect evaluation. |
| | Step 2: Utilize the results when selecting future architectural services. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | Fall 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Are the Best Practices for Educational Specifications Being Observed?*

**Goal: The district develops educational specifications for each project to meet student education needs.**

# 1 Does the district develop a general project description that includes a brief statement as to why each facility is being built, where it will be located, the population of students it is intended to serve, its estimated cost, the method of financing, the estimated time schedule for planning and construction, and the estimated date of opening?

*No. The educational specifications have not necessarily included a general project description.*

## Guidelines for the Development of Project Educational Specifications Are Needed

While educational specifications exist for most of the larger projects, they have been completed by the architects associated with the project with staff input. These specifications do a good job of detailing the amount of space for each program area and the appropriate space relations, but are often lacking in philosophy statements, project rationale, instructional methods, program objectives, etc. While it is important that the architect thoroughly understand the educational specifications for a particular project, it is the educators that should lead the process. The primary purpose of the educational specifications is to relate to the design professionals what programs are to be housed in the facility and what the design implications of those programs may be. Therefore, it is critical that the specifications include the philosophy statements, rationale, instructional methodology, and program objectives. Also, in the Manatee District, for many of the smaller projects and renovations, no educational specifications exist. In actuality, educational specifications are just as critical for these projects, as the primary purpose is often to provide program enhancements to the building.

In summary, while many of the best practice indicators for this item are discussed by district personnel and ultimately included in the project, they are not formally documented. For most projects, there are no educational specifications that

- state a project rationale,
- provide a narrative description of the project,

- state the instructional philosophy,
- state whether the project will serve all or parts of the district on a open enrollment basis, or
- state whether the new facility will be a "magnet" or other special school.

The educational specifications that have been prepared by architectural firms do usually include the determination of the size of the project, the grade levels to be served, and a construction budget.

# *Recommendation*

- *The Manatee County School District should develop guidelines for preparing educational specifications for each new school and major renovation. The guidelines should establish standards such as a minimum classroom size and minimum required core facilities, but still allow flexibility for educational program differences among different projects. These guidelines would then be used for the development of project-specific education specifications.*
- *Action Plan 8-8 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 8-8*

## Develop Guidelines for the Development of Educational Specifications

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop guidelines for the development of educational specifications. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop guidelines regarding the general statements that are to be included in the educational specifications for each major project. These will provide guidance to educational specifications committees regarding the need for project rationale, historical perspectives, etc. They will also provide district standards regarding the size of instructional spaces, square footage costs, etc. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | Fall 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 2 Do educational planners, instructional staff, and the architect develop a complete set of educational specifications before the architect begins to design a facility?

*Yes. The educational specifications that have been prepared for major projects were completed prior to the actual design by architectural firms with staff input.*

## Educational Specifications Have Been Completed for All Major Projects

The educational specification documents verify completion prior to the start of projects and the involvement of architects and district staff. The usual process has been for the architectural firm to take the lead in the development of the educational specifications with input from the project committee and staff.

# 3 Do the specifications include an educational program component relating the curriculum, instructional methods, staffing, and support services, and also include a statement of the school's philosophy and program objectives?

*No. The specifications are primarily a listing of spaces, space relations, and materials to be used. They do not include curriculum and philosophy statements.*

As stated above, the district has given the educational specification component to the architectural firm involved. This has resulted in the specifications being geared toward the architectural components rather than educational. Therefore, it is possible that architects have not taken into consideration the type of program to be housed and the specific design solutions that can best provide spaces to carry out the proposed program. A review of the educational specifications completed for recent high school projects demonstrate a lack of the best practice indicators noted below.

- Identification of the administrative leader
- A statement of goals and educational philosophy
- School–community relationships
- Goals, objectives, and instructional strategies
- Curriculum, staffing, and instructional strategies
- Definition of program objectives, activities, teaching strategies, and instructional methods
- Design implications of advanced technology
- Provision of flexibility to incorporate future teaching methods and management styles

# *Recommendation* —————————————————————————

*The Manatee County School District should form educational specification committees for each major project. The committees should include staff, parents, community members, and design professionals associated with the project. Often the committee is facilitated by a professional educational programmer but could be done with the current district staff as well. Their responsibility within district guidelines would be*

- *to define the educational programs, trends, etc. for the project that will have implications to the design;*
- *to determine the specific facility needs required to carry out the program; and*
- *to prepare written educational specifications that include*

  - *the project rationale described in terms of educational level, whether it is an addition, modernization, or a totally new building, the total number of students to be served, and the necessity for the project;*
  - *a description of the community and geographical area to be served, providing a brief historical background and current factual information as well as a description of the site;*
  - *the planned educational program including a description of the instructional program to be housed in the facility, the instructional methods to be employed, and the design implications of the program;*
  - *general building considerations that include the anticipated accessibility issues, circulation, traffic patterns, building security, communication systems, community usage, etc.;*
  - *a complete description of each instructional area; and*
  - *a summary of spatial requirements. This is the 'bottom line' which includes the total net square footage for all instructional and non-instructional areas and related cost estimates provided by the design consultant.*

*Upon completion, the committee would deliver the finalized educational specifications to the district in sufficient detail for review and recommendation to the school board for acceptance. The document then becomes the basis for the architect to engage in the schematic design phase. It is important to point out that the architect and other design professionals should be participants in the development of the educational specifications but the primary responsibility for their preparation rests with the educators.*

*Action Plan 8-9 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

# Formation of Educational Specification Committees and the Development of Educational Specifications for Each Major Project

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Formation of education specification committee and the development of a complete set of educational specifications for each major project. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Appointment of educational specification committees. The development of educational specifications by the committee, with architect input, for each major project. The committees would work within the guidelines prepared by the district. |
| Who Is Responsible | Site administrators to recommend educational specification committee appointments and ensure their completion. |
| Time Frame | Educational committees for each project— beginning 1999-2000 year. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 4 Do the specifications include a description of activity areas that describe the type, number, size, function, special characteristics, and spatial relationships of instructional areas, administrative areas, and services areas in sufficient detail that the architect will not have to guess at what will occur in each of these areas?

*Yes. The educational specifications have been prepared primarily by architectural firms.*

## Existing Educational Specifications Include Some, but Not All, of the Best Practice Indicators

The educational specifications are lacking in three best practice indicators.

- The deriving of the space requirements from planned course offerings, staffing patterns, and planned student groupings
- Identification of the number of teachers, paraprofessionals, administrative, and classified staff
- Storage space for year round programs

The indicators listed below, however, have been included in each of the educational specifications completed.

- The spatial relationship of one area to another

- A description of space relationship requirements
- Instructional support and co-curricular facilities
- Specific space for instructional support and pupil services programs, general support services, and special programs
- Environmental variables such as acoustical needs, visual needs, thermal requirements, and special aesthetic concerns
- Utility needs including water, sewer, drainage, electrical, gas, compressed air, telephone, fire alarm, conduit cable for advanced technology, and satellite dish
- Energy management systems
- Storage requirements for individual activity areas and teaching stations
- Display areas for chalkboards, tackboards, and display areas
- Furniture and equipment needs
- Planned expansion strategy.

## *Recommendation* ——————————————————————————

- *The areas that have been included, along with those from the above list that have not been included in the specifications, should be incorporated into the complete educational specifications documents as recommended on page 8-39.*
- *This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 5 Does the district communicate general building considerations, including features of the facility and the school campus in general, to the architect?

*No.  While the final product reflects many of the general building features, there is no process for ensuring this is done.*

## No Formal Process of Communicating General Building Considerations to the Architect Exists

The facility plans verify that the architect has drawn schematic layouts of buildings, parking, roads, etc.  However, there are no standards or educational specification requirements to ensure that

- educational and service activity requirements have been met;
- public address, closed circuit television, telephone, computer networking, security system needs have been met;
- potential community use has been accommodated;
- district security considerations have been incorporated into the design; and
- costs of various designs were considered.

There is evidence to conclude that circulation patterns, accommodation of future expansion, and access requirements have been addressed.

## *Recommendation* ─────────────────────────────────

- *The Manatee County School District should incorporate general building considerations into the educational specifications development and communicate these considerations to the architect.*
- *The steps needed to implement this recommendation are included in Action Plan 8-9 on page 8-36.*

# 6 Does the district use the educational specifications as criteria for evaluating the architect's final product?

*No. There is no evidence that the educational specifications are used as criteria for evaluation.*

## Educational Specifications Need to Be Used as Part of the Evaluation of the Design Solution

Since the educational specifications do not include educational program goals, they cannot be utilized in the interpretation of the design solution or be matched against the final design solution.

## *Recommendation* ─────────────────────────────────

- *The district should use the educational specifications to evaluate the design solution. The final design should reflect the design implications of the proposed educational programs as defined in the educational specifications. The educational specifications should also be given to the value engineering teams as they conduct their evaluation.*
- *Action Plan 8-10 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 8-10*

## Utilization of the Educational Specifications in the Evaluation of the Design Solution

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | At the value engineering phase, and at the completion of each project, evaluate the final design solution based on the program goals as defined in the educational specifications. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: A formal procedure should be developed to ensure that the educational program is included as a part of the value engineering review and that there is a complete post occupancy evaluation based on the ability of the design to meet the goals as specified in the educational specifications. |
| Who Is Responsible | Site administrators and Facilities director |
| Time Frame | Process completed for all projects beginning in the 1999-2000 year |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 7 Are all school board-approved program requirements communicated to the architect before final working drawings are initiated?

*No. While there is evidence of communication between the district and the architect, there is no formal process of communicating program requirements since they are not included in the educational specifications.*

## Educational Specifications Should Include Program Goals and Objectives

As with the program goals discussed above, there is not evidence that they have been included as a regular part of the educational specifications. Therefore, there is no evidence that

- program requirements were communicated to the architect before the commencement of final drawings;
- the educational specifications provide the planning team with an opportunity to reassess goals and objectives and to plan further programs and activities;
- the planning team has reassessed the educational program and identified future needs that will impact the design of the new facility; or that
- existing facilities have been evaluated in terms of educational adequacy.

There is evidence, from the general satisfaction with many of the new facilities, that program needs have been addressed. The extent to which they have been addressed, however, varies among the projects.

## *Recommendation* ───────────────────────────

- *The Manatee County School District should include program goals and objectives in the educational specifications development, communicate these to the architect, and utilize them in the post-occupancy evaluation and future planning.*
- *The steps needed to implement this recommendation are included in Action Plan 8-8 on page 8-33 and Action Plan 8-10 on page 8-39.*

# 8 Does the board minimize changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to minimize project costs?

*Yes. Project change orders have been kept to a minimum.*

## Change Orders for Manatee County Projects Have Been Kept Low and at Times Have Reduced the Cost of the Project

Construction records verify that change orders have been submitted to the board for final approval.

Change orders have not resulted in the project exceeding the budget (in fact, many change orders have resulted in a reduction of the total cost), but there is no data available to evaluate whether or not the change orders compromised the educational specifications.

## *Recommendation* ───────────────────────────

- *When contemplating any change orders that make changes that have an effect on the design implication of educational specifications, regularly review the specifications and include that analysis in the recommendation to proceed (or not to proceed) with the change.*
- *This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

# *Are the Best Practices for Architectural Planning and Financial Management Being Observed?* —————————

**Goal:  The district uses generally accepted architectural planning and financial management practices to complete projects on time and within budget.**

**1** **Does the board determine whether each new facility will be constructed using the traditional system of public works or by using some innovative system such as design/build or a construction manager?**

*No.  The board has discussed the advantages and disadvantages of different construction management systems but has not fully evaluated the possible cost differences for future projects.*

## The Manatee County School District Should Evaluate the Differences in Cost of a Traditional System vs. Construction Management, Design/Build, Etc.

During the implementation of the previous five-year plan, the district secured the services of the Department of Management Services (DMS) to ensure that projects were completed within budget in a timely manner.  Board minutes reflect discussions regarding the type of construction management for each project (or group of projects) to be utilized during the next five-year capital improvement plan and the bard made the decision to utilize a construction management process during the next five-year plan.  A thorough analysis of the cost differences, however, has not occurred.

## *Recommendation* —————————

- *During implementation of the next five-year plan, the district should thoroughly examine the pros and cons of utilizing a construction manager, the design/build approach, utilizing a traditional bid approach, etc.  The decision has been made to use a construction management process, but no detailed cost data is available.  There is also a need to include the relationship between the construction management service and the districts new organizational chart for construction services.  With the amount of construction proposed the services of a construction management program will likely*

> *help to lower costs and expedite the process but the process needs to be formalized and documented*
>
> - *Exhibit 8-7 provides the fiscal effect of this recommendation.*
> - *Action Plan 8-11 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Exhibit 8-7*

## Implementation of an Alternative System of Facilities Construction Will Save the District $3,700,000 Over the Next Five Years

| | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Savings | $740,000 | $ 740,000 | $ 740,000 | $ 740,000 | $ 740,000 |
| Cumulative Savings | 740,000 | 1,480,000 | 2,220,000 | 2,960,000 | 3,700,000 |

*Action Plan 8-11*

## Conducting an Analysis of Utilizing the Traditional System or an Alternative System of Facilities Construction

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Conduct a thorough analysis of the pros and cons, including the possible costs and cost savings of project management, construction management, design build and traditional design-bid processes. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Evaluate the costs incurred and the cost savings (if any) that have occurred in both Manatee County and other school districts when alternative construction processes have been utilized.<br><br>Step 2: Evaluate findings and provide a recommendation to the board. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | Implementing this recommendation will save the district $3,700,000 over the next five years. |

## Fiscal Impact of Implementing an Alternative System of Facilities

Most construction management firms estimate the cost savings of implementing an alternative methodology to be in the range of 3%-5%.  Upon completion of the analysis it will be possible to accurately estimate what this savings will be over the next five-year period.  Using a conservative estimate of 2% and assuming total construction needs over the next five years of $185,000,000, the total will be $3,700,000.

# 2  Does the architect prepare the building specification document?

*Yes.  All projects have been prepared by licensed architects.*

## Architects Prepare All Building Specification Documents

A review of construction documents verify completion of all plans by licensed architects and that they include general conditions specifying the details of construction and materials starting time; expected completion time; terms of payment bond, bid bond, and performance bond; workers' compensation and terms of liability insurance; subcontractors to be used; and provisions to be included in change orders.  The architectural contracts have been reviewed by district's legal counsel.

# 3  Does the architect coordinate plans, specifications, and questions concerning the project?

*Yes.  Architects have coordinated all plans, specifications and questions*

## Architects Have Coordinated Project Meetings

Project meeting minutes reflect that regular meetings are held prior to construction for the purpose of clearing up any questions and providing final input.  The meetings include representatives from the architectural firm, instructional staff and facilities staff.  They are normally coordinated through the project leader, which in the new organizational chart will be the project manager.

# 4  After bids are opened and tabulated, are they submitted to the board for awarding the contract?  Does legal counsel make certain that bid and contract documents are properly prepared and that the award is properly authorized?

*Yes.  Board approval has been secured for all contract awards and legal counsel has been advised.*

## The Majority of Projects Have Been Coordinated Through the Construction Manager

The majority of recent projects have not used the traditional design-bid process, as the district utilized the services of DMS as a construction manager.  Where the design process was utilized there is evidence in bid opening records and board minutes of

- on-time opening of the bids
- low bid submitted to the board, and
- contract awarded to the lowest responsible bidder.

# 5 Does the district require the contractor to submit a signed owner-contractor agreement, workers' compensation insurance certificates, payment bond, performance bond, and guarantee of completion within the time required?

*Yes. There are signed owner–contractor agreements and workers' compensation certificates, but not a guarantees of completion.*

## Appropriate Agreements and Certificates Have Been Obtained

The agreements with contractors have included appropriate bonds, signatures and workers compensation agreements. They have not, however, included a guarantee of completion as they were not required by DMS, and the indication is they will not be required on future district projects.

## *Recommendation* ———————————————————————

- *As the next five-year plan is implemented require contractors (or the construction manager) to guarantee completion within the time required.*
- *This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 6 Does the architect recommend payment based on the percentage of work completed? Is a percentage of the contract withheld pending completion of the project?

*Yes. Payments are made based on the percentage of work completed with a percentage withheld until completion.*

## Construction Projects Are Paid Based on the Percentage of Work Completed

Payment records reflect that the architect recommends payment, that they are based on the percentage completed (as verified by the architect) and that a percentage is withheld until final completion. Payment is made based on a pay request signed by the architect and project manager ensuring that internal controls base the payment on work completed.

# 7 Does the district require continuous inspection of all school construction projects?

*Yes. District project managers are assigned to each project to provide inspection services.*

## Regular Inspections Are Completed for All Major Projects

The duties of the district project managers include a continuous and regular inspection for all major projects including renovations and alterations as verified by the position description and interviews with project managers. There is not evidence, however, that continuous inspection occurs for installation of portables or day labor projects.

## *Recommendation* ────────────────

- *Include in the position descriptions for personnel in the new organizational chart the requirement that portables and day labor projects be inspected. This will likely fall within the duties of the project manager for the under $500,000 projects.*
- *This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 8 Does the district ensure that buildings are not occupied prior to the notice of completion?

*Yes. District project managers ensure that a certificate of completion is signed prior to occupancy.*

## Occupancy Permits Are Obtained

Certificates of completion are required by the project manager before allowing occupancy.

## *Are the Best Practices for Evaluating New Facilities Being Observed?* ────────────────

**Goal: To maximize use of new facilities, minimize operation costs, and provide feedback for future construction planning, the district trains building users and evaluates building use.**

# 1 Does the district conduct a comprehensive orientation to the new facility prior to its use so that users better understand the building design and function?

*Yes. At the opening of new schools, a comprehensive orientation has been held.*

## Orientation Programs Are Conducted After the Opening of New Facilities

At the opening of each new (or renovated) high school and middle school the district has conducted four programs.

- A detailed orientation for maintenance personnel that involved the specifics of the mechanical systems is held with the architect, contractor(s) facilities department personnel, and the site administrator in attendance.
- A pre-occupancy orientation for instructional staff is conducted by the architect and site administrator.
- A pre-occupancy walk through for students, parents and community is conducted by the site administrator(s).
- A user's guide is developed for faculty members

Therefore, the orientation program included staff, students and parents; included user's manuals, provided users with a better understanding of the building design and function; and the responsibility of the program was shared by the architect, contractor, facilities planner and building administrator.

# 2 Does the district conduct a comprehensive building evaluation at the end of the first year of operation and periodically during the next three to five years to collect information about building operation and performance?

*No. No formal post occupancy evaluations are held.*

## Post-Occupancy Building Evaluations Need to Be Conducted

There is no record that the district conducts a one-year evaluation of new facilities, follow-up utilization analysis, or an analysis of maintenance and operations costs.

# *Recommendation* ─────────────────────────────────

- *The Manatee County School District should develop and implement a post-occupancy evaluation of all major projects completed. The evaluation should include*
    - *an analysis of the educational program improvements for consideration by future educational specification committees;*
    - *an operational cost analysis;*
    - *a comparison of the finished product with the educational and construction specifications; and*
    - *recommendations for future changes.*
- *Action Plan 8-12 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 8-12*

## Conducting Post-Occupancy Evaluations

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Regularly conduct post-occupancy evaluations. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop procedure to ensure that post occupancy evaluations regularly occur and include educational adequacy, function, safety, efficiency, and suggestions for future improvements. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities and Construction |
| Time Frame | October 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# **3** Does the district analyze building evaluations to determine whether facilities are fully used, operating cost are minimized, and changes in the district's construction planning process are needed?

*No. No formal post occupancy evaluations are held.*

## Post-Occupancy Evaluations
## Should Provide for Future Program Changes

Since no formal post-occupancy evaluations are held, the district cannot demonstrate that

- the evaluation is used to assess facility use and operating costs;

- the results of the evaluation were used to compare the product with educational specifications to see whether the district received the product it said it wanted, and whether the district still needs the product it built;

- the results are used to provide the architect with corrective feedback to be used in the next building cycle; or that

- the evaluation is used to make changes, if necessary, to the district's construction planning process for facilities to be built in the future.

## *Recommendation* ————————————————————————————

- *The Manatee County School District should utilize the results of the post-occupancy evaluations to assess use and operating costs, provide feedback to the architect and make changes in the construction planning process.*

- *The steps needed to implement this recommendation are included in Action Plan 8-12 on page 8-47.*

# 4 Does the district analyze maintenance and operations costs to identify improvements to the district's construction planning process?

*No. No formal process of analyzing maintenance and operations costs is conducted.*

## Maintenance and Operations Costs Should Be Included in the Post-Occupancy Evaluation

The district has no process comparing maintenance and operations costs at recently completed projects for the purpose of implementing cost savings measures on a districtwide basis. Therefore, the district has not

- identified and analyzed measures of maintenance and operations costs;

- identified improvements made to its construction planning process based on its analysis of maintenance and operations costs;

- implemented changes that have resulted in documented cost savings, or

- identified cost saving actions that are consistently used on a districtwide basis.

## *Recommendation* ————————————————————————————

- *The Manatee County School District should develop a formal process of analyzing maintenance and operations costs and new and renovated facilities for the purpose of implementing cost saving measures districtwide.*

- *Action Plan 8-13 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 8-13*

## Analyze Maintenance and Operations Costs at Recently Completed Facilities

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Analyze maintenance and operations costs at recently completed facilities. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a procedure to ensure that post-occupancy evaluations include an analysis of the maintenance and operations costs. Compare these costs with other district facilities. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities and Construction |
| Time Frame | Include with the implementation of post-occupancy evaluations – beginning in the fall of 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## *Additional Finding*

In some cases, the appointment of site administrators for new facilities has occurred within the last year prior to completion of the project. When this occurs, the individual assigned has often not been involved in the educational specification and design phases of the project. This sometimes results in the person responsible for the opening of a new facility not necessarily being knowledgeable (or supportive) of the decision making process that led to the design.

## *Recommendation*

- *For any new (or significant renovation) of a facility, the site administrator should be appointed at the beginning of the planning phase. This individual would then be involved with the educational specification development and the project committee. In some cases (most often with a completely new facility) the individual will need time (from six months to a full year for large high schools) for planning and staffing duties.*

- *This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 9 Facilities Maintenance

*The district is generally operating the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations functions according to best practices, but has room to improve. The district needs to improve its long-range facilities plan to eliminate deferred maintenance. Staff training needs to be comprehensive and supervisors need to use more management tools to effectively use resources available.*

## *Conclusion*

The Manatee County School District is using 14 of the 24 best facilities maintenance practices. The district generally follows efficient and effective facility management practices but does not have board-approved, written guidelines for some of its practices. The district needs to improve its staff development program for maintenance and operations staff by increasing training opportunities and developing performance measures. The current acquisition of a districtwide software management system should eliminate any reasons for the district not to operate at peak performance within its funding limitations. Below are the conclusions on the district's use of each facilities maintenance best practice.

## *Is the District Using the Facilities Maintenance Best Practices?*

### Cost-Effective Methods

**Yes.** The district periodically evaluates maintenance and operations activities to determine the most effective means of providing needed services, including consideration of management, outside contracts or privatization, and joining associations of other government agencies. (page 9-10)

### Legal Responsibilities

**No.** The board does not provide procedural guidance in areas such as replacement and selection of equipment, purchasing of supplies and materials, levels of maintenance expectations, and maintenance and operations budget criteria. (page 9-12)

### Use of Qualified Staff

**No.** The maintenance and operations departments do not have adequate staff to meet their program goals and objectives. (page 9-14

**No.** The maintenance and operations departments have not written a job description for each position within the departments. (page 9-19)

***No.*** The district does not clearly communicate performance standards to maintenance and operations staff.  (page 9-20)

***Yes.*** The district provides appropriate supervision of the maintenance and operations staff.  (page 9-23)

## Annual Budget

***No.*** The district does not provide a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff to enhance worker job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.  (page 9-24)

***No.*** The administration has not developed budgetary guidelines to provide for funding in each category of facilities maintenance and operations.  (page 9-27)

## Maintenance Standards

***Yes.*** The board has established provision for a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations.  (page 9-30)

***No.*** The district has not established maintenance standards in its short- and long-term plans for providing for adequately maintained facilities.  (page 9-30)

***Yes.*** The district uses its maintenance standards to evaluate maintenance needs.  (page 9-34)

***Yes.*** The district has a system for prioritizing maintenance needs.  (page 35)

***Yes.*** The district accurately projects cost estimates of major maintenance projects.  (page 9-36)

***Yes.*** The district minimizes equipment costs through purchasing practices and maintenance.  (page 9-36)

***Yes.*** The district provides the maintenance department staff with tools, training, and instruction to accomplish their assigned tasks.  (page 9-38)

***No.*** The district has not established a computerized control and tracking system to accurately track inventory and parts and materials used and provide a reordering system.  (page 9-39)

***Yes.*** The district ensures that maintenance standards are updated to implement new technology and procedures.  (page 9-41)

## Health, Safety, Energy Efficient, and Cost-Effective Operation

***Yes.*** The district has established standards for health and safety.  (page 9-42)

***No.*** The district does not use external benchmarks to determine a cost-effective manner of meeting its health and safety standards.  (page 9-43)

***Yes.*** The district uses external benchmarks to achieve energy efficiency.  (page 9-44)

***Yes.*** Hazardous materials management complies with federal and state regulations. (page 9-45)

***Yes.*** The district has a comprehensive and systematic program of dealing with school safety and security. (page 9-46)

## Community Use of Facilities

***Yes.*** The district follows established procedures for making school facilities available to the community. (page 9-47)

***No.*** The district does not meet accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities. (page 9-48)

# *Fiscal Impact of Recommendations* ————————————————

- The goal of developing performance standards for maintenance staff should be to improve efficiency by 10%. A 10% increase in productivity is the equivalent of approximately six staff positions, which would not have to be added in the future. Using an hourly rate of pay of $9.00 for a starting position, this would amount to a cost avoidance of approximately $148,300. ($9.00 per hour x 1.32 benefits x 40 hrs. x 52 weeks x 6 positions = $148,262)

- The development of a comprehensive staff development program for the maintenance staff, which provides at least two training sessions for each staff member annually, will increase the staff development budget. The increase in cost will depend on the length of the training sessions and the direct expenses for the trainers. An approximate cost would be $8,400. (This is based on allowing four hours per session per employee two times per year at an average rate of $11.88 per hour including benefits. Sixty-two employees x 4 hours x 2 sessions x $11.88 per hour = $5,892. An appropriate budget for trainers is projected to be approximately $2,500.)

- Increasing the budget for custodial staffing to meet the best practice staffing ratio would necessitate the addition of approximately 14 positions. The cost impact of this recommendation would be approximately $302,126. ($7.86 per hour x 1.32 benefits x 2,080 hours per year x 14 positions = $302,126)

- Increasing the accessibility of district facilities for disabled persons will increase the capital construction budget. The amount of the increase will depend on the nature of the projects and the schedule for completion. This district has no current ADA assessment of its facilities, therefore it is not possible to project these costs.

- As can be seen in Exhibit 9-1, the district must make an annual investment of $162,264 to implement recommendations for facilities maintenance.

*Exhibit 9-1*

## Implementing the Recommendations for Facilities Maintenance Would Result in an Increased Cost of $162,264 Annually

| Recommendation | Fiscal Impact |
|---|---|
| • Develop standards to improve maintenance staff efficiency. | • This will result in a cost avoidance of $148,262 annually. |
| • Develop a comprehensive staff development program for maintenance staff. | • This will result in an additional annual cost of $8,400. |

| | |
|---|---|
| • Increase custodial staffing to meet the best practices staffing ratio. | • This will result in an annual cost increase of $302,126. |

# *Background*

The Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations director's mission is to assist the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations departments in implementing their goal of providing the best and safest learning and working environment for all employees and students in Manatee County schools.

The facilities maintenance function for the Manatee County School District is under the responsibility of the assistant superintendent of Human Resources and Support Services and falls within the Division of Facilities, Maintenance and Operations. The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations is responsible for five departments: Building Maintenance, Internal Controls, Vehicle Maintenance, Department of Construction Services, and Sanitation and Grounds. Exhibit 9-2 presents the organizational chart for Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations.

*Exhibit 9-2*

## Organizational Chart for Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations in the Manatee County School District, 1997-98
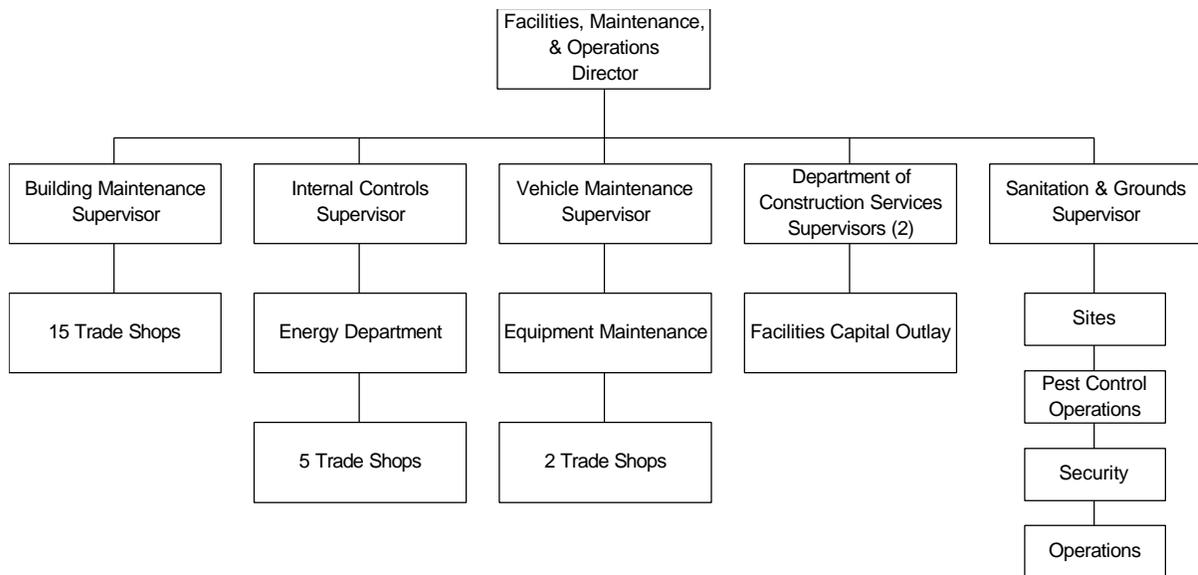


Source: Manatee County School District

## Building Maintenance

The facilities maintenance function is the responsibility of Building Maintenance, Internal Controls, and Sanitation and Grounds. The Building Maintenance Department is made up of 62 personnel and

15 trade shops, which maintain 39 school sites and three auxiliary sites.  The trade shops are listed below.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Cabinets | • Locksmith | • Security |
| • Carpentry | • Masons | • Public Address |
| • Electrical | • Furniture Repair | • Computer Repair |
| • Roofing | • Plumbing | • Fire Alarm Repair |
| • Glaziers | • Painting | • Welding |

Building Maintenance achievements during Fiscal Year 1997-98 were

- completion of over 9000 work orders;
- completion of various Capital Outlay projects;
- completion of annual inspections in compliance with all required state and local demands;
- continued assistance to Construction Services on all new projects; and
- upgrading of life safety systems and playgrounds to applicable codes.

The director of Maintenance is currently conducting a customer satisfaction survey.  This is not done annually and has not been done for some time.

# Internal Controls

The Internal Controls Department manages and maintains the mechanical equipment (HVAC) in the district and oversees the facility energy/utility costs.  The department is staffed by 4 administrative personnel and 28 trades persons.  Internal Controls has six shops.

- Refrigeration
- Heating
- Controls
- HVAC
- Industrial Equipment Repair
- Energy

The Internal Controls Department notable achievements for 1997-98 fiscal year are shown in Exhibit 9-3.

*Exhibit 9-3*

# Notable Achievements in Internal Controls

- institution of a quality team to learn the process used in Quality Improvement;
- establishment of a parts stations throughout the district to reduce 'windshield time'; and
- reduction of overtime by shifting staff hours to evenings to provide repairs at nighttime; and
- Development of the district's first preventive maintenance program for energy management controls for HVAC systems.

Source: Manatee County School District

In addition, each specialized shop in the department had achievements particular to their specific trade. These achievements typically included accomplishing repairs, performing preventive maintenance tasks, and completing new training. Most unique among the shops is energy management, which

- developed new specifications for Propane Services reducing the cost per gallon by 30 cents;
- developed a cardboard/metal recycling program;
- completed lighting audits for five schools with recommendations that annually could save $21,000;
- developed a process to monitor water usage on weekends and identify losses;
- developed an Energy Incentive Program for schools and piloted program at five schools;
- coordinated change over to summary billing for electricity to reduce number of bills from 94 to 4 or 5;
- received a grant to build containment areas for recycling materials at three schools;
- worked with K-12 Energy Grant Consortium;
- reduced the number of gas bills from 62 to 23 generating annual savings of approximately $8,000; and
- developed an energy tip checklist for custodians, food service staff, and teachers.

The district currently has about half of its schools on an energy management system, which is computer controlled. The system is a full management system and not just a time clock mechanism. The district has slated to install the system at the remainder of the schools over the next five years.

In addition to completing repairs, Internal Controls performs preventive maintenance tasks through each shop. Preventive maintenance tasks are performed on a schedule as allowed by staffing levels.

## Sanitation and Grounds

The Sanitation and Grounds Department is responsible for some of the administrative tasks of the site-based custodial services, the community use program, security, carpet and tile servicing, and site maintenance. The department's achievements for Fiscal Year 1997-98 are presented in Exhibit 9-4.

*Exhibit 9-4*

## Notable Achievements in Sanitation and Grounds

- maintain after hours patrols of schools;
- coordinate community use of schools;
- replace carpet and tile at school sites;
- transitioned custodial training program from DOE to operational control;
- complete annual athletic field inspections; and
- complete numerous site renovation projects.

Source: Manatee County School District

MGT of America, Inc.

Custodial services at the schools are site-based. School administrators are responsible for supervising custodians, but Sanitation and Grounds supports the custodial function by sitting in on staff interviews, providing training, and conducting inspections of the schools.

All custodians receive training in the "Right to Know" program which informs them of the possible hazards associated with cleaning materials. The district also provides voluntary training so custodians can obtain status as certified and as master custodians.

Custodial supplies are ordered by each school from the central warehouse. The budget for supplies is established at the school site, while Sanitation and Grounds standardizes the types of supplies that are used. Exhibit 9-5 presents an analysis of the cost of custodial supplies per square foot at each school. Results of previous school district reviews by the MGT review team, show that costs of custodial cleaning supplies vary from $0.02 to $0.19 per square foot. The MGT review team has established that a rate of $0.05 per square foot is a best practice.

As Exhibit 9-5 shows, the district is using custodial supplies at a best practice level.

*Exhibit 9-5*

# Cost of Custodial Supplies Is at a Best Practice Level, 1997-98

| School | Total Area | Amount Spent on Supplies | Cost Per Square Foot |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anna Maria Elementary | 45,026 | $ 2,884 | $0.06 |
| Ballard Elementary | 58,915 | 2,934 | 0.05 |
| Bayshore Elementary | 102,097 | 5,607 | 0.05 |
| Duette Elementary | 6,196 | N/A | N/A |
| Manatee Elementary | 94,209 | 3,450 | 0.04 |
| Miller Elementary | 104,094 | 5,669 | 0.05 |
| Myakka Elementary | 63,242 | 2,707 | 0.04 |
| Oneco Elementary | 105,655 | 5,591 | 0.05 |
| Orange Ridge/Bullock Elementary | 129,599 | 9,207 | 0.07 |
| Palm View Elementary | 87,535 | 5,498 | 0.06 |
| Palma Sola Elementary | 89,584 | 5,283 | 0.06 |
| Palmetto Elementary | 104,217 | 6.993 | 0.07 |
| Prine Elementary | 86,202 | 6,412 | 0.07 |
| Daughtrey Elementary | 106,036 | 6,395 | 0.06 |
| Samoset Elementary | 75,723 | 5,179 | 0.07 |
| Tillman Elementary | 111,420 | 4,344 | 0.04 |
| Blackburn Elementary | 104,444 | 5,689 | 0.05 |
| Wakeland Elementary | 105,662 | 1,682 | 0.02 |
| Moody Elementary | 77,737 | 5,590 | 0.07 |
| Abel Elementary | 75,387 | 4,429 | 0.06 |
| Stewart Elementary | 58,748 | 3,025 | 0.05 |
| Bashaw Elementary | 91,821 | 4,640 | 0.05 |
| Braden River Elementary | 96,485 | 4,819 | 0.05 |
| Seabreeze Elementary | 84,596 | 3,285 | 0.04 |
| Tara Elementary | 109,197 | 5,998 | 0.05 |
| Witt Elementary | 96,829 | 4,810 | 0.05 |
| *Total Elementary* | *2,264,460* | *$122,120* | *$0.05* |

| School | Total Area | Amount Spent on Supplies | Cost Per Square Foot |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lincoln Middle | 136,192 | $ 8,403 | $0.06 |
| Sugg Middle | 152,554 | 8,874 | 0.06 |
| Harllee Middle | 145,420 | 6,162 | 0.04 |
| King Middle | 132,505 | 6,983 | 0.05 |
| Braden River Middle | 165,113 | 6,406 | 0.04 |
| Haile Middle | 155,207 | 8,793 | 0.06 |
| Johnson Middle | 158,326 | 7,166 | 0.05 |
| *Total Middle* | **1,045,317** | **$ 52,787** | **$0.05** |
| Bayshore High | 278,104 | $ 9,333 | $0.03 |
| Manatee High | 313,088 | 11,342 | 0.04 |
| Manatee Technical | 252,923 | 9,537 | 0.04 |
| Palmetto High | 254,495 | 5,834 | 0.02 |
| Southeast High | 296,873 | 10,095 | 0.03 |
| Lakewood Ranch High | 298,000 | N/A | N/A |
| *Total High* | **1,395,483** | **$ 46,141** | **$0.03** |
| **District Total** | **4,705,260** | **$221,048** | **$0.04** |

Source:  Manatee County School District

Sanitation and Grounds performs inspections of the schools to determine the level and quality of custodial service.  The inspections follow prescribed procedures and utilize specific forms for different areas of the school.  The results of the inspections are shared with the school administrator and the head custodian.

# Building Maintenance, Internal Controls, Sanitation, and Grounds

Work order requests are generated directly by school staff or by maintenance staff during the annual inspections.  The requests are entered into the system and tracked using a software program developed by the district.  Work order requests are reviewed by the department administrator and then forwarded to the appropriate shop.  The work order requests are assigned using the priority system shown below.

## A − Emergency
1. Any work order that could cause a life or health hazard to anyone
2. Elementary, middle, high, administrative/support
3. Response time— immediate/same day

## B − Priority
1. Any work order which could cause a loss of equipment
2. Any work order which could hinder the ability to educate
3. Number affected
4. Any work order which could hinder a staff member from performing normal duties
5. Response time— one to two days

## C - Routine Work Orders
1. Common Repairs

2. Response Time— 1 to 30 days

Completed work orders are returned to the work load control manager who enters the time spent on the work order from the time sheets. The tradesmen enter the materials used on the job from the warehouse tickets and invoices of local vendors and any comments about the job on hard copy work orders. The manager verifies completed work orders and relays closed work orders to workload control for computer closeout. The work order tracking software allows the supervisor to track the history of work orders and produce very limited reports. The departments in maintenance receive approximately 10-15,000 work order requests each year and currently has a backlog of approximately 1,500 work orders.

Maintenance has developed a preventive maintenance program, which is based on annual inspections of the facilities. The inspections are comprehensive and include 28 categories. Exhibit 9-6 lists the systems that are inspected.

*Exhibit 9-6*

# Building Systems for Annual Inspection

| | |
|---|---|
| • Asphalt | • Furniture Repair/Refinishing |
| • Asphalt Sealing | • Exterior Finishing (Paint/Stain) |
| • Tennis/Playcourts | • Interior Finishing (Paint/Stain) |
| • Fencing | • Electrical |
| • Grounds/Site Improvements | • Heating |
| • Welding | • Air Conditioning |
| • Structural Components | • Public Address and Bell Systems |
| • Roof/Roof Accessories | • Fire Protection and Equipment |
| • Exterior Structural Walls | • Security Alarm System |
| • Interior Wall Partitions | • Refrigeration |
| • Doors/Windows/Locks | • Industrial Equipment Repair |
| • Floors | • Energy Management System |
| • Plumbing | • Lighting |
| • Cabinet Repair | • Miscellaneous |

Source: Manatee County School District

The inspections are used to identify those items, which are deficient in meeting the maintenance guidelines, and should be considered for priority funding. The data are used to establish a budget for each school and auxiliary facility. Specific inspection forms, listing items to be assessed, are used for each type of space. Exhibit 9-7 lists the inspection forms.

*Exhibit 9-7*

# Types of Inspection Forms

| | |
|---|---|
| • Classroom | • Boiler Room |
| • Relocatables | • Cafeteria |
| • Mechanical Room | • Facility |

| | |
|---|---|
| • Electrical Room | • Playground |
| • Clinic | • Site |

Source:  manatee County School District

A comprehensive inspection report is compiled which identifies the school, the building number, the room number, and the deficiency.  This report is then used to develop a five-year capital improvements plan to rectify the deficiencies.  The five-year Facilities/Maintenance Application Worksheet identifies $6,636,719 in repairs and inspections for 1998-99 and a total of $23,756,450 for the five-year period from 1998 to 2003.

Building maintenance trades persons receive training on an irregular basis.  Training sessions are typically offered by manufacturers for new products or as needed by the trades persons to develop necessary skills.  Typical examples of training include:

- computer repair - training to qualify as an Apple Repair Shop;
- fire alarm - manufacturer training;
- security - seminars by manufacturer's representatives; and
- carpentry - new product seminars.

Most maintenance materials are kept in stock in the district warehouse where they can be requested the day before they are needed.  Each shop also maintains some inventory of materials.  The district's warehouse inventory system is not linked to the work order system so the tracking of materials used is input manually by the work load control manager.  This situation will be corrected when the district installs a districtwide software system in the next year.  Maintenance also maintains blanket purchase orders at local vendors so that trades persons can acquire materials in a timely manner which are not in the warehouse.

# *Are the Best Practices for Maintenance and Operations Services Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district uses cost-effective methods of providing maintenance and operations services.**

# 1 Does the district periodically evaluate maintenance and operations activities to determine the most cost-effective means of providing needed services, including consideration of management, outside contracts or privatization, and joining associations of other government agencies?

*Yes. The district periodically evaluates maintenance and operations activities to determine if they are being provided in a cost-effective manner. These evaluations are not done on any regularly scheduled basis and all areas have not been evaluated.*

## Objectives Are Not Clearly Related to the Budget

The district does not clearly relate the objectives and responsibilities of the central administration to each major activity/priority of the budget. Cost-effectiveness measures have not been established for all general support activities. The budgeting process does not identify the objectives and responsibilities of the facilities maintenance function and demonstrate that the budget is responsive to those objectives and responsibilities in a cost-effective way. While these objectives and responsibilities are generally known, the budget does not link the dollars being spent to these objectives and responsibilities and determine if the manner in which the dollars are being spent is the most cost effective.

## The District Evaluates Cost Savings

The district evaluates contracted and/or privatized services to verify effectiveness and cost savings. All privatized services are acquired through a competitive bid, and appropriate bidding procedures are followed. The competitive bidding procedure ensures that the district is acquiring services or products at the best market price available.

## The District Evaluates Existing Services

The district periodically evaluates existing services to explore the feasibility of using outside contracts or privatization and/or identify improvements. The district has conducted cost comparisons for outsourcing several functions, including custodial services and computer repair services. The Department of Internal Controls has evaluated the utility billing structure and has been able to reduce the number of utility bills which has resulted in savings for the district.

The results of the study on computer repair services showed that it would cost less for the district to hire two additional staff persons than it would cost for outsourcing the repair work under warranty contracts. The custodial outsourcing study underwent much discussion by the board which finally decided to not issue an RFP for custodial services.

## The District Consolidates Efforts With Other Agencies

The district periodically evaluates the feasibility of contracting with or joining associations of other government agencies to perform functions of the district. Opportunities are taken to piggyback on state and other governmental agencies' bids for services and goods. The district participated in the Florida state bid for school buses and the county bid for road paving.

# Recommendations ——————————————————————————

- *We recommend that each budget item be supported by an objective that clearly supports the goals of the maintenance and operations department and the district. The objective should contain or refer to standards for determining if the budget item is cost effective.*

- *An example of an objective might be "to paint the exterior of all facilities on a seven year cycle." The annual painting budget should then be determined by calculating the materials and labor required to paint one-seventh of the district's facilities.*

# *Are the Best Practices for Performing Maintenance and Operations Functions Being Observed?* ——————————

**Goal:  The district ensures that maintenance and operations functions are performed in accordance with legal responsibilities.**

# 1 **Does the board provide procedural guidance in areas such as replacement and selection of equipment, purchasing of supplies and materials, level of maintenance expectations, and maintenance and operations budget criteria?**

*No. The board provides procedural guidance in one or two areas, but not in the majority of operations.*

## There Is a Board-Approved Mission Statement

The board has approved a written maintenance department mission statement that clearly defines the purpose and focus of the department. The mission statement identifies "a safe quality environment for all … students" as its priority. This mission statement was not developed with employee input, but it is posted in the facilities maintenance office. All employees have read the mission statement and the performance of the supervisors and the programs instituted would indicate that the mission statement is a commonly held value. Exhibit 9-8 presents the complete Building Mission Statement for the maintenance department.

*Exhibit 9-8*

## Maintenance Department Mission Statement, 1997-98

"The mission of Buildings Maintenance is to provide a safe quality environment for all Manatee County School Board's students and staff members.  The goal of Buildings

Maintenance is to accomplish this task in an effective and cost-efficient manner."

Source: Manatee County School District

The district has also approved an organizational chart but has not written or approved operational procedures for the maintenance department. The organizational chart for Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations is presented on page 9-2.

## Few Board-Approved Procedures for Maintenance Operations

The district has written procedures for the disposition of equipment. However, there are no board-approved procedures for the purchase of supplies and materials, the level of maintenance standards, maintenance budget criteria, management of facilities, personnel staffing policies, and use of equipment. The board does have an approved procedure for the use of school facilities by community groups and this function is supervised by Sanitation and Grounds. The Building Maintenance Department would like to have a staffing formula but has been unable to identify an appropriate model.

## Procedures Are Followed

The maintenance department adheres to the district procedures, which are in effect while carrying out its duties. The maintenance department is following the procedures for the disposition of surplus equipment and the use of school facilities by community groups.

## Operating Procedures Are in Existence

The Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations departments have written operating procedures that were last revised in December 1997. The procedures are not updated on a regular schedule and are not updated with employee input. There are no sections on staff training in the procedures, but the staff does receive some training to keep them updated on new materials and techniques.

# *Recommendations* ———————————————————

- *We recommend that the district develop board-approved guidelines in all areas which affect the operation of the Facilities, Maintenance and Operations departments. The guidelines should establish the policies and procedures for the following areas, at a minimum:*
  - *purchasing of supplies, materials, and equipment (quality and cost effectiveness);*
  - *disposition of equipment (procedures to ensure accountability);*
  - *maintenance standards for facilities (how much and what kinds of deferred maintenance will be tolerated);*
  - *criteria for establishing the maintenance budget (based on maintenance standards);*
  - *community use of facilities (fees, liability and eligibility);*
  - *personnel staffing levels (staffing formulas to ensure maintenance standards can be met);*

> – *staff training to ensure productivity, advancement, and appropriate skill levels; and*
>
> – *staff accountability, productivity and performance standards.*

- *Action Plan 9-1 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 9-1*

## To Develop Board Approved Guidelines

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategies | Develop board-approved written guidelines for the following items:<br>• Replacement and selection of equipment<br>• Purchasing of supplies and materials<br>• Standards for maintenance of facilities<br>• Maintenance and operations budget criteria<br>• Personnel staffing levels<br>• Personnel training<br>• Personnel accountability, productivity and performance standards. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations, in conjunction with the department supervisors, will prepare draft guidelines for the procedures.<br><br>Step 2: The director will present the draft guidelines to the board for review and comment.<br><br>Step 3: The director will revise the guidelines as appropriate.<br><br>Step 4: The director shall submit to the board to consider for approval. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations |
| Time Frame | December 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Are the Best Practices for Operations and Maintenance Personnel Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district accomplishes maintenance program goals and objectives through the use of qualified maintenance and operations personnel or contracting for services.**

# 1 Does the maintenance and operations departments have adequate staff to meet their program goals and objectives?

*No. An analysis of the custodial staffing levels, shows the district is short approximately 14 positions. The Building Maintenance Department has a backlog of approximately 1,500 work order requests.*

## A Staffing Formula Is Needed

The district does not have a staffing formula for the Maintenance Department that is tied to meeting the departments goals and objectives. The district has identified approximately $6,000,000 worth of deferred maintenance and the department has a backlog of approximately 1,500 work order requests. Site visits to several schools by the review team found that school administrators had mixed reviews on the quality of service provided by the maintenance department. In May 1998, the Florida Department of Education notified the district that three schools should be classified as "unsatisfactory" based on the Castaldi Formula and a special inspection.

A survey of eight other districts, conducted by the district in 1997, indicates that the district is staffed at a level above the average of staff per facility. Exhibit 9-9 presents the results of this survey. However, the survey does not indicate whether the other districts have significant amounts of deferred maintenance, nor to what levels the districts are sub-contracting out work. Consequently, it is not possible to draw a conclusion on the appropriateness of the staffing level from the survey.

*Exhibit 9-9*

## Staffing Levels of Nine Districts, 1996-97

| District | Number of Maintenance Staff | Number of Facilities | Number of Staff/Facility |
|---|---|---|---|
| Broward | 636 | 259 | 2.5 |
| Duval | 330 | 160 | 2.1 |
| Lee | 119 | 74 | 1.6 |
| Leon | 133 | 63 | 2.1 |
| Manatee | 99 | 44 | 2.3 |
| Marion | 94 | 52 | 1.8 |
| Polk | 160 | 120 | 1.3 |
| Seminole | 156 | 55 | 2.8 |
| Volusia | 183 | 74 | 2.5 |
| **Average** | **212** | **100** | **2.1** |

Source: Manatee County School District

## Current Custodial Staffing Formula Needs to Be Adjusted

Sanitation and Grounds uses a standard formula for arriving at custodial staffing levels. The formula considers five factors: number of teachers, number of students, number of rooms, total area of building, and number of acres. Exhibit 9-10 presents the formula calculations.

*Exhibit 9-10*

## The Current Custodial Staffing Formula Incorporates Five Factors

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number of teachers / 8 | = | _____ |
| Number of students / 225 | = | _____ |
| Number of rooms / 11 | = | _____ |
| Total area of building | = | _____ |
| Number of acres / 2 | = | _____ |
| TOTAL | = | _____ |
| Total / 5 = _____ x local adjustment | = | Total custodial allocation |

Source: Manatee County School District

The local adjustment factor is determined by factors such as building size, style, age, and number of relocatables. This factor should rarely exceed .90, but the district does not use this factor. The district, using this formula, has established a staffing level goal of approximately 1: 15,000 gross square feet (gsf), but does not have sufficient staff to meet this goal. Exhibit 9-11 presents an analysis of custodial staffing comparing the current staffing ratios to a ratio of one custodian to 19,000 gsf. The results of previous school district reviews by MGT, show staffing levels ranging from 1:12,000 to 1:22,000. A 1;19,000 ratio has been established by the MGT review team as a best practice standard.

As is shown in Exhibit 9-11, the district is staffing custodial services in the schools at a level beyond the best practice level by approximately 14 positions districtwide. The analysis indicates that while the elementary and middle schools are being staffed fairly close to the standard, the high schools are well below it. The district should evaluate the staffing formula and its budget for custodial staff.

## Appropriate Hiring Procedures Are Followed

The district follows appropriate procedures in hiring maintenance and operations staff. Job descriptions are currently being rewritten for maintenance and operations, and job notices contain adequate descriptions of responsibilities, qualifications and educational requirements. The department advertises new job openings through postings and with newspaper advertisements.

## Federal Guidelines Are Followed

The selection process meets state and federal guidelines related to equal employment opportunities. Each job notice clearly states that the district complies with state statutes on veteran's preference and federal statutes on non-discrimination on the basis of religion, race, national origin, marital status, color, sex, age, or handicap.

## Qualifications Are Evaluated

Personnel screening procedures contain methods to evaluate the qualifications of prospective employees. Applications are reviewed to ensure the applicant meets the job requirements and past employers are contacted to ensure the applicants have the appropriate skills and experience. Appropriate procedures are followed in the hiring process, lead supervisors are involved in the interviews and the evaluation of the applicants.

## References Are Obtained

Personnel procedures ensure that adequate personal and professional references are obtained and contacted. Past employers and references for job applicants are contacted to determine the applicant's skills and work habits.

## Qualified Applicants Are Recruited

Procedures are established for attracting qualified applicants based on district size, location, and needs. Job announcements identify the job description, required qualifications, and salary. Positions are advertised when necessary.

*Exhibit 9-11*

# Custodial Staffing Is Above the Best Practice Level of 1:19,000 GSF

| School | Permanent Area | Portable Area | Total Area | Current Allocation | Square Foot Per Custodian | Best Practice Allocation | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anna Maria Elementary | 39,122 | 5,904 | 45,026 | 3.5 | 12,865 | 2.4 | 1.1 |
| Ballard Elementary | 54,163 | 4,752 | 58,915 | 3.5 | 16,833 | 3.1 | 0.4 |
| Bayshore Elementary | 94,177 | 7,920 | 102,097 | 5.5 | 18,563 | 5.4 | 0.1 |
| Duette Elementary | 6,196 | 0 | 6,196 | 0.3 | 20,653 | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| Manatee Elementary | 86,721 | 7,488 | 94,209 | 4.5 | 20,935 | 5.0 | -0.5 |
| Miller Elementary | 95,022 | 9,072 | 104,094 | 5.0 | 20,819 | 5.5 | -0.5 |
| Myakka Elementary | 58,346 | 4,896 | 63,242 | 4.0 | 15,811 | 3.3 | 0.7 |
| Oneco Elementary | 105,655 | 0 | 105,655 | 6.5 | 16,255 | 5.6 | 0.9 |
| Orange Ridge/ Bullock Elementary | 117,071 | 12,528 | 129,599 | 6.0 | 21,600 | 6.8 | -0.8 |
| Palm View Elementary | 85,519 | 2,016 | 87,535 | 4.5 | 19,452 | 4.6 | -0.1 |
| Palma Sola Elementary | 86,800 | 2,784 | 89,584 | 5.0 | 17,917 | 4.7 | 0.3 |
| Palmetto Elementary | 101,481 | 2,736 | 104,217 | 6.0 | 17,370 | 5.5 | 0.5 |
| Prine Elementary | 74,202 | 12,000 | 86,202 | 5.0 | 17,240 | 4.5 | 0.5 |
| Daughtrey Elementary | 85,828 | 20,208 | 106,036 | 6.0 | 17,673 | 5.6 | 0.4 |
| Samoset Elementary | 61,899 | 13,824 | 75,723 | 5.5 | 13,768 | 4.0 | 1.5 |
| Tillman Elementary | 107,388 | 4,032 | 111,420 | 5.0 | 22,284 | 5.9 | -0.9 |
| Blackburn Elementary | 98,684 | 5,760 | 104,444 | 5.0 | 20,889 | 5.5 | -0.5 |
| Wakeland Elementary | 89,246 | 16,416 | 105,662 | 4.5 | 23,480 | 5.6 | -1.1 |
| Moody Elementary | 74,137 | 3,600 | 77,737 | 4.5 | 17,275 | 4.1 | 0.4 |
| Abel Elementary | 72,363 | 3,024 | 75,387 | 4.0 | 18,847 | 4.0 | 0.0 |
| Stewart Elementary | 58,748 | 0 | 58,748 | 4.0 | 14,687 | 3.1 | 0.9 |
| Bashaw Elementary | 88,941 | 2,880 | 91,821 | 5.0 | 18,364 | 4.8 | 0.2 |
| Braden River Elementary | 90,125 | 6,360 | 96,485 | 5.5 | 17,543 | 5.1 | 0.4 |
| Seabreeze Elementary | 84,596 | 0 | 84,596 | 4.5 | 18,799 | 4.5 | 0.0 |
| Tara Elementary | 106,173 | 3,024 | 109,197 | 5.5 | 19,854 | 5.7 | -0.2 |
| Witt Elementary | 96,829 | 0 | 96,829 | 4.0 | 24,207 | 5.1 | -1.1 |
| **Total Elementary** | **2,119,432** | **151,224** | **2,270,656** | **122.3** | **18,566** | **119.5** | **2.8** |
| Lincoln Middle | 136,192 | 0 | 136,192 | 9.0 | 15,132 | 7.2 | 1.8 |
| Sugg Middle | 137,578 | 14,976 | 152,554 | 7.0 | 21,793 | 8.0 | -1.0 |
| Harllee Middle | 130,300 | 15,120 | 145,420 | 7.0 | 20,774 | 7.7 | -0.7 |
| King Middle | 118,441 | 14,064 | 132,505 | 7.0 | 18,929 | 7.0 | 0.0 |
| Braden River Middle | 165,113 | 0 | 165,113 | 7.0 | 23,588 | 8.7 | -1.7 |
| Haile Middle | 155,207 | 0 | 155,207 | 7.0 | 22,172 | 8.2 | -1.2 |
| Johnson Middle | 158,326 | 0 | 158,326 | 9.0 | 17,592 | 8.3 | 0.7 |
| **Total Middle** | **1,001,157** | **44,160** | **1,045,317** | **53.0** | **19,723** | **55.0** | **-2.0** |
| Bayshore High | 265,000 | 13,104 | 278,104 | 11.0 | 25,282 | 14.6 | -3.6 |
| Manatee High | 302,000 | 11,088 | 313,088 | 16.0 | 19,568 | 16.5 | -0.5 |
| Manatee Technical | 226,235 | 26,688 | 252,923 | 10.5 | 24,088 | 13.3 | -2.8 |
| Palmetto High | 224,511 | 29,984 | 254,495 | 8.0 | 31,812 | 13.4 | -5.4 |
| Southeast High | 266,249 | 30,624 | 296,873 | 13.0 | 22,836 | 15.6 | -2.6 |
| **Total High** | **1,283,995** | **111,488** | **1,395,483** | **58.5** | **23,854** | **73.4** | **-14.9** |
| **District Total** | **4,404,584** | **306,872** | **4,711,456** | **234** | **20,152** | **248.0** | **-14.2** |

Source: Manatee County School District

MGT of America, Inc.

# *Recommendations* ———————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district develop a staffing formula for the maintenance department. The staffing formula should relate the number of staff in each trade to the factors which affect the work load of the trade. The custodial staffing formula now used by the district is a good model to follow. Possible factors could include those below.*
  - *Painters – painting cycle for exteriors of facilities*
  - *Glazers – amount of broken glass due to vandalism*
  - *HVAC trades – preventive maintenance cycles*
  - *Grounds – mowing cycles*
  - *Roofers – age and condition of roofs*
- *We recommend that the district adjust the current custodial staffing formula to produce a staffing ratio of one custodian for every 19,000 gross square feet.*
- *We recommend that the district budget for custodial salaries at a level to meet the custodial staffing formula when it is adjusted to a ratio of 1:19,000.*
- *Exhibit 9-12 shows the estimated fiscal effect over the next five years.*
- *Action Plan 9-2 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

Exhibit 9-12

## Implementing Recommendations Will Cost the District Approximately $1,358,504 Over the Next Five Years

|  | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Cost of | ($150,000) | ($302,126) | ($302,126) | ($ 302,126) | ($ 302,126) |
| Cumulative Cost | ( 150,000) | ( 452,126) | ( 754,252) | ( 1,056,378) | ( 1,358,504) |

Note: Parentheses indicate costs or investments.

Action Plan 9-2

## To Develop and Improve Staffing Formulas

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategies | Develop a staffing formula for the maintenance trades. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations, in conjunction with the department supervisors, will research staffing formulas. |
| | Step 2: The director and supervisors will establish the factors which affect work load for each trade. These factors will be related to existing staffing levels and the amount of work order backlog and the amount of deferred maintenance as identified in the five-year plan. |
| | Step 3: The director and the supervisors will develop a staffing formula which will enable the district to eliminate all deferred maintenance in five years and maintain the facilities to the district standards. |

| | Step 4: | The director shall submit the staffing formula to the board for review and approval. |
|---|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations | |
| Time Frame | June 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

| **Recommendation 2** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategies | Adjust the current custodial staffing formula to reflect a staffing level of 1:19,000. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The supervisor of Sanitation and Grounds will adjust the current custodial staffing formula so that it produces a staffing level of 1:19,000. |
| | Step 2: | The supervisor shall submit the revised formula to the board for review and approval. |
| Who Is Responsible | Supervisor of Sanitation and Grounds | |
| Time Frame | December 1998 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

| **Recommendation 3** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategies | Develop a custodial staffing budget to reflect a staffing level of 1:19,000. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | After reviewing and approving the staffing formula, the board shall consider budgeting the additional funds for achieving the staffing formula. |
| Who Is Responsible | School board | |
| Time Frame | January 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | If the board approves a staffing level of 1:19,000 square feet, this would require approximately $300,000 annually. | |

# 2 Do the Maintenance and Operations departments have written job descriptions for each position within the departments?

*No. The Maintenance and Operations departments have job descriptions for each position in the departments. However, these job descriptions are old and out of date. The departments are currently rewriting their job descriptions to update the requirements so that they reflect the current practices and needs of the departments, but this process has been stalled for a year.*

## Current Job Descriptions Are Needed

Job descriptions have not been developed that properly reflect the needs of the department. The department revised its job descriptions about a year and half ago. These job descriptions were sent to the Office of Personnel Management for review and approval, but have not been processed as yet.

## Job Descriptions Are Reviewed Periodically

Job descriptions are reviewed and updated periodically to address changing requirements and actual practices. There is not a set schedule for the review of job descriptions, but the department is currently under going this process.

## Staff Participates in Writing Job Descriptions

The staff participates in the writing and review of job descriptions. The last time the job descriptions were rewritten and reviewed, the administration included the managers and supervisors in the process. The Internal Controls Department included all employees in the reviews of job descriptions.

## Job Descriptions Are Available to Staff

Job descriptions are readily available for staff to review. Job descriptions are maintained and readily available for staff to review in the Maintenance, Operations, Facilities, and Personnel departments.

# *Recommendations* ─────────────────────────

- *We recommend that the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations departments update their job descriptions.*

- *Action Plan 9-3 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 9-3*

## To Update Job Descriptions

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Expedite the process of updating the job descriptions for the Maintenance and Operations departments. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Contact the Office of Personnel Management and establish a timeline for the review of the new job descriptions. |
| | Step 2: Make all necessary revisions and updates. |
| | Step 3: Submit revised job descriptions to the board for review and approval. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations |
| Time Frame | August 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 3   Does the district clearly communicate performance standards to Maintenance and Operations staff?

*No.   The district has not developed performance standards for the Maintenance and Operations staff.  The departments rely on the lead trades persons to set standards and evaluate the work of staff.  This is a common practice but leaves the evaluation of staff up to the lead workers.*

## There Are No Performance Standards

Work standards, quality levels, completion schedules, and other standards for job performance have not been established and based on appropriate industry standards.  The department hopes to accomplish more in this area once the new work order tracking software is implemented.

## Current Work Order Software Is Not Sophisticated

Performance standards for frequently repeated tasks have not been established.  The district does not have the capability of doing this with its present work order tracking software.  The software was written by Information Services and is not capable of producing reports based on queries.  When the new software is implemented, common tasks such as, repairing a lock, painting a room, replacing glass in a window, and changing a filter, can be tracked and performance measures (the required time for the task) can be established using the experience of the lead trade persons and the work history developed by the tracking of work orders.  These performance standards will allow the manager to more effectively schedule work and set clear expectations for the staff.  (For more information on performance standards, refer to page 4-16.)

## Employees Can Review Performance Appraisals

Employees have the opportunity to review their performance appraisals and measurement according to established standards.  The employees receive an annual evaluation and can review their appraisal at that time.  Leads and managers communicate continuously with the workmen regarding their performance.

## Performance Training Is Not Provided

The district does not provide training targeted at improving performance of the trade persons.  The training that is provided is technical in nature, often provided by manufacturers of equipment used by the district, but does not have a comprehensive focus on improving the performance of the staff.  For example, training has been provided by Apple Computer, Pyrotronics Fire Alarms, and the security alarm company.

## *Recommendations* ————————————————————

- • *We recommend that the district establish performance standards for the maintenance and operations staff.  These standards would be based on frequently repeated tasks and can be used to schedule workloads, evaluate staff, and improve productivity.  Clearly*

*defined expectations have been shown to improve worker productivity. For more information on developing performance standards, refer to Action Plan 4-3, page 4-18.*

- *We recommend that the district provide training to the maintenance and operations staff which is targeted at improving staff performance. The training should focus on areas such as work habits, teamwork, efficient work methods, and interpersonal communications.*

- *Action Plan 9-3 shows the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 9-4*

# To Develop Performance Standards and Improve Staff Performance

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategies | Develop performance standards for frequently repeated maintenance tasks. The standards shall clearly define the task and the number of staff hours necessary to complete the task in an efficient manner. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The supervisors of Building Maintenance, Internal Controls, and Sanitation and Grounds shall identify tasks, which are appropriate for the application of performance standards. |
| | Step 2: The supervisors shall research any existing industry/military standards, which are applicable. |
| | Step 3: Utilizing the work order tracking software, the supervisors and their lead forepersons shall develop performance standards for the most commonly repeated tasks. |
| | Step 4: The supervisors and the lead forepersons shall hold staff meetings to explain the performance standards. The standards shall be made available to all staff members. Sanitation and Grounds should communicate the performance standards for custodians to the site administrators. |
| | Step 5: The supervisors shall track the performance of their staff as measured against the performance standards for six months and adjust the performance standards as needed to reflect the most efficient standards. |
| | Step 6: The director shall review the performance standards with the board. |
| | Step 7: The board shall approve the use of the performance standards for the performance evaluations of staff. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations and the supervisors of Building Maintenance, Internal Controls, and Sanitation and Grounds |
| Time Frame | September 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Develop a training program for the maintenance and operations staff which is targeted at improving job performance. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director and supervisors of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations departments shall meet with the appropriate staff of the Staff Development Department and outline a training program for the staff. |

|  | Step 2: | The Staff Development Department shall develop training courses which meet the goals and objectives established in Step 1. |
|---|---|---|
|  | Step 3: | The board shall review and approve the training program and budget the necessary funds to implement the program. |
|  | Step 4: | The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations shall implement the training program. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations | |
| Time Frame | June 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

# 4 Does the district provide appropriate supervision of maintenance and operations staff?

*Yes. Staff evaluations are performed annually using a standardized evaluation form. The district has compared the number of supervisors to other districts and found that it is comparable. Due to the site-based model the district is using, custodians are supervised by the school administrator. The supervisor of Buildings, Grounds, and Operations offers support to the administrators by providing some training, purchasing equipment and supplies, and helping in personnel matters.*

## Board Procedures Are Followed in Staff Evaluations

Evaluations are performed in accordance with board procedures. The board has established an employee evaluation form for maintenance workers. The form lists various skills, which the employee is evaluated on. The evaluator indicates if the employee "exceeds requirements," "meets requirements," "needs improvement," or has "not been observed or the skill is not applicable." The skills evaluated include:

- technical skills,
- decision making,
- planning and organization,
- interpersonal,
- motivation,
- communication, and
- work habits/appearance.

## No Supervisor/Employee Ratios Established

Supervisor/employee ratios have not been established based on appropriate industry standards. The department is currently developing a staff allocation formula, which should include supervisor/employee ratios. The district should look to private maintenance companies to establish appropriate ratios.

## Levels of Authority Are Clear

Levels of authority and responsibility have been assigned to each position.  The job descriptions describe the responsibility of each position and these job descriptions are currently being updated.

## The Current Work Order Tracking System
## Is Not an Effective Management Tool

The work order tracking system is not used to increase management capability because of its limited capability to produce management reports.  A new software system is currently being installed and management is planning to use it in a more comprehensive manner.  Managers will be able to track the productivity of crews and individual workers.  The length of time required to complete work orders will also be able to be tracked.  These and other reports will allow managers the ability to manage more effectively.

## *Recommendation* ─────────────────────────────────────

- • *We recommend that the district establish supervisor/employee ratios for the maintenance and operations staff.  These ratios will need to be specific to the trade and need to consider whether the supervisor is a working manager or an administrative supervisor.*

# 5 Does the district provide a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff to enhance job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety?

*No.  The district's staff development program is geared primarily toward the teaching staff. The staff development program does offer training in leadership and time management for the administrators, but these classes are not geared toward the trade persons.*

## Staff Development Is Not
## Supporting Maintenance Staff

The district does have an active staff development and training program but the emphasis is on administrative and educational staff, not support staff.  There are no annual training programs for trades personnel and support staff.  With the exception of legally mandated training, such as health hazards, the staff development training calendar for January - August 1998 lists no programs which are specifically tailored to improve the work habits or skill levels of maintenance personnel.

## There Are No Written Training Goals

There are no written training goals for the maintenance and operations staff.  Training by manufacturer's representatives is offered as appropriate for new materials, tools, or systems.  The trades staff receives no training in interpersonal team skills, time management, or district policy awareness.  The operations function does offer training for custodians to achieve a certification or master level, but this training is voluntary.  The budget for training is very limited.

## Staff Development Should Plan Specific Programs for Maintenance and Operations

The Maintenance and Operations director does not work closely with the Staff Development department to ensure a planned, sequential program for personnel skill development. District staff develop programs are typically not geared toward maintenance staff and therefore the directors of these departments rarely work together in this effort. The district should forge this link so that the maintenance department does not have the total planning and fiscal responsibility for staff development programs for maintenance staff.

## The Training Needs to Be Broadened

The training programs do include technical training but do not include personnel interaction strategies. Training is not individualized. Manufacturers and equipment suppliers provide some training for maintenance staff, which covers the technical skills needed for some specific equipment or tools. Training on an individualized basis would be outside the possibility of the existing budget.

## Appropriate Trainers Are Used

Instructors used for staff training are from appropriate trade/instructional areas. The district uses outside professional training where possible (manufacturer's training representatives/technical experts). The department takes advantage of training offered by manufactures and suppliers of equipment, which the district uses. This training is conducted by appropriately skilled technicians or manufacturer's representatives.

## Training Programs Need Staff Feedback

Training programs do not offer an opportunity for staff feedback and evaluation. The lack of training programs provided by staff development exclude this possibility.

## Training Program Is Offered

The district does have a training (apprenticeship) program through the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) which is available to essentially all the trades helpers on a voluntary basis. The employee is assigned to a trainee position for a minimum of 120 days. The employee is trained and evaluated every 30 to 60 days until the training is satisfactorily completed.

## *Recommendation*

- *The Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department needs to develop a comprehensive training program that is aimed at improving the technical skills of the staff, their job satisfaction, efficiency and safety. This program should include regularly scheduled training sessions and should not be limited to sessions offered by manufacturer's representatives.*

- *Action Plan 9-5 provides steps to implement this recommendation.*

MGT of America, Inc.

*Action Plan 9-5*

# To Develop a Staff Development Program

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff in the areas of job skills, job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations and his supervisors will meet with the respective staffs to determine the types of training the staffs feel are needed. |
| | Step 2: The director and the supervisors shall meet with the Staff Development staff and develop staff training in the following areas at the least: |
| | • job safety, |
| | • team work, |
| | • use of tools, |
| | • interpersonal communications, |
| | • work habits, and |
| | • job skills. |
| | Step 3: Staff Development shall prepare a training schedule, which allows for all Maintenance and Operations staff to receive at least two training sessions per year. |
| | Step 4: The director of Facilities shall develop a training budget based on the schedule prepared by Staff Development. |
| | Step 5: The director of Facilities and the director of Staff Development shall present the training curriculum, schedule, budget, and expected outcomes to the board. |
| | Step 6: The board shall review, revise and consider the approval of the training program. |
| | Step 7: The program will be evaluated annually. Staff feedback will be part of the basis for the evaluation. |
| Who Is Responsible | The directors of Facilities and Staff Development |
| Time Frame | December 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Are the Best Practices for Maintenance and Operations Budgets Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district has an annual budget for facilities maintenance and operations to support annual ongoing maintenance and deferred maintenance requirements to control and track maintenance and operations costs.**

# 1 Has the administration developed budgetary guidelines to provide for funding in each category of facilities maintenance and operations?

*No.  There are no written guidelines for budgeting.  The budget is developed based on past budgets and identified needs.*

## Budget Does Not Address Goals

The annual budget does not address short-term objectives and long-term goals for maintaining and operating district facilities.  Each department develops objectives, activities, and evaluation criteria for its budget.  However, the budget is not built to directly reflect these objectives and activities.  The budget is constructed by using the previous year's budget and adding a factor for inflation and growth.  The district should make an effort to quantify the cost of the objectives and goals of the individual departments and construct the budget from these identified costs.

## The Budget Does Not Address Deferred Maintenance

Funding is not provided in the budget for annual ongoing maintenance programs in order to avoid high repair or replacement costs in future years.  The district does identify on-going maintenance tasks and deferred maintenance tasks.  However, the existence of approximately $23,000,000 in deferred and ongoing maintenance needs indicates the district is not funding these areas sufficiently.

The district budgeted approximately $11,000,733 for maintenance, operations, and utilities in 1997-98.  Exhibit 9-13 compares this expenditure to national averages as reported in an annual survey by American School and University magazine.

*Exhibit 9-13*

## Comparison of Maintenance and Operations Expenditures, 1997-98

| District | Dollars Per Student | Dollars Per Square Foot |
|---|---|---|
| National Median | $523.30 | $3.64 |
| Region 4 Median | 376.62 | 2.89 |
| Manatee County School District | 326.27 | 2.34 |

Note:  Region 4 includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Source:  *American School* and University publication

The district is considerably below the national median but is within 13% and 19%, respectively, for dollars per student and per square foot of the regional median.  Consequently, it can be concluded that the board should develop guidelines for budgeting, which eliminate the backlog of deferred maintenance and approximate the regional profile.

## Recurring Maintenance Tasks Are Not Adequately Funded

The budget does not adequately address recurring maintenance tasks.  Based on the data presented in Exhibit 9-13 it can be concluded that the district is not funding maintenance and operations sufficiently to address all recurring maintenance tasks.

## Funding Too Little to Eliminate Deferred Maintenance

The district funds deferred maintenance projects within the resources available.  The district has identified deferred maintenance projects and funds these on a prioritized basis.  However, the resources made available for deferred maintenance projects are too little to eliminate the recurrence of deferred maintenance.

## Budget Does Not Meet Industry Standards

The budget for physical plant maintenance does not meet appropriate industry standards such as cost per square foot, percentage of total general fund operating budget, and historical budget expenditures.  The maintenance and operations budget is less than the regional and national median on a per student basis and on a per square foot basis as shown in Exhibit 9-13.  These figures indicate what school districts are currently spending while still building a deferred maintenance backlog.

## District Has Budget Evaluation Process

The budget process provides for periodic evaluation of actual versus planned expenditures.  The department can produce reports at any time to compare actual versus planned expenditures and adjust the budget or planned expenditures accordingly.

# *Recommendations* ——————————————————————————

- *The budgeting process should be tied to the goals and objectives of each department. Each department supervisor should identify the costs associated with the department's goals and objectives. These costs should become the basis for the budget.*

- *The district should review its annual maintenance and operations budget which should allow the district, over a set period of time, to eliminate the backlog of deferred maintenance. All deferred maintenance projects have been identified, costed, and prioritized. A budget plan should be developed to eliminate these items over a 10-year period while not allowing other deferred maintenance items to accumulate.*

- *Action Plan 9-6 provides steps to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 9-6*

## Develop Budget Guidelines for Maintenance and Operations

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop guidelines for budgeting in each budget category for maintenance and operations. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations and the director of Finance and budget shall work together to develop guidelines for budgeting in each budget category for maintenance and operations. |
| | Step 2: The directors shall review the guidelines with the board. |
| | Step 3: The director of Facilities shall use the guidelines in developing the next budget. |
| Who Is Responsible | Directors of Facilities and Budget and Finance |
| Time Frame | December 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Associate the goals and objectives of the maintenance and operations department with budget amounts. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Department supervisors shall identify the departments goals and objectives on the departmental budget worksheets. |
| | Step 2: The supervisors shall develop the costs necessary to achieve these goals and objectives. |
| | Step 3: The director shall review and approve the budgets which are based on the goals and objectives. |
| | Step 4: The board shall review and consider approving the budgets which are based on the goals and objectives. |
| Who Is Responsible | The department supervisors |
| Time Frame | Annually −January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a long range (10-year) maintenance plan which will eliminate all the deferred maintenance in the district and not allow new projects to occur. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations shall develop a 10-year budget plan based on the current list of identified needs.<br><br>Step 2: The board shall review and consider the budget plan. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations. |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be developed with existing resources. |

# 2 Has the board established provision for a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures to support maintenance and operations?

*Yes. The budget does identify a maintenance reserve fund.*

## Reserve Fund Is Available to Maintenance

The maintenance department does have access to special reserve funding to meet unique situations created by new programs mandated by the state or federal governments. The district's reserve fund has approximately $2,000,000. The Risk Management department has a fund to reimburse maintenance for damage caused by vandalism and acts of God. This fund was recently used to repair the damaged caused by an abandoned car, which exploded on a school campus.

## The Budgetary Policy Is Flexible

The budgetary policy is flexible enough to ensure funding of unforeseen maintenance needs that could adversely affect the district's mission if not funded (e.g., emergency funds). The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations has the authority to transfer funds from the operating budget to meet emergency needs; however, this is not done unless the need is really justified. The director has the authority to transfer funds from the 101 Special Maintenance Fund, the director's cost center or other funding sources as suggested by a supervisor and approved by the director. The director can make a request through the assistant superintendent to access the district's reserve fund which is under the authority of the Finance director.

# *Are the Best Practices for Maintenance Standards Being Observed?*

**Goal: The district has established maintenance standards to be used in planning and managing the maintenance program and in evaluating whether the department is achieving its program goals and objectives.**

# 1 Has the district established maintenance standards in its short- and long-term plans for providing adequately maintained facilities?

*No. The district has established maintenance standards for its facilities. These standards are used to conduct yearly inspections of the school facilities and identify items to be inspected by space type, such as classroom, mechanical room, etc. However, the district does not have a long-term plan which identifies manpower, budget, and equipment needs based on maintaining the facilities to the established standards.*

## Maintenance and Operations Has Established Short- But Not Long-Term Goals

The district has established short-term goals but has not established long-term goals and objectives for the maintenance department that are consistent with the mission statement. Each department establishes objectives for itself during the budgeting process. These objectives cover the following fiscal year and are consistent with that department's role in maintenance and operations.

The district has not established appropriate standards in its short- and long-term plans. The long-term plans do not include a written comprehensive projection of manpower, budget, or equipment.

## Long-Term Plan Projects Needs

The long-term or five-year plan does project physical condition and repair/replacement needs of district facilities. Inspections are used to identify those items, which are deficient in meeting the maintenance guidelines and should be considered for priority funding. The data are used to establish a budget for each school and auxiliary facility. Specific inspection forms, listing items to be assessed, are used for each type of space. Exhibit 9-14 lists the inspection forms.

*Exhibit 9-14*

## Types of Inspection Forms

| | |
|---|---|
| • Classroom | • Boiler Room |
| • Relocatables | • Cafeteria |
| • Mechanical Room | • Facility |
| • Electrical Room | • Playground |
| • Clinic | • Site |

Source: Manatee County School District

A comprehensive inspection report is compiled which identifies the school, the building number, the room number, and the deficiency. This report is then used to develop a five-year capital improvements plan to rectify the deficiencies. The five-year Facilities/Maintenance Application Worksheet identifies $6,636,719 in repairs and inspections for 1998-99, and a total of $23,756,450 for the five-year period from 1998 to 2003.

## Customer Survey Is Currently Being Conducted

Feedback is currently being collected from customers, and self-analysis will be applied to improve the performance and productivity of the maintenance department.  The department is currently conducting a customer survey.  In the past, surveys were conducted annually, but this current survey is the first in several years.

## Customer Surveys Are Not Annual

Customers are no longer surveyed annually using a written instrument to determine strengths and weaknesses of the maintenance and operations department service.  The department is currently conducting such a survey.  In the past, surveys were conducted annually, but this current survey is the first in several years due to a change in the maintenance department administration.

## Survey Results Shared With Customers

Survey results are shared with customers and staff.  It is the intention of the maintenance department to share the results of the current survey with the customers and the staff in order to increase customer satisfaction.

## Work Order Completion Times Not Analyzed

Work order completion times are not analyzed.  The maintenance and operations departments are planning to do more thorough analysis once the new work order tracking software is operational.  They have not had this capability with the current software program since it is not possible to query the program.

## Effective Work Hours Not Analyzed

The maintenance and operations departments do not analyze effective work hours and hours worked versus hours scheduled.  The departments have not been effective in utilizing this kind of analysis but hope to with the installation of the new software.

## Limited Work Order Reports Are Produced

Limited work order reports are produced periodically and analyzed to improve performance.  Department supervisors use work order reports to analyze the performance of their departments and individual workers.  The reports can identify the types of work orders completed and the time it took to complete them.

# *Recommendations* ——————————————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district develop a long-term plan which utilizes the district's identified facility needs and projects manpower, budget and equipment needs to meet the goals of the plan.*
- *The Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department should establish the mechanism to annually survey its customers.  The results of the survey should be used to improve the operations of the department and to better communicate with the customers.*

- *Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations needs to utilize work order completion data to effectively manage its operations. This data should be used to analyze time to complete work orders (departmental responsiveness), staff productivity, and to make work schedule projections.*
- *Action Plan 9-7 provides steps to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 9-7*

# Effectively Provide Adequately Maintained Facilities in Accordance with Existing Facility Standards

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a long-range (five-year) plan which identifies the manpower, budget, and equipment needs to meet the goals and objectives of the plan. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director and the supervisors shall analyze the existing list of identified needs for improvements to facilities and include all needs which have been removed from the list due to lack of funds or manpower. |
| | Step 2: The director and the supervisors shall project manpower, budget and equipment needs necessary to complete all the identified needed facility improvements. |
| | Step 3: The director and supervisors shall prioritize the needs and develop a five-year plan with clearly stated goals and objectives for each year. The plan shall project manpower, budget, and equipment needs for each year. |
| | Step 4: The director shall present the long-range plan to the board. |
| | Step 5: The board shall review and consider approving the plan. |
| Who Is Responsible | The director and supervisors of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department |
| Time Frame | April 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Develop and implement an annual survey of the customers of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations shall oversee the completion of the existing customer survey. |
| | Step 2: The results of the current survey shall be used to establish the format and content of an annual survey. The director will implement the necessary mechanism so that the annual survey is conducted at the same time every year by a responsible staff person. |
| | Step 3: The results of the annual surveys shall be reported to the board and used to improve the operations of the department. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations |

| Time Frame | June 1999 |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 3** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop management practices which utilize work order completion data to more effectively manage the department. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director and supervisors of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations should design work order data reports which can be used to evaluate the responsiveness of the department, the productivity of the staff, and to project work schedules.<br><br>Step 2: The work load control manager should produce the reports on a monthly basis and distribute them to the director and supervisors.<br><br>Step 3: The director and supervisors should meet monthly to analyze the data and develop strategies to improve the effectiveness of the department. |
| Who Is Responsible | The director and supervisors of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department |
| Time Frame | January 1999 and ongoing |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 2  Does the district use its maintenance standards to evaluate maintenance needs?

*Yes. The standards used to conduct the annual inspections are the basis for identifying maintenance needs. The maintenance staff prioritizes these needs, with input from the school staff, to develop a five-year capital improvements plan. This plan is detailed and identifies the needs by school, by room, and by priority. The plan develops a schedule for the improvements and a cost estimate.*

## District Identifies Needs Based on Standards

The district has identified and evaluated maintenance needs based on maintenance standards. The district has established standards for the types of spaces noted below.

- Classrooms
- Relocatables
- Mechanical rooms
- Electrical rooms
- Clinics
- Boiler rooms
- Cafeterias
- Facilities
- Playground
- Site

The standards are printed on a checklist which inspectors use to complete the inspections of all district facilities. Items that do not meet the standards are identified and prioritized for correction.

## District Solicits Input From School Administrators

The district solicits input from school and district administrators to determine major maintenance needs. All school principals, work location coordinators, and Joint Parent Organization members are notified of the identified needs at their facility and asked to prioritize these needs. This information is used to place the projects in the five-year plan.

## District Evaluates Facility Designs and Costs

The district evaluates facility designs and costs to maintain, it implements labor savings, energy reduction, and reduced long term maintenance strategies. The district has published a construction requirements manual which specifies products that the district has found to be efficient and cost effective for long term maintenance and operations procedures.

# 3 Does the district have a system for prioritizing maintenance needs?

*Yes. All projects in the five-year plan are prioritized using the categories listed below.*

- *Life Safety*
- *Roofing and HVAC Projects*
- *Additional Student Station Replacement Needs*
- *Replacement Student Stations*
- *Minor Maintenance*
- *School Center Requests*

## District Has Guidelines for Prioritizing Maintenance Needs

The district has guidelines to determine priorities of maintenance needs. All projects are prioritized by maintenance personnel and then submitted to school principals for prioritization.

## District Uses Guidelines

The district prioritizes maintenance needs based on its guidelines. The guidelines for prioritization are emergency, priority, and routine.

## District Procedure Recognizes Emergencies

The district procedure determines when emergency maintenance is necessary and provides for effective emergency repairs. Items determined to be emergency or life/safety issues receive first priority.

## Educational Program Needs Are Considered

The maintenance priorities do consider the educational program needs of the district, the changing enrollments projections of the district, and the long-range facility planning. The priority rating system does consider the need for additional student stations and the improvement of existing student stations.

## District Prioritizes Maintenance Needs

The district prioritizes maintenance needs and completes repairs accordingly. Department managers and leadmen are responsible for prioritizing the work orders and seeing that they are completed accordingly. The current backlog of 1,500 work order requests are typically low priority repairs or furniture construction requests. Some of the backlogged work order requests have been discovered to be double entries.

# 4 Does the district accurately project cost estimates of major maintenance projects?

*Yes. In the past, the district used private engineers to estimate the cost of major projects. Now these cost estimates are developed by Construction Services. Construction Services staff compares cost estimates with actual bids to assess the accuracy of their estimates.*

## Cost Estimates Are Based on Past Experience

Cost estimates are based on the district's experience with prior similar projects, current estimating cost standards, and market conditions. Construction services uses cost estimating manuals and past projects to estimate costs of future projects. Market conditions are taken into account by assessing the competitiveness of the bidding climate. Recent projects for which cost estimates have been developed are the replacement of fire escapes, a water treatment system, and interior wall remodels.

## Inflation Is Figured into Cost Estimates

The cost of inflation for maintenance projects is projected for five years. Construction services follows the state guidelines in estimating projects which includes an inflation factor for seven years.

## District Evaluates Accuracy of Cost Estimates

The district periodically evaluates cost estimates for accuracy and utilizes this information to improve future estimates. Adjustments are made to the unit costs of materials and labor. This is an ongoing process for the cost estimators.

# 5 Does the district minimize equipment costs through purchasing practices and maintenance?

*Yes. The district has a preventative maintenance program for its operating equipment, and follows competitive bidding procedures for purchasing equipment. The maintenance staff*

*conducts cost comparisons for new equipment and board procedures are followed for disposing of old equipment.*

## District Does Not Figure
## Five-Year Inflationary Factor for Equipment

Inflationary costs for equipment are not provided for a five-year period.  The district does not project equipment needs beyond the next year and therefore does not project inflationary costs.

## Volume Purchases Are Utilized

Volume purchases are considered.  The Purchasing Department buys most of the materials and parts for the Maintenance Department and regularly makes volume purchases.

## Bidding Procedures Are Followed

Bidding procedures are followed.  The Purchasing Department follows all bidding procedures in the procurement of materials and supplies.

## Preventive Maintenance
## Programs for Equipment Are in Place

The Maintenance Department has preventive maintenance programs in place.  Some of the equipment which have preventive maintenance inspections include items listed below.

- Bleachers
- Back flow preventers
- Playground equipment
- Fire alarms
- Grease traps
- Roofs
- Security systems
- Portables
- HVAC equipment
- Refrigeration equipment
- Ice makers
- Kitchen equipment
- Boilers

## Equipment Replacement Projections
## Need to Be Developed

Equipment replacement projections have not been developed.  Projections for equipment replacement are not a priority for the district.  Equipment needs are evaluated and budgeted for annually.

## Disposal of Surplus Equipment
## Covered by Board Policy

Policies and procedures are followed for the disposal of surplus furniture and equipment.  Board approved procedures are followed for the disposal of surplus equipment and furniture.  Unserviceable or obsolete items are declared surplus in order to remove them from inventory accountability and dispose of the items as provided for in Florida Statute 274, Tangible Personal Property Owned By Local Governments.  Disposition may involve any of the following:   sale by public auction, sale or transfer to another government entity, scrap for reusable parts, donation to a school board designated receiver, or abandonment at a public landfill.

## Equipment Is Repaired When Feasible

Refurbishing and/or repair are considered in lieu of new purchases.  The district considers repair of equipment to increase the equipment's useable life and minimize new equipment costs.  Internal Controls maintains an Industrial Equipment Repair Shop where power tools and equipment are repaired when it is economically feasible.

## District Considers Operating Costs of Equipment

The district considers equipment operating and maintenance costs when buying new equipment.  This is especially true for HVAC equipment, which is expensive and affects the energy efficiency of facilities.  Managers, leadmen, and trades workers do this when purchasing materials and equipment.

## District Does Not Conduct Cost Comparison Studies

The district does not periodically conduct cost comparisons to determine whether purchasing practices have minimized costs.  The district does not currently conduct cost comparisons for purchasing practices but plans to do these studies once the new management software is online.

## *Recommendations* ─────────────────────────

- *We recommend that the district make projections for needed equipment for five-year periods.  These projections should include an inflation factor and should be included in the long-range plan.*
- *We recommend that the district periodically conduct cost comparison studies for its purchasing practices of maintenance materials and equipment.  The goal of the studies should be to ensure that the district is obtaining the best value for the money it is spending.  The studies should be presented to the board on an annual basis.*
- *These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 6 Does the district provide the maintenance staff with the tools, training, and instructions to accomplish their assigned tasks?

*Yes.  The district provides tools and the appropriate level of supervision to the maintenance staff to accomplish their responsibilities.  The staff is provided with the technical training necessary to work on new materials and equipment.*

## Necessary Tools Are Provided to Maintenance Staff

The Maintenance Department staff is provided with the tools necessary to accomplish assigned duties.  Budgeting for new tools is based on requests received from the staff.  A walk-through of the shops indicated that the staff had the appropriate tools to accomplish their duties.

## Seldom-Used Tools Are Rented

Tools and equipment that are seldom needed are readily available through other sources.  Tools that are not regularly needed are rented from equipment rental agencies.  The budget contains an amount for tool and equipment rentals.  Typical tools rented include coring machines, sewer detection machines, street saws, and special lifts.

## Technical Training, Supervision, and Instruction Are Sufficient

Technical training, supervision, and instruction given to the staff are sufficient for accomplishment of their assigned tasks.  Technical training is provided to the staff from manufacturers and suppliers of equipment used by the district.  Examples of recent training include:  fire alarm systems, security systems, and new product seminars for carpentry.  This training is irregular and is not targeted at improving productivity or job satisfaction.  Supervision is accomplished through shop lead personnel and managers who are responsible to the department supervisor for the performance of their crew.

## Managers Communicate Personnel and Customers

The Maintenance Department communicates with maintenance personnel and customers in order to efficiently assign, schedule, and complete work.  The department managers prioritize and tracks all work order requests to ensure efficient completion of requested work within the resources of the district.  The installation of new work order tracking software will increase the effectiveness of this process.

## *Recommendation* ——————————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district develop a comprehensive training program which targets technical skills, productivity and job satisfaction.  See Action Plan 9-5 on page 9-26. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 7 Has the district established a computerized control and tracking system to accurately track inventory and parts and materials used and provide a reordering system?

*No. The Maintenance Department does not have a sophisticated software program to track work orders and materials. This situation will be remedied as the district is purchasing a sophisticated software program, which will include an inventory tracking system.*

## District Does Not Have Sophisticated Software

The existing computerized work order system does not include control of inventory as well as tracking of parts, materials, and equipment to individual work orders. The new work order and inventory tracking software will be capable of tracking all equipment, materials and parts. Materials kept in the district warehouse, as well as materials kept in the maintenance shops and on maintenance vehicles, will be tied to Maintenance Department work orders.

## Inventory System Does Not Track Commonly Used Parts

The inventory control system does not include an inventory of commonly used parts, materials, and equipment, including those carried on maintenance vehicles. With the installation of the new districtwide software system, all material inventories will be tracked and assigned to the appropriate work orders.

## Procedures Exist for Staff to Acquire Parts Not Stocked on Trucks

A procedure exists for maintenance staff to acquire parts, materials, and equipment that are not stocked on maintenance vehicles. Maintenance staff can request needed materials, parts, and equipment from the warehouse at the end of a workday. The requested supplies are typically picked up the next morning. Materials not kept in the warehouse, can be purchased by staff, through blanket purchase orders from local suppliers. These blanket purchase orders are managed by the work load manager.

## There Is No Automatic Reorder System

The inventory control system does not include an automatic re-order procedure. The new inventory tracking software will include a re-order mechanism. Lower limits of material quantities will be set by the warehouse staff, and when these limits are reached, the software will trigger a re-order initiative.

## *Recommendation* ———————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district prioritize the establishment of an inventory tracking system for the Facilities Maintenance and Operations department when the new software is installed. The inventory tracking system should*
  - *track all inventory in the warehouse, shops and on trucks,*

> – *tie all inventory used to a specific work order, and*
>
> – *automatically trigger reorders for materials that are low in stock.*

- *Action Plan 9-8 provides the steps needed to implement the recommendation.*

*Action Plan 9-8*

## Prioritize Establishment of Inventory Tracking System

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop plan to prioritize the establishment of an inventory tracking system. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The director of Facilities, Maintenance and Operations will meet with the manager of the Warehouse and determine the necessary steps to the establishment of an inventory tracking system. |
| | Step 2: | The director and the manager will identify any additional manpower required to input all inventory into the new software system. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department | |
| Time Frame | April 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

# 8 Does the district ensure that maintenance standards are updated to implement new technology and procedures?

*Yes. The district ensures that the maintenance standards are updated to reflect new technology and procedures by receiving trade magazines and becoming a charter member in Florida Educational Energy Managers Association (FEEMA). The district provides training to staff through the use of manufacturers who have produced the equipment which is being used by the district.*

## District Participates in Professional Organizations

Participation in state and national organizations is established in order to remain current with maintenance issues, new technology, equipment, materials, and procedures. The Maintenance Department participates in five professional organizations.

- Florida Educational Maintenance Association (FEMA)
- Florida Educational Planners Association (FEPA)
- Council of Educational Facility Planners International  (CEFPI)
- State of Florida, Department of Education-sponsored trade associations
- National Playground Safety Institution

## Maintenance Department Subscribes to Trade Publications

The Maintenance Department subscribes to various trade publications and the publications are available to employees.  The department has subscriptions to various trade publications listed below and these are readily available to the staff.

- *School Engineer*
- *Engineering News and Record*
- *American School and University*
- *Building Operators Management*
- *Construction Quarterly*
- *Roofing Magazine*

## Information Is Shared With Employees

A method is established to provide new information to employees.  The Maintenance Department disseminates information to the staff in several ways.  Each shop has its own mail box for written materials.  Electronic (e-mail) and verbal communications are also used.

## Maintenance Standards Are Updated for New Technology

The district updates maintenance standards to implement new technology and procedures, as needed.  The department complies with the state standards for updating standards, especially in the area of HVAC equipment which is expensive and has a significant impact on the energy usage.  HVAC equipment is frequently subject to changing standards for energy efficiency and air quality as technological improvements are made.

# *Are the Best Practices for Operating Facilities in a Healthy, Safe, Cost-Effective Manner Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district operates facilities in a healthy, safe, energy-efficient, and cost-effective manner.**

# 1 Has the district established policies and procedures to ensure its facilities are operated in a healthy and safe manner?

*Yes.  The district uses Florida State standards as standards for cleanliness of its facilities.  Sanitation and Grounds conducts inspections of schools to determine if the custodial work is*

> *up to standards. The inspections are guided by a set of guidelines, which objectifies the procedure.*

## District Has Established Health and Safety Standards

The district has established standards for health and safety. The district has established standards for health and safety, and these standards are part of the items, which are checked on the annual facility inspections. These standards include items for code compliance on exiting, fire safety, security, and cleanliness of the facilities.

## Procedures Comply With EPA Guidelines

District procedures address compliance with Environmental Protection Agency guidelines. The Risk Management Department has established procedures for dealing with hazardous materials and other issues related to the Environmental Protection Agency.

## Building Condition Evaluations Are Made

Periodic and documented evaluations are made of the condition of buildings and of each school. The maintenance department conducts annual inspections of all facilities in the district. These inspections address health and safety issues, as well as building condition issues.

## Custodians Have Current Manual of Operations

There is a current manual of operations for custodial services. The district utilizes the Florida State Requirements for Educational Facilities to establish the procedures for custodians.

## Training Is Provided to Operations Personnel

Pre-service and in-service training programs are made available to operations personnel. Training is provided in the Right-to-Know law and how it applies to operations staff. Training is also available to custodians to be recognized as a Certified and/or Master Custodian.

## Custodians Also Accomplish Some Maintenance Work

Custodians accomplish limited maintenance work as part of their normal responsibilities. The custodial staff is under the supervision of the school administrators and is directed to accomplish some maintenance work as seen appropriate by the administrator. Some typical tasks include changing light bulbs, sharpening tools, and touch-up painting.

## The District Has Written Standards for Cleanliness

The district has written standards for cleanliness. The district utilizes the Florida State Requirements for Educational Facilities to establish standards for cleanliness.

# 2 Does the district use external benchmarks to determine a cost-effective manner of meeting its health and safety standards?

*No. The district does not use external benchmarks to evaluate the cost effectiveness of the manner it is meeting health and safety standards. The district is staffing its custodial operations at a best practice standard as evaluated by the review team.*

## External Benchmarks Are Not Used

The district does not use external benchmarks to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of its health and safety standards. The district should establish benchmarks to ensure that it is meeting health and safety standards in a cost effective manner. These benchmarks could include those noted below.

- Ratio of custodians to gross square feet
- Cost of cleaning supplies per gross square feet
- Number of staff accidents per staff
- Number of student accidents per student
- Number of security staff per facility

## *Recommendation* —————————————————————————

- *We recommend that the district establish and use benchmarks to evaluate the cost effectiveness with which it is meeting health and safety standards. (For more information on developing benchmarks refer to Action Plan 4-3, page 4-18.)*
- *Action Plan 9-9 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 9-9*

## Develop External Benchmarks for Health and Safety

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategies | Use external benchmarks in determining a cost-effective manner of meeting health and safety standards. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities shall meet with the supervisor of Sanitation and Grounds to identify the appropriate benchmarks and appropriate districts to measure the cost-effectiveness of the district. |
| | Step 2: The supervisor shall research the benchmarks, develop comparisons of the district to the benchmarks and prepare a report. Some benchmarks might be those noted below.<br><br>• Ratio of custodians to gross square feet<br>• Cost of cleaning supplies per gross square feet |

|  |  |
|---|---|
| | • Number of staff accidents per staff |
| | • Number of student accidents per student |
| | • Number of security staff per facility |
| | Step 3: The supervisor and the director shall present the report to the board. |
| Who Is Responsible | Supervisor of Sanitation and Grounds |
| Time Frame | December 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 3 Does the district use external benchmarks to achieve energy efficiency?

*Yes. The district has an aggressive energy management program.*

## The District Collaborates With Other Agencies

The district collaborates with its utility providers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, available local industry expertise, and/or other organizations to identify energy efficiency benchmarks and implements actions to increase cost efficiency. The Department of Internal Controls, which oversees energy use in the district's facilities, has an aggressive program to achieve energy efficiency. The department is working with local utilities to establish benchmarks and institute energy savings programs. During the past fiscal year the energy management program

- created a five-year plan for installation of meters on chilled and hot water systems;
- developed process for security staff to monitor water losses on weekends;
- recovered sewer credits on construction projects;
- captured $7,757 in sewer credits due to water leaks;
- developed cardboard/metal recycling program;
- worked with gas company to reduce number of bills and saved approximately $8,000;
- developed new specification for propane services which reduced cost by 30 cents per gallon, which was a 33% reduction;
- developed energy incentive program for schools and piloted at five schools which produced saving of approximately $21,000 in six months;
- developed energy conservation checklist for teachers, custodians, and food service staff;
- conducted lighting audits for five schools which achieved savings of $21,000; and
- currently tracks all utility information in the FASER software program.

# 4 Does hazardous materials management comply with federal and state regulations?

*Yes. The district has a hazardous materials business plan which conforms with the applicable regulations. The district maintains current Materials Safety Data Sheets and they are available to staff.*

## District in Compliance With Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act

The district is in compliance with Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act rules. The responsibility for compliance with these rules falls under Risk Management Department and they prepared a hazardous materials business plan.

## District in Compliance With OSHA and State Rules

The district is in compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Hazardous Communication Standards and Florida's Right-to-Know requirements. The district maintains Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), which explain the hazards of materials and chemicals used by the district. The sheets detail what to do in case of an accident. These MSDS documents are made available to all employees.

## District Has Hazardous Materials Plan

The district has developed a hazardous materials plan. The plan has been prepared by the Risk Management Department.

## MSDS Reports Are Available to Staff

Current Materials Safety Data Sheet reports are readily available to staff. The MSDS reports are maintained in the Department of Sanitation and Grounds and are available to all staff.

# 5 Does the district have a comprehensive and systematic program of dealing with school safety and security?

*Yes. Risk Management has prepared a disaster preparedness plan that covers most safety and security issues. Sanitation and Grounds is responsible for providing security for the physical plant. It accomplishes this through the use of night security patrols. Vandalism is tracked through the work order system.*

## District Has a Disaster Preparedness Plan

The district has a disaster preparedness plan. The plan was prepared by the Risk Management Department and has a current phone number directory dated June 4, 1998.

## Safety Committee Has Input

The district's safety committee has input in developing the district's comprehensive school safety and security plan. The Risk Management Department has prepared a safety program which outlines the responsibilities of the district Safety Committee and the satellite Safety Committees. These committees have the responsibility of ensuring that the safety program is an effective program.

## District Provides for Physical Plant Security

The district has a system for providing for physical plant security. The Sanitation and Grounds Department is responsible for plant security. The security team is assigned the duty of checking every school site on every night and during the weekends and holidays. In addition, the schools have security systems to detect intruders.

## Vandalism Budget Is Separate

The budget for dealing with vandalism is separate from the maintenance and operations budget. The Risk Management Department maintains the budget for repairs due to vandalism. Projects completed by the Maintenance Department to correct problems caused by vandalism are billed to this account.

## Procedures Exist for Reporting Vandalism

Procedures exist for reporting vandalism. Work order requests, which are a result of vandalism, are noted as such. The work load manager tracks all vandalism work orders. The security personnel notify specified maintenance personnel for immediate response after normal working hours.

## Feedback Is Provided to Facility Planners

Feedback from safety and security programs is provided to facility planners and incorporated into future projects. The annual facility inspections look at many safety and security issues, and the results of these inspections are shared with the facility planners. Examples of these issues include indoor air quality and improvements to fire alarm systems.

# *Are the Best Practices for Making Facilities Available to the Community Being Observed?*

> **Goal: The district makes facilities available to the entire community, to allow all taxpayers to benefit from the investment.**

# 1 Does the district follow established procedures for making school facilities available to the community?

*Yes. The district has clearly stated guidelines for the use of school facilities by community groups. The assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Support Services, and the site administrators are responsible for administering the program. Sanitation and Grounds personnel manage the paperwork.*

## Procedures Exist for Community Use of Facilities

The district has developed procedures governing community use of district facilities. The community use of school district facilities procedures are clearly stated on the "Space Use Application." The application states:

> "The philosophy of the School Board of Manatee County is that maximum use should be made of all school properties. The Board, however, reserves the right to prohibit activities that are determined to be inappropriate e.g., dirt bike races, horse shows, etc. School Board buildings and enclosed fields and courts are available to groups of citizens of Manatee County all days of the week, subject to the following provisions:……."

## Community Use Procedures Are Comprehensive

The district's procedures include priority/eligibility for use, current fee schedules (revised annually), rules and regulations for users, security of property and equipment; and insurance coverage. While fee schedules are not printed on the application form for space use, there is a space to figure the fees. The rules and regulations governing the use of school facilities are clearly printed on the back of the application. The application requires the submission of proof of the appropriate insurance coverage at the time the application is submitted.

# 2 Does the district meet requirements for persons with disabilities?

*No. Not all buildings meet ADA requirements but the district is correcting these conditions as funds allow and when new construction is undertaken on a facility. This is a commonly accepted practice for correcting impediments to accessibility.*

## The District Is Aware of ADA Laws

Applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations are readily available. The facility planners have the state and federal laws, rules and regulations, which apply to facility accessibility.

## The District Complies With ADA Requirements on New Facilities

The district complies with accessibility requirements. All new facilities are designed to comply with the accessibility requirements. Existing facilities are brought into compliance as funds are available.

## Training Is Provided

Training is provided.  The facility planners receive the appropriate training in the accessibility requirements.

## Code Books Are Available to Planners

Resource materials are used to satisfy the requirements.  The facility planners use the appropriate code books to ensure compliance with the accessibility requirements.

## Code Books Are Accessible to Staff

The staff knows where resource materials are located.  The facility planners are aware of where the code books are kept.

# *Recommendation*

- *We recommend that the district develop a schedule to eliminate any impediments to the accessibility of all facilities to persons with disabilities.*
- *Action Plan 9-10 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan 9-10*

## Increase the Accessibility of All Facilities

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategies | Increase the accessibility of all district facilities to persons with disabilities. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  The director of Facilities shall review the most current facility review for accessibility.  If one has not been completed within the last five years, he shall have one done. |
| | Step 2:  The director shall develop a schedule for the completion of all necessary projects to eliminate any impediments to accessibility. |
| | Step 3:  The director shall review the schedule and cost of the projects with the board. |
| | Step 4:  The board shall review, revise, and approve the schedule and budget. |
| Who Is Responsible | The director of Facilities and the board |
| Time Frame | Ongoing for probably the next five years |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 10 Student Transportation

*The district has not developed systems to evaluate transportation activities and improve operations. In addition, the district needs to systematically replace its aging buses.*

## *Conclusion*

The Manatee County School District uses 10 of the 14 best financial management practices in the area of student transportation. A significant area needing improvement is that the district does not evaluate its student transportation activities using cost comparison or performance benchmarks. Such an evaluation would improve the district staff's ability to identify problem areas and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of operations. The district's new management information system should be designed so that it provides the type of performance and cost information needed to evaluate activities. In addition, the district's bus fleet is older than those of its peer districts. Many of the district buses exceed the replacement age specified in policy. As a result the district must maintain a large number of spare buses. This report provides recommendations on the above issues as well as additional areas. If all of our recommendations are implemented, we estimate that each of the next three fiscal years would require a net annual investment of $283,000 per year, and the following two fiscal years would each show annual savings of $271,000 per year.

## *Is the District Using the Best Practices in Student Transportation?*

### Appropriate and Cost Effective Transportation

*No.* The district has not established cost-comparison benchmarks based on standards from similar districts and other organizations, taking district conditions into consideration. (page 10-5)

*Yes.* The district uses cost comparisons to increase efficiency by identifying alternative methods of providing transportation and maintenance services, such as privatization and outsourcing. (page 10-10)

*Yes.* The transportation program accurately accounts for direct and indirect costs, while excluding costs attributable to other district vehicles or programs. (page 10-11)

*No.* The district does not regularly review and report on its student transportation performance in comparison to its established benchmarks and adjust its operational structure and staffing levels to improve efficiency. (page 10-13)

> ***No.*** The district does not routinely analyze and control costs based on reliable projections and conditions in the district that influence costs. (page10-14)

> ***Yes.*** The district continuously improves purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase the efficiency of the procurement of goods and services. (page 10-16)

## Adequate Transportation

> ***No.*** The district does not use a comprehensive plan for the cost-effective replacement and management of vehicles based on a systematic method to project the number of buses needed to meet transportation needs. (page 10-18)

> ***Yes.*** The district has implemented inspection and maintenance practices to ensure that all vehicles in service meet or exceed state safety operating requirements. (page 10-23)

> ***Yes.*** The district has procedures and practices in place to ensure that vehicles are garaged, maintained, and serviced in a safe and economical manner. (page 10-24)

> ***Yes.*** The school district provides transportation to meet the educational needs of special education pupils through individual educational programs (IEPs) as provided in Public Law 94-142, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (page 10-28)

## Safe and Efficient System

> ***Yes.*** The district's transportation routing system is periodically reviewed to provide maximum safety for pupils and staff and efficiently meet the needs of the district. (page 10-33)

> ***Yes.*** Staff, drivers, and pupils are instructed and rehearsed in the procedures to be used in an accident or disaster. (page 10-37)

> ***Yes.*** The district has implemented hiring and training policies to employ and retain an adequate number of appropriately qualified bus drivers. (page 10-38)

> ***Yes.*** The district has a policy on drugs and alcohol for all transportation department employees, and it enforces that policy. (page 10-39)

# *Fiscal Impact of Recommendations*

OPPAGA recommends five actions in the student transportation area that would have a fiscal impact. If our recommendations are implemented, we estimate that each of the next three fiscal years would require a net annual investment of 283,000 per year, and the following two fiscal years would each show annual savings of $271,000.

- Increase the capital outlay budget by $554,000 a year for each of the next three fiscal years for the purpose of retiring school buses that exceed 16 years of age. (page 10-22)
- Continue efforts to implement procedures that would allow the Manatee district to receive Medicaid reimbursement for a portion of the costs associated with the transport of exceptional students who are qualified for Medicaid and are receiving medical services or treatments. The district could receive $73,000 in additional federal funding annually. (page 10-31)

- Reduce the number of non-qualifying exceptional students who receive special student transportation services.  We believe the district would realize a reduction in costs that cannot be specifically calculated at this time.  (pages 10-29 and 10-30)
- Discontinue bus service to students who could walk to school.  We estimate that the district would save $161,000 annually.  (page 10-36)
- Charge school groups for field trips to recover the full cost of the trip, including depreciation on the school buses.  We estimate that the district would receive $37,000 annually in additional funding.  (page 10-35)
- Exhibit 10-1 shows the estimated fiscal effect of the recommendations concerning student transportation.

*Exhibit 10-1*

## Implementing the Recommendations for Student Transportation Would Require a Cost Investment

| Recommendation | Fiscal Impact |
|---|---|
| • Replace over age buses | • This will require an investment of $554,000 for the next 3 years. |
| • Continue to pursue Medicaid reimbursement for eligible transportation | • The district could receive approximately $73,000 in additional revenue annually |
| • Discontinue bus service to students who could walk to school | • The district could save approximately $161,000 annually. |
| • Charge school groups (i.e., athletic boosters, activity clubs) for field trips to cover the full cost of the trip. | • The district could increase revenue by $37,000 annually. |

# *Background*

The Manatee County School District provides school bus service to 14,500 of the district's 33,500 students at 39 school centers (including three charter schools) throughout the county.  Among those served are 1,200 exceptional students, who, because of their various disabilities, require special arrangements to be transported to various school sites throughout the district.  District school buses are also used for 4,500 extracurricular field trips in a year and, on an 'as available' basis, for transportation for 20 other community groups and organizations.  There are 245 school buses in service (including those identified as spares) on 167 school bus routes.  Most buses make three runs daily to accommodate the staggered school start times.

All student transportation services, including both operations and vehicle maintenance, are provided under the assistant superintendent for human resources and support services.  Operations are headed by a student transportation supervisor.  She supervises 271 employees and reports directly to the assistant superintendent.  Principal activities under student transportation operations include the responsibility for hiring, training, and managing bus drivers, and for creating bus routes.  Operations staff are also responsible for coordinating student transportation issues with other district staff, school

advisory committees, parent-teacher organizations, parents, and concerned citizens. They also handle some administrative functions, including payroll and billing. The assistant superintendent also oversees a director of facilities, maintenance, and operations, under whom is a vehicle maintenance supervisor who has the responsibility for maintaining the school bus fleet. He supervises 31 employees in the vehicle maintenance area. The school bus service area includes a parts shop, a tire shop, a body shop, and a paint shop, and it operates on two main shifts daily.

Student transportation services for the 1998-99 school year are budgeted for approximately $9.14 million. Exhibit 10-2 provides further information on the main components of the student transportation budget for the current school year and the school year just past.

*Exhibit 10-2*

## Student Transportation Budget, 1997-98 and 1998-99

| | Expenditures, 1997-98 | Budget, 1998-99 |
|---|---|---|
| Operations | $6,418,239.02[1] | $6,856,359.30[2] |
| Vehicle Maintenance | 2,334,387.85 | 2,284,385.77 |
| Total Budget | 8,752,626.87 | 9,140,745.07 |

[1] Student transportation operations expenditures include $1,221,024 for the purchase of school buses.
[2] The student transportation operations budget includes approximately $1.3 million for the purchase of school buses.

Source: Manatee County School District

Manatee district staff have had some notable accomplishments in the past three years. These are summarized in Exhibit 10-3.

*Exhibit 10-3*

## Notable Accomplishments in Student Transportation

- Expanded the acreage at the bus compound to alleviate bus parking problems and workspace constraints
- Implemented computerized routing for all regular students at negligible cost to the district
- Adopted computer-generated route time standards as the basis for paying bus drivers
- Developed stand-alone computer systems for vehicle maintenance management, fueling, and parts inventory
- Analyzed vehicle maintenance staffing against state distributed guidelines
- Participated actively in the development of the forthcoming districtwide management information system

Source: Manatee County School District

# *Are the Best Practices for Appropriate Transportation Being Observed?* ————————————————————

**Goal A:  The district provides appropriate transportation for its students in a cost-efficient manner, without compromising safety.**

# 1 Has the district established cost-comparison benchmarks based on standards from similar districts and other organizations, taking district conditions into consideration?

*No.  The Manatee County School District generally has not established cost-comparison benchmarks for student transportation.*

Cost-comparison or other performance benchmarks for student transportation would improve managerial control and public accountability.  In most student transportation areas information about performance is sporadic rather than systematic, and the district has not used the information it has to develop performance benchmarks.  The exception is the use of standard times for bus route completion as the basis for paying bus drivers.  However, Manatee district staff believe they are familiar with what constitutes good performance, and they have some local and state data available that allows comparison with comparable and exemplary districts.  However, there are some significant limitations in the vehicle maintenance management system that constrain the usefulness or availability of some district data.

## Benchmarks Generally Not Established

Benchmarks are expectations of how well an activity or function, such as student transportation, should perform.  When a public entity tracks its actual performance over time and compares that performance with the benchmark (i.e., the expectation), it can improve both its managerial control over its operations and its accountability to the public.  The Manatee County School District has not adopted any cost-comparison or other performance benchmarks for student transportation, with one exception which is described in the next paragraph.  The result is that key information on performance and costs are not monitored consistently over time.  This limits staff's ability to provide decision-makers, such as the school board, with objective information on the performance and cost-efficiency of the student transportation program.  (Benchmarks are discussed more extensively beginning on page 4-16.)

The exception to the general absence of benchmarks is the recent adoption of standard bus route completion times.  The student transportation supervisor implemented computerized routing for regular students during the 1997-98 school year.  Data generated from this new computer routing system provides information on times and distances of bus runs.  Several test runs verified the accuracy of that information.  The district then adopted time standards as the basis for paying bus

drivers following successful negotiations with the bus drivers' union of this action. This action has greatly reduced the possibility of bus drivers "padding" their time sheets and provides them with a clear expectation of performance.

Staff concede that benchmarks have not been specifically identified for the student transportation program, but they assert that they know approximately how well the program is performing. For example, staff indicate that they know generally if they are keeping buses on the road, if children are being delivered to schools on time, and if school bus down time is within acceptable limits based on their experience. Student transportation and vehicle maintenance staff can provide evidence of their general familiarity with performance indicators of concern to them. For example, they readily identify matters of particular cost-related interest (such as average bus occupancy, or parts inventory levels) and other standards of performance (such as the number of late buses). However, in the absence of benchmarks, the district lacks a systematic way to monitor student transportation performance.

## Absence of Benchmarks Is a Districtwide Issue

The absence of benchmarks to evaluate program performance and cost is a districtwide issue that is not limited to the student transportation area. One reason why benchmarks are not more developed is that there is currently no management information system that is designed to report on performance for all district activities, including student transportation, although the development of such a system is a current district priority. A comprehensive new management information system is now under development and is scheduled to be operational in July 1999. District staff need to ensure that this new system will be able to provide valid information that is useful for managerial oversight and can be used to develop program benchmarks. Examples include regular reports with valid information on the number of late buses, number of preventable accidents per 100,000 miles, total vehicle costs per mile of operation, and number of vehicle breakdowns per 100,000 miles. Additional examples are included in the action plan for this best practice. (See pages 3-37 and 4-32 for more information on the management information system now under development.)

## Staff Have Developed Some Local Performance Information, and State Data Allow Comparisons with Other Districts

Although benchmarks have not been established, staff have access to local information on program cost-efficiency and performance. Staff use this information to monitor fuel usage, control the inventory of parts and supplies, and ensure that vehicle inspections occur on time through a variety of stand- alone computer systems. These systems provide information that facilitates timely orders of needed parts and fuel, helps minimize waste, and makes it possible to monitor many of the day-to-day costs and activities of the vehicle maintenance shop. The system is also used to make decisions about the cost-effectiveness of doing certain jobs in-house or through local contractors. (This issue is discussed further on page 10-10.) Staff rely on these systems for many purchasing and managerial decisions on a daily basis.

Staff also have access to student transportation data for each of Florida's school districts from the Florida Department of Education. District staff do not use this data to regularly report on district performance in comparison to other districts, but they do use it to answer specific questions. The Department of Education regularly distributes information such as district demographics, school enrollment, number of eligible students transported, number of courtesy riders, average bus occupancy, numbers and categories of student transportation personnel, numbers and types of buses and bus facilities, expenditure and funding data, and the age of school buses. We used these data to compare the Manatee district with other districts. (See Exhibit 10-4.) Some of these comparisons

show efficient operations in Manatee County such as the average bus occupancy of 78 students compared to a peer district average of 73 students. However, other comparisons are not as favorable. For example, operating expenditures per mile are higher than the average of the peer districts. Much of the comparative data in this chapter comes from the department's periodic publication of district information. Manatee staff should use these available data to establish performance benchmarks and to address issues such as the districts high operating costs per mile compared to its peer districts.

*Exhibit 10-4*

## Data Are Available to Establish Cost-Effectiveness and Performance Benchmarks

| Examples of Data Available | Alachua | Collier | Leon | Manatee | Marion | Sarasota | Peer District Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Students Enrolled | 29,648 | 28,177 | 31,558 | 32,797 | 36,244 | 31,951 | 31,516 |
| Eligible Students Transported | 13,869 (47%) | 12,883 (46%) | 13,740 (44%) | 12,952 (40%) | 20,885 (58%) | 14,677 (46%) | 15,211 (48%) |
| Number of Courtesy Riders | 1,471 | 685 | 845 | 1,421 | 775 | 1,512 | 1,058 |
| Average Bus Occupancy | 77 | 73 | 69 | 78 | 70 | 74 | 73 |
| Percentage of State Funding | 75% | 55% | 62% | 67% | 70% | 51% | 63% |
| Operating Expenditures Per Student | $465.00 | $585.00 | $497.00 | $527.00 | $489.00 | $650.00 | $537.00 |
| Operating Expenditures Per Mile | $1.32 | $2.38 | $1.58 | $3.38 | $1.60 | $2.26 | $1.83 |
| Number of Bus Drivers | 181 | 179 | 238 | 168 | 367 | 244 | 242 |
| Total Transportation Positions | 275 | 275 | 341 | 307 | 488 | 335 | 343 |

Source: *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 1998* (Draft), for 1996-97 School Year, Florida Department of Education, and OPPAGA calculations

## The Vehicle Maintenance Management System Has Significant Data Limitations

The vehicle maintenance management system, which generates much of the information upon which Manatee district staff rely, has significant data limitations. Data are not always complete, some data are not valid, and the system is not user-friendly. Specifically, the current system has been in use only

since early 1997, and it lacks information on buses prior to that time. Thus, for any analyses that would require information from a time frame prior to the implementation of the system, the computer record must be supplemented with information extracted from the file for each bus. One example of such an analysis would be to calculate the life cycle cost of a bus, including its original purchase price and the cost of all fuel, parts, and repair costs to date. Also, system data for the 1997-98 school year indicate that 19 buses (out of 249 total) exceeded 30,000 miles, a figure that the vehicle maintenance supervisor identified as being improbably high. (The records for four of these buses indicated that their annual mileage was over 100,000 miles.) We therefore concluded that performance information based on total mileage figures in the vehicle maintenance system (such as per mile costs, total fleet mileage, and breakdowns per 100,000 miles) may not be accurate. Finally, it is difficult to make certain queries through the vehicle maintenance management system. For example, the only way to identify the number of breakdowns in district school buses during the 1997-98 school year is to analyze manually a 549-page printout. District staff should ensure that these limitations are specifically addressed in the new management information system that will supersede the current vehicle maintenance management system so that the new system can be used to monitor program performance accurately.

# *Recommendation*

- *We recommend that the Manatee district adopt cost comparison and other performance benchmarks for student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance that are both feasible to collect and are useful for evaluating performance. It should then track its performance over time in these selected areas and make comparisons with peer districts as appropriate. Improvement of performance would be based on the management principle that "what gets measured, gets done." By routinely and systematically collecting and reporting data on these benchmarks over time, the Manatee district and the general public would have a better understanding of how well student transportation is performing and what areas need to be improved. (See also the action plan components of Chapter 4 of this report.)*
- *Action Plan 10-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*

### Action Plan 10-1

## Develop Performance Benchmarks

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Adopt cost-comparison and other performance benchmarks as appropriate for both student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Review benchmarks that are appropriate, feasible, and useful for both student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance. Selected benchmarks should support the district strategic plan. Staff should consider the following list of performance measures for student transportation operations. |
| | | a. Cost per mile for school bus operations |
| | | b. Failure to furnish sufficient manpower to transport students (trips missed), measured as incidents per month |

      c.  Failure to comply with pick-up or delivery schedules within prescribed time ranges (late arrivals), measured as incidents per month

      d.  Customer service evaluation rating as good, as measured by routine customer service surveys of principals and parents

      e.  Number of all accidents, measured as incidents per 100,000 miles

      f.  Number of all preventable accidents, measured as incidents per 100,000 miles

      g.  Parent complaints, measured by number of phone calls and categorized by type of complaint (on-time, discipline, safety concerns, vehicle maintenance, driver performance, etc.)

**Step 2:** Staff should also consider this list of performance measures for vehicle maintenance.

      a.  Vehicle re-repairs, measured as incidents per month or percent of total monthly maintenance cost

      b.  Failure to certify school buses, measured as incidents per month or percentage of total monthly maintenance cost

      c.  Down time of buses, measured as days out of service

      d.  Number of breakdowns per 100,000 miles

      e.  Maintenance cost for each vehicle, measured against average for all comparable vehicles

      f.  Turnaround time for scheduled and corrective maintenance by type of vehicle

      g.  Vehicle maintenance hours as a percentage of total hours charged

      h.  Vehicle to mechanics ratio

      i.  Average maintenance cost per mile by type of school bus

      j.  Accidents or breakdowns due to defective equipment, measured as number of incidents or percentage of total monthly maintenance cost

      k.  Repairs delayed due to parts being out of stock, measured as number of incidents or total time out-of-service

      l.  Safety inspections, measured as a percentage of all repair work time

**Step 3:** For all performance measures that are selected, devise a reporting mechanism and frequency appropriate for that particular measure.

**Step 4:** Collect information on actual performance and report on it at selected intervals.

**Step 5:** Establish performance standards for future school years.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Who Is Responsible** | Student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance staff, in consultation with assistant superintendent for human resources and support services |
| **Time Frame** | June 1999:  Identify which benchmarks are appropriate and feasible, and establish the mechanism for measuring them. |

| | August 1999:  Begin collecting baseline performance information for the 1999-2000 school year for each of the established benchmarks. |
| | June 2000:  Establish performance standards for the 2000-01 school year based on actual recent performance. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

# 2 Does the district use cost comparisons to increase efficiency by identifying alternative methods of providing transportation and maintenance services, such as privatization and outsourcing?

*Yes.  The district uses cost comparisons as a tool to increase efficiency.*

The Manatee County School District routinely uses cost comparisons in making decisions such as whether to contract some vehicle maintenance activities to outside vendors.  Vehicle maintenance staff often refer certain services to private vendors in their community (outsourcing) when it is cost-effective to do so.  However, comprehensive privatization of student transportation operations has not been considered to date.  Professional literature on the subject suggests that this decision requires information that is not currently available in the Manatee district.

## Some Vehicle Maintenance Services Are Contracted to Outside Vendors

Vehicle maintenance staff regularly compare their own costs with those of private vendors to identify maintenance activities that can be performed at a lower cost elsewhere.  Staff have analyzed costs for outsourcing various tasks and services and made appropriate decisions based on the costs identified.  For example, the district has concluded that certain repair and maintenance jobs, including major engine overhauls, transmission work, and front end alignments, are more efficiently or cost-effectively conducted through local private vendors than through the use of vehicle maintenance staff and equipment.  Vehicle maintenance staff maintain full records on all jobs sent to local vendors and include the costs of these outsourcing projects as a separate category of costs in their vehicle maintenance management database.

## Privatization of Student Transportation Services Has Not Been Assessed

The Manatee district has not evaluated the possibility of privatizing its student transportation services.  Without such an assessment there is no assurance that student transportation services are being provided in the most cost-effective manner.  Several vendors routinely provide student transportation services for school districts around the nation.  However, the feasibility of contracting with one of these vendors cannot be evaluated at this time because information is lacking for an informed decision.  There are several data deficiencies in the district that would make it difficult to conduct a comprehensive analysis and comparison of options.  Some information is not currently part of any database in the district; obtaining it would require time-consuming reviews of files to extract

the information required.  Examples we found during our review include identifying the life cycle cost of a school bus, counting the number and costs of breakdowns, and creating reliable data on bus driver turnover.  These are all factors affecting the overall cost of operations.  Such information should be available to make possible a comparison of the district's actual total costs with the projected total costs of any private vendor making a bid to provide student transportation services.

The professional literature on student transportation privatization strongly suggests caution when the relatively sophisticated information required for a comprehensive analysis is not available.  For example, a recent student transportation privatization analysis by the Reason Foundation concluded that when public agencies consider the prospects of privatization, they routinely underestimate their true operating costs by as much as 30%. If the organization's costs are underestimated privatization may be ruled out as being too expensive when it is actually less expensive than providing the service in-house. That analysis cited several common mistakes that public agencies can make: hidden cross subsidization by other departments, failing to allocate overhead costs, understating capital requirements and replacement reserves, ignoring the cost of capital, and excluding or underestimating certain categories of costs (such as pension plans, legal fees, insurance, and administration).  This analysis suggests that in places where a good database for informed decision-making does not exist, as is the case in the Manatee district, full consideration of privatization may be premature.  However, the district should consider this option in the future when the limitations of its current information system are resolved.

# *Recommendation*

- *Although the Manatee district substantially meets this best practice, the prospect of greater privatization should be assessed.  Thus, once the district's new management information system is in place, we recommend that the district conduct a "make or buy" analysis to determine whether it should pursue privatizing student transportation services.  This analysis should use the full cost of transportation services provided by the school district compared to potential costs of privatizing these services.*
- *This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.*

# 3  Does the transportation program accurately account for direct and indirect costs, while excluding costs attributable to other district vehicles or programs?

*Yes.  The Manatee district's budget is structured to account for direct and indirect costs in the student transportation area.*

The Manatee district's budget for student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance can be used to identify categories of both direct and indirect costs.  Costs attributable to other district vehicles or programs are tracked through an accounting mechanism linked to the budget.  Staff say that the timeliness of budget information has recently improved, and there are prospects for better linkage in the future between the budget information system and the maintenance management system now used in the vehicle maintenance area.

## Direct and Indirect Costs Are in the Budget

The district's budget information system provides staff with access to the district's budget.  The budget for student transportation reflects student transportation costs and excludes costs that are attributable to other district vehicles or programs.  It is a composite of two separate cost centers, for school bus transportation operations and vehicle maintenance.  The budget is structured by traditional categories such as salaries, overtime, employee benefits, insurance, capital outlay (which includes the purchase of school buses), and administrative support costs; this structure allows for the identification of direct and indirect costs.  The costs for parts, labor, and maintenance that are attributable to other district vehicles (and are thus funded by other cost centers in the district) are separated from the costs for student transportation vehicles through the use of budgetary codes.  These budgetary codes are then tracked and sorted through work orders in vehicle maintenance.  Thus, vehicle maintenance staff can distinguish what work and costs are associated with vehicles and equipment that are assigned to other departments.

## Budget Information Has Improved and May Improve More

Staff in the student transportation area report that the quality of budget information available to them has improved in recent months.  During our initial interviews, they raised a concern about the currency of budget information, citing instances when they suspected that certain reported account balances were not accurate because not all charges had been posted to the account in a timely fashion.  In the spring of 1998 the district hired a new finance director, and staff now indicate that they have more confidence in the budget information they receive.

The district is currently acting to improve the linkage between budget information and other cost data now maintained by vehicle maintenance staff.  District management has specifically directed student transportation staff to participate actively in developing and implementing a new management information system now projected to be operational in July 1999.  This new system would incorporate the functions that are now separate in the district's budget system and the vehicle maintenance management system.  This would facilitate improved reporting by bringing together such information as parts inventory levels, vehicle maintenance costs, and fuel purchases with budget information on expenditures, encumbrances, and residual balances.  Currently, staff must check separate systems for this information; the new management information system would integrate them into one system. (See pages 3-37 and 4-32 for information on the new management information system.)

# *Recommendation*————————————————————

- *Although the Manatee district substantially meets this best practice, we recommend that the district continue its current initiative to create a more integrated information system and incorporate student transportation cost data wherever appropriate.  The new system should allow staff to retrieve pertinent cost information that is accurate and comprehensive.*
- *This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 4 Does the district regularly review and report on its student transportation performance in comparison to its established benchmarks and adjust its operational structure and staffing levels to improve efficiency?

*No. Benchmarks for student transportation performance do not generally exist in the Manatee district, and there are no regular reviews or reports on performance to use in adjusting its operational structure and staffing levels.*

Performance measurement has not been a district priority, as shown by the general absence of student transportation benchmarks and regular performance reports. However, staff have taken some steps to improve program efficiency by evaluating and responding to the information that is currently available.

## There Are No Regular Reports of Performance Compared with an Established Standard

Benchmarks for student transportation are generally absent in the Manatee district. (Bus route completion times are an exception.) Without adopted benchmarks, it is difficult for district staff or administrators to know how well student transportation is performing relative to how well it is expected to perform. For example, there are no current expectations about operating costs per mile, number of accidents per 100,000 miles, out-of-service rates for school buses, or vehicle breakdowns per 100,000 miles. Thus, the district has not developed regular reports on actual performance compared with established standards of performance, and there is also no systematic review of the costs and performance of student transportation. This type of information would provide program managers with tools to evaluate performance and identify areas for improvement and increased efficiency. (Student transportation benchmarks and performance indicators are discussed beginning on page 10-5.)

Although staff often lack baseline information related to performance, they have taken some steps to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of information available to them. When it is available, they use that information to evaluate the efficiency of their operations. Furthermore, senior management have consistently supported staff initiatives to develop computer systems and other sources of information to promote efficiency. For example, the student transportation supervisor has surveyed all school principals asking for ways that service could be improved within budgetary constraints. Other examples already discussed include using computer-generated bus route completion times as the basis for paying drivers (page 10-5) and the development of stand-alone computer systems for specific student transportation applications (page 10-6).

## *Recommendation* _____

- *We recommend that the Manatee district, in conjunction with establishing its cost comparison and other performance benchmarks (see the action plan beginning on page 10-8), also identify the most suitable format and time frame for reporting on subsequent*

*performance.  Such reports should be generated by the information management system
that is now scheduled to be operational in July 1999.  (For more information on the
management information system, see pages 3-37 and 4-32 of this report.)*

- *Action Plan 10-2 provides the steps necessary to implement this recommendation.*

*Action Plan  10-2*

## Develop a Regular Performance Reporting Mechanism

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a regular reporting mechanism as part of the new information management system to provide information on performance in the student transportation area. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  For each established benchmark (see action plan beginning on page 10-8), develop an appropriate means and frequency of reporting. The format should be user friendly, be standardized as much as possible, and include complete explanations about what is or is not being reported.   Identify the measures to be reported to senior management and the school board on an ongoing basis. |
|  | Step 2:  During the 1999-2000 school year, provide regular reports at least monthly from staff to the assistant superintendent for human resources and support services.  Allow for revisions of the reporting format, as may seem appropriate. |
| Who Is Responsible | Student transportation and vehicle maintenance staff, in consultation with assistant superintendent for human resources and support services |
| Time Frame | June 1999:  Select format and frequency of reporting on benchmarks. |
|  | August 1999:  Begin reporting as part of the collection of baseline performance information for all established benchmarks |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

# 5  Are costs routinely analyzed and controlled based on reliable projections and conditions in the district that influence costs?

*No.  The Manatee district lacks management information to analyze and control costs
routinely.*

Manatee district staff rely on the annual budget as their principal tool to analyze and control costs, but its usefulness is limited.  The lack of a comprehensive management information system that includes student transportation information limits the district's ability to analyze and control costs.  Without reliable baseline information on costs, it is difficult to analyze what influences those costs or project future costs.  Staff are aware of some other factors besides costs that influence student transportation activities, including rapid growth in the county and the changing nature of educational programs.

## The District Primarily Uses the Budget to
## Analyze and Control Student Transportation Costs

Student transportation and vehicle maintenance refer to the annual budget as their principal tool for reviewing information on student transportation costs. Staff use the budgeting process to identify current and future needs. For example, through a budget request, staff recommended making technical improvements to the computer bus routing system to enhance its usefulness, which was subsequently approved. (For more on the computer bus routing system, see page 10-33.)

However, the annual budget is of limited value in analyzing and controlling costs since it cannot be used to assess expenditures or locate potential improvements. It cannot answer some important questions about student transportation costs or the factors that influence those costs. In order to obtain this type of information, cost and management information must be linked. For example, while the budget can be used to identify total staff costs, additional information is needed to analyze the staff costs in connection with a given activity, such as repairing a school bus, responding to a breakdown, or driving a bus on a school activity trip. The budget alone is insufficient because it does not include information on the time required to perform these tasks, nor does it identify which staff persons are involved.

## Information Needed to
## Manage Costs Is Often Unavailable

During our review we encountered several examples of information on costs, or factors that affect costs, that are currently either hard to obtain or unavailable. These include information on the life cycle cost of a school bus, the frequency of bus breakdowns, and the annual cost of keeping school buses on the road. (pages 10-7 and 10-8) A more comprehensive linkage to help answer these questions may be available in the future. As described on page 10-17, district staff, including several representatives from the student transportation and vehicle maintenance areas, are working to implement a districtwide information management system that will consolidate what are now separate information systems. Specifically, the new system is intended to link budget information with other student transportation data, such as maintenance cost data and performance information. The new management information system is scheduled to be operation in July 1999 and should improve staff understanding of their operations and control costs. (The issue of the management information system is discussed in more detail on pages 3-37 and 4-32.)

## County Growth and Program Changes
## Can Influence Student Transportation Costs

Manatee district staff recognize that rapid growth of the county is a major factor affecting student transportation costs. District projections indicate that Manatee will receive more than 900 new students over the next five years. The district recently employed a planner whose responsibilities include activities that affect student transportation. For example, the planner assists the school board in identifying areas of Manatee County where additional school children will live in the future as new housing developments are planned and built. This information helps in determining the sites for additional schools which, in turn, affects transportation costs. In addition, the planner suggests to county and city public works officials those areas where the development of sidewalks would be most beneficial to provide access to existing and future school sites. Where sidewalks are available, they can provide a safe option for school children to be able to walk to school rather than be driven on a school bus at taxpayer expense.

Other factors such as the new school choice program and magnet schools will also affect transportation costs, and student transportation staff have only limited input in planning such programs. They have, however, analyzed the cost issues and options involved in future expansion of such programs and have provided that information to the school board.

# *Recommendation*

- *We recommend that the district continue its current initiative to create a comprehensive information system that will incorporate budgetary and performance information. The system should allow staff to be able to identify, track, and project student transportation costs and establish benchmarks so they can be appropriately analyzed and controlled.*

- *Action Plan 10-3 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation. (See also the action plan components of Chapter 4 of this report.)*

*Action Plan 10-3*

## Ensure Increased Information on Costs and Performance

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Implement a more comprehensive management information system to provide accurate information on student transportation performance and costs. |
| Action needed | Step 1: In conjunction with developing the new management information system, ensure that information related to student transportation performance and costs will be included and tracked on a regular basis. |
| Who Is Responsible | Those individuals from vehicle maintenance and student transportation operations who are already serving on the task force for the new management information system |
| Time Frame | July 1999: implementation of the new management information system |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

# 6 Does the district continuously improve purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase the efficiency of the procurement of goods and services?

*Yes. The district's purchasing practices are oriented to decreasing costs and increasing the efficiency of procuring goods and services for student transportation.*

The district has worked to maintain an effective transportation procurement system. The district's procedures for acquiring parts and supplies for student transportation include a continuous updating

process and careful inventory control. Frequently used parts are acquired through the state contract, and all purchases are coordinated with the purchasing department. The parts room manager has a role in helping to implement future system improvements.

## Purchasing Practices and Inventory Control Are Efficient

The district's purchasing staff take several steps to decrease purchasing costs for student transportation. Staff periodically update their collection of catalogues and sources to enable them to be current with parts specifications for a variety of different parts for several models of buses extending over several years. Staff also try to manage the timing of purchasing actions, as it can be advantageous to order some parts in conjunction with others and to stock critical parts. District staff routinely conduct competitive bids for high usage parts and supplies. Factors that influence purchasing decisions also include quality, durability, reliability of the supplier, and availability in addition to price. The district's parts inventory control system includes a comments section which staff use to record comments about their experience with parts and suppliers in the past, and these comments contribute to purchasing decisions.

Parts room staff use a computerized inventory control system which allows them to monitor their stock closely. The system tracks parts from the date they are received (at which point they are checked to ensure that they received what they ordered) until they are used (at which point the cost of the part becomes part of the cost record for the vehicle in which it was used). The system maintains a perpetual inventory, which staff routinely check when filling orders, and it also provides a prompt when the inventory has dropped to the level where a reorder is advisable. Reorders are subject to "common sense oversight" to ensure, for example, that seasonal items are not ordered out of season, or that certain parts will not be ordered if the bus model in question is being phased out. The system is also supplemented with spot checks, with particular emphasis on any situation in which the last item is being used. The system appears to be accurate; discrepancies between reported and actual inventory levels were less than 1% at the most recent inventory. Only parts room employees have access to the parts stock room as a further means of maintaining control over inventory.

Frequently used parts are purchased through the state contract process, which is cost-effective for the district. School buses are also purchased through the state contract process to take advantage of some of the lowest school bus purchase prices available in the country. Purchases are coordinated with the purchasing department through requisitions (which include regularly updated specifications) and purchase orders. Procedures are in place to provide for expeditious action when it is needed. Both the parts room manager and the purchasing supervisor characterize their working relationship as smooth.

## Staff Are Working to Implement Further Improvements

Because of her familiarity with the inventory control system, the parts room manager serves as a member of the district task force which is overseeing the implementation of the new districtwide management information system. That system should provide better linkage of budgetary data and inventory control information than is available now. The parts manager has established priorities for improvements to their existing parts inventory system. These include better mechanisms for tracking the undue frequency of usage of parts (although staff have developed manual checks to help identify such situations now), tracking parts warranties, tracking tire usage more efficiently, and identifying parts with little or no usage.

# Recommendation

- *Although the Manatee district meets this best practice, we recommend that staff continue to pursue these already identified issues in conjunction with the implementation of the new management information system. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

# Are the Best Practices for Adequate Transportation Being Observed?

**Goal B: The district maintains an adequate transportation fleet to safely and efficiently meet current and future needs of all students.**

**1** **Does the district use a comprehensive plan for the cost-effective replacement and management of vehicles based on a systematic method to project the number of buses needed to meet transportation needs?**

*No. The Manatee district's acquisition of school buses falls short of its plan to replace them, and many of its buses are older than school board standards allow.*

Many buses exceed the district's 15-year standard for replacement, and the district's record of replacing buses over the past several years has been erratic. The number of school buses acquired in recent years has often fallen short of the projected number needed according to the current five-year replacement plan. Furthermore, cost analysis data that would facilitate "fix or replace" decisions are incomplete. However, when buses are purchased, the process is conducted efficiently. Several safety and cost considerations associated with older buses, including higher maintenance costs, must be considered in a determination of whether to fix or replace a bus. The age of the buses also obliges the district to maintain a relatively high number of spare buses to have an adequate number of them available when needed to replace regular service buses.

## The School Bus Fleet Is Older Than Most

The district's school bus fleet is older than most, and one of every six buses exceeds the age standard set by school board policy. Exhibit 10-5 compares the age of the school bus fleet for the Manatee school district with its peer districts. The school board's policy is to "plan for the replacement of old, worn-out units or units that are beyond economical repair on a fifteen (15) year cycle." In practice, however, 17% of the buses in the Manatee fleet are more than 15 years old, which compares

unfavorably with the peer districts. Two districts have no buses that old, while a third has only one, representing less than 1% of its fleet. A fourth has 8% of its buses that old, but that is less than half the proportion of old buses in the Manatee district's fleet. The remaining peer district, in Marion County, matches the 17% figure for the Manatee district for buses over 15 years old. However, the Marion district has also compensated for this in part by also having a much larger proportion of its buses that are newer (10 years old or less) than does the Manatee district (60% in Marion compared with only 44% in Manatee).

*Exhibit 10-5*

## Manatee's Buses Are Generally Older Than Its Peers

| | Alachua | Collier | Leon | Manatee | Marion | Sarasota | Peer District Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Buses | 224 | 220 | 292 | 222 | 346 | 283 | 273 |
| Buses More Than 15 Years Old | 18 (8%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (< 1%) | 37 (17%) | 59 (17%) | 0 (0%) | 16 (6%) |

Source: *Florida Student Transportation Handbook, 1998,* for 1996-97 school year, Department of Education, and OPPAGA calculations

Vehicle maintenance staff have developed a five-year plan for the acquisition of new school buses which calculates that the district needs to purchase an average of 17 regular buses and 4 wheelchair buses each year over the next five school years to meet current needs and projected growth. However, as Exhibit 10-6 shows, the actual number of school buses purchased has been irregular over the last decade, including one year in which no new buses were acquired, and another year in which only one new bus was purchased. In only 2 of the last 10 years did the number of new buses acquired meet or exceed the current replacement standard of 21 new buses per year. If this pattern continues, the number of old buses in the Manatee district school bus fleet will continue to increase. The district's effective current standard for replacing school buses in the Manatee district is to keep them until they can no longer be repaired at all.

One problem particularly associated with aging school buses in the Manatee district is that beyond a certain age obtaining parts for buses becomes a significant challenge. For example, five buses from 1984 are currently sidelined because their engines became obsolete several years ago, and parts are no longer available. The vehicle maintenance shop can sometimes customize parts for particular problems (such as a steering gear box which was rebuilt in-house), but such projects are time consuming. The diesel engines used on school buses are capable of handling high mileage, but when parts availability takes a bus out of service, that situation in turn creates other problems. Those problems include down time for the bus driver, late deliveries at the schools, and manpower in the shop while the vehicle is being repaired.

*Exhibit 10-6*

## Bus Purchases in the Manatee District, 1988-1998

| School Year | Number of Buses Purchased |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1988-89 | 28 |
| 1989-90 | 14 |
| 1990-91 | 1 |
| 1991-92 | 14 |
| 1992-93 | 20 |
| 1993-94 | 0 |
| 1994-95 | 23 |
| 1995-96 | 20 |
| 1996-97 | 16 |
| 1997-98 | 19 |
| **Total for 1988-98** | **155** **(or 15.5 per year average)** |

Source:  Manatee County School District

## School Bus Purchasing Practices Are Efficient

When bus purchases are made, the district uses an efficient procedure for purchasing them.  During the 1997-98 school year, the Manatee district spent $1.22 million and acquired 19 new buses, including 4 that are equipped with wheelchair lifts.  Vehicle maintenance staff develop their proposal for how many buses are needed and secure the approval of the school board.  They then work with the purchasing department to identify what options are needed or required on the new buses.  The actual purchases are made through the state purchasing pool which allows the Manatee district to take advantage of the favorable prices that are available.  Buses that are being replaced are sold at auction through a process which is also coordinated through the district's purchasing office.  As of August 1998, vehicle maintenance staff listed 4 buses approved for auction and 21 others awaiting approval in the near future.

## The Florida Department of Education Recommends a 10-Year Replacement Schedule

The district's 15-year bus replacement policy varies from the Florida Department of Education's recommendation that school buses be replaced on a 10-year cycle.  The department supports that recommendation with three arguments.  First, they cite the increased safety associated with newer buses.  In part this is a function of the wear and tear on older buses that can result in serious compromises to the structural integrity of the bus and its commensurate ability to withstand a crash with minimal damage.  There are also several examples of safety features of school buses that are now routine, but are not found on older buses.  Examples include better seat belts for drivers, strobe lights, emergency exit windows and roof hatches, and fire retardant seating material.  Second, the department points out that state school bus purchasing specifications cite a 10-year usable life for school buses.  Because the age specification is not longer, the department is able to maintain some of

the lowest new bus prices in the country. Third, by retiring school buses at 10 years, most school districts can maximize the auction price received for the bus being retired (resale prices typically drop sharply after the eleventh year of service). They can also often avoid the cost of rebuilding an engine, which is usually necessary between 150,000 and 200,000 miles, which is often at the 10-year mark for many buses. The state recommendations on bus replacement are not mandatory and would increase the number of buses the Manatee district needs to buy over time. However, the district should consider whether its 15-year bus replacement policy is its best policy option.

## The Number of Spare Buses Is High

One important byproduct of the Manatee district's relatively old bus fleet is that a high number of buses are maintained as spares in order to have them available when needed. Of the Manatee district's 222 school buses, 154 are listed as daily service buses and 68 are listed as spares. Although the percentage of spares (31%) is substantially higher than any of the peer districts (none of which exceeds 26% - see Exhibit 10-7), district student transportation staff report that all of these spares are actually used on a regular basis. They confirm that the larger number of spares is needed to compensate for the age (and associated unreliability) of their current school bus fleet.

*Exhibit 10-7*

## Number and Percentage of Spare Buses for Manatee and Its Peers

|  | **Alachua** | **Collier** | **Leon** | **Manatee** | **Marion** | **Sarasota** | **Peer District Average** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spare Buses | 43 (19%) | 58 (26%) | 27 (9%) | 68 (31%) | 31 (9%) | 72 (25%) | 46 (17%) |

Source: *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 1998* (Draft), for 1996-97, Department of Education and OPPAGA calculations

# *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

- *We recommend that the Manatee district take steps to bring the age of its fleet into compliance with current school board policy. This should include a release to the auction process of all buses that cannot be repaired cost-effectively. We also recommend that when this has been substantially accomplished, and when better cost analysis data are available, the school board should consider the feasibility of replacing the current 15-year replacement policy with a new policy requiring more frequent replacement.*

- *Action Plan 10-4 provides the necessary steps to implement this recommendation.*

*Exhibit 10-8*

## Replacing Over Age Buses Will Cost The District an Additional $554,000 Annually For The Next Three Years

|  | Fiscal year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Cost to Replace Over Age Buses | ($554,000) | ($ 554,000) | ($ 554,000) | ($ 0) | ($ 0) |
| Cumulative Cost | ( 554,000) | ( 1,108,000) | ( 1,662,000) | ( 1,662,000) | ( 1,662,000) |

*Action Plan 10-4*

## Initiate a School Bus Purchase Plan to Meet the Board's Policy on Age of Buses

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Create a school bus fleet with an adequate number of operational buses no more than 15 years old. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify all currently non-operational buses that cannot be repaired cost-effectively and sell them at auction. |
|  | Step 2: The school board should reaffirm its intention to run buses no longer than 15 years before they are replaced. In developing its annual five-year bus acquisition plan, staff should identify all currently operational buses that will exceed 16 years of age during the next school year and plan to phase them out during the next three cycles of bus purchases. Replacing these overage buses should be in addition to acquiring new buses needed to accommodate growth. (Example: During year one, the district should acquire enough buses to equal one full year's normal replacement plus all of the buses that are needed to accommodate district growth for that year plus enough buses to replace approximately one-third of the number of buses identified as over-age during year one.) |
|  | Step 3: At such time as the district has substantially met the goal of replacing all of its over-age buses, it should consider the prospect of revising the 15-year standard to a standard of more frequent replacement. A cost-benefit analysis in connection with this should be able to make use of improved data quality from the management information system. |
| Who Is Responsible | Vehicle maintenance staff and purchasing department staff and the school board |
| Time Frame | By June 1999 for Step 1 By June 2001 for Step 2 By June 2002 for Step 3 |
| Fiscal Impact | The economic impact of purchasing these extra buses to retire all of the over-age buses would be $554,000 a year for three years. (This is calculated as nine new buses at $64,264 each, or $578,400, less the receipts from the sale of nine old buses at auction at $2,716 each, or $24,400.) |

# 2 Has the district implemented inspection and maintenance practices to ensure that all vehicles in service meet or exceed state safety operating requirements?

*Yes. The district operates an adequate safety inspection program.*

The Manatee district has implemented inspection and maintenance practices to meet state safety requirements. Both drivers and inspectors have a role in conducting routine inspections and mechanics make repairs in accordance with safety standards. Vehicle maintenance staff do not operate a preventive maintenance program.

## Vehicle Inspection Practices Operate Smoothly

Vehicle maintenance practices are consistent with state safety operating requirements. The routine 20-day inspections of all school buses, which are legally mandated by the Florida Statutes, are central to the process. These inspections take an hour or more and are conducted every twentieth school day by certified inspectors who work from a standardized checklist from the Florida Department of Education. Through this process they can identify such problems as worn or flat tires, oil leaks, clouded windshields, torn seats or inadequate seat foam, and other problems. The 20-day inspections are conducted according to a well-established and coordinated routine. Bus drivers receive notification from the vehicle maintenance section about when and where to report with their usual vehicle; on days when their bus is being inspected or serviced, they are assigned a spare bus. Any problems identified by the inspectors are referred to vehicle maintenance staff, who make the needed repairs. Staff maintain and review these inspection records to determine their completeness and accuracy. Past audits conducted on these documents have reported no deficiencies.

Bus drivers have an important role in ensuring the safety of their buses through a procedure to inspect their bus daily and report any deficiencies. The Manatee district has adopted a mandatory 32-step pre-trip inspection procedure with an associated form to help identify potential problem areas. If any are encountered, there is a standard procedure for notifying the vehicle maintenance staff through the use of the inspection list that is converted into a work order.

When defects or problems are encountered (whether by the drivers or during the 20-day inspection routine), the problem is identified in writing on a defect report, and this becomes part of a formal work order for the mechanics. Mechanics (who are certified by the Institute for Automotive Service Excellence) make their repairs in accordance with basic safety standards, which are established by state rules, to ensure that all safety concerns are met before the bus is returned to service.

## A Preventive Maintenance Program May Be Beneficial

District staff believe that implementing a preventive maintenance program would improve the district's ability to service vehicle components and systems based on time or mileage intervals recommended by manufacturers. However, staff have not conducted a cost benefit analysis to determine whether the benefits of such a program outweigh the costs. The Manatee district used to conduct more comprehensive preventive maintenance checks, but they were abandoned because of staff time constraints. That preventive maintenance program enabled the district to conduct more extensive checks on the mechanical aspects of school buses and included activities that are not part of

the 20-day inspection routine. For example, it included activities such as removing wheels and checking wheel bearings and brake wear. These are relatively time-consuming activities because they involve placing the bus on a lift, and they are not part of the current inspection routine. The preventive maintenance process would also include a road test.

It is not currently clear whether lowered repair costs and a reduced number of breakdowns would offset the increased staff and space costs required to implement a preventive maintenance program. Although the district has no hard data to substantiate the cost-effectiveness of preventive maintenance, both the student transportation supervisor and the vehicle maintenance supervisor believe that such a program could improve the overall safety record and lower repair costs. However, district staff estimate it would require at least two additional mechanics and two additional bus stalls. The district should study this issue further. (For further discussion of workspace, see the discussion beginning on page 10-26.)

## *Recommendations*

- *The Manatee district substantially meets this best practice, although the district should consider the costs and benefits before deciding whether to implement a preventive maintenance program. We recommend that the Manatee district develop by March 2000 a cost benefit analysis of the proposed preventive maintenance program. It should specifically include considerations for staffing and workspace, including an assessment of any workspace changes that may be made during the 1998-99 school year. (These workplace changes are discussed beginning on page 10-25.) If the analysis shows that the benefits outweigh the costs district staff should recommend that the school board should consider restarting the preventive maintenance program beginning in the 2000-01 school year.*
- *This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

## 3  Does the district have procedures and practices in place to ensure that vehicles are garaged, maintained, and serviced in a safe and economical manner?

*Yes. The district safely and economically parks, maintains, and services its school buses.*

The Manatee district takes care of its school buses. Staff maintain records for vehicle maintenance, fuel usage, and parts inventory, and they use cost data for making decisions on sending certain maintenance jobs to local private vendors. The number of vehicle maintenance staff is lower than state distributed standards suggest; some new mechanics were recently hired to lessen that gap. There is a staff development program in place. Fueling and parking arrangements are satisfactory, although some adjustments are being made to accommodate growth. Staff monitor environmental health and safety issues related to shop operations.

## Records Management Is Adequate

Several wide-ranging  examples point to the adequacy of records management in the vehicle maintenance area.  First, the district maintains records on the performance and maintenance on each vehicle through a work order system that includes identifying and resolving problems.  As part of their records management, staff have developed stand-alone data systems that allow them to track maintenance costs, including labor, parts, supplies, and fuel.  They use an automated fueling system that provides a degree of security against theft.  It also accurately tracks the disposition of fuel by vehicle and fuel remaining in the tank.  The purchase of fuel is conducted through a co-operative bulk purchasing arrangement that was competitively bid to get the best possible price on fuel; in addition to the Manatee district, other participants are Manatee County, Sarasota County, the City of Bradenton, and Manatee Community College.  A second example is the parts inventory system to ensure security and sufficient, but not excessive, stocking levels.  This stand-alone system helps manage tires and other parts and supplies that comprise a significant percentage of maintenance expenditures.  This system tracks all parts and supplies from receipt to storage as part of the inventory, and eventually to usage in conjunction with a specific work order for a given vehicle.  It generates a recommended order based on a restocking level.  This is subject to oversight for "common sense" reasons, such as seasonal items, or items that may have limited future use.  Items used in large volume, especially tires, are purchased through the state pool purchasing arrangements.

By tracking maintenance cost data, staff are able to use this information to evaluate outsourcing specific maintenance or repair activities and act accordingly.  Although the Matzke complex is a fully stocked full-service shop costs are compared with those of private vendors and it has been concluded that there are some jobs they should contract out because they are not cost effective to do in-house.  Major engine overhauls and rebuilding work are more cost effective elsewhere and can be covered by a warranty.  If major engine work is needed, they remove the engine, ship it to the contractor, and reinstall the engine when it is returned, thus avoiding costs associated with towing the entire vehicle to the shop.  Transmission work is also bid out locally; the work is both cost effective and quick (turnaround is about two days).  Front-end alignments are also shipped out because of a limited number of lifts and the absence of certain specialized equipment.

## Vehicle Maintenance Staffing May Be Low

Staffing in the vehicle maintenance area is low compared with state guidelines but is somewhat higher than the peer district average.  Data from 1996-97 show that Manatee maintenance staff serviced an average of 10 buses per worker compared with the peer district average of 12.  (See Exhibit 10-9.)  However, district staff have conducted a more recent and comprehensive analysis of vehicle maintenance staffing and workspace needs that indicated a distinct shortage in the Manatee district.  This analysis was conducted using a computer program provided by the Florida Department of Education. The department made this program available to all school districts in the state to assist them in evaluating their own staffing level in comparison to the suggested guidelines of the computer program.  The computer program considered several key factors affecting the workload in a vehicle maintenance shop, including the number and types of buses and other equipment, the average labor hours associated with each of them, the total number of man hours now available, the amount of shop space available, and work shift information.  In addition, state transportation officials indicate that the activities Manatee contracts to private firms are similar to those contracted in other districts, so that would not affect their use of the guidelines.  Manatee's analysis using the state guidelines indicated that the Manatee district was operating eight mechanics below the staffing level suggested by these state distributed guidelines.  On the basis of that analysis, two new fully trained mechanics began work during the summer of 1998 to help address the vehicle maintenance workload, including some preventive maintenance activities.

*Exhibit 10-9*

## Maintenance Staffing in 1996-97
## Was Generally High Compared With Peer Districts

| | Alachua | Collier | Leon | Manatee | Marion | Sarasota | Peer District Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of School Buses | 224 | 220 | 292 | 222 | 346 | 283 | 273 |
| Number of Maintenance Workers | 22 | 15 | 27 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 22 |
| Buses Per Maintenance Worker | 10 | 15 | 11 | 10 | 15 | 12 | 12 |

Source:  *Q-Link:  Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 1998* (Draft), for 1996-97 school year, Department of Education, and OPPAGA calculations

## Vehicle Maintenance Staff Receive Training

The Manatee district has a staff development program for technicians and garage supervisors to keep them apprised of updated safety, technology, and garage management practices.  Mechanics are certified by the Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) in one or more service specialties, and the Manatee district pays for this certification.  The mechanics also attend, at district expense, a special summer school for school bus mechanics that is organized by the Florida Department of Education.  School bus inspectors, who conduct the 20-day inspections that help identify maintenance problems requiring resolution, are also certified, although this is not currently required by law.

## There Are Unresolved Site Problems
## at the Matzke Complex

The Manatee district has recently authorized an expansion of its bus compound at the Matzke complex, but some site problems will need to be resolved before the expansion can proceed.  The plans include providing additional bus parking space and relocating some staff offices in order to expand the vehicle maintenance workspace.  However, as of August 1998 staff learned of some site limitations affecting their ability to create a stormwater retention pond.  This will need to be resolved before the offices are moved and the vehicle maintenance workspace can be expanded.  Currently, workspace in the vehicle maintenance area is often constrained, and some work is done in exposed areas, which is very inconvenient when the weather is bad.  A recent analysis of the workspace (done in conjunction with the staffing analysis described above) confirmed that the Manatee district has one-half of a workbay less than the state distributed suggested guidelines.  The vehicle maintenance supervisor also notes that he has not been able to implement the idea of a special "jiffy area" for short repairs, such as the replacement of windshield wipers or light bulbs, because of the space limitations.

# Procedures Are Adequate for Parking and Fueling Buses and Monitoring Environmental, Health, and Safety Issues

Currently 55% of the buses are parked at a compound, with 40% of the buses at the Matzke complex and 15% at either the Lincoln Middle School in Palmetto or the VoTech Center in southwest Bradenton. The Manatee district allows bus drivers to take the buses home if the location is conducive to the particular route, if the driver is allowed to have the bus at home, and if there are no security problems. The student transportation supervisor points out that in such cases the location is beneficial to the district because less driving time is involved in reaching the beginning and ends of bus routes. Incidents of vandalism to school buses parked at drivers' homes have been rare, and when they have occurred, the home parking was discontinued.

The Manatee district's arrangements for fueling its buses is generally satisfactory, although the district's continuing expansion and opening of new school sites presents continuing challenges. Most fueling operations occur at the Matzke complex, but there is also an arrangement for a tanker truck to refuel school buses at four locations in the southwest and northern parts of the county. There is a newly emerging need to provide an additional off-site tanker truck fueling option east of Bradenton at the new Lakewood Ranch High School. There are also other fueling arrangements available for rural area buses and special situations. Also, credit cards can be issued to drivers for longer field trips that will require refueling before returning.

Vehicle maintenance staff also monitor environmental, health, and safety issues related to transportation shop operations. For example, they have recently installed three 10,000-gallon double-walled fiber glass tanks (two for diesel, one for gasoline) in accord with federal Environmental Protection Agency requirements. In other safety issues, there have been seven workers' compensation claims within the past two years. (This injury is comparable to those reported by the peer districts.) The vehicle maintenance supervisor issues protective lifting belts to his staff to minimize the incidence of back injuries. There have been no recent claims relating to injuries from any toxic chemicals, such as gasoline fume inhalation.

## *Recommendations* ——————————————————————

- *The Manatee district substantially meets this best practice, but the adequacy of the vehicle maintenance workspace should be reviewed again in the near future by evaluating the costs and benefits of the options. We recommend that during the 1998-99 school year the Manatee district focus on ways to resolve the site limitations at the Matzke complex. We also recommend that the need for additional vehicle maintenance workspace be specifically included as part of the cost benefit analysis due in March 2000 in connection with consideration of whether to reestablish a preventive maintenance program during the 2000-01 school year. (Preventive maintenance is discussed beginning on page 10-23.)*

- *This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 4 Does the school district provide transportation to meet the educational needs of special education pupils through individual educational programs (IEPs) as provided in Public Law 94-142, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?

*Yes. The Manatee district provides student transportation for exceptional students, although there are some serious inefficiencies in connection with that service.*

Student transportation service is provided to exceptional students, but some aspects of that service are problematic. Staff in the exceptional student education area have procedures for determining which children require special transportation consideration, and they communicate this to student transportation staff who make the bus routing arrangements for them. However, the district provides special transportation services to many exceptional students who are not eligible to receive state supplemental funding for such services. Also, school assignments are often far from students' homes, and poor data on students' addresses has hampered efforts to computerize the routing for exceptional students. The district has recently applied to receive federal Medicaid funding in support of some student transportation services for qualified exceptional students, which should become an important new source of supplemental funds in the future.

## Some Exceptional Students Who Require Special Transportation Consideration Receive State Supplemental Funding

The Manatee district has implemented policies regarding transportation services for pupils with special educational needs, and part of the process includes an annual assessment of whether children who ride special transportation could instead ride on a regular bus. The decision-making process is largely controlled by the 1975 federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which was reauthorized by Congress in 1997. It involves several stakeholders, most notably exceptional student education staff and student transportation operations staff, but also including school principals, teachers, doctors and other human services professionals, and parents.

Exceptional student education staff are responsible for overseeing the process of identifying which students meet the IDEA specified categories of exceptionality and coordinating the preparation of an individual education plan for each exceptional student so they can be served in the least restrictive environment. Developing these individual education plans is a collaborative process to identify what is needed, who will be involved, and how the student will receive the services they require, including student transportation services. Those involved typically include the teacher, the parents, exceptional student education staff, and any doctors or other human services professionals who have been involved in evaluating the exceptional student. Student transportation staff do not typically have a role in creating the individual education plan. The exceptional student administrator points out that a large majority (about 5,200 of 6,400, or 81%) of the exceptional students in the Manatee district do not require special transportation consideration.

The individual education plan process includes certain clear criteria identifying students who will definitely require special student transportation consideration. Students who meet any of these criteria are eligible for supplemental state funding from the Florida Department of Education.

The department has identified five criteria for this supplemental funding which are presented in Exhibit 10-10.

## State Criteria for Exceptional Student Eligibility for Supplemental State Funding

- Medical equipment is required. (Medical equipment is defined as wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, canes, tracheotomy equipment, positioning or unique seating devices.)
- Medical condition requires a special transportation environment as per physician's prescription. (Examples are tinted windows, dust controlled atmosphere, and temperature control.)
- Aide or monitor is required due to disability and specific need of student. (Aides are more knowledgeable about children's health problems than monitors, whose assignment is to assist the bus driver in maintaining good order.)
- Shortened day is required due to disability and specific need of student.
- School assigned is located in an out of district school system. (This refers to a school assignment out of the county; it is not the same thing as a school assignment outside of the student's local school zone.)

Source: Department of Education

Examples of physical limitations or requirements that would meet one of these criteria include students in wheelchairs, students prone to epileptic seizures who may require an air-conditioned bus, and severely emotionally disturbed children who may require a monitor or aide. All plans and decisions must be made on a student-by-student basis, and that the student's level of functioning is a more important factor than the actual disability in making student transportation decisions.

## Program Location Decisions Influence Special Transportation Consideration for Some Exceptional Students Who Do Not Receive State Supplemental Funding

Not all of the exceptional students who receive special transportation consideration meet the state's criteria for supplemental funding. The full cost of special transportation provided to the 617 exceptional students who do not meet any of the criteria must be paid by the district. The degree to which this service can be minimized or replaced by regular bus service will result in immediate savings for the district.

The factor that necessitates the special transportation consideration for exceptional students who do not qualify for state supplemental funding is the availability or non-availability of programs at particular school sites to serve students with particular disabilities. Since programs to serve all exceptionalities are not available in all schools, exceptional student programs in the elementary schools are distributed among four geographic "clusters" in an attempt to minimize the student transportation load involved in serving exceptional students. Exceptional students are transported to the closest school within their cluster that has the specific program needed for that child. For example, there are about 300 children with specific learning disabilities who do not attend their local

school, but some other school that has a program suitable for them. Such children do not meet any of the criteria that would allow the district to receive state supplemental funding for them, but they do require special transportation consideration in order to be transported to the school with the program to serve them. (Transfers outside of the clusters are more difficult to arrange, but since not all programs are provided in all four clusters, they do have to be set up for some students.)

The concept of clusters was originally established to minimize the student transportation load by consolidating the areas within which these exceptional students would have to be transported. However, the concept was weakened during the 1997-98 school year when the district reconfigured its original five clusters into four. District staff explain that the reconfiguring was a response to other concerns about racial balance and space availability for special programs at particular schools.

Bus rides for exceptional students tend to be longer than for regular students, which is at least partially reflective of the distance they must be transported. Moreover, the average ride times for them has recently increased, as shown in Exhibit 10-11. The reconfiguration of the clusters may affect longer average ride times for the elementary schools, but they do not account for increased ride time for middle and high schools. Concern over the length of time exceptional students spend riding buses was expressed by principals, bus drivers, and members of the general public.

*Exhibit 10-11*

## Average Ride Times for Exceptional Students in the Manatee District, 1996-97 and 1997-98

|  | Average Ride | |
|  | 1996-97 | 1997-98 |
|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 1.06 hours | 1.30 hours |
| Middle | 1.00 hours | 1.28 hours |
| High School | 1.37 hours | 1.49 hours |

Source: Manatee County School District

## Computer Routing Is Not in Use for Exceptional Students

A contributing factor toward long ride times may be that the Manatee district is not currently using its computer routing system for exceptional student routings. The current situation is that planning routes for exceptional student bus runs is an inefficient process that cannot be improved without first correcting an important underlying problem, the inaccuracy of many students' addresses in the Manatee district's student database. Student transportation operations staff must design highly individualized routes for all exceptional student bus runs. Accurate addresses are essential for exceptional student bus runs, since pick-ups are made at the student's home rather than a more generalized neighborhood bus stop. The Manatee district's student database includes students' home addresses, but when this information is inaccurate, as is the case for a large number of exceptional students, the student database cannot be used. One direct result of these inaccuracies for student transportation staff is that they cannot then use the computer routing system, because it is directly linked to the student database for all student addresses, including those that are wrong. Instead, they must prepare individually hand-drawn maps based on their best understanding of what the exceptional student's real address is; this is a very time-consuming process. Use of the computer routing system is planned to begin for exceptional student routes during the 1998-99 school year as

the routing staff receive further training and experience with that system and the system itself is upgraded into a more user-friendly format. (Computer routing for regular students is discussed beginning on page 10-33.)

Registrars at the individual school sites are responsible for keeping the student information database current, and they are the only individuals now authorized to make changes in the district's student database. (The exceptional student transportation coordinator and staff in student transportation operations have "read only" access to the student database.) Registrars concede that address information is often "out of synch with reality," for a variety of reasons, including delays in doing the data entry. Other reasons include failure of the child or parents to report a move, not knowing of a move because it was reported to the wrong person, and parents who may be uncooperative for a variety of reasons. In practice, student transportation operations staff are often the first to notify registrars of address changes because bus drivers are often the first to learn of students' moves.

## Staff Are Seeking New Medicaid Funding for Some Exceptional Student Bus Runs

The exceptional student administrator has recently taken some initial steps to apply for an important new source of funding in support of student transportation for some exceptional students. The source is the federal Medicaid program, which is now processing the Manatee district's application and assisting district staff to identify which exceptional students are also eligible for Medicaid. Federal funds would reimburse slightly more than half of a set rate of $5.14 for each one-way trip for each eligible exceptional student receiving any medical treatment or service in conjunction with a student transportation trip. For example, a Medicaid-eligible exceptional student who receives physical therapy at the school site as part of their individual education plan would enable the district to receive partial reimbursement for the bus trips that delivered him to the school site for the therapy and returned him home again. Because this reimbursement program is so new, there are no baseline data on the number of exceptional students who are also eligible for Medicaid, or on how many treatments or services they receive for which reimbursement may be claimed. However, some preliminary estimates from the Hillsborough County School District suggest that approximately 30% of exceptional students are also eligible for Medicaid, and those students receive at least eight eligible trips a month. Those numbers suggest that Manatee County could receive $73,000 a year from this new funding source.

## *Recommendations* ———————————————————————————

- *Although the Manatee district substantially meets this best practice, there are opportunities to improve the coordination between exceptional student education staff and student transportation staff. The intention of this improved coordination is to minimize the number of exceptional students who receive special student transportation service, but who do not qualify for state supplemental funding. First, we recommend that student transportation staff be involved with all IEP decisions that are likely to require an exceptional student to be transported for particularly long distances. This would specifically include all elementary students who would be transported from one cluster to another. Second, we recommend that student transportation staff be involved with IEP decisions likely to involve a shortened school day. Third, we recommend that student transportation staff be specifically involved in any meetings involving the location or relocation of exceptional student programs at particular school sites. This*

*would include all discussions on clustering. Fourth, we recommend that student transportation be involved with any other IEP decisions that may require special attention from student transportation staff, such as the construction of special harnesses, special requirements for aides, and so forth. Finally, district staff may wish to review whether moving the exceptional student transportation coordinator into the student transportation office would result in improved coordination.*

- *We also recommend that the Manatee district amend its IEP forms to avoid any confusion that may arise about which students qualify for state supplemental funding. Specifically, the criterion listed on the IEP form that now reads "school assigned is out of zone," should be changed to reflect the actual state criterion language, "school assigned is located in an out of district school system." Student transportation staff say there are no students in the Manatee district who meet this criterion; that is, no Manatee students are transported into other counties to attend school. However, exceptional student staff should be aware that students transported out of their zone are not necessarily eligible for supplemental state funding, although those transported out of the district would be.*

- *We also recommend that the Manatee district continue its current initiatives to improve student transportation services to exceptional students. Specifically, the student transportation supervisor should proceed with current plans to upgrade the computer routing system to a more user-friendly format and to train all student transportation routing staff on that upgraded system. In support of the move to computerized routing for exceptional student bus runs, we also recommend that the exceptional student transportation coordinator and all student transportation routing staff should be fully authorized to make changes to the student address, emergency contact, and telephone fields of the district's student information database. In conjunction with this expanded authority to make changes to the student information database, we recommend that the school board policy establish a policy stating that the official information about students' addresses will be considered to be what is entered in the student information database at any given time. The point of this action is to encourage the prompt entry of data that has changed and discourage reliance on extraneous documents that may not be accurate.*

- *Finally, we recommend that the exceptional student administrator continue current efforts to collect Medicaid reimbursement for all qualifying student transportation trips. Manatee County could receive $73,000 a year from this new funding source.*

*Exhibit 10-12*

## Receiving Eligibility for Medicaid Reimbursement for Eligible Transportation Services Could Increase Revenues by $365,000 Over the Next Five Years

|  | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Revenue Increase | $ 73,000 | $ 73,000 | $ 73,000 | $ 73,000 | $ 73,000 |
| Cumulative Revenue Increase | 73,000 | 146,000 | 219,000 | 292,000 | 365,000 |

# *Are the Best Practices for a Safe and Efficient System Being Observed?*

**Goal C:  The district provides a safe and efficient transportation system that complements the educational needs of the district's students.**

# 1   Is the district's transportation routing system periodically reviewed to provide maximum safety for pupils and staff and efficiently meet the needs of the district?

*Yes.  The district's transportation routing system for regular students is safe and efficient, but there are some features that could be improved.*

The Manatee district periodically reviews the safety and efficiency of its operations, and staff make effective use of their computer routing system for regular students.  However, there are some operational areas needing improvement.  Some students ride the bus longer than school board policy allows, activity trips operate at a loss, and the district serves many students who could walk to school and for whom it receives no state funding support.

## Policies for Safety Are in Place

The Manatee district has implemented a number of provisions that are intended to provide continuous review of their primary function, delivering children safely to school.  These provisions collectively help ensure maximum safety for pupils and staff.  For example, the Manatee district has adopted standard operating procedures to provide maximum safety at stops and loading zones.  The district has also adopted a policy that requires bus drivers to promptly report overloaded buses or "any hazards arising which would offer either an actual or a potential threat to the safety of students in his care."  Any such concerns that are identified would be investigated by the student transportation safety officer and subsequently referred to the student transportation routing specialist for appropriate action.  A third example is that the Manatee district has established policies on the responsibility of transported students and the establishment of school bus stops and non-transportation zones.

## Computer Bus Routing and Staggered Start Times Help Ensure Efficiency

During the 1997-98 school year, student transportation staff implemented an important innovation that has significantly improved the efficiency of student transportation operations:  a computerized routing system.  This computer routing system is more efficient and accurate than the hand routing

formerly used. In conjunction with specific route reviews provided by the four district chiefs (i.e., the bus driver foremen), the new system provides the necessary oversight to ensure that the size and configuration of the bus assigned to each route is appropriate for the route and the number of pupils transported. (Exceptional student bus routes are an exception that are discussed beginning on page 10-30). Through the computer routing system, student transportation staff have collected data to determine the optimal expected time for buses to arrive at given points on their route, and they have used this information to assess and improve the transportation system's efficiency. In particular, they have been able to use the computer-generated times as the basis for paying bus drivers. Student transportation staff maintain records on all regular student and exceptional student bus routes, including those that are computer-generated and those that are not.

Another provision is that the Manatee district has also established staggered school start times to enhance the utilization of buses and increase the efficiency of bus routing. High schools begin at 7:30 a.m. and dismiss at 2:05 p.m.; elementary schools start at 8:15 a.m. and dismiss at 2:45 p.m.; and middle schools start at 9:00 a.m. and dismiss at 3:35 p.m. This staggered arrangement means that most school buses are used for three separate runs. Thus, through a combination of staggered start times and the use of the computer routing system, the student transportation system in Manatee County has been able to achieve an efficient bus utilization rate. Exhibit 10-13 demonstrates that the Manatee district has a higher bus occupancy rate than any of the five peer districts. This is important because school districts receive increased funding from the Florida Department of Education as a function of a higher bus occupancy rate.

*Exhibit 10-13*

## Bus Occupancy Rate in Manatee Is Higher Than in Its Peer Districts

|  | **Alachua** | **Collier** | **Leon** | **Manatee** | **Marion** | **Sarasota** | **Peer District Average** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bus Occupancy Rate | 76.84 | 72.79 | 69.39 | 78.26 | 69.50 | 74.13 | 72.53 |

Source: *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 1998* (Draft), for school year 1996-97, Department of Education

## Some Bus Runs Are Longer
## Than the Limits Set by School Board Policy

The Manatee district has adopted a policy that limits a pupil's riding time on school buses in compliance with state rules, but many students now exceed the time limit set by that policy. The district's policy limits one-way riding time to 50 minutes for elementary students and 60 minutes for high school students. Student transportation staff do not currently have data on the exact number of individual children who ride beyond these established limits, but bus route records indicate that eight buses take as long as two hours on either their morning or afternoon run. However, these are exceptions, as the majority of the routes (152 of 233, or 65%) are concluded within 30 minutes.

# The Manatee District Has a High Percentage of Activity Trip Miles

Although activity trips are approved and operated in compliance with state regulations and district policy, they present some problems to the district. The school board approved a fee schedule that was supposed to recoup the cost of the actual operation of the bus. This fee was set at $1.00 per mile (plus the cost of the bus driver) for outside users. (These include student-age groups from community centers, commercial child care facilities, the University of South Florida, etc.) However, they also set the rate for trips related to school curricula and school groups (such as athletic boosters, parent-teacher organizations, activity clubs, and so forth) at $0.62 per mile plus the cost of the bus driver. The school board's rationale for the discounted rate is that schools and school groups should not have to pay for depreciation on the school buses they use.

There have been as many as 4,500 activity trips in the course of a school year. Since many of these requests come toward the end of the school year, the logistics of organizing them (despite a required two-week advance notice) have been complex. Student transportation staff will not schedule activity trips if they interfere with the requirements of regular routing, but that creates automatic problems with any requests for longer field trips, since they require very early or very late returns from the destination. Furthermore, when service to the new Lakewood Ranch High School begins in the fall of 1998, school bus availability for field trips will be greatly constrained. We estimate that if the district charged school groups the same per mile rate it charges outside entities, it would generate an additional $37,000 annually from school groups.

Exhibit 10-14 provides information on the rates charged by Manatee and its peers for field trips.

*Exhibit 10-14*

## Activity Trip Rates and Activity Trips as a Percentage of Total Miles for Manatee and Its Peer Districts

|  | **Alachua** | **Collier** | **Leon** | **Manatee** | **Marion** | **Sarasota** | **Peer District Average** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rate Charged for Outside Entities | $0.70 per mile, plus $12.90 per hour | $1.08 per mile, plus $17.26 per hour | $0.70 per mile, plus $13.30 per hour | $1.00 per mile, plus $12.00 per hour | $0.63 per mile, plus $10.00 per hour | $1.50 per mile, plus $15.00 per hour | $0.92 per mile, plus $13.69 per hour |
| Rate Charged for Schools | $0.55 per mile, plus $11.00 per hour | $23.75 per hour for 1st five hours, plus $13.00 per hour for any additional hours | $0.70 per mile, plus $13.30 per hour | $0.62 per mile, plus $12.00 per hour | $0.63 per mile, plus $10.00 per hour for field trips; $0.50 per mile for athletic or band trips | $1.00 per mile, plus $15.00 per hour | $0.72 per mile, plus $12.33 per hour (excludes Collier) |
| Activity Trip Miles as a % of all Miles | 5.6% | 5.0% | 3.0% | 9.1% | 2.6% | 1.6% | 3.6% |

Source: *Q-Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 1998* (Draft), for school year 1996-97, Department of Education, and OPPAGA calculations and interviews

## Providing Bus Service to Students
## Who Could Walk Is Costly

The Manatee district currently provides school bus service to many students who live close enough to their school to be able to walk.  Through its computer routing system, the Manatee district has collected data regarding each student's distance from school, but there is no effective policy limiting the student transportation that is provided to students who live less than two miles walking distance from school ('courtesy students').  The district receives no state funding support for any student transportation provided to them, so for the 1,421 courtesy students served during the 1996-97 school year, the Manatee district bore 100% of the costs associated with them.  Courtesy students comprise almost 10% of all students transported by the district, a higher ratio than the peer districts.  (See Exhibit 10-15.)  District staff say that providing student transportation to courtesy students is a vestige of an earlier era when the community largely lacked sidewalks.  They also note that there are some inequities from one school to another about the provision of courtesy bus service.  We estimate that if the Manatee district discontinued providing courtesy bus service, it would save $161,000 annually.

*Exhibit 10-15*

## Courtesy Student Data for Manatee and
## Its Peer Districts for the 1996-97 School Year

|  | **Alachua** | **Collier** | **Leon** | **Manatee** | **Marion** | **Sarasota** | **Peer District Average** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Number Riding Bus | 15,340 | 13,568 | 14,585 | 14,373 | 21,660 | 16,189 | 16,268 |
| Number of Courtesy Students Riding Bus | 1,471 | 685 | 845 | 1,421 | 775 | 1,512 | 1,058 |
| Courtesy Students as a Percentage of All Bus Riders | 9.6% | 5.1% | 5.8% | 9.9% | 3.6% | 9.3% | 6.5% |

Source:  *Q-Link:  Florida School District Transportation Profiles, 1998* (Draft), for school year 1996-97, Department of Education, and OPPAGA calculations

## *Recommendations* ———————————————————————————

- *Although the Manatee district substantially meets this best practice, there are some significant issues that need to be addressed.  We recommend that student transportation staff improve their ability to report regularly on the number of students who ride longer than the time set by school board policy; this initiative should be in conjunction with*

*developing performance benchmarks (as discussed in the action plan beginning on page 10-8). We also recommend that the school board reconsider its policy of charging school groups less than the full cost of field trips. (See Exhibit 10- 16.) Finally, we recommend that the school board also actively consider phasing out bus service to students who could walk to school as this could save approximately $161,000 annually. (See Exhibit 10-17.)*

Exhibit 10-16

## Charging School Groups (i.e., Athletic Boosters, Activity Clubs) Full Cost to Cover Field Trips Could Increase District Revenue by $185,000 in the Next Five Years

|  | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Revenue Increase | $37,000 | $37,000 | $ 37,000 | $ 37,000 | $ 37,000 |
| Cumulative Revenue Increase | 37,000 | 74,000 | 111,000 | 148,000 | 185,000 |

Exhibit 10-17

## Discontinuing Bus Service to Students Who Could Walk to School Could Save the District $805,000 in the Next Five Years

|  | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Cost Savings | $161,000 | $161,000 | $161,000 | $161,000 | $161,000 |
| Cumulative Cost Savings | 161,000 | 322,000 | 483,000 | 644,000 | 805,000 |

# 2 Are staff, drivers, and pupils instructed and rehearsed in the procedures to be used in an accident or disaster?

*Yes. The Manatee district effectively prepares staff and pupils for emergency situations.*

Actions to take in the event of emergencies, including bus evacuation procedures, are well covered by Manatee district policies and procedures and are an integral part of bus driver training. Practices for reviewing accidents exceed state requirements.

## Safety Drills and Accident Review Practices Are Adequate

The Manatee district has adopted a policy requiring each school bus driver to hold two emergency evacuation drills during each school year. The student transportation department issues memoranda

on the subject and collects certifications that the required drills were conducted.  The standard operating procedures for school bus drivers includes specific directions on actions to take in the event of an accident.  That material is specifically included as part of the training package for bus drivers.  All buses carry flip charts for instant reference on emergency procedures, and buses used for exceptional student runs also have information on student disabilities.

The district has an accident review policy that meets state reporting requirements.  The policies adopted by the Manatee district are limited to stating that all accidents must be reported to the student transportation operations office in accordance with the standard operating procedures for bus drivers in the event of an accident.  However, the actual practices are more extensive.  The student transportation safety officer specifically reviews the circumstances of all accidents, and his findings are reviewed by the student transportation operations manager and the student transportation supervisor.  The vehicle maintenance supervisor maintains a photographic record of vehicle damage and coordinates with the insurance staff in the risk management office as needed before commencing actual bus repair jobs.

# 3 Has the district implemented hiring and training policies to employ and retain an adequate number of appropriately qualified bus drivers?

*Yes.  The district's policies ensure that it has an adequate number of qualified bus drivers.*

The Manatee district has a sufficient number of bus drivers.  Turnover has been within acceptable limits, salaries are comparable with other districts, and staff evaluation and training procedures are in place.

## The District Maintains an Adequate Roster of Bus Drivers

Although the Manatee district does not have any useful information on the turnover rates of any of its staff (including bus drivers), the student transportation operations manager asserts that bus driver turnover has not been an issue in Manatee County.  The district has been able to maintain an adequate roster of drivers and substitute drivers.  She points out that the job offers some unique features that always attract applicants.  These features include "a good-paying part-time job" at $10 an hour or more, full-time benefits for part-time employment, and free training to receive a commercial driver's license.  When additional applicants are needed, no advertising is needed, since they have been able to fill all vacancies through word-of-mouth or sending notices home with elementary school children.  From these indications and from reviewing Florida Department of Education comparative data on salaries and benefits, they have concluded that their salaries and benefits are in line with similar districts and are comparable to those of local employers.

## The District Reviews Bus Drivers' Records and Provides Training

The district regularly reviews personal driving records.  The district obtains an initial driving record report from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles when bus driver trainees become applicants for the commercial driver's license.  The drivers' licenses tracking system allows for regular updates of the record, and student transportation operations staff check this at least three times a year, and more often if necessary.  The student transportation operations manager reports that the

incidence of problems is less than 10%. An annual inspection by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles in April 1998 concluded that "the driver files were complete and up to date."

The district has a system for monitoring bus drivers' performance and student management techniques. Each of the four district chiefs has the responsibility to work with the bus drivers assigned to their sector of Manatee County. They ride with each bus driver twice a year to review their performance against a comprehensive checklist. The student transportation safety officer or the student transportation operations manager will also occasionally follow buses or investigate problems that come to their attention through informal means, including telephone calls from parents or citizens. They also respond to parent or citizen complaints about incidents occurring at bus stops. Video cameras and radar guns are used for some monitoring.

The district has a staff development program to address drivers' training needs. The initial training of bus drivers to receive a commercial driver's license is free to potential bus drivers, although prospective bus drivers are not paid for their training time. (The incidence of drivers leaving upon receipt of the commercial driver's license has been negligible, according to the student transportation operations manager.) Student transportation staff also organize an annual summer conference that includes defensive driving, instruction on student discipline, emergency evacuation procedures, exceptional student criteria and behavior management techniques, and other timely topics. A second in-service training session is held in October for all operations personnel. When problems arise with particular drivers on particular issues, remedial training can be arranged. The operations manager and other staff are certified trainers, which lessens the cost to the Manatee district.

# 4 Does the district have a policy on drugs and alcohol for all transportation department employees, and does it enforce that policy?

*Yes. The district has a substance abuse policy that it enforces.*

## The District's Substance Abuse Policy Is Clear and Enforced

The district has adopted and communicated to all of its employees including those in student transportation a drug and alcohol policy in compliance with the federal Omnibus Transportation Employees Testing Act of 1991 and implementing regulations. In addition, the standard operating procedures for school bus operations states that "School Bus Drivers of Manatee County shall be of good moral character and shall refrain from the use of tobacco, intoxicating beverages, drugs or narcotics while on duty." The district's health insurance coverage includes an employee assistance program. Appropriate treatment can be provided to employees who voluntarily report themselves as being in need of assistance; in such cases they are removed from active driver status until completion of the substance abuse dependency program. Anyone found to be actively violating the policy, however, will be immediately terminated; the student transportation supervisor confirms that this policy has been actively enforced with dismissal in the recent past.

# 11 Food Service Operations

*The Manatee Food Service program has lost money for the past two years. A continual shift in program administration, poor food ordering choices, and failure to raise meal prices have all contributed to the loss. Several program changes are needed to avoid further losses and the use of reserve fund monies.*

## Conclusion

The Manatee School District Food Service program is using 4 of 15 best practices. As the following best practices illustrate, the Food Service program has a system for receiving and storing goods, provides nutritious meals, accurately provides a count of those meals to the Florida Department of Education, and follows safety and environmental health practices and regulations. However, the Food Service program needs to improve its efficiency and financial profitability and accountability.

## Is the District Using the Food Service Best Practices?

### Efficient and Effective Operation

**No.**    The Food Service program does not have clear direction of and control over resources and services. (page 11-8)

**No.**    The district has not identified barriers to student participation in the school meals program and strategies have not been implemented to eliminate the barriers. (page 11-15)

**No.**    The district has not established cost-efficiency benchmarks based on comparable private and public sector food service programs and other applicable industry standards. (page 11-19)

**No.**    The district does not regularly evaluate the school nutrition program based on established benchmarks and improvements have not been implemented to increase revenue and reduce costs. (page 11-22)

**No.**    The district does not regularly assess the benefits of service delivery alternatives, such as contracting and privatization, and changes have not been implemented to improve efficiency and effectiveness. (page 11-26)

### Financial Accountability and Viability of School Nutrition Program

**No.**    The program budget is not based on departmental goals but is based on revenue and expenditure projections. (page 11-30)

***No.***     The district's financial control process does not include an ongoing review of the program's financial and management practices.  (page 11-32)

***Yes.***     The district accounts for and reports meals served by category.  (page 11-37)

***No.***     The district does not regularly evaluate purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase efficiency.  (page 11-38)

***No.***     The district has not developed an effective inventory control system that is appropriate to the size of the school nutrition program.  (page 11-41)

***Yes.***     The district does have a system for receiving and storing food, supplies, and equipment.  (page 11-48)

***No.***     The district does not have a long-range plan for the replacement of equipment and facilities that includes preventative maintenance practices. (page 11-49)

### *Meal Preparation and Service*

***Yes.***     The district does provide school meals that ensure the nutritional needs of all students are met.  (page 11-52)

***No.***     The district's food production and transportation system does not ensure the service of high quality food with minimal waste.  (page 11-53)

### *Safe and Sanitary Food Service Environment*

***Yes.***     The district does follow safety and environmental health practices and regulations.  (page 11-57)

# *Fiscal Impact of Recommendations*————————————

There are several things the district can do to increase Food Service program revenue.  As illustrated in Exhibit 11-1, we estimate that the district could realize an annual increase of $501,126 by implementing breakfast programs in all schools, increasing meal participation rates, and increasing select meal prices.  This represents a five-year income of approximately $2 million.  In addition, the district could realize one-time savings of $46,500 as a result of reducing food storage costs.  However, the district could potentially be fined $240,000 for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities that have exceeded their shelf life.  This figure is not included in fiscal impacts as it is not a result of our recommendations.  The district will incur a cost of $2,100 as a result of installing external thermometers on freezer units to reduce access and improve security for stored food.  Taking these costs into consideration, the district can increase revenue by approximately $1.7 million over the next five years.

*Exhibit 11-1*

## Implementing the Recommendations for the Food Service Program Should Enable the District to Realize a Cost Savings of $2,437,147 Over the Next Five Years

| Recommendation | Fiscal Impact |
|---|---|
| • Implement breakfast programs in all district schools (page 11-9). | • $ 152,928 |
| • Implement a promotional campaign and use customer feedback to increase meal participation rates (page 11- 16). | • 233,628 |
| • Raise selected meal prices (page 11-33). | • 1,820,191 |
| • Increase food security by installing external freezer thermometers (page 11-44). This is a one-time investment. | • (2,100) |
| • Reduce storage costs by decreasing on-hand inventory by half (page 11-53). | • 232,500 |

# *Background*

The mission of the Food Service program is to enhance the conducive learning experience for the student by providing attractive quality meals and a positive atmosphere through professional training of staff and open communication with customers. The department, with 1997-98 revenues of $10.1 million, served approximately 4.5 million meal equivalents in Fiscal Year 1997-98 in 38 cafeterias. Each school in the district has its own kitchen and prepares meals on site. On average, the department serves approximately 27,000 meal equivalents daily.

The Food Service program was included in the district's 1995 reorganization and has since experienced a high rate of management turnover with four people in three years serving as the head of the Food Service program. As part of the reorganization, the Food Service director position was first downgraded to Food Service manager and then revisited and upgraded to Food Service supervisor. Currently, the position remains at this level with a Food Service supervisor overseeing the program.

## Board Policies/Procedures

The Manatee County School Board policies and procedures address 10 specific Food Service program areas.

- Personnel staffing and evaluations
- Staffing cafeteria and kitchen manager positions
- Staffing other Food Service positions
- Procedures for evaluations
- Responsibility of director of Food Services
- Responsibility of principal and school staff
- Responsibilities of school Food Service cafeteria manager

- Services
- Pricing
- Eligibility for free and reduced price meals

## Organizational Structure

Program authority is split between the Food Service supervisor and principals. As illustrated in the department's current organization structure in Exhibit 11-2, the Food Service supervisor is responsible for program administration but does not have line authority over cafeteria managers and Food Service workers. The school's principal supervises cafeteria managers and Food Service workers.

*Exhibit 11-2*

## Food Service Organization Chart
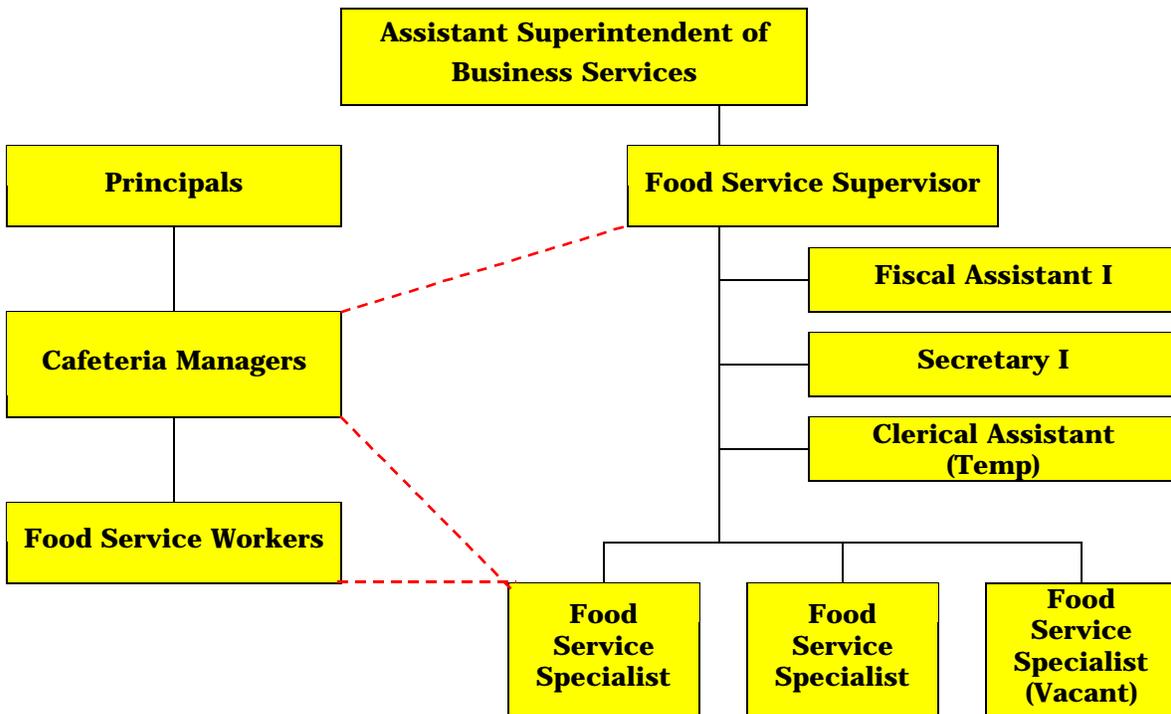


Source: Manatee County School District

The district provides centralized support to the department in the areas of personnel, accounting, payroll, purchasing, and the limited warehousing of some goods. The 253 full-time and part-time Food Service employees and 7 central office staff perform all other department activities in 38 school cafeterias.

## Nutritional Programs

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and National Breakfast Program (NBP) which are regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). These school nutrition programs are designed to assist states through

grant-in-aid and other means in establishing, maintaining, operating, and expanding non-profit school feeding programs. The NSLP and NBP aim at safeguarding the health and well being of the nation's children and encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities and other foods.

In Florida, the NSLP and NBP are administered by the Department of Education, Food and Nutrition Management Section and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Bureau of Food Distribution, Division of Marketing and Development. The district renews its agreements with these state agencies each year to operate the program at the local level. The district's board, school principals, and the Food Service department share local responsibility for program administration.

During the 1997-98 school year, 42% of the district's students were approved to receive free or reduced meal benefits through the NSLP and NBP. As a participant in these programs, the district receives federal reimbursement income for free, reduced, and paid breakfast and lunch meals served. Exhibit 11-3 shows the reimbursement rates for the 1997-98 and upcoming 1998-99 school year. At a minimum the district receives $0.18 for each full lunch equivalent and $0.20 for each breakfast equivalent. Additional monies are received based on the number of free and reduced meals served and whether schools are designated as having a maximum severe need population (greater than 60% Economically Needy). Exhibit 11-3 shows the full reimbursement rates based on the category of meal served.

In addition to federal meal income reimbursements, the district also receives USDA food commodities. Commodities are packaged in food service size packages and are grouped into two categories: Group A commodities – meat, fish, poultry, fruits, and vegetables; and Group B Commodities – grains, oil, shortening, cheese, and peanut products. These food commodities are received at a USDA-approved storage facility where they are either sent out for further processing or transferred to the district-contracted private storage facility. The commodities are delivered from the district-contracted private storage facility to the schools as cafeteria managers order them.

*Exhibit 11-3*

## Meal Reimbursement Rates

| Meal | | 1997-1998 | 1998-1999 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Free Lunch | Population <60% Economically Needy | $1.89 | $1.94 |
| | Population >60% Economically Needy | 1.91 | 1.96 |
| Reduced Price Lunch | Population <60% Economically Needy | 1.49 | 1.54 |
| | Population >60% Economically Needy | 1.51 | 1.56 |
| Breakfast | Free | 1.05 | 1.07 |
| | Reduced | 0.75 | 0.77 |
| | Maximum Free | 1.25 | 1.28 |
| | Maximum Reduced | 0.95 | 0.98 |

Source: Department of Education

## Receipt of Goods

The district receives food and related meal items such as paper goods from four different sources. As previously stated, USDA commodities are delivered directly to the schools from a private storage facility. The district has contracted with food service vendors to provide all other food, which is also delivered directly to the schools. The district has contracted with a private vendor for direct delivery to the schools of paper products such as styrofoam trays and eating utensils. Finally, the district warehouse stores cleaning supplies and a few non-refrigerated USDA commodities. The warehouse delivers requested materials to the schools using its personnel and vehicle fleet.

## Financial Status

The Food Service program is primarily funded through federal and state meal reimbursements and cash sales. Federal and state monies account for 58% of total program revenue, while cash sales represent 41% of the district's Food Service income. Federal law allows the program to maintain a reserve fund balance equal to three months' average expenditures. Presently, the district's Food Service reserve fund is $632,000 below the amount allowed by law. As illustrated in Exhibit 11-4, the Food Service program has experienced a total operating deficit of $283,000 in the past two years. This deficit represents both operating expenses (food, supplies, salaries, etc.) as well as indirect charges (utilities, personnel services, purchasing services, warehouse, etc.). Monies from the reserve fund balance have been used to meet this budget deficit. Of the two primary sources of income, reimbursement rates have continued to increase annually while cash sales have remained largely flat. This is primarily due to the fact that the district has not raised meal prices in over five years. Without price increases, the program will not be able to meet operating and indirect costs and will have to use funds from the reserve balance to continue to meet the deficit.

*Exhibit 11-4*

## Profit and Loss Statements of the Manatee County School District Food Service Department

| | FY 1993-94 | | FY 1994-95 | | FY 1995-96 | | FY 1996-97 | | FY 1997-98 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Dollars | Percentage of Revenue | Dollars | Percentage of Revenue | Dollars | Percentage of Revenue | Dollars | Percent age of Revenue | Dollars | Percentage of Revenue |
| **Revenue** | | | | | | | | | | |
| National School Lunch Act | $4,076,083 | 51% | $4,278,361 | 50% | $4,661,271 | 52% | $ 4,700,228 | 50% | $ 4,940,479 | 49% |
| USDA donated food | 507,987 | 6% | 545,909 | 6% | 462,098 | 5% | 605,985 | 6% | 584,210 | 6% |
| State Supplemental Income | 260,690 | 3% | 275,532 | 3% | 273,099 | 3% | 243,802 | 3% | 255,235 | 3% |
| Breakfast and Lunch Cash Sales | 2,380,167 | 30% | 2,430,303 | 29% | 2,460,352 | 27% | 2,337,841 | 25% | 2,341,019 | 23% |
| A-la-carte sales | 768,023 | 10% | 897,348 | 11% | 960,141 | 11% | 1,321,801 | 14% | 1,772,765 | 18% |
| Other food sales | 37,153 | 0% | 39,102 | 0% | 24,818 | 0% | 18,342 | 0% | 24,493 | 0% |
| Other revenue | 30,301 | 0% | 49,859 | 1% | 122,979 | 1% | 188,551 | 2% | 148,326 | 1% |
| **Total Revenue** | **$8,060,404** | **100%** | **$8,516,414** | **100%** | **$8,964,758** | **99%** | **$9,416,550** | **100%** | **$10,066,527** | **100%** |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Expenditures** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Food and supplies | $ 3,502,246 | 47% | $3,763,318 | 46% | $4,191,684 | 47% | $ 4,453,135 | 47% | $ 4,903,224 | 48% |
| Salaries | 2,537,525 | 34% | 2,827,785 | 35% | 2,875,456 | 32% | 2,967,605 | 31% | 3,129,140 | 31% |
| Benefits | 1,078,599 | 14% | 1,186,138 | 15% | 1,210,161 | 14% | 1,256,713 | 13% | 1,312,235 | 13% |
| Purchased services | 32,829 | 0% | 33,586 | 0% | 38,822 | 0% | 57,329 | 1% | 53,923 | 1% |
| Energy services | 68,600 | 1% | 58,710 | 1% | 64,532 | 1% | 68,653 | 1% | 72,107 | 1% |
| Capital outlay | 23,389 | 0% | 86,426 | 1% | 39,428 | 0% | 191,072 | 2% | 61,653 | 1% |
| Other expenses | 200,509 | 3% | 193,821 | 2% | 455,802 | 5% | 543,955 | 6% | 695,468 | 7% |
| **Total Expenditures** | **$7,443,697** | **99%** | **$8,149,784** | **100%** | **$8,875,885** | **99%** | **$ 9,538,462** | **101%** | **$10,227,750** | **102%** |
| ***Net Operating Income*** | 616,707 | | 366,630 | | 88,873 | | (121,912.00) | | (161,223.00) | |
| **Fund Balance** | **$1,913,947** | | **$2,183,688** | | **$2,369,451** | | **$2,247,539** | | **$ 2,086,314** | |

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.
Source: Manatee County School District

# *Are the Best Practices for Food Service Operations Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district Food Service program operates efficiently and effectively.**

# 1 Does the Food Services program have clear direction of and control over resources and services?

*No.  The Food Service program administrator does not have clear direction of and control over program services.*

While the Food Service program has a qualified supervisor with control over program resources, the supervisor is not completely in control of program services.  Lack of input into cafeteria manager evaluations and instances of principals not cooperating to maximize nutrition programs restrict the supervisor's program control.  Additionally, the program is not complying with its stated mission; thereby not fulfilling its service role.  Finally, program control is hampered by the lack of a strategic plan outlining goals, objectives, benchmarks, and plans of action.

## Program Authority Is Divided Between Principals and the Food Service Supervisor

The district's Food Service organizational chart, found in Exhibit 11-2, illustrates that program authority is divided between the school's principal and the Food Service supervisor.  Cafeteria managers report to the principal but are responsible to the Food Service supervisor for specific program functions such as food and labor costs.

School board policies and procedures require principals and the Food Service supervisor to work cooperatively in hiring and evaluating cafeteria managers and to maximize nutritional services.  Board policies and procedures do not address the firing of a cafeteria manager or specify who is responsible for this task.

Although policies and procedures require principals and the Food Service supervisor to work together, this is not the current practice.  The school principal retains control over serving times, selection of nutritional programs in secondary schools and hiring, evaluating, and firing cafeteria managers, but is not accountable for either meal or labor costs.  The Food Service supervisor is held accountable for meal and labor costs and is usually consulted in the hiring of cafeteria managers, yet frequently has no input regarding the evaluation or firing of cafeteria managers.  The Food Service supervisor is also responsible for establishing the number of staff and labor hours per cafeteria and ensuring

school cafeterias meet state and federal requirements. Thus, no single entity is accountable for all aspects of the Food Service program.

There are occasions when principals do not cooperate with the Food Service supervisor to maximize nutritional services. In some cases, principals schedule too few lunch periods to accommodate the number of students that should be eating. In other cases, middle and high school principals have refused to implement a breakfast program in their school even when a number of students qualify for free and reduced meals. When children do not eat, their ability to learn may be impaired, the district's meal reimbursement rates are reduced, and USDA allocations may be affected.

State law requires a breakfast program in every elementary school, but not in secondary schools. The peer districts (Marion, Sarasota, Collier, Leon, and Alachua) have a breakfast program in all but six schools. These schools are so large they must begin serving lunch at 10 a.m., and a breakfast program is not feasible. There are three middle schools and four high schools in Manatee County without a breakfast program. This is due primarily to lack of a legal requirement to offer breakfast programs in secondary schools and the principals' decision to not offer a breakfast program. Exhibit 11-5 shows the number of students in these schools eligible for free and reduced meals

*Exhibit 11-5*

## There Are Seven Manatee Schools Without a Breakfast Program

|  | Student Enrollment | Free and Reduced Eligibility | Percentage Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Braden River Middle | 864 | 167 | 19 % |
| Harllee Middle | 1,112 | 658 | 59 % |
| King Middle | 1,272 | 277 | 22 % |
| Palmetto High | 1,100 | 345 | 31 % |
| Bayshore High | 1,619 | 494 | 31 % |
| Southeast High | 2,318 | 597 | 26 % |
| Manatee High | 2,246 | 358 | 16 % |

Source: Manatee County Food Service Program, Food Service supervisor

If these schools were to implement a breakfast program, the district could increase revenue by $38,232 annually; an increased revenue of $191,160 over the next five years. Exhibit 11-6 illustrates this expected income. Breakfast participation rates for the middle and high schools without a breakfast program were estimated using the current districtwide breakfast participation rates. Overall meal participation figures tend to decrease as students progress through grade levels.

*Exhibit 11-6*

# Revenue From Implementing Additional Breakfast Programs

| School Category | Estimated Percentage of Free/Reduced Breakfast Participation | Number of Projected Additional Breakfasts Per Year | Price Per Breakfast | Projected Additional Annual Income |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Middle School | 26% | 38,723 | $0.60 | $23,234 |
| High School | 14% | 24,996 | 0.60 | 14,998 |
| **Total** | | | | **38,232** |

# Five-Year Projected Income of Additional Breakfast Programs

| | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Savings | $0 | $38,232 | $38,232 | $38,232 | $38,232 |
| Cumulative Savings | 0 | 38,232 | 76,464 | 114,696 | 152,928 |

Source: Manatee Food Service program data, Fiscal Year 1997-98

Manatee's peer districts have organizational systems that provide more clarified program authority. Two of the peer districts (Marion and Alachua) have divided Food Service organizational structures that are similar to Manatee County but are reportedly more cooperative and successful. In these counties, the principal and Food Service director jointly evaluate cafeteria managers. The principal evaluates program administration within the school, while the Food Service director assesses technical Food Service issues. As in the Manatee County School District, principals in Marion and Alachua are responsible for designating Food Service programs. They decide, for example, whether secondary schools, will participate in a breakfast program or an after school nutrition program. According to the Manatee Food Service supervisor, this used to be the process in Manatee County as well, with the principal and Food Service supervisor both participating in the cafeteria manager's evaluation which was signed by the assistant superintendent of Non-Instructional Services. This divided organizational structure was not a problem when both the principal and the Food Service supervisor had evaluative input. Since that time, however, there has been a procedural shift that excludes the Food Service supervisor from the evaluation process and compromises program accountability.

The evaluation form used for Manatee district cafeteria managers does not include a review of the technical aspects of food services, but is a generic management evaluation form completed by the school's principal. Without specific feedback from the Food Service supervisor about the cafeteria manager's ability to efficiently prepare meals and contain food and labor costs, the Food Service supervisor cannot effectively manage the program.

Two peer districts (Sarasota and Collier) have Food Service programs that are the sole responsibility of the Food Service director. In these districts, the director is responsible for hiring, evaluating, and firing cafeteria managers, and principals are not involved in the process. The Food Service director is also responsible for choosing and implementing

school nutrition programs. According to one Food Service director, this structure allows the principal to avoid Food Service personnel issues and program related parent issues, allowing the principal to focus on education. The remaining peer district, Leon County, has recently privatized its entire Food Service program. While a centralized organizational structure has been successful in Sarasota and Collier County, the Manatee County Food Service program would have to undergo a complete organizational revision to follow this model. This is not necessary since the other peer districts have demonstrated that a cooperative approach can also be successfully implemented.

## Policies and Procedures Are Not Provided to All Employees

The district has established Food Service program policies and procedures, but this information is not provided to all employees. Policies and procedures are provided cafeteria managers in the manager's handbook. Food service employees, however, do not receive a copy of the program policies and procedures. While a copy of the policies and procedures is maintained at each cafeteria by the cafeteria manager, the district has not made employees aware that these policies and procedures are available for their review. In order to ensure consistent implementation of Food Service program initiatives, it is important for all Food Service employees to understand the program's operating procedures. For example, should a cafeteria manager designate a Food Service worker to receive deliveries, it is important that the worker be familiar with receiving policies and procedures to ensure that the school gets all ordered items and is not charged for items not delivered. The Food Service supervisor should encourage all cafeteria managers to remind employees of their access to the policies and procedures and encourage their review.

## The Program Mission Statement Is Not Being Implemented

The Food Service program is not complying with its stated mission. The program's mission statement calls for the Food Service program to enhance the learning experience in part by providing a positive atmosphere through professional training of staff and customer communication. The district does not provide routine training to Food Services workers nor does it attempt to obtain formal input from its student and teacher customers.

All of the peer districts offer training to Food Service employees. Several of the peer districts tie employee training to promotions and pay increases. Several districts also offer training to Food Service staff after-hours and pay the employees a state-required hourly stipend for attendance. In order to effectively implement program policies and procedures and contain program costs, staff need job-related training.

## The Food Service Program Lacks a Strategic Plan

Control over program services is hampered by the lack of a Food Service strategic plan establishing long-range goals, short-term objectives, priorities, and plans of action. Without a strategic plan and related benchmarks, the Food Service supervisor is unable to meaningfully assess program performance and plan for future program development. Furthermore, the lack of a strategic plan with goals and related plans of action hinders cafeteria manager's abilities to contain costs and maximize revenues. The district should develop a long-range (five-year) strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives that address, for example, meal participation rates, costs per meal, meals served per labor hour, and use of USDA commodities. This plan should be developed with input from Food Service central office staff, cafeteria managers, and principals.

# *Recommendations*————————————————————————

- *To increase control over program services, we recommend that the principal and Food Service supervisor adhere to board policies and procedures regarding the evaluation of cafeteria managers and that the cafeteria manager evaluation form be revised to include a review of technical Food Service issues. There needs to be a separate review of cafeteria manager duties. The principals should evaluate administrative issues within the school and the Food Service supervisor should evaluate the technical aspects of Food Service. This separate review would ensure that a complete and accurate review of cafeteria manager duties is carried out. Principals and the Food Service supervisor should also work cooperatively regarding the dismissal of cafeteria managers and to maximize nutritional services. For example, principals should consult with cafeteria managers and the Food Service supervisor to establish an adequate number of meal periods to ensure that all students have an opportunity to eat.*

- *Additionally, the district should develop a requirement that, when feasible, all schools participate in a student breakfast program.*

- *We also recommend that Food Service employees be made aware that program policies and procedures are available for review and that cafeteria managers encourage staff to read them.*

- *The Food Service program should adhere to its mission statement by providing training to its employees and obtaining customer feedback.*

- *Finally, the district should develop a strategic plan to allow for program assessment and to guide program development.*

- *Action Plan 11-1 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Exhibit 11-7*

## Five-Year Fiscal Impact of Additional Breakfast Programs

| | Fiscal Year | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | 1998-1999 | 1999-2000 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 |
| Annual Savings | $0 | $38,232 | $38,232 | $38,232 | $38,232 |
| Cumulative Savings | 0 | 38,232 | 76,464 | 114,696 | 152,928 |

*Action Plan 11-1*

## Improve Program Control

| Recommendation 1 | |
| --- | --- |
| Strategy | Adhere to board policies and procedures regarding the evaluation of cafeteria managers. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Both the Food Service supervisor and principals have input into evaluations of cafeteria managers. (See Action Plan 3-3, page 3-26.) |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent for Academics and the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services |

| Time Frame | Immediately; upon initiation of the next evaluation cycle for cafeteria managers (April 1999) |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 2

| Strategy | Revise the evaluation form for cafeteria managers to include areas specific to food production. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Contact peer districts and obtain a copy of the evaluation form used for cafeteria managers. |
| | Step 2: Identify areas of the evaluation form specific to Food Service duties and the efficient preparation of meals for inclusion in a revised cafeteria manager evaluation form. |
| | Step 3: The Food Service supervisor work in conjunction with the personnel department and principals to update and revise the evaluation form for cafeteria managers. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the personnel department |
| Time Frame | The revised evaluation form should be implemented upon initiation of the next evaluation cycle for cafeteria managers (April 1999). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 3

| Strategy | Establish a policy in the school board policies and procedures governing the dismissal of a cafeteria manager. The policy should require input from both the Food Service supervisor and the school's principal before a cafeteria manager can be dismissed. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services should draft a policy outlining procedures for firing a cafeteria manager. |
| | Step 2: Obtain Food Service supervisor input. |
| | Step 3: Obtain principal input. |
| | Step 4: Obtain input from the personnel department. |
| | Step 5: Submit the draft policy to the superintendent for review, approval, and adoption. |
| | Step 6: The superintendent should present the policy to the board for review, approval, and adoption. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to draft a policy outlining the dismissal of a cafeteria manager and presenting the policy to the board. |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 4

| Strategy | Where feasible, implement a breakfast program in schools without one. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify barriers to implementing a breakfast program at schools without such a program. |
| | Step 2: The Food Service supervisor and principals should design and implement a written plan to address breakfast program barriers. |

|  | Step 3: If necessary, the board should direct that all district schools will have a breakfast program. |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to implement breakfast programs at those schools without a program.  If necessary, the superintendent should bring the issue before the board and request a requirement that all schools participate in the National Breakfast Program. |
| Time Frame | Each school in the district should have a breakfast program at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999) |
| Fiscal Impact | Revenues generated would more than offset the costs associated with this recommendation.  Expected revenue each year is $38,232. |

| **Recommendation 5** ||
|---|---|
| Strategy | Make Food Service policies and procedures available to all Food Service employees. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The Food Service supervisor should review and update the program policies and procedures with input from four stakeholder groups.<br><br>• Cafeteria managers<br>• Vendors<br>• Principals<br>• Food service workers |
|  | Step 2: Ensure that a copy of the Food Service policies and procedures are available in each cafeteria for review by any employee. |
|  | Step 3: Inform all Food Service employees in writing that policies and procedures are available for their review.  Include an outline and/or table of contents of the available materials with the memo. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | The first memo should be distributed to Food Service employees at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999) and provided again at the beginning of each new school year. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 6** ||
|---|---|
| Strategy | Adhere to the Food Service mission statement. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a training curriculum for all Food Service workers, not just cafeteria managers. |
|  | Step 2: Obtain feedback from Food Service employees and cafeteria managers regarding training needs. |
|  | Step 3: Obtain training information/examples from peer districts. |
|  | Step 4: Explore any training packages provided by USDA or other federal or state nutritional programs |
|  | Step 5: Outline a training package, options to access training, and training timelines for distribution to cafeteria managers and employees. |
|  | Step 6: Staff development should cooperate with the Food Service supervisor to ensure appropriate training is developed and |

offered to Food Service employees and should note completion of training in employee records.

Step 7: Solicit input from Food Service customers about program performance. (See Recommendation No. 2, page 11-18.**)**

| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | Training programs and materials should be available to employees at the beginning of the 99-2000 school year (August 1999)<br><br>Develop and implement feedback methods by February 28, 1999; repeat annually in this same time frame (obtain customer feedback during the second quarter of each school year). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 7** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a five-year Food Service strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop goals, objectives, priorities, benchmarks, and plans of action to maximize Food Service program efficiency.<br><br>Step 2: For assistance in developing goals and objectives, see Action Plan 4-1, page 4-9.<br><br>Step 3: For assistance in developing benchmarks, see Action Plan 4-3, page 4-18.<br><br>Step 4: Include input from three stakeholder groups.<br>• Food service central office staff<br>• Cafeteria managers<br>• Principals |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to see to it that a five-year Food Service strategic plan is developed. |
| Time Frame | Implementation of the five-year Food Service strategic plan should begin at the start of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 2 Does the district identify barriers to student participation in the school meal program and implement strategies to eliminate the barriers?

*No. The district has not made efforts to identify barriers to meal participation and, therefore, cannot implement strategies to eliminate the barriers.*

The district is not maximizing efforts to increase meal participation rates. While the district has select policies aimed at encouraging meal participation, it has not implemented districtwide Food Service promotional efforts or obtained customer feedback about program satisfaction.

## The District Attempts to Minimize Meal Competition

The district attempts to encourage meal participation by elevating the price of a la carte food items and restricting the sale of 'junk food.' Participation in the school meals program can be affected by the competition of a la carte food items that do not qualify for federal reimbursement under the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program(s). It is in the district's best interest to encourage students to participate in the main meal rather than purchase a la carte food items, since the district receives no reimbursement funds for a la carte items sold. To counter the competition of some foods, the district has a policy that restricts the sale of minimal nutritional foods in secondary schools; a la carte items are not sold in elementary schools. The policy states that these foods cannot be sold on the school premises from the beginning of the school day (12 a.m.) until one hour after the last lunch period. This policy ensures that 'junk food' will not be available to middle and high school students before school or before all lunch periods end.

A la carte items are marked-up to encourage meal participation and cover the district's cost of providing the item. School board policy and procedures require a la carte items be priced to include the cost of the item as well as the cost of the labor and any non-food items used to prepare and serve the item. The Food Service supervisor reports that a la carte items that do not require preparation are generally marked up 30% of the cost of goods, while those that require preparation are generally marked up 40% of the cost of goods.

## There Is No Food Service Program Promotional Campaign

The district has not developed and implemented a Food Service promotional campaign to increase meal participation rates. While some schools make an effort to publicize the school menu, there has been no districtwide Food Service promotional campaign. Twenty-one of 26 elementary schools send Food Service menus home with children. The remaining 11 middle and high schools do not provide parents with meal information.

The peer districts are engaged in Food Service program promotional efforts. Three peer districts have districtwide promotional campaigns (Sarasota, Collier, and Alachua), while one (Marion) allows schools to do individual Food Service promotions. The three peer districts with a concentrated promotional campaign have reportedly increased their meal participation rates. Sarasota County experienced a 29% increase in meal participation rates over the past five years with 8% of the increase occurring in the last year.

Two of the three peer districts with districtwide Food Service promotions have established positions to oversee these specific responsibilities. Sarasota County employs a nutrition educator that provides information to students about eating habits and ties the curriculum to the Food Service program. A central office supervisor in Alachua County is responsible for coordinating Food Service promotions with the dietitian. While it may not be necessary to establish a position to oversee program promotional efforts in Manatee, this is an option that the district may want to consider as the district and the Food Service program continue to grow.

## No Formal Efforts Have Been Made to Obtain Customer Feedback

The district has not solicited customer feedback to eliminate meal participation barriers. The district has made no formal effort to obtain student feedback about the Food Service program, although a few schools, on an informal discussion basis, have attempted to

identify student likes and dislikes.  Without this information, the district is unable to identify program areas for improvement to increase meal participation rates.

Peer districts have been successful in obtaining customer feedback.  Several of the peer districts (Sarasota, Collier, and Alachua) reported that they have successfully implemented student surveys to gather customer feedback.  This feedback assists the program director in selecting which USDA commodities to order and to maximize meal participation and reimbursement rates by planning popular meals.  The peer districts reported an increase in meal participation rates as a result of both promotional efforts and obtaining and using customer feedback to improve program services.

# *Recommendations* ——————————————————————

- *To increase meal participation rates, we recommend that the department develop and implement a districtwide Food Service promotional campaign and identify and eliminate meal participation barriers.  The district should solicit customer feedback in order to identify participation barriers and needed program adjustments.*

  *If the district implements these recommendations, it should be able to increase its meal participation rates and program revenues.  Because we could not estimate the number of students eligible for free and reduced meals, the calculations for increased meal participation revenue reflect only full paid lunches.  As Exhibit 11-8 illustrates, the Manatee County Food Service Program could realize an annual revenue increase of $58,000 if paid lunch participation rates were increased by 3%.  Over a five-year period, the district will realize $234,000 in increased revenue.  The Manatee Food Service supervisor anticipates an annual increase of 1% to 1.5% in meal participation rates due to an expanding school system.  A 3% increase is a reasonable recommendation based on the findings of a private consultant and the performance of a peer district (Sarasota).  In several of its reviews of Florida county schools, MGT of America Inc. recommended an annual meal participation increase of 3% a year.  The Sarasota County Food Service program has averaged an annual increase of 6% for each of the past five years.*

- *Action Plan 11-2 provides the steps necessary to implement these recommendations.*

Exhibit 11-8

## Increased Paid Lunch Participation Rates
## Will Generate Additional Revenues

| School Category | Current Number of Paid Lunches | Projected Additional Meals Per Day | Price Per Meal | Projected Additional Annual Revenue |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 847,835 | 141 | $1.30 | $33,066 |
| Middle | 299,874 | 50 | 1.70 | 15,294 |
| High | 196,997 | 33 | 1.70 | 10,047 |
| **Total** | | | | **$58,407** |

## Projected Five-Year Additional Income

| | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1998-1999 | 1999-2000 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 |
| Annual Revenue Increase | 0 | $58,407 | $ 58,407 | $ 58,407 | $ 58,407 |
| Cumulative Revenue Increase | 0 | 58,407 | 116,814 | 175,221 | 233,628 |

Source:  OPPAGA calculations based on Manatee County School District 1997-98

*Action Plan11-2*

# Increase Meal Participation Rates

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a districtwide Food Service promotion campaign to increase meal participation rates. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Outline options to adopt at individual schools to increase meal participation rates. |
| | Step 2: Obtain information from peer districts regarding successful methods used to promote Food Services and increase participation. |
| | Step 3: Obtain input from and brainstorm with cafeteria managers as to what promotional programs may work in their schools. |
| | Step 4: Contact the USDA for input/information about meal program promotion efforts. |
| | Step 5: Solicit input from principals and discuss the feasibility of identified options. |
| | Step 6: Select specific promotion efforts to be piloted at individual school sites. |
| | Step 7: Implement promotion efforts on a pilot basis, requiring cafeteria managers to monitor and report resulting participation rates. |
| | Step 8: Coordinate with teachers and principals to tie nutritional education curriculum with the Food Service promotion campaign. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services should direct the Food Service supervisor to develop and implement a Food Service promotional campaign. |
| Time Frame | Identify successful promotional efforts and implement them at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999) |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Obtain Food Service customer feedback to identify barriers to meal participation. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Solicit input from Food Service customers about program |

performance.

Step 2: Contact peer districts to identify effective methods of obtaining customer feedback.

Step 3: Consult and brainstorm with cafeteria managers about effective methods of obtaining customer feedback.

Step 4: Consult the USDA and/or other federal or state nutritional programs to identify effective methods of obtaining customer feedback.

Step 5: Discuss potential feedback options with school principals to identify any barriers/areas of concern.

Step 6: Select and implement procedures for obtaining customer feedback as appropriate to the school population.

Step 7: Require cafeteria managers to report and analyze feedback and identify problems and successes with the method used to obtain feedback.

Step 8: Revise feedback methods based on initial implementation results.

Step 9: Implement revised feedback methods.

Step 10: Continue to solicit input from customers and make necessary program adjustments as a result of the feedback.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | Develop and implement feedback methods by February 28, 1999; repeat annually in this same time frame (obtain customer feedback during the second quarter of the school year). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 3 Has the district established cost-efficiency benchmarks based on comparable private and public sector Food Service programs and other applicable industry standards?

*No. The district has not established cost-efficiency benchmarks.*

The district has not established benchmarks to assess program performance. The district has no benchmarks to review program productivity, costs per meal, meal participation rates, and employee wages, salaries, and benefits. Without benchmarks, the Food Service supervisor cannot effectively monitor program performance, plan for future program performance, and identify whether employee salaries and benefits are competitive.

## Meals Per Labor Hour Goals Have Not Been Identified

The Food Service supervisor cannot gauge program production without meal per labor hour benchmarks. The supervisor identifies the number of meals served per labor hour for each of the 38 cafeterias. This information is then compared to the Department of Education (DOE) meals per labor hour standard. Without benchmarks, this comparison only provides information regarding how the district compares to the published standard. The

comparison does not reveal whether productivity is in line with expected and/or predicted production levels.

## Meal Participation Rate Goals Have Not Been Identified

The Food Service supervisor does not know if the district has satisfactory meal participation rates. The program supervisor projects annual meal participation rates but has no benchmarks to assess actual participation rates. Furthermore, participation projections are not compared to actual performance. Without comparing predicted and actual program performance, the Food Service supervisor is unable to determine program success. Additionally, without established participation benchmarks, the supervisor is unable to identify what constitutes program success.

## Acceptable Costs Per Meal Have Not Been Identified

Per meal costs have not been identified and there are no benchmarks outlining acceptable meal costs. The Food Service supervisor gives each cafeteria manager a monthly report that includes the school's average cost per meal. The supervisor compares the school's meal costs to previous months and gives feedback to the cafeteria manager indicating areas of success or needed improvement. However, this comparison does not indicate whether the manager's cost(s) per meal are good or bad since there is no acceptable range or benchmark for measure.

## Staff Wages/Salaries/Benefits Have Not Been Assessed

There are no established benchmarks for assessing employee wage and salary scales or benefits. As Exhibit 11-9 illustrates, Manatee Food Service staff are paid 7% below the state average. When compared to peer districts, however, Manatee Food Service workers are paid an average of 3% more. The same is not true for the Food Service supervisor. On average, the Food Service supervisor is paid 41% less than peer Food Service directors and 12% less than the state average.

*Exhibit 11-9*

## Food Service Workers Compare Favorably to Peers; the Food Service Supervisor Does Not

|  | Alachua | Collier | Leon | Manatee | Marion | Sarasota | State Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Food Service Manager | $75,500 | $75,445 | -------- | $48,266 | $52,402 | $69,644 | $53,918 |
| Food Service Worker | 9,192 | 12,545 | 8,653 | 10,404 | 12,184 | 8,104 | 11,148 |

Source: *Statistical Brief, February 1998, Series 98-18B,* Department of Education

The district's policies and procedures do not accurately reference the Food Service supervisor position. As part of the district's 1995 reorganization, the Food Service director position was reclassified as a Food Service supervisor position and the salary downgraded from $59,094 to $48,226. School board policies and procedures do not reflect the position reclassification and erroneously refer to a 'Food Service Director'. Likewise, no director assigned duties and responsibilities were transferred or amended to reflect the position

downgrade.  In order to achieve a successful Food Service program and reduce management turnover, the district should ensure that the program administrator position has an appropriate level of authority and offers a competitive salary.

# *Recommendations* —————————————————————————————

- *The district should establish Food Service benchmarks to assess program production levels, meal costs, participation rates, and employee wages, salaries and benefits.  These benchmarks should be a component of the district's Food Service strategic plan.*
- *Furthermore, to reduce administrative turnover and enhance opportunities for program success, the district should review the Food Service supervisor position duties, compensation, and responsibilities to ensure that they are commensurate with the position reclassification.*
- *Action Plan 11-3 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 11-3*

## Improve Program Monitoring and Administration

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify program benchmarks to assess program performance. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  Develop program benchmarks. (For assistance in developing benchmarks see Action Plan 4-3, page 4-18)  Include the areas listed below. |
| | • Meals per labor hour |
| | • Meal participation rates |
| | • Costs per meal |
| | • Employee wages, salaries, and benefits |
| | Step 2:  Include input from the following stakeholders |
| | • Food service central office staff |
| | • Cafeteria managers |
| | • Principals |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to see to it that a Food Service program benchmarks are established and included in the five-year Food Service strategic plan. |
| Time Frame | Implementation of the five-year Food Service strategic plan and related benchmarks should begin at the start of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999) |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Review the Food Service supervisor duties, compensation, and responsibilities to ensure they are commensurate with the position's authority. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services should conduct a review of the duties, compensation, and responsibilities assigned to the Food Service supervisor position and identify those that exceed the authority of a supervisory level position. |
| | Step 2: | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services should draft a proposal for the transfer of duties that exceed supervisory authority and identify who will be responsible for the duties. |
| | Step 3: | The superintendent should review the proposal, provide feedback, and present it to the board for review, approval, and adoption. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to review the Food Service supervisor duties, compensation, and responsibilities and presenting a proposal to the board should these duties, compensation, and responsibilities need to be restructured. | |
| Time Frame | January 1, 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

# 4 Does the district regularly evaluate the school nutrition program based on established benchmarks and implement improvements to increase revenue and reduce costs?

*No. The district has not developed Food Service benchmarks and, therefore, cannot fully evaluate the program and implement improvements to increase revenue and reduce costs.*

Though the Food Service supervisor compares select program data, without benchmarks to guide the comparison, the program cannot be effectively evaluated. The Food Service supervisor annually reviews the performance of all 38 cafeterias and provides feedback to the cafeteria managers. Additionally, the Food Service supervisor sends an annual financial report to the DOE. However, none of this data is analyzed using district goals and benchmarks. The data is also not used to establish a plan for increasing revenue while decreasing costs.

## Meals Per Labor Hour Are Compared to the DOE Guidelines

Though the meals per labor hour are tracked and compared to DOE guidelines, there are no district goals or benchmarks to assess the number of meals served per labor hour. The district's meals per labor hour are compared to DOE published data but this comparison does not indicate whether the Manatee School District is performing well in relation to established goals, only how it is performing in relation to other districts. This post performance comparison, while helpful, has not been used to establish and achieve future goals.

## Wages/Salaries/Benefits Have Not Been Assessed

The Food Service program does not annually evaluate employee wages, salaries, and benefits.  As previously illustrated in Exhibit 11-9 Food Service worker wages are generally comparable to both the peers and the state average.  Program director wages, however, are significantly below both peer wages and the state average.  To counter the high level of administrative turnover the program has experienced in the last few years and increase employee morale, the district should take steps to better ensure it can obtain and, more importantly, retain qualified program administrators.  Employee wages, salaries, and benefits should be reviewed annually to identify whether the district is maintaining a competitive compensation package.

## Customer Feedback Has Not Been Solicited

As discussed on page 11-16, the district has made no districtwide effort to obtain customer feedback to identify needed program changes and increase program efficiency.  Without customer input, the Food Service supervisor and cafeteria managers do not have the information necessary to evaluate program performance, maximize meal participation rates, and increase program revenue.

Program performance feedback is limited by the absence of a strategic plan and related program goals, objectives, and benchmarks.  Without a strategic plan to guide program management and development, the Food Service supervisor is unable to effectively monitor program performance and identify needed changes to increase revenue and reduce costs

## Information Is Not Provided to Determine Per Meal Costs

Information needed to evaluate meal production costs is not available.  While the Food Service supervisor reviews the monthly costs per meal for each cafeteria, she does not plan the price per meal or provide data to cafeteria managers that would allow them to calculate costs per meal prior to production.  Additionally, there is no established range or target to identify an acceptable per meal cost.

The Food Service supervisor prescribes meals for each cafeteria.  The Food Service central office distributes a six-week master menu to each cafeteria manager prescribing the main meal to be served daily.  Cafeteria managers are not required to follow the master menu but, based on interviews with eight managers, most attempt to follow the prescribed menu.  In addition to the main meal, the cafeteria manager has the discretion of providing an alternate entrée choice.

The Food Service supervisor does not calculate the master menu cost per meal and does not provide information to cafeteria managers to calculate the cost of the alternate entrée meal.  Cost information is available for specific items such as entrées, but this information has not been used to calculate per meal costs nor compiled and distributed to cafeteria managers.  Without this information, meal costs cannot be effectively contained.  For example, cafeteria managers do not currently know if meal production costs are higher than the meal income.  As illustrated in Exhibit 11-10, we identified nine schools that produce meals that cost more than the income received for the meal.

Extreme Food Service worker salary ranges complicate evaluating the cost of meals served per labor hour.  The Food Service supervisor generally uses the meals per labor hour standard as published by the DOE to establish the number of staff and labor hours at each

cafeteria. Employee wages are based on longevity, and salary ranges are extreme among some schools. For example, the average employee pay step among middle schools ranges from 1 to 19. Schools with Food Service workers who have been employed by the district for several years spend a much larger proportion of funds in salaries than schools with newer staff. Schools with high labor costs must keep food costs to a minimum in order to balance expenses. Schools with higher costs of labor have higher per meal costs, and this makes it difficult to compare per meal costs among schools.

*Exhibit 11-10*

**Schools With Meal Production Costs That Exceed Meal Income**

| School Category | Production Costs Per Meal | Income Per Meal | Loss Per Meal |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Elementary Schools** | | | |
| Duette | $3.86 | $1.89 | $(1.97) |
| Anna Maria | 1.80 | 1.56 | (0.24) |
| Palma Sola | 1.86 | 1.66 | (0.20) |
| Braden River | 1.60 | 1.45 | (0.15) |
| Sea Breeze | 1.85 | 1.74 | (0.11) |
| Stewart | 1.77 | 1.68 | (0.09) |
| **Middle Schools** | | | |
| Johnson | $2.52 | $1.97 | $(0.55) |
| Sugg | 1.98 | 1.93 | (0.05) |
| **High Schools** | | | |
| Palmetto | $1.92 | $1.91 | $(0.01) |

Source: Manatee County School District, Fiscal Year 1997-98

## Meal Participation Rates Should Be Increased

As discussed on page 11-17 and 11-18, the district can increase program revenue by increasing meal participation rates. The district could increase meal participation by implementing a breakfast program in schools without a program, obtaining and using customer feedback to improve the program, and implementing promotional efforts. Principals can assist in the effort to increase meal participation by ensuring that there are a sufficient number of meal periods to allow all students to eat.

# *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

- *To maximize program revenue and minimize costs, we recommend that the district establish benchmarks for meals served per labor hour, employee wages, salaries and benefits, and per meal costs. These benchmarks should be a component of the district's Food Service strategic plan. To control meal production costs, we recommend that the Food Service supervisor calculate per meal costs, provide cost information to cafeteria managers, and establish an acceptable per meal cost range. The district should review employee wages, salaries and benefits to determine whether they are competitive. Finally, we recommend that the district obtain customer and program performance feedback for use in program evaluation.*

- *Action Plan 11-4 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 11-4*

# Evaluate Program Performance

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop Food Service program benchmarks to identify areas to increase revenue and cut costs. |
| Action Needed | See Recommendation No. 1, page 11-21 (benchmarks).<br>See Recommendation No. 7, page 11-15 (strategic plan). |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to see to it that a Food Service program benchmarks are established and included in the five-year Food Service strategic plan. |
| Time Frame | Implementation of the five-year Food Service strategic plan and related benchmarks should begin at the start of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Identify per meal costs and provide cost information to cafeteria managers to allow for alternative meal cost calculations. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Calculate the cost per meal for the main menu and distribute this information to cafeteria managers with the menu.<br>Step 2: Develop a list of per item costs for all items served and distribute the list to cafeteria managers.<br>Step 3: Update the per item cost list as prices change. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | Both price lists should be distributed to cafeteria managers by December 15, 1998. The price lists should be updated as prices change and/or bids are renewed or rebid. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 3** | |
| Strategy | Establish an acceptable per meal cost range that ensures production costs do not exceed the income for the meal. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Based on main meal calculated costs, develop and disseminate a per meal cost range that cafeteria managers must adhere to.<br>Step 2: Require cafeteria managers to calculate per meal costs and report this information to the central office. If per meal costs exceed the acceptable range, managers must submit documentation as to why this occurred. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | Implement the acceptable per meal price range and require cafeteria managers to report to the central office per meal costs on a monthly basis with the submission of their inventory records starting January 1, 1999. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 4** | |
| Strategy | Evaluate Food Service employee wages, salaries, and benefits. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Obtain peer district and statewide average information regarding Food Service manager and employee salaries and benefits. |
| | Step 2: Obtain applicable private sector information regarding Food Service manager and employee salaries and benefits. |
| | Step 3: Contact the personnel department to identify data and data format needs. |
| | Step 4: Do an analysis of the information obtained from peers and private sector, develop a written analysis, and provide this information to the personnel department to be included in an overall assessment of district salaries and benefits. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for ensuring that a review of employee wages, salaries, and benefits is completed and the resulting information is submitted to the Personnel Department. |
| Time Frame | January 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 5** | |
| Strategy | Obtain Food Service customer feedback. |
| Action Needed | See Recommendation No. 2, page 11-18. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | Develop and implement feedback methods by February 28, 1999; repeat annually in this same time frame (obtain customer feedback during the second quarter of the school year). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 5 Does the district regularly assess the benefits of service delivery alternatives, such as contracting and privatization, and implement changes to improve efficiency and effectiveness?

*No. The district has neither assessed the current service delivery system to determine whether it is cost efficient nor has it compared the current delivery system to alternative systems.*

The district does not know if it is utilizing the most cost-effective food delivery system. The district changed its food procurement policy in 1996 from central warehousing to vendor direct school delivery but there has been no analysis of this policy change to determine whether a cost savings has been realized and the policy should be continued. The option of privatizing the entire Food Service program has not been considered.

## Service Delivery Has Not Been Assessed

The district has not reviewed the direct-delivery of food to determine whether it is cost-efficient.  The superintendent recommended in March 1996, that the school board approve purchases from U.S. Food Services, Inc. for direct delivery to the schools, utilizing two other districts' contracts (Hillsborough and Broward).  The district purchased from these contracts until March 1998, when it secured its own contract with U.S. Food Services, Inc. for direct food delivery.  The proposal presented to the school board advocating the policy change to direct delivery predicted annual savings of $3,860.  However, there has been no analysis since the implementation of direct delivery to determine whether this predicted savings has been realized.  Likewise, there has been no formal analysis to determine whether direct delivery is performing well for its users, the cafeteria managers.

## Additional Nutrition Programs Should Be Explored

The district may be able to increase Food Service program revenue by increasing the number of nutritional programs and providing additional services.  Some schools may be appropriate for an after-school nutrition program and the district may be eligible for additional reimbursement monies as a result.  The Food Service program could identify opportunities for expanding services to include serving at school functions such as banquets, faculty meeting, and/or student organization meetings.  The district could also pursue non-traditional revenue programs such as contracting with other state organizations.  Four of the five peer districts participate in non-traditional revenue generating programs.  For example, several of the districts provide catering services or contract with other state agencies and organizations to provide Food Services.  These contracts include the Department of Juvenile Justice, Headstart Program, charter schools, and community colleges.

# *Recommendations* ————————————————————————

- *To determine the most cost-effective food delivery system, we recommend that the district compare delivery alternatives.  To successfully compare alternatives, the district must identify cost data and develop a methodology for system comparisons.  As part of this comparison, the district should identify whether predicted direct delivery savings have been realized.  The district should include input from cafeteria managers when assessing the current direct delivery system.*
- * Finally, the district should identify whether nutritional programs and/or program services can be expanded to increase program revenues.*
- *Action Plan 11-5 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan11-5*

# Assess Delivery Alternatives and Additional Nutritional Programs

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Compare Food Service delivery systems. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify data necessary to compare district warehousing, direct delivery, and privatization of Food Services. |
| | Step 2: Gather baseline data regarding district warehousing and direct delivery. Data should include the items below. |
| |     • Direct costs |
| |     • Indirect costs |
| |     • Cost per item (including any volume discounts) |
| |     • Delivery costs |
| |     • Storage costs |
| |     • Personnel/labor costs |
| |     • Rental costs |
| | Step 3: Solicit information from vendors regarding costs associated with privatizing the entire Food Service program. |
| | Step 4: The Purchasing supervisor and warehouse manager should work with the Food Service supervisor to identify current direct delivery costs, identify past direct delivery costs, and project costs if the district were to return to internal warehousing. |
| | Step 5: Compare the costs and benefits of district warehousing, direct delivery, and Food Service privatization and develop a written report outlining the most cost-efficient delivery system. |
| | Step 6: If the most cost-efficient method is one other than the policy currently being utilized in the district, identify needed changes to increase the cost-efficiency of the current delivery system. |
| | Step 7: Develop a report for presentation to the board outlining improvements to the current delivery system and the potential for adopting alternative methods of program delivery. |
| | Step 8: The school board should review the analysis and adopt either changes to the current delivery method to increase its cost efficiency or an alternative delivery system. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for overseeing the comparison of delivery alternatives and should play an active role in analyzing and summarizing comparison findings and for presenting the findings to the board. |
| Time Frame | Program adjustments and/or program changes should be implemented starting in December 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 2 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Assess vendor direct delivery of food to determine if predicted cost savings have been realized. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Using cost information gathered in Strategy No.1, compare direct delivery costs to district warehousing costs to determine whether the predicted $3,860 annual cost savings is being realized. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Determine whether additional nutritional programs could be added to district schools. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify requirements for an after-school nutrition program and determine whether there are school sites where a program could be piloted. |
| | Step 2: Cafeteria managers should work cooperatively with the Food Service supervisor to identify and select pilot after-school nutrition program sites. |
| | Step 3: Meet with principals to design and implement a pilot after-school nutrition program. |
| | Step 4: Assess the pilot project outcome and submit a written report to the superintendent recommending either expansion or discontinuation. |
| | Step 5: Obtain feedback from and brainstorm with cafeteria managers and principals to identify potential events to increase Food Service revenue, e.g., catering, banquets, meetings, contracting with other state agencies or organizations. |
| | Step 6: The Food Service supervisor should oversee the implementation of any additional services, document costs and income, and report this information to the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for directing the Food Service supervisor to outline and implement additional nutritional programs. |
| Time Frame | Explore potential additional Food Services for implementation at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999). |
| | Implement the pilot after-school nutrition project at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999). |
| | Assess the pilot project at the end of the 1999-2000 school year and do a written report outlining either expansion of the project or discontinuation by June 2000. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Are the Best Practices for Financial Accountability and Viability of the School Nutrition Program Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district maintains the financial accountability and viability of the school nutrition program.**

# 1 **Is the program budget based on departmental goals, revenue, and expenditure projections?**

*No.  The Food Service supervisor uses projected revenues, expenditures, and meal participation rates in budget development, but there are no department fiscal goals to guide the process.*

The Food Service budget is developed using revenue and expenditure projections, but without program goals.  The Food Service supervisor maintains budget documents and makes projections for each of the 38 cafeterias.  The supervisor reported that budget projections are reviewed occasionally, but not on a regularly scheduled basis and not by anyone outside of Food Services.  Without regular monitoring, budget adjustments cannot be anticipated and must be made on an after-the-fact as needed basis rather than as a result of planning.

# *Recommendations*

- *To maximize program revenues and minimize costs, the district must develop Food Service program fiscal goals.  These goals should be part of the program's strategic plan.  Additionally, to anticipate necessary budget adjustments, the district should require regular review and comparison of budget projections and actual performance.*
- *Action Plan 11-6 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 11-6*

# Improve Fiscal Monitoring

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop Food Service program fiscal goals. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop program fiscal goals to guide annual budget development.  Program fiscal goals should be incorporated into the five-year strategic plan.<br><br>(See Recommendation No. 7, page 11-15) |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to see to it that Food Service program fiscal goals are established and included in the strategic plan. |
| Time Frame | Implementation of the five-year Food Service strategic plan should begin at the start of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Review revenue and expenditure projections and actual and budgeted expenses on a regular basis and compare these figures to the established program fiscal goals. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Track revenue and expenditure projections as well as actual and budgeted expenses and provide the data in a format that projections and actual can be easily compared.<br><br>Step 2: The Food Service supervisor, Purchasing supervisor, and the Finance and Accounting supervisor should meet to review projected expenditures, revenue, and actual expenditures to make necessary program adjustments to reduce costs and maximize revenue. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for ensuring that parties from each department (Food Services, Purchasing, and Finance and Accounting) meet to review Food Service program projected expenditures, revenue, and actual expenditures and report meeting results and recommended program adjustments. |
| Time Frame | The Food Service supervisor, Purchasing supervisor, and Finance and Accounting supervisor should meet every quarter following the beginning of the 1998-99 school year to review projected expenditures, revenue, and actual expenditures.  Program adjustments should be made as necessary following these meetings. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 2 Does the district's financial control process include an ongoing review of the program's financial and management practices?

*No. The district does not have a process for the ongoing review of Food Service financial and management practices.*

The district has some financial controls in place as well as limited automation for reporting and monitoring financial information. However, the financial controls are not regularly reviewed or updated, and automation is limited to three pilot sites that are testing point-of-service automation. In addition, the district has not reviewed its meal pricing structure to determine whether meal prices are sufficient to support the program.

## The Food Service Program Has Limited Financial Controls

The district has Food Service financial controls in place, but they are not used to evaluate financial and management practices. The program has procedures outlining the collection, deposit, and disbursement of money, as well as procedures to account for reimbursable meals and other food sales. However, these procedures have not been reviewed for efficiency or needed changes.

## The District Is Testing a Point-of-Service Pilot Project

In March 1997, the district began a point-of-service automation pilot project at three schools, two elementary and a middle school. The automation system is designed to help the Food Service supervisor manage and monitor program performance. The system also assists cafeteria managers in collecting data on inventory, meal counts, and meal categories (free, reduced, and paid). This project uses a bar code system and has been implemented differently at each of the three schools. One of the elementary schools uses a roster with a unique bar code next to each child's name and the code is scanned as the child passes the cashier. At the other elementary school, students are given a bar code card prior to entering the serving line and return the card to the cashier. The middle school issues a bar code card to each student and the student is responsible for maintaining the card. This bar code system allows children and parents to store meal credit by pre-paying for meals and maintains the anonymity of children who receive free and reduced meals.

Critical factors were not considered in pilot study site selection. According to the Food Service supervisor and the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services, a former Food Service director selected the sites for the automated pilot project. The former director chose the sites based on the cafeteria's existing computer infrastructure and its ability to support the pilot system, not on school or population need. At one high school we visited that was not chosen as a pilot site, the cafeteria manager stated that the cafeteria is in great need of an automation system like the bar code system to reduce the potential for fraud and improve the accuracy of meal counts.

Success of the point-of-service automation pilot project implementation has been mixed. One elementary school cafeteria manager reported some success with the project and attributed this to the fact that the bar code cards are maintained on the premises and children receive them just prior to going through the meal serving line and return them at the cashier. The middle school cafeteria manager reported limited success due to the fact

that children are responsible for maintaining possession of their bar code cards and many frequently lose the cards.  The middle school manager went on to say that the process of issuing a temporary eating pass is time consuming and can be frustrating for some students.  The manager believes that this process results in some middle school children who are eligible for free and reduced meals simply giving up and not eating.  Not only does this potentially affect the child's ability to learn but it may also effect the amount of funds the district receives from the federal and state government in reimbursable meals.  The schools participating in the pilot automation project should share information about the methods of implementation as well as related problems and successes in order to facilitate the success of the project in all three locations.

## Food Service Automation Is Inadequate

The Food Service program is not sufficiently automated to monitor financial and management practices and overall program performance.  Reporting financial information from individual cafeterias is complicated by the fact that, with the exception of three pilot study sites, automation exists only at the central office level and all information must be submitted by hand in hard copy form  from cafeteria managers to the central Food Service office.  This lack of automation impedes the program supervisor's ability to monitor program costs and identify and implement timely program changes to contain costs.

The district has lost money as a result of bad automation decisions.  At the beginning of the 1997-98 school year, the district spent $12,296 on a software extension of the pilot automation package.  After purchasing the software, it was determined that the system did not meet the needs of the Food Service program, and it was discontinued.  During our review, we observed one school equipped with computers that were not being used; cash registers were being used instead.  The Food Service supervisor reports, however, that this hardware will be used when a new software package is purchased, which is planned for 1999-2000.  The Food Service supervisor anticipates phasing in automation over the next five years.  As such, the district will not lose the value of the hardware, only the funds expended to purchase the discontinued software.

## Some Meal Prices Are Too Low
## When Compared to the Peer Districts

The district is not charging students who pay full price enough to cover the costs of meal production.  The district has not raised its meal prices in at least five years even though the cost of food has increased during this time.  Presently, the district loses money on every full paid meal.  The amount of money reimbursed by the state and federal government for free meals exceeds the cost of production.  However, the charge for meals for students who do not qualify for free and reduced meals usually does not cover the cost of producing the meals.  Because the district has not raised meal prices, some cafeterias are producing meals that cost more than they are charging and collecting.  (See Exhibit 11-10.)  Without an increase in meal prices, the district will continue to lose money and will not be self-supporting.

The district has not increased meal prices which has contributed to an operating fund deficit.  As Exhibit 11-11 illustrates, the district's meal prices are sometimes lower than its peers.  According to the Food Service director in Leon County, the decision to privatize the entire Food Service program was directly related to the program losing money for three consecutive years.  A contributing factor to this loss was the fact that the district had not raised meal prices in nine years.  The Manatee Food Service program has lost money for the past two years and, without raising meal prices, is likely to continue to lose money; requiring the program to expend reserve fund monies to meet the budget shortfall**.**

*Exhibit 11-11*

## Manatee and Peer District Fiscal Year 1997-1998 Meal Prices

| Meal | District | Elementary | Middle | High | Adult Prices |
|------|----------|-----------|--------|------|--------------|
| Full Priced Lunch | Alachua | $1.50 | $1.65 | $1.65 | $2.00 |
| | Collier | 1.50 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 2.50 |
| | **Manatee** | **1.30** | **1.70** | **1.70** | **2.25** |
| | Marion | 1.35 | 1.50 | 1.50 | 2.05 |
| | Sarasota | 1.50 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 2.00 |
| | Leon | 1.25 | 1.35 | 1.35 | 1.35 |
| Reduced Priced Lunch | Alachua | $.40 | $.40 | $.40 | $N/A |
| | Collier | .40 | .40 | .40 | N/A |
| | **Manatee** | **.40** | **.40** | **.40** | **N/A** |
| | Marion | .40 | .40 | .40 | N/A |
| | Sarasota | .40 | .40 | .40 | N/A |
| | Leon | .40 | .40 | .40 | N/A |
| Full Priced Breakfast | Alachua | $1.00 | $1.00 | $1.00 | $1.25 |
| | Collier | .75 | .85 | .85 | 1.25 |
| | **Manatee** | **.60** | **.60** | **N/A** | **.85** |
| | Marion | .95 | .95 | .95 | 1.20 |
| | Sarasota | .75 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.50 |
| | Leon | .70 | .75 | .75 | .75 |
| Reduced Priced Breakfast | Alachua | $.30 | $.30 | $.30 | N/A |
| | Collier | .30 | .30 | .30 | N/A |
| | **Manatee** | **.20** | **.20** | **.20** | **N/A** |
| | Marion | .30 | .30 | .30 | N/A |
| | Sarasota | .30 | .30 | .30 | N/A |
| | Leon | .30 | .30 | .30 | N/A |

Source:  Manatee County School District

## *Recommendations*

- *To minimize program costs, we recommend that the district implement procedures to ensure the ongoing review of Food Service financial and management practices. This should include a review of existing financial controls.  In addition, to allow for better program control and more accurate cost and performance information, the district should identify Food Service automation needs and select a districtwide*

*Food Service automation package. Finally, the district should raise meal prices to increase revenue and reduce the budget deficit.*

- *The district could move toward eliminating the operating fund deficit by increasing the charge for elementary lunches and all breakfasts. Exhibit 11-12 illustrates the potential income to the district if it increased these meal prices. This represents a five-year revenue increase of $1.6 million. As shown in the previous exhibit, adult breakfast charges are significantly lower than the peer districts. District data does not indicate the number of adult breakfasts served, but includes these meals in a total count of breakfasts. As a result, we were unable to calculate potential additional income from increasing the cost per adult breakfast. We do, however, recommend that the district increase the adult breakfast price to be comparable to peer district charges. As food costs increase over time, it is important that the district increase its charge per meal to avoid a continued loss in operating income. If the district increases prices as well as meal participation rates, it should be able to overcome its present deficit and re-establish a sufficient income reserve.*

- *Action Plan 11-7 provides steps to implement these recommendations.*

*Exhibit 11-12*

# Potential Income From Increasing Select Meal Prices

| Meal | Current Price Per Meal | Average Peer Price Per Meal | Number of Meals Served Per Year | Potential Additional Revenue |
|------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Elementary Paid Lunch | $1.30 | $1.45 | 847,835 | $127,175 |
| Breakfast | | | | |
| Elementary | 0.60 | 0.85 | 793,919 | 198,480 |
| Middle | 0.60 | 0.95 | 54,973 | 19,241 |
| High | N/A | 0.95 | 38,723** | 36,787 |
| Reduced | 0.20 | .30* | 228,043 | 22,804 |
| **TOTAL** | | | | **$404,487** |

*Federal Law allows districts to charge up to $.30 for reduced breakfasts.

**High school breakfast figures are estimated based on implementation of a breakfast program.

Source: OPPAGA calculations based on Manatee County Food Service Program data, Fiscal Year 1997-98

# Projected Five-Year Income From Increasing Select Meal Prices

| | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1998-1999 | 1999-2000 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 |
| Annual Income Increase | $202,243 | $ 404,487 | $404,487 | $ 404,487 | $ 404,487 |
| Cumulative Income Increase | 202,243* | 606,730 | 1,011,217 | 1,415,704 | 1,820,191 |

*OPPAGA estimates that the district may realize half of the anticipated revenue increase in the first year as price increases will not be in effect the entire school year.

*Action Plan 11-7*

# Improve Financial and Management Practice Review

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Review financial and management performance to identify necessary adjustment to minimize program costs. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services and the Food Service supervisor should meet to review program performance and identify areas for improvement. |
| | Step 2: The Food Service supervisor should meet with the Purchasing supervisor and the supervisor of Finance and Accounting to discuss program performance and obtain identify areas for improvement. |
| | Step 3: Cafeteria managers should implement program adjustments and report results to the Food Service supervisor. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for ensuring that parties from each department (Food Services, Purchasing, and Finance and Accounting) meet to review Food Service program performance and for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to monitor implementation of suggested program revisions. |
| Time Frame | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services and the Food Service supervisor should meet quarterly following the start of 1998-99 school year to discuss program performance. |
| | The Food Service supervisor, Purchasing supervisor, and supervisor of Finance and Accounting should meet annually during the last month of the school year (June) to assess program performance and develop strategies to implement for the upcoming school year to improve program efficiency. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Evaluate and recommend a Food Service automation package to be used in conjunction with the new management information system. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Continue to explore automation packages used by peer districts. |
| | Step 2: Identify and outline, in writing, areas of anticipated improved efficiency and cost containment as a result of automation implementation. |
| | Step 3: Identify the district's Food Service automation needs in conjunction with the implementation of the new management information system. |
| | Step 4: Outline central office data/automation needs. |
| | Step 5: Outline individual school automation needs. |
| | Step 6: Identify data that should routinely be available to Finance and Accounting. |
| | Step 7: Identify data that should routinely be available to the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services. |
| | Step 8: Select an automation package that meets the district's data |

needs.

Step 9: Outline the components of the automation package and the related implementation timelines.

Step 10:        Outline the cost of the data system and the timeline for purchasing the package.  Present this outline to the board for review.

| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to oversee the selection of an automation package and is responsible for presenting a selection package to the board for review, approval, and adoption. |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | Present the automation package selection to the board by the end of the 1998-99 school year (June 1999).  The district should purchase and implement the selected Food Service automation package based on the approved purchase and implementation timeline. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 3** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Increase the charge per meal for elementary paid lunches and all breakfasts. |
| Action Needed (may need to differentiate between breakfast and lunch prices) | Step 1: Prepare necessary paperwork for submission to the board for approval to raise meal prices.<br><br>Step 2: Obtain board approval to raise meal prices.<br><br>Step 3: Implement increased meal prices. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for directing the Food Service supervisor to prepare a price increase proposal for presentation to the board. |
| Time Frame | Meal price increases should be implemented by February 1, 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This would result in a first-year increase in income of $202,243 with annual increased incomes of $404,487 each year thereafter. |

# 3  Does the district account for and report meals served, by category?

*Yes.  The district accounts for and reports meals served by category.*

The district has policies and procedures in place to accurately report the number of paid, free, and reduced meals served.  Though schools use a variety of techniques to record the number and types of meals served, all of these techniques meet the USDA meal counting and claiming requirements.  Procedures to account for meals served compared to student attendance are included in the district's meal count efforts.

# 4 Does the district regularly evaluate purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase efficiency?

*No. Purchasing practices are not routinely evaluated for efficiency or needed adjustments.*

Purchasing practices can be improved with greater cooperation between the Food Service program and the Purchasing Department. Both play a part in soliciting and awarding vendor bids, but neither is capitalizing on the expertise of the other. In addition, there are bid procedures that can be improved to ensure the regular review of purchasing practices.

## More Cooperation Is Needed in the Preparation of Requests for Bids

The district does not know if it is getting the maximum benefit from its Food Service purchasing practices. The Food Service supervisor prepares the bid specifications for food purchases, forecasts food purchases for the year, and decides what entrée items to put in the bid. However, neither bid specification changes nor information regarding the need for the change is documented. The Food Service supervisor gives the bid specifications to the Purchasing Department for organizing and presenting to bidders. During the last request for bids in January 1998, 15 companies were invited to submit bids for direct delivery food purchases. Only two companies elected to do so. The district has not attempted to identify why vendors, some with local offices, have declined to bid.

There is a need for more cooperation and communication between the Food Service program and the Purchasing Department. Currently, bid specifications are unilaterally developed by the Food Service supervisor without input from the Purchasing supervisor. While the Food Service supervisor has expertise regarding selection of food items and necessary bid specifications, the Purchasing supervisor has expertise in structuring bids and related specifications. Increased cooperation and communication between the two departments should result in more efficient purchasing practices, increased bid and vendor satisfaction, and cost savings to the district.

## Internal Bid Award Controls Should Be Improved

The district cannot ensure that all pertinent factors are considered prior to bids being awarded. District policies and procedures require that bids be reviewed by a committee but do not require that more than one individual verify bid analysis. Prior to the bid award, a committee composed of the Food Service supervisor, the Food Service specialists, a Purchasing buyer, an assistant buyer and a cafeteria manager from each category of school (elementary, middle, and high) review the bid. The Purchasing supervisor reported sufficient staff present to allow for the verification of bid analysis by more than one individual. Bid analysis by more than one person is important in order to maintain the financial accountability and viability of the school nutrition program.

# *Recommendations* ———————————————————————

- *To determine whether the district is obtaining the maximum benefit from Food Service purchasing practices, we recommend that Food Service and Purchasing staff work cooperatively to evaluate purchasing practices.  Procedures should be updated to require the documentation of bid specification changes and reasons for the changes as well as verification of the bid analysis process by more than one individual.  We also recommend that the district take steps to identify and rectify why vendors are not submitting bids when requested.*
- *Action Plan 11-8 provides the steps necessary to implement these recommendations.*

### Action Plan 11-8

## Improve Purchasing Practices

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Evaluate Food Service purchasing practices. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop an instrument to guide the evaluation of Food Service purchasing practices. |
| | Step 2: Compare prices between years for the same vendor and like items between vendors to determine whether the district is getting the best price per item. |
| | Step 3: Classify and summarize any cafeteria manager complaints regarding vendor service. |
| | Step 4: Note the number of times a vendor has shorted an order, substituted an order, or not had an item that was requested. |
| | Step 5: Compare delivery costs between years for the same vendor and between vendors for like items. |
| | Step 6: Prepare a summary report of price comparisons and vendor satisfaction. |
| | Step 7: The Food Service supervisor and Purchasing supervisor should meet and, using the Purchasing review instrument, review Food Service purchasing practices. |
| | Step 8: As a result of the meeting to review purchasing practices, the following information should be noted in writing:<br>• specific planned purchasing adjustments;<br>• an explanation as to why the change is being made;<br>• who will be involved in implementing the change;<br>• their specific role; and<br>• an anticipated time frame for completion of the change(s). |
| | Step 9: Both the Food Service supervisor and the Purchasing supervisor should sign-off on agreed upon changes to purchasing practices and a copy of the changes should be provided the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Step 10: Both the Food Service supervisor and the Purchasing supervisor should implement agreed-upon changes to the purchasing practices as they relate to the specific departments (Food Service and Purchasing). |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for reviewing and approving suggested purchasing practice changes and for monitoring their implementation. The assistant superintendent overseeing the Purchasing Department is responsible for reviewing and approving suggested purchasing practice changes and for monitoring their implementation. |
| Time Frame | Food service purchasing adjustments should be implemented at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999) or to coincide with the request for bid or bid renewal cycle. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 2

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Review and document Food Service bid specifications. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The Food Service supervisor, Food Service specialists, Purchasing supervisor, and select cafeteria managers should meet to review and update bid specifications. |
| | Step 2: Changes to bid specifications should be documented as well as an explanation as to why the changes were made. The Purchasing Department should maintain this documentation in the event that a vendor should have a question or want to review the bid specifications. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate parties meet to review the Food Service bid specifications and that any changes are documented and maintained. |
| Time Frame | The Food Service supervisor, Food Service specialists, Purchasing supervisor and select cafeteria managers should meet at least annually, prior to requests for bids or bid renewals, to review and update bid specifications. The first meeting should occur within the 1998-99 school year in preparation for bids that will be effective in the 1999-2000 school year. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop and adopt a policy requiring the Purchasing supervisor and one other person verify bid analysis and document this analysis. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a policy requiring the Purchasing supervisor and one other person, designated by the Purchasing supervisor, verify bid analysis and document this analysis. |
| | Step 2: Include this policy in the board's Purchasing policies and procedures. |
| | Step 3: The assistant superintendent overseeing Purchasing must present the policy to the board. |
| | Step 4: The board must review, approve, and adopt the policy. |
| Who Is Responsible | Purchasing supervisor |
| Time Frame | By the end of the 1998-99 school year in preparation for the 1999- |

| | 2000 school year bid process |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 4** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify why vendors are not submitting bids and adjust the request for bid process as necessary. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The Food Service supervisor and Purchasing supervisor should together identify and agree upon a method to obtain feedback from potential bidders to identify barriers to bid submission. Potential methods include<br><br>a. holding a bidder's conference,<br><br>b. interviewing potential bidders, and<br><br>c. surveying potential bidders.<br><br>Step 2: Based on the information obtained identify needed adjustments to the request for bid process. Needed adjustments should be documented. Adjustments pertaining to the bid and purchasing process should be reported to the assistant superintendent overseeing Purchasing, and adjustments pertaining to the Food Service program should be reported to the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services.<br><br>Step 3: Based on bidder feedback and the assistant superintendent's feedback, the Food Service supervisor and Purchasing supervisor should initiate implementation of the adjustments to the request for bid process. |
| Who Is Responsible | Food Service supervisor and Purchasing supervisor |
| Time Frame | Prior to bid renewal or requests for bids for the 1999-2000 school year |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 5 Has the district developed an effective inventory control system that is appropriate to the size of the school nutrition program?

*No. The district has an inventory control system for USDA commodities and purchased foods but this system does not adequately track and monitor food to ensure cost efficiency.*

The district's inventory control system has not been successful in containing program costs. The system is in great need of automation to allow for continual and thorough monitoring of inventory levels, production, and program costs. The district will likely incur a fine for the value of USDA commodities in inventory that have exceeded their shelf life. This could be a monetary fine equal to the value of the commodities or replacement in-kind. The on-hand inventory is excessive and inventory records to do not provide all information necessary for the Food Service supervisor to maximize stored food. Finally, access to food storerooms and freezers compromises the security of on-hand inventory.

# The Inventory Control System
# Does Not Provide Needed Information

The district's inventory control system does not provide all information necessary to effectively contain Food Service costs. The district maintains a perpetual inventory for USDA-distributed commodities and conducts a monthly physical inventory of all other food items. This information is submitted in hard copy form from the cafeteria managers to the central office where the fiscal assistant inputs the information into the AS400 mainframe system. Inventory data and delivery invoices are the only information received by the central office to track food items across the district. Meal production reports completed by cafeteria managers are maintained at the schools and the central office does not compare food receipts, production records, and remaining inventory to ensure that food is not being wasted or stolen.

The inventory control system does not provide accurate up-to-date information. Current accounting methods used by the district and the Food Service program differ and do not allow for an accurate monthly cost of goods. The Finance and Accounting Department operates on an annual accrual basis while the Food Service program attempts to operate on a monthly accrual basis. Without corresponding bookkeeping to reconcile the two inventory systems, the monthly physical inventories completed by each cafeteria manager do not reflect the actual costs of goods at that point in time and do not provide the Food Service supervisor the data necessary to manage program costs. This discrepancy cannot be remedied under the current financial accounting system. Finance and accounting staff report, however, that the new management information software package that will be implemented in 1999 will remedy this inaccuracy. This new system will allow for monthly accruals and will provide accurate information about the costs of goods that can be used by the Food Service supervisor to effectively manage the program.

The district needs to improve the inventory instructions provided cafeteria managers. The manager's handbook includes minimal inventory instructions but does not provide specific instruction regarding the receipt, handling, and storage of food. Program policies and procedures should identify steps to ensure that vendor deliveries are checked for accuracy, food is stored properly, and that it is used in a timely manner.

# Outdated USDA Commodities
# May Result in Fines to the District

The district is at risk of being levied a fine of at least approximately $240,000 by the USDA for commodities that have exceeded their shelf life and are likely no longer palatable. Current inventory methods do not ensure that stock is rotated in order to use the oldest product first and many of the items presently stored at the district-contracted private storage facility are outdated. Due to limited contract storage space and an overabundance of inventory, stock is not rotated to ensure the first in first out (FIFO) use of USDA food commodities. In addition, neither the central office nor the storage facility maintains commodity pack date information to identify which shipment is older and should be issued first. Older shipments should be issued first to avoid spoilage, unnecessary storage costs, and potential fines. Both FIFO and pack date tracking are USDA commodity program requirements.

The USDA provides information on commodity product recommended shelf life and retains the right to fine school authorities the value of the commodity if it is not properly used or is allowed to go bad. The USDA does not provide recommended shelf life information for commodities that are sent out for processing (e.g., made into pre-charred patties). In

addition, there are some items in storage that the USDA policies and procedures manual did not include in its shelf life information chart. The team observed several items that have exceeded the recommended shelf life and may not be consumable. Exhibit 11-13 illustrates the types, quantities, and value of USDA commodities that exceed recommended shelf life and could result in an equivalent USDA fine. While there are additional items in storage that appear to be old, we did not include them in the chart without specific USDA shelf life recommendation information. The items in Exhibit 11-13 represent those for which the USDA provided a recommended shelf life and for which we could identify the year of receipt. We identified 12 of 146 individual commodity shipments that meet these criteria. The exhibit also shows that the district has paid $23,303 to store commodities that have exceeded their recommended shelf life. In some cases, the storage costs have exceeded the value of the item. For example, storage costs for 7,488 pounds of whole frozen turkeys totaled $5,930, while the value of the item was $4,563. The district is at risk of being levied a fine equal to the value of the commodities allowed to expire or may be required to replace the items in kind.

*Exhibit 11-13*
## Outdated USDA Commodities and Storage Costs

| Item | Total Number of Cases | Total Weight in Pounds | Value | USDA Maximum Recommended Shelf Life | Minimum Product Age | Storage Costs for Period Beyond Recommended Shelf Life |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dry milk* | 245 | 12,250 | $ 14,744 | 6 mos | 12 mos | |
| Whole turkey-frozen | 156 | 7,488 | 4,563 | 9 mos | 75 mos | $ 5,930 |
| Roast beef-frozen | 2,376 | 71,280 | 136,359 | 12 mos | 15 mos | 2,566 |
| Frozen beef patties | 566 | 11,886 | 22,947 | 4 mos | 15 mos | 1,569 |
| Raisins | 107 | 3,210 | 2,408 | 18 mos | 99 mos | 3,120 |
| Ground pork-frozen | 67 | 2,412 | 2,311 | 9 mos | 15 mos | 174 |
| Chicken, cut up-frozen | 79 | 3,160 | 2,113 | 8 mos | 15 mos | 303 |
| Ground turkey-frozen | 58 | 2,320 | 1,508 | 3 mos | 75 mos | 2,004 |
| Diced chicken-frozen | 351 | 14,040 | 29,332 | 6 mos | 24 mos (5,880 lbs) | 1,270 |
| | | | | | 19 mos (8,160 lbs) | 1,273 |
| Turkey sausage-frozen | 346 | 10,380 | 7,898 | 3 mos | 51 mos (750 lbs) | 432 |
| | | | | | 27 mos (9,630 lbs) | 2,773 |
| Mozzarella cheese-frozen | 188 | 8,272 | 11,080 | 12 mos | 27 mos (1,760 lbs) | 317 |
| | | | | | 15 mos (6,512 lbs) | 234 |
| Frozen blueberries | 269 | 8,070 | 4,826 | 18 mos | 75 mos (810 lbs) | 554 |
| | | | | | 27 mos (7,260 lbs) | 784 |
| **Total** | **4,808** | **154,768** | **$240,089** | | | **$23,303** |

*Dry milk is stored at the district's warehouse facility. All other items are stored at the private contract storage facility.
Source: Manatee County School District

It is likely that there are more outdated items than just those presented in Exhibit 11-13. Without pack date information, the age of items had to be estimated. Since items were obviously packed in advance of receipt, their actual age is older than is represented in Exhibit 11-13. Furthermore, because district data indicates only the fiscal year that items were received, we made conservative estimates regarding the age of items. Rather than calculating the maximum item age, we calculated the minimum age.

## The District Has Too Much On-Hand Inventory

The district has an excessive on-hand food inventory. The USDA recommends that receiving authorities keep no more than a six-month supply of inventory on hand. At the close of the 1998 school year, the district had approximately a year's worth of USDA commodities ($639,158.95) in inventory at the contracted storage facility and has begun receiving more for the 1998-99 school year. Since the district must accept commodities as the USDA ships them, it is not always within their control to minimize the on-hand inventory. However, the Food Service supervisor should work to ensure the efficient use and turnover of USDA commodity stock by insisting that commodities be utilized before food is purchased from the contract vendor. The Food Service supervisor should also plan menus that maximize use of on-hand USDA commodities.

## Inventory Records Are Not Complete and Accurate

Inventory records do not provide information necessary to effectively manage inventory levels. The district has visited the contract USDA commodity storage facility only twice in the past two years and inventory records maintained at the storage facility and the Food Service program do not provide accurate information. Site visits are necessary to ensure that stock is being rotated, pack dates are being noted and monitored, and the oldest items are being issued first. Routine site visits also allow for a comparison of district and warehouse records to detect and correct errors. The district's inventory records do not accurately reflect specific commodity products stored at the warehouse. For example, the records do not indicate whether USDA commodity cheese is in block or shredded form. Without specific product information, the Food Service supervisor cannot plan menus that maximize on-hand commodities and reduce the need for purchased food items.

Inventory records do not accurately reflect the value of on-hand inventory nor do they identify the oldest products for first use. We physically observed commodities in the contract storage facility to obtain information on item rotation. We found that the commodity accounting system is inaccurate. For example, Food Service program records reflected 245 50-pound bags of dry milk on-hand as of June 1998. Of these, 124 were identified as coming from shipment A ($59.11/bag) and 121 from shipment B ($65.10/bag) for a total value of $15,206. Physical inventory revealed that of the 245 bags, 201 were from shipment A and 44 were from shipment B and the actual value was $14,744. The recorded inventory value of this item was overstated by $461 or 3%. This example illustrates that inventory records misrepresent inventory values as well as what items are in stock. This hinders efforts to maximize USDA commodities and could result in additional commodities exceeding their shelf life, increasing potential fines to the district.

## Food Access Is Excessive

Too many people have access to food storage areas and freezers, compromising the district's inventory control system. According to the Food Service supervisor and cafeteria

managers, custodians routinely have keys that allow access to food storerooms and freezers. In some cases, the school principal also has a key to these areas. Without assured strict access to stored food items, cafeteria managers and the Food Service supervisor cannot guarantee the security of USDA commodities and purchased food. According to the Food Service supervisor, custodians require keys in order to monitor and document freezer temperatures. Due to the value of commodities and purchased food, fewer people should have access to storerooms and freezers. This situation could be remedied by installing external freezer thermometers that do not require entrance into the freezers. Presently, the district estimates that 14 freezers would have to be fitted with external thermometers, at a cost of $2,100, to reduce the need for custodial staff access into storerooms and/or freezers. It is unclear why school principals would require keys to the food storerooms or freezers.

# *Recommendations*

- *Though many of the current inventory problems cannot be remedied until the implementation of the new management information software package, there are steps that Food Service staff can take to improve inventory control. To minimally monitor program performance, the district should better utilize available program information. The Food Service central office should compare meal production reports, delivery records, and monthly inventory information. While the inventory information is not up-to-date, until automation is implemented, it is the only information available for program monitoring. In addition to comparing the available information, school inventory items should be spot checked for accuracy and security.*

- *The district should improve cafeteria manager inventory instructions. The instructions provided managers in the manager's handbook should outline procedures for receiving, handling, and storing food items.*

- *The district should reduce its food inventory. The inventory of USDA commodities stored at the district-contract warehouse should be cut in half. This reduction can be achieved by eliminating outdated commodities, transferring commodities that will likely not be used this school year, and increasing commodity use in lieu of purchased food. School inventories should be restricted to 10 days of meals on hand. Schools with inventories exceeding this level should restrict their ordering or trade items that will not be used in the next two weeks.*

- *To reduce the likelihood of USDA fines for outdated commodities, the district should ensure the contract warehouse facility regularly practices FIFO and notes item pack dates. These requirements should be part of the bid specifications and the contract facility should be held accountable for these USDA program requirements. Rotating stock and noting the actual age of items ensures that commodities will be used before they expire and contributes to the accurate accounting of inventory counts and value.*

- *The district should increase food security by restricting access to storerooms and freezers. This will require a minimal one-time cost of approximately $2,100 to purchase and install externally read freezer thermometers at 14 school sites. This will also require stricter controls on key distribution and a procedure outlining access to storerooms and freezers.*

- *Action Plan 11-9 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Exhibit 11-14*

## Projected Five-Year Investment

| | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| One-time cost | $(2,100) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

*Action Plan 11-9*

## Improve Inventory Control

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Until the Food Service inventory is automated and can be regularly monitored, compare inventory reports, production reports, and vendor delivery receipts for each school. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Require cafeteria managers to submit their meal production sheets with inventory records. |
| | Step 2: Spot-check each school for inventory accuracy and/or problems. |
| | Step 3: Randomly select 7 to 10 food items for comparison/monitoring during the on-site review. |
| | Step 4: Include a section in the on-site review instrument requiring notation of the spot-check for inventory accuracy and/or problems. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists who conduct the site reviews |
| Time Frame | Each school should be reviewed annually and attempts should be made to spot-check the inventory every three months. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Develop and implement procedures for the receipt, handling, and storage of food items. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Include in the cafeteria manager's handbook a procedure requiring the cafeteria manager or the manager's designee to sign for vendor deliveries. |
| | Step 2: Include in the cafeteria manager's handbook a procedure requiring the cafeteria manager or the manager's designee to inspect deliveries and check deliveries against the delivery invoice before the invoice is signed. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | January 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Reduce the overall inventory presently in the contracted storage facility by half and establish a policy restricting how much inventory individual schools can maintain at any given time. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Transfer palatable commodities not likely to be used during the 1998-99 school year. |
| | Step 2: Identify how much inventory is presently located at each school and restrict further purchases of items until the inventory represents no more than 10 days worth of items. |
| | Step 3: Use existing items before ordering/requesting more. |
| | Step 4: Trade items between schools to increase timely use. |
| | Step 5: Develop and adopt a policy that is disseminated to all cafeteria managers requiring that no more than 10 days of inventory be on-hand at any given time.  If there is a need to exceed this requirement, the cafeteria manager should notify and obtain approval in writing of the Food Service supervisor. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | February 28, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 4 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Spot-check the private storage facility to ensure first in first out (FIFO) and pack date information is being noted and monitored to ensure the oldest items are being issued first. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Inspect the storage facility to ensure FIFO is being practiced and pack dates noted and commodity distribution records match what is actually in inventory. |
| | Step 2: Include in the storage bid specifications that FIFO be regularly practiced. |
| | Step 3: If the storage facility is not regularly practicing FIFO, the Food Service supervisor should notify the facility in writing that this breach provides grounds for canceling the contract. |
| | Step 4: The storage facility should be monitored at least every three months to ensure FIFO is regularly practiced.  If the facility continues to not practice FIFO after receiving written notification the contract should be canceled. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | The storage facility should be inspected by January 31, 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 5 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Conduct an inventory at the private storage facility to ensure record accuracy and the notation of item pack date. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Physically inventory USDA commodities at the private storage facility. |
| | Step 2: Test commodities that have exceeded their shelf life based on |

pack date for palatability.

Step 3: Contact the Department of Agriculture and submit the required paperwork for non-palatable expired items.

Step 4: Begin the process of transferring or quickly using items at or near their recommended shelf life based on pack date.

| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | January 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 6

| Strategy | Purchase and install external thermometer readings on freezers to reduce the need for key access. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify freezers without external thermometers. |
| | Step 2: Develop an outline of the cost of purchasing and installing the external freezer thermometers and submit this information to the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services for approval. |
| | Step 3: Purchase and install external thermometers. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | June 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This recommendation will require a one-time cost of $2,100. |

## Recommendation 7

| Strategy | Develop and implement a key control policy to restrict access to food items. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a key control policy outlining who should have access to freezer and food storeroom keys and under what conditions. |
| | Step 2: Collect all freezer and food storeroom keys not under control of the cafeteria manager. This includes keys from custodians and principals. |
| | Step 3: The key control policy should include a provision for emergency access to a freezer and/or food storeroom key as well as documentation when the emergency provision must be utilized. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | February 28, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 6 Does the district have a system for receiving and storing food, supplies, and equipment?

*Yes. The district has a system for receiving and storing food, supplies, and equipment. However, this system does not have written policies for authorization to receive goods and for verifying deliveries.*

The district has a receiving system for food supplies and equipment but it is lacking specific written procedures to ensure that it gets what it pays for. Training for both cafeteria managers and staff regarding proper methods to receive, handle, and store goods would assist in containing program costs.

## Food Service Has a Receiving System

The district has a system that records the purchase and delivery of food, supplies, and equipment. The cafeteria manager signs a requisition for USDA commodities directly delivered to the school and a copy is provided the central Food Service office. Likewise, a requisition accompanies deliveries from the district's central warehouse. However, while receipts for food directly delivered to schools are provided to the cafeteria manager and the Finance and Accounting Department, they are not forwarded to the central Food Service office. If items are not acceptable, for example they are damaged or spoiled, the district is credited the cost of the item(s). The Food Service supervisor reports that only cafeteria managers can sign for deliveries and if someone other than the manager actually receives the goods, the manager must still co-sign the receipt ticket. While this may be district practice, there is no written procedure outlining this practice.

Though the district has a record system in place for receiving and storing goods, minimal instruction is provided managers and staff. While the 1998-99 manager's handbook references receipt of products, there is no information outlining procedures for verifying or storing deliveries. At two of the six school sites we visited prior to the end of the 1998 school year, the team observed food deliveries that were not verified against the delivery invoice by the cafeteria manager or any other staff. Several managers reported being either shorted items by vendors, receiving substituted items, or not receiving ordered items at all. Without specific steps outlining delivery verification, shortages may go unnoticed and not get credited to the district.

## *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

- *While the district has procedures for receiving and storing food, supplies, and equipment, we recommend that program procedures be updated to specifically require the cafeteria manager's signature for the receipt of goods. Updated procedures should also outline steps to ensure the accuracy of deliveries and related charges. We also recommend that the district instruct both cafeteria managers and Food Service workers about procedures to ensure the accuracy of deliveries and related charges.*

- *In order to improve program monitoring, we recommend that a Food Service automation package include mechanisms to track food deliveries made to individual schools.*

- *These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 7 Does the district have a long-range plan for the replacement of equipment and facilities that includes preventative maintenance practices?

*No. Though the Food Service supervisor has projected equipment needs for the next three years, there is no long-range equipment maintenance and replacement plan.*

The Food Service supervisor has outlined program equipment needs and related costs, but this information has not been incorporated into a districtwide equipment maintenance and replacement plan. Presently, the lack of timely repair of equipment and schools with poorly designed kitchens have created some program efficiency problems at select cafeteria sites.

## There Is No Plan for Equipment Replacement

The Food Service supervisor prepared a list of equipment needs prioritized over the next three school years and submitted this list to the maintenance department for inclusion in a master equipment replacement plan. According to the supervisor, this has been the only effort and/or input by the Food Service program regarding equipment maintenance and replacement. To date, the Food Service supervisor has not received an equipment maintenance and replacement plan from the maintenance department.

## There Is No Plan for Equipment Maintenance

Food service staff reported that the district handles all equipment maintenance needs internally. However, neither the Food Service program nor the Facilities Maintenance Department developed a plan for routine maintenance and scheduled equipment replacement. Currently, the maintenance department responds to requirements for repair on an as-needed basis. Although most staff reported timely attention by the maintenance department, a maintenance plan could extend the life of equipment and minimize potential disruptions to the Food Service program.

## Some Poorly Designed Kitchens Increase Program Costs

The team observed poorly designed kitchens that result in equipment not being used and overall cost increases to the district. Two kitchens we visited contained vertical choppers that are rarely used and, according to the cafeteria managers, are not particularly needed. We also observed a kitchen design that did not allow for trays to be washed in the dishwasher for lack of drying space. This resulted in the school using disposable styrofoam trays while the plastic trays sat idle. The Food Service supervisor stated that several new schools are in the process of opening and, while Food Service staff are sometimes given the opportunity to provide input regarding kitchen design, this input was apparently not considered during construction, as the new kitchens do not meet the needs of the cafeteria. For example, one school recently opened without enough worktables ordered and in three schools, rather than installing dishwashers, a disposal system for styrofoam waste was installed. According to the Food Service supervisor, this forces the schools to rely on higher cost disposables such as styrofoam trays and plastic eating utensils rather than less costly plastic trays and reusable silverware.

# *Recommendations* ————————————————————————

- *To maximize the life of equipment and reduce overall program costs, the district should develop a long-range equipment maintenance and replacement plan.  To maximize equipment funds, we recommend that the district assess the need for existing kitchen equipment and, where appropriate, sell or trade unneeded or underutilized equipment.  Furthermore, the district should evaluate existing kitchens and identify any needed changes to reduce the use and reliance upon disposable items, e.g., styrofoam trays and plastic eating utensils.*
- *Action Plan 11-10 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 11-10*

## Improve Equipment Utilization and Maintenance

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a long-range equipment replacement and preventative maintenance plan. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify equipment replacement needs and costs for the next five years. |
| | Step 2: Obtain input from cafeteria managers on equipment use rates. |
| | Step 3: Inspect and document current equipment conditions. |
| | Step 4: Develop equipment maintenance plans to maximize the life of the product and minimize replacement costs. |
| | Step 5: Submit the equipment replacement and maintenance plans to the maintenance department for inclusion in an overall equipment plan. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | June 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Assess the need for existing kitchen equipment and sell or trade unneeded or underutilized equipment. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Consult with cafeteria managers about kitchen equipment that is not needed or is rarely used. |
| | Step 2: Identify whether the equipment can be sold or traded for needed equipment or whether equipment can be transferred among schools to increase utilization. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | February 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify kitchen design flaws that result in increased reliance on disposable items and outline costs to remedy the situation. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Solicit information from cafeteria managers regarding design flaws that restrict the use of equipment or require increased use of disposable items such as Styrofoam trays. |
| | Step 2: Identify what steps are required to remedy the situation and at what cost. |
| | Step 3: Develop a retrofitting plan to increase the efficiency of existing facilities.  Project associated costs and any anticipated savings from the reduced use of disposable items and/or reduced labor. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | February 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Are the Best Practices for Meal Preparation and Transportation Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district prepares and serves nutritious meals with minimal waste.**

# 1 Does the district provide school meals that ensure the nutritional needs of all students are met?

*Yes.  The district plans and serves nutritious meals that meet federal and state nutritional guidelines and qualify for reimbursement.*

The Food Service program administrator and staff work together to prepare and serve nutritional meals.  Additionally, in some cases, staff make an effort to review food products and identify their acceptability prior to incorporating them into the meal program and/or awarding vendor bids.

## Administrative Staff Receive Nutrition Training

Both the Food Service administrator and cafeteria managers receive nutrition education.  The Food Service supervisor is a registered dietician and is responsible for developing the master menu that is distributed to all schools.  Cafeteria managers are provided nutrition training through the monthly manager's meetings.  Food service workers, however, do not

receive nutrition training. Although prescribed recipes and menus are provided, staff sometimes tailor recipes to taste or otherwise alter them to make them more appealing. Lack of staff training could impact the nutritional value of meals since these workers are responsible for actually preparing the items served.

## Some Food Items Are Tested Prior to Purchase

The district makes an effort to test convenience foods for cost effectiveness, nutrition, and student acceptability. For example, the district provided documentation of a pizza taste test conducted by students and faculty for awarding a vendor the bid to deliver pizzas to a school. The award of the contract was based on the results of the taste test and the bid price. The vendor also provided a nutritional analysis of the pizzas as part of the bid agreement.

# *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

- *To assist in their meal preparation duties, we recommend Food Service workers receive nutrition training. We also recommend that whenever possible the Food Service program utilize input from students and teachers regarding the acceptability of new products and/or recipes prior to incorporating them into the meal program.*
- *These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 2 Does the district's food production and transportation system ensure the service of high quality food with minimal waste?

*No. The district's food production system does not ensure the service of high quality food with minimal waste.*

The district successfully serves nutritional meals that qualify for state and federal reimbursement, but several deficiencies in the Food Service program contribute to food and financial waste. The district does not maximize its USDA commodity allocation and is paying excessive food storage costs. Meal production records and site inspections lack data that would assist the Food Service supervisor in monitoring program performance and reducing costs, and the lack of cost per meal information hinders cafeteria managers' abilities to contain meal production costs. Because the district contracts with private vendors for the delivery of all non-USDA food, the portion of this best practice relating to a food transportation system does not apply to the Manatee County Food Service program.

## Use of USDA Commodities Should Be Improved

The Food Service program does not know if it is getting the most for its money when ordering USDA commodities. The Food Service program does not do an analysis of purchased food costs and USDA item value to maximize commodity allocations and has made some poor commodity choices. Based on Fiscal Year 1997-98 use rates, the district presently has an approximate 15-year supply of pre-cooked roast beef on-hand valued at

$136,359. At the present distribution rate, it is unlikely that the district will be able to use this item before it is no longer consumable.

## Food Storage Costs Should Be Reduced

The district pays to store USDA commodities in two different warehouses. When USDA commodities are shipped to a district, they are initially sent to a USDA-approved warehouse. The district paid this USDA-approved storage facility $19,000 last year for USDA commodity handling, storage, and delivery. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Bureau of Food Distribution handles the contract for this storage facility and services are assigned according to geographical location. USDA commodities are stored for 60 days free of charge at this facility but charges are assessed the district for the handling and delivery of commodity items. The district maintains its own contract with another private storage facility and paid $93,061 in Fiscal Year 1997-98 for the storage of USDA commodities. Presently, there is at least one year's worth of inventory valued at $639,158.95 at this district-contract storage facility.

The district could reduce USDA commodity storage costs at the district-contract facility by approximately $46,500 annually if it reduced its stored inventory by half. The USDA commodity program makes provisions for the transfer of commodities between approved recipient agencies. Transferring commodities does not negatively affect future USDA commodity allocations. The goal of the USDA commodity program is to ensure that food items are used and not wasted due to spoilage.

## Meal Production Records Should Require More Information

Annual cafeteria inspections include an observation of school meal production but do not include specific procedures to ensure that data is collected for waste analysis. The site review instrument does not require notation of what children are throwing away and will not provide necessary feedback to cafeteria managers to reduce food waste.

Meal production is noted but not used to monitor program performance. Each cafeteria manager is responsible for completing a meal production sheet for every meal served. This information is not sent to the central Food Service office, but maintained at the school. The meal production sheet records information such as portion size, number of portions planned, and leftovers. The production report does not, however, contain a reference to portion utensils nor does it indicate under-production. Neither the Food Service supervisor nor anyone in the central Food Service office regularly reviews the individual school meal production reports. The annual site review includes a check of the production reports but this one time inspection does not allow for analysis over time. This could result in higher districtwide food costs if schools are regularly over-serving or over-producing meals. On the other hand, without noting under-production or cases where the number of main entrees ran out before all students were served, information is not available to ensure maximum meal participation.

Though the central Food Service office provides cafeteria managers with standardized USDA recipes, it is questionable as to whether the recipes are used. Cafeteria managers generally follow the main menu distributed by the central office, but choose the recipe for the alternate entrée meal. Some managers we interviewed indicated that the prescribed recipes are bland and unappealing to students. As a result, the managers generally follow the prescribed recipe and improvise to improve taste while meeting USDA nutritional requirements.

## Costs Per Meal Should Be Calculated

Meal production costs must be calculated in order to contain program costs and Food Service workers must receive training in order to maintain program efficiency. The Food Service supervisor does not calculate the cost per meal nor provide meal costs to cafeteria managers for use in meal production planning. Costs per meal must be calculated in order to identify and meet budget goals. While cafeteria managers receive training in portion control, Food Service workers do not. Since Food Service workers are the line servers and prepare the meals, it is necessary that they receive training to allow for proper serving portions and control. Meal costs and labor efficiency are integral to successfully containing program expenditures.

# *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

- *To ensure high quality food with minimal waste and maximize program funds, we recommend that the district take steps to maximize USDA commodity allocations.*
- *To reduce costs and the potential waste of food, we recommend that the district cut on-hand inventory and related storage costs by half.*
- *The meal production sheet should be revised to include additional program information and the Food Service site review instrument should specifically require observation of waste and a review of recipes used to prepare meals.*
- *In addition, the district should make an effort to increase the number of recipes available to managers and get student feedback about their acceptability before recommending their use.*
- *Finally, the Food Service supervisor should provide per meal cost information to cafeteria managers to allow for the containment of meal production costs.*
- *Action Plan 11-11 provides the steps necessary to implement these recommendations.*

*Exhibit 11-15*

## Projected Five-Year Income From Reduction in Storage Costs

| | Fiscal Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1998-1999** | **1999-2000** | **2000-2001** | **2001-2002** | **2002-2003** |
| Annual Savings | $46,500 | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 |
| Annual Cost Avoidance | 0 | 46,500 | 46,500 | 46,500 | 46,500 |
| Cumulative Savings/Cost Avoidance | 46,500 | 93,000 | 139,500 | 186,000 | 232,500 |

*Action Plan 11-11*

# Improve Meal Production

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Improve USDA commodity ordering to minimize waste and maximize the USDA commodity allocation. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Compare USDA item prices with vendor prices to maximize value per dollar prior to ordering commodities. |
| | Step 2: Consult cafeteria managers about order needs and potential use rates of USDA commodities. |
| | Step 3: Compare the current inventory of USDA commodities with original receipt amounts to assess use rates to assist in identification of high and low use commodities prior to ordering. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | June 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 2 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Reduce on-hand inventory by half resulting in a reduction in storage costs. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Reduce USDA commodity inventory by half to reduce storage costs.  (See Recommendation No. 3, page 11-46.) |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | February 28, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | The annual fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation is an annual savings of $46,500. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Include serving utensil information and under-production on cafeteria production reports and require the reports be sent to the central office. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Revise the meal production report instrument to require notation of serving utensils and individual portions as well as cases of under-production of food. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 4 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Train all Food Service staff in portion control. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop training for all Food Service employees regarding portion control and serving. |
| | Step 2: Work with staff development to ensure the appropriate training is offered and documented in the individual employee's file. |

| | Step 3: Establish a schedule for training implementation. |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor in cooperation with staff development |
| Time Frame | February 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 5

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Require notation of waste and over-production on the cafeteria site review instrument. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Revise the annual cafeteria site review instrument to require notation of what students throw away and over-production of food. |
| | Step 2: Provide a copy of the completed site review instrument to the cafeteria manager to allow for meal production adjustments. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | February 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 6

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Increase the number of meal recipes available to cafeteria managers. Obtain customer feedback before adopting the recipes for repeated use. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify additional recipes to utilize on-hand USDA commodities and distribute the recipes to cafeteria managers. |
| | Step 2: Solicit recipes from cafeteria managers, students, and school staff where appropriate. |
| | Step 3: Brainstorm with cafeteria managers how to introduce the new recipes and get customer feedback. |
| | Step 4: Require the cafeteria managers to report successful/well-liked recipes to be shared with other cafeteria managers. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | June 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 7

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify per meal costs and provide cost information to cafeteria managers to allow for alternative meal cost calculations. |
| Action Needed | (See Recommendation No. 2, page 11-25.) |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | December 15, 1998; price lists should be updated as prices change and/or bids are renewed or rebid. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Are the Best Practices for a Safe and Sanitary Environment Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district provides Food Services in a safe and sanitary environment.**

# 1 Does the district follow safety and environmental health practices and regulations?

*Yes.  The district follows safety and environmental health practices and regulations.*

All cafeteria managers receive information necessary to ensure environmental health practices and regulations are followed.  The district can document that the county health department quarterly inspects the cafeterias and disaster plans and county health codes are distributed to cafeteria managers.  Additionally, the Risk Management Department provides plans for reporting, investigating, and correcting the causes of accidents. However, there is no documentation that the district's Risk Management Department conducts regular inspections regarding safety and environmental health practices and regulations.

As consistently found in other areas, cafeteria managers receive Food Service related training while Food Service workers do not.  Cafeteria managers receive training regarding food safety, sanitation, food storage and handling, kitchen safety techniques, communication, customer service, and special diets.  Food service workers do not receive this same training.

# *Recommendations*

- *To ensure that the Food Service program consistently observes environmental health practices and regulations, we recommend the Risk Management Department document cafeteria inspections.*
- *To maximize program efficiency and reduce the potential for accidents, we recommend that staff receive workplace safety training.*
- *These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.*

# 12 Cost Control Systems

*The district's cost control systems include internal auditing, financial auditing, asset management, risk management, financial management, purchasing, and information systems. Improvements are needed in internal auditing, asset management, financial management, and information systems.*

## Conclusion

The Manatee County District School Board has generally established adequate cost control systems. However, we have identified 4 of the 31 best practices which are not effectively implemented and certain enhancements which could be made to these cost control systems to improve effectiveness.

## Is the District Using the Cost Control Systems Best Practices?

### Internal Auditing

***No.*** The district has established an internal audit function with its primary mission to (1) provide assurance that the internal control processes in the organization are adequately designed and functioning effectively, and (2) where appropriate, offer recommendations and counsel to management that improve its performance.

Although the district has established an internal audit function, improvements are needed to this function's operation in order to (1) provide adequate assurance that the internal control processes are adequately designed and functioning effectively; and (2) where appropriate, offer recommendations and counsel that will improve management's performance. (page 12-5)

### Financial Auditing

***Yes.*** The district obtains an external audit in accordance with government auditing standards. (page 12-8)

***Yes.*** The district provides for timely follow-up to findings identified in the external audit. (page 12-8)

### Asset Management

***Yes.*** Employees responsible for asset custody are functionally separate from employees maintaining accounting records for these assets. (page 12-9)

***Yes.*** The district has established controls that provide for proper authorization of asset acquisitions.  (page 12-9)

***No.*** The district has established records that accumulate project costs and other relevant data to facilitate reporting construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors.

Although the district accumulates project costs and other relevant data to facilitate reporting of construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors, the methods of accumulating such costs do not provide for adequate checks and balances to ensure that project costs are accumulated accurately.  (page 12-9)

***Yes.*** The district has provided recorded accountability for capitalized assets.  (page 12-11)

## Risk Management

***Yes.*** The district has an adequate process to set objectives for risk management activities, identify and evaluate risks, and design a comprehensive program to protect the district at a reasonable cost.  (page 12-11)

***Yes.*** The district has comprehensive policies and procedures relating to purchasing and reviewing insurance coverage.   (page 12-11)

***Yes.*** The district regularly monitors and evaluates its self-insurance program to ensure the feasibility of its self-insured coverages.  (page 12-12)

## Financial Management

***No.*** District  management has not communicated its commitment and support of strong internal controls.

Although the district has established adequate control systems and practices, the communication of its commitment to and support of strong internal controls could be enhanced by developing an internal control policy and by the development and maintenance of detailed procedures manuals relative to all of the district's financial operations.  (page 12-12)

***Yes.*** The district records and reports financial transactions in accordance with prescribed standards.  (page 12-14)

***Yes.*** The district has established processes to ensure the timely submission of its financial reports.  (page 12-15)

***Yes.*** The district has a financial plan serving as an estimate of and control over operations and expenditures.  (page 12-15)

***Yes.*** The district does have adequate controls that provide for recorded accountability for cash resources.  (page 12-15)

***Yes.*** The district has an investment plan that includes investment objectives and performance criteria and specifies the types of financial products approved for investment.

The district invests primarily with the State Board of Administration's (SBA) Investment Pool; a state managed investment pool that offers competitive rates at

relatively low risk.  Should the district decide to consider other investment products, a fully developed investment plan would be necessary.  (page 12-15)

*Yes.*     The district has established controls for recording, collecting, adjusting, and reporting receivables.  (page 12-15)

*Yes.*     The district has established controls that provide accountability for employees' compensation and benefits pursuant to an approved compensation plan.  (page 12-16)

*Yes.*     The district has procedures for analyzing, evaluating, monitoring, and reporting debt-financing alternatives.  (page 12-16)

*Yes.*     The district adequately monitors and reports grant activities.  (page 12-16)

## Purchasing

*Yes.*     The district has segregated purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving functions.  (page 12-17)

*Yes.*     The district has established controls for authorizing purchase requisitions.  (page 12-17)

*Yes.*     The district has established authorization controls to ensure that goods and services are acquired at prices that are fair, competitive, and reasonably consistent with acceptable quality and performance.  (page 12-17)

*Yes.*     The district has established controls to ensure that goods are received and meet quality standards.  (page 12-18)

*Yes.*     The district has established controls for processing invoices to ensure that quantities, prices, and terms coincide with purchase orders and receiving reports.  (page 12-18)

*Yes.*     The district has established controls to ensure that disbursements are properly authorized, documented, and recorded.  (page 12-18)

*Yes.*     The district has established controls to ensure that payables/encumbrances (obligations) are properly authorized, documented, and recorded.  (page 12-18)

## Information System

*Yes.*     The district segregates duties to prevent unauthorized transactions by appropriately limiting access to data systems processes and functions.   (page 12-19)

*Yes.*     The district's user controls ensure authorization prior to processing transactions and ensure that all output represents authorized and valid transactions.  (page 12-19)

*Yes.*     The district has established appropriate data controls between the user and the data system department.  (page 12-19)

*No.*     The district has established general controls designed to provide physical security over terminals, limit access to data programs and data files, and to control risk in systems development and maintenance.

Although the district has established the three general controls mentioned above, certain enhancements could be made to improve the effectiveness of the controls. (page 12-20)

# *Fiscal Impact of Recommendations*

The corrective action plans provided for cost control systems can be implemented with existing resources. It is not anticipated that the corrective actions will incur additional costs.

# *Background*

The district's major cost control systems are separated into seven subsections.

- Internal Auditing
- Financial Auditing
- Asset Management
- Risk Management
- Financial Management
- Purchasing
- Information Systems

The board, as provided in s. 230.03(2), F.S., is required to operate, control, and supervise all free public schools in the district. Laws, rules, regulations, and grantor restrictions applicable to the district's activities define, among other matters, the purposes for which resources may be used and the manner in which authorized uses shall be accomplished and documented. Section 230.03(3), F.S., provides that the responsibility for the administration of the schools and for the supervision of instruction in the district is vested with the superintendent as the secretary and executive officer of the board, as provided by law. To assure the efficient and effective operation of the district in accordance with good business practices and with applicable legal and contractual requirements, effective cost control systems must be established and maintained.

The superintendent is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective and efficient cost control systems. The objective of effective and efficient cost control systems is to

- provide management with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition;
- ensure that transactions are executed in accordance with the board's authorization;
- ensure that transactions are recorded properly to promote reliable financial data;
- ensure that restricted assets are managed in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and contracts; and
- within the constraints established by applicable laws and regulations, ensure that operating policies and procedures promote cost-effective and efficient methods of operation.

# *Are the Best Practices for Internal Auditing Being Observed?*

**Goal:  The district has an adequate internal auditing function.**

**1**  **Has the district established an internal audit function with its primary mission to provide assurance that the internal control processes in the organization are adequately designed and functioning effectively, and where appropriate, offer recommendations and counsel to management that improve their performance?**

*No.  Although Manatee County District School Board has employed an internal audit function with a senior internal auditor, an internal auditor, and one support staff, certain enhancements would improve the effectiveness of this function's operations.*

Section 11.45(3)(a)1., F.S., permits school districts to employ internal auditors to perform ongoing financial verification of the financial records of a school district and requires that internal auditors hired pursuant to this law must report directly to the board or its designee.  Internal auditors employed in this manner, if effectively used, can be considered to be meeting this best practice.

The internal audit function is a major element of management and internal control.  The purpose of an internal audit function within a school system is to provide assurance that the internal control processes in the organization are adequately designed and functioning effectively and evaluate the manner in which district organizational units comply with board and administrative policies and procedures, as well as state and federal guidelines.  In addition, an internal audit function can provide a district with an effective internal performance and evaluation system.

In addition to funds received at the district level, funds are also received by the individual schools for club and class activities.  These funds are deposited into the school's accounts, which are commonly identified as school internal funds.  State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.087, F.A.C., requires school districts to provide for annual audits of the school internal funds.  Internal auditors may also be assigned the responsibility for auditing school internal funds.

Pursuant to s. 11.45(3)(a)1., F.S., the senior internal auditor reports directly to an audit committee that reports to the board.  This audit committee was formed effective July 1, 1998, and is composed of the board chairman, the superintendent of schools, and other parties to be named later.  The Manatee County District School Board compares favorably among eight similarly sized school districts (based on FTE), in that four school districts employ internal auditors.  Of these, two districts have one internal auditor and two have two internal audit staff.

# *Recommendations* ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

*Enhancements that would improve the effectiveness of this function's operations are discussed below:*

- *As noted above, effective July 1, 1998, the senior internal auditor reports to an audit committee. Currently, the committee is composed of the board chairman, the superintendent of schools, and other persons that will be appointed by the chairman and the superintendent. Other members have not been selected and the rules establishing the committee do not specify the size of the committee, nor do they specify the requirements for the remaining committee members. We recommend that the district establish specific committee guidelines, including the size of the committee and the qualifications of the committee members. For example, the guidelines could require a five-member committee comprised of the superintendent, the board chairman, and three appointed members such as an independent certified public accountant, a community business leader, and a representative from the PTA, PTO, or school advisory councils. Additionally, the district may include in the guidelines the length of time that a member can serve and the process for appointing audit committee members.*

- *Currently, the Internal Audit Department is responsible for conducting audits of all school internal funds; performing various reviews of financial systems, such as performing bank reconciliations and inventorying tangible personal property; and conducting selected performance reviews of district operations. Although these activities may meet certain best financial management practice goal requirements, there has not been an overall risk assessment performed by district personnel to itemize and prioritize control system concerns that should be reviewed by the internal audit function. Currently, the senior internal auditor determines the priority of audit tasks, often based on suggestions from the board and district senior management. We recommend that one of the first priorities of the audit committee be to develop a mission statement for the internal audit function which is based on best financial management practice goals and indicators for internal auditing (such as a review of full-time equivalent student reporting) and an overall risk assessment of the district's operations. Subsequent to the development of the mission statement, the committee should work with the internal audit function to develop a long-range audit plan that meets mission objectives.*

- *Once a long-range plan is developed, the district should consider establishing procedures to ensure that the proposed internal audit committee is made aware of new audit concerns as they develop and that such concerns are evaluated and incorporated in the internal audit function's long-range plan. To carry out the requirements of the long-range plan, short-range (annual) plans describing tasks to be performed by the internal audit function each year should be developed. These short-range plans should include time budgets and staffing plans to determine the resources needed by the internal audit function to complete the plan requirements. Using this methodology, the district can determine if sufficient resources have been allocated to the internal audit function so that requested internal audits can be performed within desired time frames.*

- *The internal audit function prepares reports that are presented to the board showing the results of the internal audits. Except as noted in this paragraph, these reports are generally comprehensive and complete. Our review of selected reports showed that the reports often vary in format from one to another and that they usually did not include management's response to the findings noted in the reports. We also determined through interviews with district personnel that there is currently not a formalized process in place for the presentation and reporting of internal audit findings. The proposed*

*internal audit committee, after review of professional standards relative to internal auditors, should develop a formalized process for the presentation and reporting of internal audit findings which includes management involvement in the process and the inclusion of management's response to the internal audit findings in the reports.*

*Action Plan 12-1*

# Internal Auditing

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Establish specifications for committee size, qualifications, and length of service. |
| Action Needed | Board approval of committee guidelines and committee membership |
| Who Is Responsible | School board |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 2 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop mission statement that incorporates committee's overall risk assessment. |
| Action Needed | Board approval of mission statement |
| Who Is Responsible | Audit Committee |
| Time Frame | March 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop long-range plan to meet mission objectives. |
| Action Needed | Board approval of long-range plan |
| Who Is Responsible | Senior internal auditor in association with Audit Committee |
| Time Frame | April 30, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 4 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop short-range (annual) plans with related time budgets and staffing plans. |
| Action Needed | Internal Audit Committee approval of short-range plan |
| Who Is Responsible | Senior internal auditor |
| Time Frame | May 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 5 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Determine resource needs of Internal Audit Department based on long- and short-term plans. |
| Action Needed | Internal Audit Committee makes a recommendation to board relating to resource needs. |
| Who Is Responsible | Internal Audit Committee |
| Time Frame | May 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 6 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop performance criteria for the internal audit function based on short- and long- range plans. |
| Action Needed | Internal Audit Committee communicates performance criteria to the internal auditor. |
| Who Is Responsible | Internal Audit Committee |
| Time Frame | June 30, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 7 | |
| Strategy | Develop process for presentation and reporting of internal audit findings. |
| Action Needed | Internal Audit Committee develops a process for reporting audit findings. |
| Who Is Responsible | Internal Audit Committee |
| Time Frame | June 30, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Are the Best Practices for Financial Auditing Being Observed?*

**Goal: The school district ensures that it receives an annual external audit and uses the audit to improve its operations.**

# 1 Does the district obtain an external audit in accordance with government auditing standards?

*Yes. Annual audits are conducted by the Auditor General in accordance with government auditing standards.*

# 2 Does the district provide for timely follow-up on findings identified in the external audit?

*Yes. The district provides written responses for findings included in each audit report indicating corrective actions that will be taken. Our review of past audit reports indicates that the district has addressed issues noted in these reports.*

## *Are the Best Practices for Asset Management Being Observed?*

**Goal:  District management has established controls to provide for effective management of capital assets.**

# 1  Does the district segregate responsibilities for custody of assets from record keeping responsibilities for those assets?

*Yes.  A review of the district's organizational structure indicated that employees responsible for asset custody are functionally separate from employees maintaining accounting records for these assets.*

# 2  Has the district established controls that provide for proper authorization of asset acquisitions?

*Yes.  The district has established procedures that provide for effective review and approval of asset acquisitions.*

# 3  Has the district established records that accumulate project costs and other relevant data to facilitate reporting construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors?

*No.  Although the district accumulates project costs, our review determined that the procedures in place could be improved to more effectively accumulate this information. Specifically, we noted:*

The district uses an AS-400 computer system with in-house developed accounting software.  The accounting system was designed to include a chart of accounts consistent with the requirements of the Florida Department of Education's manual, ***Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools*** which is required pursuant to s. 237.01, F.S., and State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.001, F.A.C.  The features of this accounting system include sufficient account code information to accumulate costs on a project basis.  However, Business Services personnel have

not used the system to generate project ledgers generating costs for capital construction projects and were unable to produce such records for our review upon request.

The Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations function maintains a database on a stand-alone computer using spreadsheet software. Financial disbursement information related to capital outlay projects was also manually input into this system. This system generated project ledgers that were used for management purposes. However, district personnel did not reconcile these ledgers with the district's central accounting system to ensure the accuracy of the project ledger records. Absent such reconciliation, the district has limited assurance that the project ledgers used for management purposes accurately include all expenditures related to individual construction projects.

Additionally, this practice results in an unnecessary duplication of effort in that financial transactions related to capital outlay projects are recorded twice, once by accounting personnel when checks are issued, and again by facilities personnel on their stand-alone system to generate project ledgers. District personnel are aware of this situation and have elected to wait until a new purchased accounting system, which is expected to be operational July 1, 1999, has been implemented. District personnel believe that this new system will be able to generate reports that will show costs by project.

# *Recommendation*

- *Until such time as the new accounting system is operational, the district should ensure that project ledgers used for management purposes are accurate either by generating project ledgers from the accounting system or by reconciling the manually kept project ledgers with the accounting records. Additionally, when the new system is operational, the district should ensure that procedures are developed that will eliminate the current practice of recording capital outlay project financial information twice to different systems.*
- *Action Plan 12-2 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 12-2*

## Project Accounting

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Ensure the accuracy of management reports detailing capital outlay project activities. |
| Action Needed | Produce project ledgers from accounting system or reconcile manually prepared project ledgers to accounting system. |
| Who Is Responsible | Finance manager |
| Time Frame | July 1, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 4 Does the district provide recorded accountability for capitalized assets?

*Yes. The district has established procedures to accumulate costs related to specific assets and/or construction projects and, when completed, to record total cost in fixed asset subsidiary ledgers.*

# *Are the Best Practices for Risk Management Being Observed?*

**Goal: The district has established procedures that identify various risks and provide for a comprehensive approach to reducing the impact of losses.**

# 1 Does the district have an adequate process to set objectives for risk management activities, identify and evaluate risks, and design a comprehensive program to protect the district at a reasonable cost?

*Yes. The district has established a risk management function that reports to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Support Services. This function is responsible for identifying and evaluating risks and setting objectives for the risk management function. From this evaluation, the risk management function determines the extent of and methods of obtaining coverage for risk. Through the risk management function, the district's management of risk includes those coverages required by law.*

# 2 Does the district have comprehensive policies and procedures relating to purchasing and reviewing insurance coverage?

*Yes. The district evaluates its coverages on a periodic basis. Through the periodic solicitation of competitive proposals, the district is able to evaluate existing costs with those provided by interested providers. The district also requests proposals for different methods of providing coverages (such as providing straight commercial coverage or providing self-insurance coverage with third party administration of the claims). With this information, along with the*

*assistance of a contracted risk management consultant, the district is able to evaluate costs factors, method of services, and other factors. The district also evaluates the performance of current vendors providing services to the district. For example, through surveys, district employees provide information relating to their satisfaction with health insurance services.*

# 3 Does the district regularly monitor and evaluate its self-insurance program to ensure the feasibility of its self-insured coverages?

*Yes. See the narrative above (Risk Management Best Practice No. 2).*

# *Are the Best Practices for Financial Management Being Observed?* ——————————————————————

**Goal: The district has established controls to ensure that its financial resources are properly managed.**

# 1 Does district management communicate its commitment and support of strong internal controls?

*No. The district has established a Business Services function that generally separates various business activities to promote an adequate system of internal controls. Responsibilities assigned to various staff members in this function are such that an adequate system of internal controls has been established. However, we noticed that the district's communication of its commitment and support of strong internal controls could be enhanced as discussed below.*

Although district management believes that it communicates its commitment to and support of strong internal controls, management cannot document that its commitment to and support of strong internal controls has been communicated. Ordinarily, the communication of such commitment and support is done through the establishment of ethics policies and the development and maintenance of comprehensive procedures manuals of its financial operations. We noted that although the district had an ethics policy, the policy does not address the district's position relative to its commitment to and support of strong internal controls. The district should place a high priority in expanding its ethics policy or establishing a separate policy on internal controls to include the district's position relative to its commitment to and support of strong internal controls.

Similarly, district management has not developed and maintained comprehensive procedures manuals relating to the district's financial operations. Although, some written procedures documents were available for certain parts of the district's financial operations, they were outdated in some instances and/or incomplete and were not sufficiently detailed. The district should develop and maintain current procedures manuals relating to all its financial operations. Procedures manuals are necessary to ensure appropriate training of new staff as well as to provide an aid in bridging the transition in the event of loss of key finance related personnel. As an example, during the course of our review, a key accounting director terminated employment with the district. Our understanding of many of the procedures involved in the review of the district's best financial management practices was based on procedures performed by this former employee. Although the responsibilities assigned to this employee were reassigned to other personnel, the absence of established procedures manuals may make this transition difficult for the district. In addition to establishing and maintaining comprehensive procedures manuals, the district should also consider cross-training finance personnel in at least the critical accounting processes to lessen the impact of a key employee leaving.

District personnel advised us that they occasionally experience problems with department heads and principals making purchasing decisions that are inconsistent with established district procedures. However, because the procedures are not documented in procedures manuals, the department heads and principals are unaware that they are making decisions in conflict with the established procedures. In association with the detailed procedures manuals developed and maintained for finance personnel, the district should consider developing administrative procedures manuals for department heads and principals. The development of procedures manuals are particularly important as the district implements its new accounting system.

Another factor that indicates management's commitment to and support of strong internal controls is the establishment of policies and procedures for employees to report suspected improprieties without fear of reprisal. Our review indicated that the district has not established policies and procedures for employees to report suspected improprieties.

## *Recommendations* ———————————————————————

- *The district should consider having the internal auditor review the procedures manuals and subsequent revisions to ensure that the procedures are designed to promote effective internal controls.*
- *Additionally, the district should establish procedures that employees can follow if they suspect that improprieties are occurring. We suggest that such procedures include provisions that allow employees to contact someone other than a direct supervisor (perhaps the internal auditor), anonymity for those reporting suspected improprieties, feedback to employees who report suspected improprieties, and immunity from reprisals.*
- *Action Plan 12-3 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 12-3*

## Management Control Methods

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Determine district's position on its commitment and support of strong internal controls. |
| Action Needed | Incorporate this position in ethics policy, which must be approved by the board. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Develop and maintain detailed procedures manuals for all financial management activities. |
| Action Needed | Upon approval of the manuals, distribute them to all users. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services |
| Time Frame | Total completion by December 31, 1999, with earlier completion of some parts |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 3** | |
| Strategy | Identify critical finance processes and develop a cross-training policy. |
| Action Needed | After critical finance processes are identified, develop a cross-training schedule. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services |
| Time Frame | Some informal cross-training is currently done.  Formalized cross-training plan to be developed by January 31, 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 4** | |
| Strategy | Develop district policy for the reporting of suspected improprieties. |
| Action Needed | Board approval of policy |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services |
| Time Frame | January 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# 2 Does the district record and report financial transactions in accordance with prescribed standards?

*Yes.  The district's accounting system was designed to include a chart of accounts consistent with the requirements of the Florida Department of Education's manual, **Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools,** which is required pursuant to s. 237.01, F.S., and State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.001, F.A.C.  The features of this accounting system include sufficient account code information to accumulate costs in accordance with prescribed standards.*

# 3 Does the district prepare and distribute its financial reports timely?

*Yes. The district has established processes that ensure that required financial reports are submitted timely and within reporting deadlines.*

# 4 Does the district have a financial plan serving as an estimate of and control over operations and expenditures?

*Yes. As required by law, the district prepares annual budgets and follows established rules for subsequent amendments to the budgets as estimates change.*

# 5 Does the district have adequate controls to provide recorded accountability for cash resources?

*Yes. The district has established effective separations between the asset custody and the responsibility for accounting for cash transactions. Additionally, effective monitoring processes have been established to ensure that transactions involving cash were appropriately recorded.*

# 6 Does the district have an investment plan that includes investment objectives and performance criteria and specifies the types of financial products approved for investment?

*Yes. The district invests primarily with the State Board of Administration's (SBA) Investment Pool, a state-managed investment pool that offers competitive rates at relatively low risk. However, if the district decides to consider other types of investment products, an investment plan that includes investment objectives and performance criteria and specifies the types of financial products approved for investment would be necessary.*

# 7 Has the district established controls for recording, collecting, adjusting, and reporting receivables?

*Yes. The district has established controls for recording, collecting, adjusting, and reporting receivables.*

# 8 Has the district established controls that provide accountability for employees' compensation and benefits pursuant to an approved compensation plan?

*Yes. The district has established salary schedules which provide the basis for compensation of employees. Procedures exist to ensure that employees are properly compensated based on these salary schedules and that applicable benefit costs are determined and/or deducted and remitted to appropriate vendors. Other personnel-related best practices are evaluated in the Personnel Systems and Benefits chapter of this report (page 5-14).*

# 9 Does the district have procedures for analyzing, evaluating, monitoring, and reporting debt financing alternatives?

*Yes. When considering debt financing, the district has established a process that ensures that various debt financing alternatives are evaluated, monitored, and analyzed.*

# 10 Does the district adequately monitor and report grant activities?

*Yes. The district has established practices to ensure monitoring of grant activities in accordance with grantor requirements. Reporting requirements for grants are determined and procedures are established to ensure that grantor required reports are submitted within established deadlines.*

# *Are the Best Practices for Purchasing Being Observed?*

**Goal: The district has established a defined purchasing function with controls over requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving functions.**

# 1 Does the district segregate purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving functions?

*Yes. The district has a centralized purchasing function that has the responsibility for ensuring effective purchasing practices. Purchased goods and services are received and accounted for by employees in other functions.*

# 2 Has the district established controls for authorizing purchase requisitions?

*Yes. The district uses a computerized requisitioning system that requires appropriate approvals before the requisitions can be transferred to the purchasing function.*

# 3 Has the district established authorization controls to ensure that goods and services are acquired at prices that are fair, competitive, and reasonable and consistent with acceptable quality and performance?

*Yes. The district has demonstrated that it is meeting this best practice by the establishment of a purchasing function and related district established procedures and guidelines for the purchase of goods and services. District guidelines include requirements to obtain quotations or bids when proposed purchases exceed specific dollar thresholds and for using competitive negotiation procedures for specific categories of purchasing. During our review we became aware of an enhancement to the district's purchasing procedures that would improve its effectiveness which is described below.*

The district's purchase requisitioning process is such that there are many employees that have the authority to requisition goods and/or services. Requisitions for goods and/or services are submitted to the purchasing function for processing into purchase orders. The district's current accounting system does not have features that would assist purchasing personnel in identifying several requisitions for the same or similar goods and/or services that when combined would result in a purchase that would exceed the dollar threshold which requires quotations or bidding. In such situations, it is possible that obtaining quotes or bidding for the goods and/or services may not occur. This practice, if it occurs intentionally to avoid bidding or higher approvals, is called split purchasing. District purchasing buyers are advised to be aware that split purchasing can occur and to try to identify and combine purchase requisitions for similar or like items. Although this method can identify some split-purchase situations, it may not be as effective as using a computerized system to identify requisitions for similar items.

District personnel are aware of this situation and are waiting on the implementation of the new accounting system that is estimated to be operational by July 1, 1999, to correct it. Under the new

system, reports showing purchase requisitions and purchase orders for the same vendor or for the same goods and/or services over specified periods of time can be accumulated in reports for review and evaluation by purchasing personnel.

# 4 Has the district established controls to ensure that goods are received and meet quality standards?

*Yes. Procedures established required authorized receivers to review goods and services received and ensure that they are consistent with what was ordered.*

# 5 Has the district established controls for processing invoices to ensure that quantities, prices, and terms coincide with purchase orders and receiving reports?

*Yes. The district has an accounts payable function that is responsible for ensuring that items and amounts billed by vendors are consistent with what was ordered and received by the district.*

# 6 Has the district established controls to ensure that disbursements are properly authorized, documented, and recorded?

*Yes. All purchase orders are reviewed to determine that the account coding for the purchase is appropriate and that there is sufficient budget for the purchase.*

# 7 Has the district established controls to ensure that payables/encumbrances (obligations) are properly authorized, documented, and recorded?

*Yes. The purchasing process is designed such that when approved purchase requisitions are changed to purchase orders, they are given account coding and are encumbered.*

# *Are the Best Practices for Information Services Being Observed?*

**Goal: The district maintains an information system to provide quality data.**

## 1 Does the district segregate duties to prevent unauthorized transactions by appropriately limiting access to data systems processes and functions?

*Yes. A system is in place that provides for the limiting of user access to only those persons who require access as a part of their job responsibilities. However, some improvements could be made. See our discussion of these recommended improvements in the Information System Best Practice No. 4 section of this report on page 12-20.*

## 2 Do the district's user controls ensure authorization prior to processing transactions and ensure that all output represents authorized and valid transactions?

*Yes. Procedures are in place that require users to ensure the validity of input prior to transactions being processed. Additionally, users have established effective monitoring procedures to ensure the validity of transactions input by users.*

## 3 Has the district established appropriate data controls between the user and the data system department?

*Yes. Users have established effective monitoring procedures to ensure the validity of transactions input by users.*

# 4 Has the district established general controls designed to provide physical security over terminals, limit access to data programs and data files, and control risk in systems development and maintenance?

*No. The district has established an information systems function, which provides for segregation of duties and addresses user controls, application controls, and general controls. However, enhancements could be made to the district's general controls to improve operating effectiveness.*

General controls, among other matters, address physical security and environmental control procedures and access control procedures.

Physical security and environmental controls improve custody over assets, prevent accidental or intentional destruction of data, and provide for both replacement of records that may be destroyed and the continuity of operations following major hardware or software failure. Physical security control procedures are intended to safeguard computer equipment and facilities against unauthorized physical access. Environmental control procedures are intended to protect computer equipment from damage resulting from adverse environmental conditions. These controls, together with control procedures for monitoring equipment and control procedures for recovery from interruptions in data processing services, are designed to minimize the likelihood and the duration of losses in information processing capability.

Access controls provide safeguards to assist in the prevention or detection of deliberate or accidental errors. Errors may be caused by improper use or manipulation of data files, unauthorized or incorrect use of computer programs, and/or improper use of computer resources. Effective access controls limit access to systems documentation, data files, programs, and computer hardware to authorized persons who require such access in the performance of their duties.

General controls also relate to planning processes for the acquisition and maintenance of information technology resources.

In response to a finding made by the Auditor General in a recent audit report, the district has taken steps to address the Year 2000 Problem. It is in the process of converting student information systems so that they will be Year 2000 compliant. The district's finance and human resources systems are being replaced by a Year 2000 compliant system that is expected to be operational in July 1999. The district has established a task force to evaluate the impact of the Year 2000 on other embedded systems, such as those found in elevator systems, HVAC systems, and motor vehicles. This task force expects to recommend corrective actions so that all Year 2000 issues will be resolved before the Year 2000 arrives.

## *Recommendations* —————————————————————————

*The following enhancements could be made that would improve operating effectiveness.*

- *Under the present organizational structure, the district has an Information Systems function that is responsible for the district's mainframe hardware and software systems along with the local area network (LAN) hardware and software which provides connectivity with the mainframe at the district's remote user sites. The Information Systems function reports organizationally to the Business Services function. The district also has an Instructional Technology function, which is responsible for the information technology hardware and software used for instructional services in the schools. The Instructional Technology function reports organizationally to the Academic Services function. To some degree, these two functions share resources, particularly LAN resources. However, because of the functional separation of these two activities, information technology decisions, (which includes purchasing of hardware and software and the methods used to maintain the systems) are made independently and without consideration of available resources of each function and the potential for system conflicts with resources of each function. For example, Instructional Technology systems maintenance personnel make LAN upgrades and modifications which allow updated Instructional Technology software to work more efficiently. These changes can occasionally create conflicts with Information Services applications used on the LAN. Due to these hardware and software conflicts and the fact that the two functions generally work independently of each other, the current organizational structure may possibly lead to the establishment and maintenance of two or more separate systems platforms that have incompatible configurations. Depending on how these two functions diverge, the cost of acquiring and maintaining two or more systems platforms potentially could be high.*

- *The district should consider organizational changes so that all systems network technicians report to one district function (under the existing organizational structure, this would likely be Information Services). Other functions of providing support to instructional staff could be retained by the Instructional Technology function. Any LAN or platform changes needed by the Instructional Technology function could then be requested from the Information Services function.*

- *Additionally, the district's established information technology council should develop a plan that will consider the various information technology needs of the users, prioritize them, and then identify a uniform platform strategy that will meet the district's needs. By establishing a uniform platform strategy, future hardware and software purchasing and maintenance decisions will be based on the compatibility of the desired hardware and software with the desired platform. Additionally, procedures for the updating and upgrading (maintenance) of this platform will be uniform and all systems maintenance personnel will follow the same set of protocols which will reduce the incidence of down time caused by hardware and software conflicts.*

- *The district has a computerized work order system for users to request programming changes. System analysts review work order requests to prioritize them. The system analysts then assign higher priority work orders to specific programmers. When the work is completed, the programmer moves the program modification into the production libraries and notifies the user that the requested change has been made. Review and approval of the changes by Information Service personnel other than the programmer and user approval of the changes made by programmers is rarely documented. The absence of independent review and approval of program changes limits the assurance that improper program changes, should they occur, would be timely detected. The district should develop procedures that will ensure that all program changes are authorized, that the review and approval of the changes is documented, and that the program changes are moved into production by someone other than the programmer making the changes.*
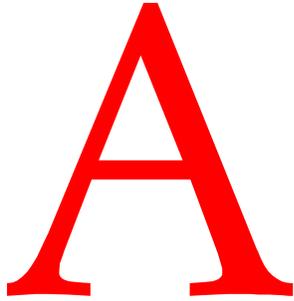
- *Although the district appropriately certifies work performance of employees in the Information Services function, the time and attendance records do not permit programming personnel to allocate time to the various work orders for programming changes. District Information Technology personnel have project management software but time constraints have prevented timely implementation of the software. The allocation of time to specific projects will assist the Information Services function in planning subsequent programming change requests of a similar nature and in assessing the cost of making such changes. We suggest that the district provide that time spent on making programming modifications be documented by using this project management software.*

- *Information Services programmers have unlimited access to production data through a data file utility feature. Information Services personnel advised us that programmers access production data on a regular basis using this utility. Generally they access data files at the request of users to correct errors in data entry that cannot be corrected by the users. Such requests are frequently made verbally without any written documentation of the request. Consequently, the district cannot be sure that all changes to data files were appropriate or for authorized purposes. The district should implement a procedure that requires all requests for changes to data files to be documented, authorized, and once the change is made, reviewed for accuracy. Additionally, we suggest that the district assign data change responsibility to only selected personnel and remove data file access to the other programmers who, because of their assigned responsibilities, should not have access.*

- *Concurrently with the implementation of the above procedure for documenting data file changes, the district should consider the use of the security auditing features of its operating system. Currently, the security auditing features are not being used. One such feature that is available that could be used would provide an audit trail of changes made to user capabilities. The granting and removal of temporary access to production data by programmers could also be recorded for review. Other security administrator activity could also be logged.*

- *District procedures provide for department/school management personnel to authorize user password access to various computer applications. Similarly, when users terminate or are assigned different responsibilities (transferred) management personnel are required to notify Information Services so that the password access can be terminated. This notification is documented by use of an enrollment/withdrawal form. Our review disclosed that Information Services is not always advised of employees for whom password access needs to be terminated or changed. In these instances the password access of the former or transferred employees is not terminated. When the password access of former or transferred employees is not terminated, there is an increased risk that security over access to critical data files could be compromised. We suggest that the district revise its procedures to ensure that the password access for terminated or transferred employees is terminated in a timely fashion. One possible solution would be to have the Personnel Department provide Information Systems with a list of terminated or transferred employees on a periodic (at least monthly) basis so that Information Services can remove password access for terminated employees and can make appropriate inquiries of the access capability of transferred employees.*

- *Action Plan 12-4 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.*

*Action Plan 12-4*

# General Controls

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Require all network technicians to report to the Information Systems function. |
| Action Needed | Board approval of organizational changes |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services and assistant superintendent for Academic Services |
| Time Frame | July 1, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Through the district's Technology Council, ensure that a common network platform is developed that is suitable for all district functions. |
| Action Needed | Specifications developed that guide the purchase of future hardware and software products to ensure network compatibility |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services, assistant superintendent for Academics |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 3** | |
| Strategy | Require computer programming changes to be reviewed and approved by appropriate Information Services Staff.  Document review and approval including approval by user requesting change. |
| Action Needed | Establish procedures that provide for the documentation of changes made as well as documentation of the review and approval of the changes. |
| Who Is Responsible | Information Services supervisor |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 4** | |
| Strategy | Require that changes be loaded into production files by employees other than the ones making the changes. |
| Action Needed | Establish system controls preventing programmer access to production files. Provide access to non-programming administrative staff who will load programming changes into production. |
| Who Is Responsible | Information Services supervisor |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 5** | |
| Strategy | Establish methodology for allocating time spent on programming changes to be charged to the work-order (project). |
| Action Needed | Establish procedures requiring programmers to charge time to various work-orders (programming changes) assigned to them. |
| Who Is Responsible | Information Services supervisor |
| Time Frame | March 31, 1999 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 6 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Restrict access of Information Service programmers to data files. |
| Action Needed | Establish system controls and system audit controls that will provide documentation of all data file changes by programmers. |
| Who Is Responsible | Information Services supervisor |
| Time Frame | June 30, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 7 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Establish procedure to notify Information Services of employees who require password status changes due to termination or transfer. |
| Action Needed | Establish procedures that will require that the notification to Information Services will be documented. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services |
| Time Frame | November 30, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# A Appendix: Action Plans

*If the Manatee County School Board agrees by a majority plus one vote to institute the action plans in Appendix A, the district could meet the best practices within two years and receive the seal of Best Financial Management from the State Board of Education.*

## *Management Structures*

*Action Plan 3-1*

## Several Action Steps Are Needed to Implement Recommendations

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop functional organization charts and written procedures describing each unit's authority and responsibility. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The superintendent should make the human resources department responsible for working with assistant superintendents, directors, and principals to develop a functional organization chart and procedures that describe the authority and responsibility of each organizational unit. |
| | Step 2: The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review and revise the functional organization chart and procedures and present them to the board for approval. |
| | Step 3: The board should review the functional organization chart and procedures to ensure that they are consistent with district policies, correct any inconsistencies, and approve the charts and procedures. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent |
| Time Frame | The functional organization chart and procedures should be completed by the end of March 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Update and distribute the district's policies. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The board should direct the superintendent to conduct a full review of the district's policies. |
| | Step 2: The superintendent should create a new unit for planning and evaluation (see page 3-14) and assign lead responsibility for the review to this unit. |
| | Step 3: The new Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should work with all assistant superintendents and other stakeholders to identify policies that are duplicative or not needed and to assess the need for additional policies. In addition, the unit should consult with the Florida School Board Association about the policies used by other districts. |

|  | Step 4: | The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should write a report detailing the changes the district needs to make to its policies. The recommended changes should include a new policy that establishes timeframes by which the district will regularly review and update its policies. |
|---|---|---|
|  | Step 5: | The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review and revise the proposed policies and present them to the board for adoption. |
|  | Step 6: | The attorney should review the proposed policies and recommend any changes needed to ensure that they meet federal and state requirements. |
|  | Step 7: | The board should review and revise the proposed policies. |
|  | Step 8: | The board should adopt the proposed policies. |
| Who Is Responsible | The school board | |
| Time Frame | The board should adopt new policies by July 1999. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

| **Recommendation 3** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop new procedures and distribute a policy and procedures manual. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | After the board adopts new policies, the superintendent should make the new Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation responsible for reviewing existing procedures and making any changes needed to make them consistent with the board's new policies. |
|  | Step 2: | The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should work with assistant superintendents and other stakeholders to develop a written report showing the changes the district needs to make to its procedures. |
|  | Step 3: | The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review and revise the proposed procedures. |
|  | Step 4: | The superintendent should approve the new procedures and direct the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation to include them and the newly adopted policies into a policies and procedures manual. |
|  | Step 5: | The superintendent should direct the Information Services Department to automate the new policy and procedure manual and to train district staff and board members on the uses of the automated manual. In addition the superintendent may wish to consider publishing the policy and procedures manual on the Internet. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent | |
| Time Frame | The new policy and procedure manual should be published by December 1999. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

*Action Plan 3-2*

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

| **Recommendation 1** |
|---|
| Strategy |
| The board should focus on district policy and the superintendent on day-to-day operation. |

| Action Needed | Step 1: | Each board member should receive initial training on the role of the board and superintendent and annual continuing education. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Step 2: | The board should adopt a policy for making requests for information from the district.  The policy should require all of the board's requests for information to be channeled through the superintendent. |
| | Step 3: | The board should direct the superintendent to disseminate information about its policy to all district staff. |
| | Step 4: | Board members need to become thoroughly familiar with existing district policies.  When the board disagrees with current policy, it should direct the superintendent to draft a new policy for its approval.  Otherwise, the board needs to try to adhere to district policy when responding to requests it receives from the public or from district staff. |
| Who Is Responsible | The school board | |
| Time Frame | The board should have a plan for receiving training and adopt a policy for making requests for information by March 1999. | |
| Fiscal Impact | The annual cost of training for school board members is estimated to be $10,000.  This estimate assumes that each board member attends two training sessions a year at an average cost of $1,000 per session for registration fees, and travel, lodging, and per diem expenses. | |

## Recommendation 2

| Strategies | The superintendent needs to identify and implement strategies for improving communication with the board. | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The superintendent should work with the Florida Association of School Boards to identify strategies school districts use for meeting the informational needs of board members. |
| | Step 2: | The superintendent should consult with the board to determine what strategies may meet their informational needs. |
| | Step 3: | The superintendent should implement strategies most likely to be acceptable to board members. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent | |
| Time Frame | The superintendent should identify and implement strategies no later than March 1999. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

## Recommendation 3

| Strategy | The superintendent and board should take positive action to achieve common goals. | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The superintendent and board need to identify and recognize district accomplishments, including student achievement, school choice, and the construction and renovation of many of the district's schools. |
| | Step 2: | The superintendent and board need to identify the common goals they will pursue over the next five years. |
| | Step 3: | The superintendent and board need to develop and implement strategies for implementing best financial management practices and keep Manatee citizens informed on the progress they've made towards implementing these practices. |

| Who Is Responsible | The board and superintendent |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | The board should fully implement best financial management practices by October 1, 2000. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 3-3*

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

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Clarify the responsibility and authority of principals. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The superintendent should direct the assistant superintendent for Academics to develop a task force comprising the directors of Academic, Support Services, and Business Services divisions, representatives of elementary and secondary principals, and other key stakeholders. |
| | Step 2: The task force should determine the authority principals need to effectively operate their schools as well as the limits that need to be placed on their authority to assure that the district operates in a consistent and cost-effective manner. |
| | Step 3: The task force should develop a matrix showing when principals have the authority to take independent action and when they need to consult with other district staff and with whom they need to consult. |
| | Step 4: When principals have line authority over staff who perform functions that are the responsibility of other departments, such as the food services or maintenance departments, the task force should recommend that principals involve the heads of those departments in the evaluation of those staff. |
| | Step 5: The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review and revise the matrix developed by the task force. |
| | Step 6: The board attorney should review the matrix. |
| | Step 7: The superintendent should submit the matrix to the board to ensure that it adheres to district policy. |
| | Step 8: The board should review and approve the matrix. |
| | Step 9: All principals and assistant principals should receive mandatory training about the matrix and the limits of their authority. |
| | Step 10: The superintendent should direct Information Systems staff to make the matrix available in electronic form and to train staff in how to access it. This training should be mandatory for all principals and assistant principals. |
| | Step 11: The superintendent should adopt a procedure to ensure that the matrix is updated when needed. |
| | Step 12: The superintendent and board need to monitor to ensure that principals adhere to the matrix and take corrective action when they do not adhere to it. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent |
| Time Frame | The matrix should be developed and adopted by March 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | The matrix can be developed with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 3-4*

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

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a five-year strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The superintendent should appoint a steering committee to guide the strategic planning process. The committee should include representatives of the district's board, departments, and schools as well as community stakeholders. |
| | Step 2: The superintendent should direct the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation to serve as staff to the steering committee. |
| | Step 3: The steering committee, in conjunction with the board and superintendent, should hold public hearings to solicit community input on the district's goals and objectives. |
| | Step 4: The steering committee should hold a series of workshops to solicit input from the schools and their stakeholders. |
| | Step 5: The steering committee should solicit input from the board, central administrative staff, and school-based staff. |
| | Step 6: Based on the input it has received, the steering committee and Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should develop a draft of a strategic plan, including measurable goals and objectives and specific strategies, responsibility assignments, and timelines for the superintendent and assistant superintendents. |
| | Step 7: The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review the draft and present it to the board for comments. |
| | Step 8: The steering committee and Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should incorporate their comments into a final draft. |
| | Step 9: The superintendent should present the final draft to the board for approval. |
| | Step 10: The board should approve the plan. |
| Who Is Responsible | The board and superintendent |
| Time Frame | The plan should be completed by March 2000. |
| Fiscal Impact | The plan can be created with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 3-5*

# The District Should Develop Performance Measures to Enable It to Routinely Assess Its Progress Toward Achieving Its Goals

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | The district should routinely assess its progress towards achieving strategic goals and objectives. |
| Action plan | Step 1: The superintendent should direct the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation to work with assistant superintendents to develop strategic measures for each of the district's major programs and functions. |
| | Step 2: In looking at performance measures, the Office of Planning Accountability, and Evaluation needs to consider what programs and functions need to be included. It should not combine performance measures for basic education programs with the measures for programs for exceptional and at-risk students. |
| | Step 3: The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation needs to determine what data the district is already collecting or will be collecting as it implements its new computer system. |
| | Step 4: The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation needs to determine if the district needs to collect additional data and the cost of obtaining that data. |
| | Step 5: The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should make written recommendations for the outcome, output, and input data the district needs to routinely collect to assess the effect of its major programs and functions and the cost of those programs and functions. |
| | Step 6: The superintendent and assistant superintendents need to review and, if necessary, modify the recommended performance measures. |
| | Step 7: The board should review, modify, and approve the measures. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent |
| Time Frame | A complete set of measures should be developed by December 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 3-6*

# The Manatee County School District Should Implement a Number of Actions to Link Performance to the Budget

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Link performance to the budget. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: During the strategic planning process, the superintendent needs to direct the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation to work with the assistant superintendents to identify the strategies they believe will be most effective in attaining the district's strategic goals and objectives. |
| | Step 2: The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should work with assistant superintendents to determine the likely cost of implementing the strategies they deem will be most effective. |
| | Step 3: In addition the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation and assistant superintendents should identify alternative strategies and the likely cost of those strategies. They also should identify changes in current operations that would enable them to invest in the alternative strategies and the amount the district could save by implementing those changes. |
| | Step 4: The Finance director should work with the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation to determine how much the district can afford to invest in the recommended strategies. |
| | Step 5: The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should incorporate the alternative strategies, their likely costs, and the amount the district can invest in the strategies in a written report. It also should give its recommendations concerning which strategies should be implemented given budgetary constraints. |
| | Step 6: The superintendent and assistant superintendents should review the reports and, if necessary, modify the recommendations. |
| | Step 7: The superintendent should forward the report to the board for review and approval. |
| | Step 8: The board should review the report, modify the recommendations as needed, and adopt them. It should then direct the superintendent to base the upcoming budget on the recommendations. |
| Who Is Responsible | The board and superintendent |
| Time Frame | The plan should be completed by March 2000, and the budget for Fiscal Year 2000-2001 should be based on the plan. |
| Fiscal impact | The district can link performance to the budget with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 3-7*

# The District Needs to Take Several Actions to Implement Improvements to Its Information Systems

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Successfully implement the new finance and human resources system. |
| Action Needed | **Step 1:** Business Services and Support Services and Human Resources staff should take a number of actions to carry out the current proposal for implementing the new financial and human resource management information system. These should include<br><br>a. ensuring that staff having the authority to make decisions about financial and human resource issues continue to participate in the planning and implementation process for the new information system;<br><br>b. insisting that the contractor for the new information system provide consultants who are well versed in the administration of K-12 school systems; and<br><br>c. continuing to work well with the contractor's technical staff to ensure successful implementation of the information system.<br><br>**Step 2:** Business Services and Support Services and Human Resources staff should implement additional strategies to ensure the success of the implementation process. These should include<br><br>a. contacting staff of school districts that have gone through the contractor's implementation process to identify areas where they encountered the most difficulties;<br><br>b. assigning the responsibility for accomplishing each implementation function to one individual;<br><br>c. empowering these individuals with authority to make the decisions required to accomplish the function and hold them accountable for completing the function within the planned time frame, or when necessary, within an agreed upon extension of time;<br><br>d. obtaining progress reports every two weeks for the superintendent, the head of Information Services, and the heads of applicable user departments;<br><br>e. obtaining documentation about the new system that users will be able to understand; and<br><br>f. cross-training Information Services personnel on the system in order to ensure that ongoing technical support will be adequate and effective. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendents for Business Services and Support Services and Human Relations |
| Time Frame | These steps should be taken throughout the implementation process. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with allocated resources. |

## Recommendation 2

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Reduce programming backlogs by creating programs that allow administrative and instructional staff to access and analyze information in the student database. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Information Systems should ensure that the new information system contains tools district programming staff can use to create programs that will allow administrative and instructional staff to query the student database to obtain the information they need. |
| | Step 2: The Information Systems director should work with staff from the Academics department and schools to examine current programming requests and identify information needs and the types of queries that would meet those needs. |
| | Step 3: The Information Systems director should direct staff to develop programs that will permit users to make needed queries. |
| | Step 4: The Information Systems director should work with the assistant superintendent for Academics and Personnel director to train administrative and instructional staff on how they can access and analyze information in the student database without requesting assistance from Information Services for assistance. |
| | Step 5: In the interim, the director of Information Systems should work with staff of other departments to change the manner with which they make programming requests by adopting processes that Alachua and Collier school districts use to reduce the number of special programming requests. These processes include taking actions discussed below. |
| |     a. Develop a catalog or manual that specifies the general type of information available in all district-level management information systems and how staff can access this information. Staff should review this manual before requesting special reports from Information Services. This should reduce the number of requests for special reports. |
| |     b. Review the requests for special reports in the backlog and eliminate any that are no longer needed or are not deemed to be high priority. |
| |     c. Implement a policy requiring the heads of departments requesting information and the director of Information Services to sign off on any new requests for specialized reports. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Information Systems |
| Time Frame | The programs and training should be completed by June 2000. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Improve the reliability and accuracy of data contained in the district's management information systems |
| Action Needed | Academics staff should consult with Information Services staff to implement district-level procedures school staff must follow to check the accuracy of information in the student database. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Step 1: | Information Services staff should work with Human Resources staff to provide training to school-based clerks, secretaries, registrars, and others responsible for entering data into the main computer system. The training should include a review of all procedures put in place by district staff to ensure data accuracy. |
| | Step 2: | Academics and Information Services staff should work with Personnel staff to provide training to principals to ensure that they understand the importance of maintaining accurate data. A key component of this is the collection of FTE information. |
| | Step 3: | Academics and Information Services staff should work with Personnel staff to provide training to administrators, managers, principals, and teachers who use district information to emphasize the need for them to accept the responsibility for their data. All users should become the owners of the data and assume full responsibility for its accuracy and completeness. |
| | Step 4: | To better ensure data accuracy, the Academics Department should implement measures to hold responsible parties accountable for incorrect data. The board should review and approve these measures. |
| **Who Is Responsible** | Assistant superintendent for Academics and director of Information Services | |
| **Time Frame** | Training should begin in February 1999 and be ongoing. | |
| **Fiscal Impact** | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

## Recommendation 4

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Improve the reliability and accuracy of data contained in the district's management information systems by developing a process that would reduce the number of unconnected databases in the district. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Survey district staff in order to estimate the number of program-level databases that users have developed to supplement or substitute for information in the district's main information system. |
| | Step 2: | Review the data elements the program-level databases contain and compare them to elements in the district's main information system. |
| | Step 3: | Develop a plan that would eliminate unnecessary databases with the addition of the key data elements to the district's system. |
| | Step 4: | Add these elements to the system and eliminate the unnecessary databases. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Information Services | |
| Time Frame | Should be complete by July 2000. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with allocated resources. | |

*Action Plan 3-8*

# The District Needs to Develop Mechanisms for Guiding and Performing Formal Evaluations of Its Programs

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Conduct formal evaluations of programs and use the results to improve performance. |
| Action Needed | **Step 1:** The superintendent and Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should develop an annual plan for the evaluations to be conducted by the office. |
| | **Step 2:** In developing the plan, the superintendent and office should consider giving priority to evaluations of programs that have not performed according to expectations or are the subject of debate. In addition, the plan should be designed to ensure that all programs are evaluated with a reasonable timeframe. |
| | **Step 3:** In developing the plan, the superintendent should seek input from assistant superintendents, board members, and other stakeholders. |
| | **Step 4:** The superintendent should present the plan to the board. |
| | **Step 5:** The board should review and approve the plan. |
| | **Step 6:** The Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should implement the plan. |
| | **Step 7:** In carrying out the evaluations, the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation should adhere to the Program Evaluation Standards promulgated by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent and the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation |
| Time Frame | The first plan should be complete by March 1999 and evaluations should be conducted during that year. |
| Fiscal impact | The district should be able to staff the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation through transfers from other departments. |

*Action Plan 3-9*

# The District Should Take Several Steps to Evaluate Its Legal Costs and Reduce Its Risk of Lawsuits

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | The district should evaluate its legal costs and, if necessary, take appropriate steps to reduce them. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The board should direct the superintendent to take steps to ensure that the district can readily identify all of its legal costs and whether these costs are due to lawsuits or routine legal work. |
| | Step 2: In breaking down these costs, the district should separate routine legal work, such as attendance at board meetings, from work performed in response to litigation or legal action. |
| | Step 3: The board should direct the superintendent to research comparable legal costs of similar-sized districts.  The research objective should be to see if the district can reduce its routine legal costs either by hiring an in-house attorney to do some of the more routine work now performed by its contract attorney or by changing the terms of its contract.  This research can be conducted in house or through a contract with an entity such as the Florida School Board Association. |
| | Step 4: The board should take steps to implement recommendations that result from this research. |
| Who Is Responsible | The school board |
| Time Frame | The district should segregate costs for legal services and identify the reasons for the costs by November 1998.  The study of other districts should be done by June 1999 and its recommendations implemented when the board attorney's contract ends in November 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Performance Accountability System*

*Action Plan 4-1*

## Develop Goals and Objectives for Major Programs

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop an accountability framework for each program. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop an accountability framework for each program to guide staff through the development of the district's program-level accountability system. The framework should contain a detailed format that includes the items listed below and instructions to guide the development of each item.<br><br>• Program name<br>• Program purpose<br>• Unit administering the program<br>• Person responsible for ensuring that the framework is completed and updated regularly<br>• Program goals<br>• Program objectives<br>• Performance measures by program objective, including a short explanation of how each relates to the program objective<br>• Processes by program objective—the answer to the question, "What processes will you put in place to accomplish this objective?" providing an overview of implementation strategies, the person responsible for implementation, resources needed, and target date<br>• Human resource development—the answer to the question, "What training is needed (and for whom) in order to accomplish this objective?"<br>• Performance evaluation methods—including how often a performance evaluation will be conducted, by whom, and the answer to the question, "How will you know you have progressed toward or successfully completed the objective (your evaluation criteria)?" |
| Who Is Responsible | Planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Provide training on accountability. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Using the concepts in Exhibit 4-6, "Basic Elements of Program Goals and Objectives," as a guide, develop a training program that covers the topics below. |

- The basic concepts of program accountability including goal, objective, performance measure, and evaluation plan development
- The use of the district accountability framework
- The district budget development process including district budget priorities and the connection between program goals and objectives and the allocation of program resources

Step 2: Provide training to each department head and program staff to enable them to develop accountability systems for their programs.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Planning, accountability, and evaluation unit, and budget director |
| Time Frame | February 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop program level goals and objectives. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop 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. Major programs should, at a minimum, include the programs listed below. |

- Basic Education (K-3, 4-8, and 9-12)
- Exceptional Student Education
- Vocational
- At-Risk (Dropout Prevention, Educational Alternatives, English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- Facilities Construction and Facilities Maintenance
- Personnel
- Asset and Risk Management
- Financial Management
- Purchasing
- Transportation
- Food Services
- Safety and Security

Step 2: Identify the purpose of each major program (from federal or state law, grant specifications, etc.) and the primary services provided by the district.

Step 3: Review school improvement plans to identify school-based needs as they relate to specific programs.

Step 4: Using information in Exhibit 4-5, "Basic Elements of Program Goals and Objectives," as a guide, develop short-term and mid-term objectives for each program goal based on the specific, measurable outcomes the district would like program to achieve. Each objective should relate to the program's goals, the program's intent and resources, children served, school needs, districtwide goals, and the district's expectations for the program.

| | |
|---|---|
| | Step 5: Identify key strategies that the district will implement to achieve each program objective. Use these strategies to set priorities for staff members' daily work. |
| | Step 6: Update goals and objectives annually based on legislative changes, changes in district goals, student needs, program resources, needs identified in school improvement plans, and program evaluation results. |
| Who Is Responsible | Program directors, assistant superintendents, other appropriate program staff, and the planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
| Time Frame | March 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 4-2*

# Action Plan to Develop Performance and Cost-Efficiency Measures for Major Programs

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop program performance and cost-efficiency measures and identify data needs. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Review information in Exhibit 4-12, "Basic Elements of Program Performance and Cost Efficiency Measures," and use it as a guide in developing these measures. |
| | Step 2: Schedule periodic meetings to develop measures that indicate progress toward program goals and objectives. |
| | • Include program staff for input and assistance. |
| | • Include input and feedback stakeholders such as parents, community members, and appropriate school district employees (teachers, food service workers, bus drivers, etc.). |
| | • Use the accountability framework developed by the district's Planning, Accountability, and Evaluation unit. |
| | • Identify detailed input and outcome measures and indicators of efficiency and effectiveness. Focus on desired results and outcomes not just on activities. |
| | • Identify how performance measures link to the budget and the measures in the district strategic plan. |
| | Step 3: Clearly define the measure (some measures such as "absenteeism" may mean something quite different, depending on who defines it) and make sure that it measures what is intended. Try to stay away from measures that could easily be misinterpreted. |
| | Step 4: For each performance measure, identify the data needed and provide the information below. |
| | • Who will collect performance data and how often? |
| | • What is the source of the data, e.g., state or district reports? |
| | • In what format is the data needed? |

- How often should the data be collected?
- Who (program staff, department head, assistant superintendent, superintendent, school board) will the data be reported to and how often?
- How should the data be used?

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Program directors and appropriate program staff with the assistance of the planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
| Time Frame | August 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 2 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify data needs and develop a system for approving data requests. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify and prioritize data needs by classifying data into the two categories below.<br><br>• Data currently available, accessible, and in the format needed to determine progress toward program goals and objectives and<br><br>• Data currently either not available, accessible or in the format needed to determine progress toward program goals and objectives.<br><br>Step 2: Establish and implement a districtwide process for approving data requests made to the Information Systems unit. This policy may include review and signoff from department managers or assistant superintendents and how the data relates to program goals and objectives. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendents with the assistance of the management information systems unit |
| Time Frame | August 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 4-3*

# Developing Benchmarks

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop benchmarks. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Review information in Exhibit 4-9, "Basic Elements of Benchmarks," and use it as a guide in developing these benchmarks.<br><br>Step 2: Determine which major programs would benefit most from benchmarking.<br><br>Step 3: Identify key performance measures of cost, quality, and efficiency that should be compared.<br><br>Step 4: For each program, identify a group of about 5 to 10 Florida school districts with which Manatee County School District could compare its performance and cost efficiency. Develop criteria that would help identify comparable school districts such as those listed below. |

- Availability of program
- Location of school district
- Number of students in district
- Number of students served by program
- Urban nature of district
- Socioeconomic status of students

Step 5: For each program, pick other model organizations. These would include government agencies or private companies that have similar programs with which Manatee County School District could compare its performance and cost-efficiency.

Step 6: Contact the peer districts and other benchmarking organizations to ensure the that they

- collect the needed performance data,
- regularly update the data,
- have confidence in data accuracy and reliability, and
- define and report each data the same way as (or in a way that is useful to) Manatee County School District.

Step 7: Identify other standards, such as trend analysis data, minimally acceptable performance, or generally accepted industry standards, to judge program performance or cost-efficiency (especially of commonly provided services such as square footage cleaned per custodian, how often preventative maintenance should be performed on a vehicle, etc.). Identify whether other stakeholders such as the public, teachers, school board members, etc., should be involved in developing these standards.

Step 8: Determine how the data will be used to draw conclusions about Manatee County School District programs. For example, establish standards by determining whether Manatee County School District program performance will be compared to the average of the peer districts, the highest performing organization, the organization with the lowest cost, etc.

Step 9: Set a schedule to collect performance data from benchmarking organizations. Determine the items below.

- Specific school district staff person(s)accountability for collecting benchmark data
- Source for school district and benchmark data
- Timelines for collection and reporting benchmarking data

Step 10: Collect the data from benchmarking organizations. Measure the performance of best-in-class organizations for each performance measure.

Step 11: Measure performance and identify gaps between Manatee County School District programs and those of the benchmarking organizations.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Program directors and appropriate program staff with the assistance of the planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
| Time Frame | October 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 4-4*

# Evaluate District Programs

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop an evaluation schedule and expand program evaluations. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Conduct evaluations, at least annually, of major district programs. Use the list of major programs identified in Action Plan 4-1, page 4-9. |
| | Step 2: | Each evaluation should be in writing and include an assessment of progress toward program goals and objectives developed as described in Action Plan 4-1, page 4-9, using data collected for performance and cost-efficiency measures developed as described in Action Plan 4-2, page 4-14, and benchmarks developed in Action Plan 4-3, page 4-18. |
| | Step 3: | Use the results of annual evaluations to reassess program goals and objectives, revise performance measures and benchmarks (as needed), identify program resource needs for the upcoming year, and identify program staff training needs. |
| | Step 4: | Implement recommendations for program improvement. |
| Who Is Responsible | Program directors and appropriate program staff with the assistance of the planning, accountability, and evaluation unit | |
| Time Frame | February 2000 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

*Action Plan 4-5*

# Increase Use of Evaluation Results

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop an annual report on performance and cost-efficiency of major district programs. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Develop an annual report on the progress toward district strategies plan, which should include a summary of evaluation results of each major program, recommendations for improvement, and future resource needs. This report should be provided to the school board and superintendent. The report should be used to revise the district strategic plan, revise district goals, and develop the district budget for the upcoming year. For more information on the district's strategic plan, refer to page 3-27. |
| | Step 2: | Adopt a district policy that requires the evaluation, accountability, and evaluation unit regularly (e.g., six months after an audit or the annual report is completed) report to the superintendent and school board on the status of recommendation implementation. In cases in which recommendations have not been implemented, the unit should provide justification, such as alternative strategies have been implemented, or rationale when no action is taken. |
| Who Is Responsible | The planning, accountability, and evaluation unit and school board | |

| Time Frame | November 2000 |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with the existing resources. |

*Action Plan 4-6*

# Increase Public Reporting

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Publicly report additional information on the performance and cost-efficiency of major district programs. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Provide an annual report on progress toward the district strategic plan to the various districtwide committees and to others upon request. Refer to Action Plan 4-5, page 4-24, for more information on the annual report. |
| Who Is Responsible | The planning, accountability, and evaluation unit |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Personnel Systems and Benefits*

*Action Plan 5-1*

# Consider Market Value of Services
# When Determining Employee Compensation

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Consider the market value of similar positions in comparable school districts, and when appropriate, the private sector, when determining compensation. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Conduct a general market value comparison of similar positions in comparable school districts. The comparison should include, at a minimum, <br> a. average salaries; <br> b. starting salaries; <br> c. the positions identified in Exhibit 5-12; and <br> d. at least five peer districts. <br> Step 2: Provide the assistant superintendent the written results of the analysis. <br> Step 3: Periodically, on an as-needed basis, conduct a market value comparison of similar positions in comparable school districts before hiring staff for key administrative positions. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |

| Time Frame | April each year |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 2** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Use the results of the market value of services in determining salary increments and bargaining positions. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop and implement a formal procedure to use annually in determining adjustments to salary schedules and the overall annual salary budget. The procedure at a minimum should include an analysis of |
| |    a.  available funding; |
| |    b.  district cost of living indices; and |
| |    c.  analysis of the market value of services provided by district staff |
| | Step 2: These three components should be used, at a minimum, to determine the feasibility of adjustments to salary schedules and annual salary increases |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
| Time Frame | April of each year |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 5-2*

# Improve Staff Development

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Include staff development as a means to increase productivity and achieve overall district and school goals and objectives in the district's strategic plan. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Include staff development as a means to increase productivity and achieve district overall goals and objectives in the district's strategic plan. |
| | Step 2: Appoint a member to the strategic planning steering committee that will represent staff development. |
| | Step 3: Staff development priorities in all departments should be determined based on the goals and priorities developed in the strategic plan. |
| | Step 4: The strategic plan should include measurable objectives and standards that evaluate how well staff development programs help the district reach its goals. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for District Support Services |
| Time Frame | March 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Identify, coordinate, and align all district training programs and resources with overall district and school goals and objectives. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | **Step 1:** The superintendent should direct all schools and departments to identify all training activities and resources being used in the district, including funds and programs earmarked for training purposes. All district units should report this information to staff development personnel by March 1998. Staff development personnel will then compile and disseminate this information to the assistant superintendent. |
| | **Step 2:** The Manatee Council for Professional Development, with input from program staff and the County Office Leadership Team, should evaluate how these training activities and resources align with district and school goals and prioritize future training based on current training provided, staff needs assessments, and overall district and school goals and objectives. |
| | **Step 3:** The council should evaluate gaps in training activities and use this process to identify which scarce training resources should be used to provide the training needed to meet the priorities and desired outcomes of the district. |
| Who Is Responsible | The County Office Leadership Team |
| Time Frame | August 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop and implement a comprehensive orientation package for all district employees that clearly communicates their role in helping the district achieve desired outcomes and the performance the district expects of them in this role. |
| Action Needed | **Step 1:** The personnel director and the Staff Development supervisor should develop a comprehensive orientation package for all district employees by August 1999. |
| | **Step 2:** The focus of this orientation package should be to communicate to all new district employees a clear understanding of their role in helping the district achieve overall district goals and objectives, the performance the district expects of them in this role, and that employees will be evaluated on this performance. |
| | **Step 3:** The orientation package should also include information on applicable procedures, physical facilities, federal and state program requirements, and how to access training and career opportunities. |
| | **Step 4:** This information may be communicated to new employees together through the New Teacher Induction Program and through departmental or site orientation, but it must be communicated to all new district employees. |
| | **Step 5:** The personnel director and the Staff Development supervisor should develop general guidelines for site-level orientation activities. The assistant superintendent for Support Services should report these guidelines to the superintendent and the County Office Leadership Team for implementation throughout the district by August 1999. |
| | **Step 6:** Orientation activities should include a follow-up activity that ensures that new employees can apply the information they have learned. Site supervisors should ascertain if new employees are using orientation information in their jobs, provide guidance and the opportunity for |

| | employees to ask questions about their role in the district or about site-level orientation.  This follow-up activity should take place no less than four weeks after staff begin employment. |
|---|---|
| | Step 7:  This strategy may be accomplished with existing resources. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent responsible for staff development |
| Time Frame | August 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 4** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify the training needs of all district staff through personnel evaluations, employee feedback, and supervisory input to help staff achieve desired district outcomes. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  Supervisors should report the training needs of their employees based on the prior year's performance evaluations and other training needs identified. Employees should be provided an opportunity to identify the types of training needed to their supervisors. Supervisors should aggregate and summarize employee-training needs by June 1999. |
| | Step 2:  Staff Development program staff will coordinate training for supervisors to identify training needs as part of personnel performance evaluation training, as recommended on page 5-30. |
| | Step 3:  Beginning in the 2000-01 school year, supervisors will utilize the new processes and forms to identify training needs and evaluate employee contributions as part of the personnel evaluation process. |
| | Step 4:  Supervisors will identify training needed to improve staff performance and meet overall district and school goals and objectives.  Supervisors will then report these needs to division directors, who will share the information with staff development program staff. |
| | Step 5:  Staff development program staff will aggregate and analyze needs assessment and in-service evaluation data to adjust current training programs and plan future training programs.  Program staff have indicated that new scanning technology and the management information systems, coupled with new assessment and evaluations instruments, should bolster program analytical capacity by the 1999-2000 school year.  Program staff will have more time to devote to analytical functions as part of their oversight role because they will no longer be involved in providing direct services. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for District Support Services |
| Time Frame | August 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 5-3*

# Communicate Performance Expectations to Each Employee

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Inform district staff of general performance expectations. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Communicate general performance expectations to staff using mechanisms such as the district's employee handbook, the school board's web site and new employee orientation (See page 5-23.) |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Communicate performance expectations specific to each position to staff. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop written performance expectations for each position. The expectations should<br><br>a. be based on accurate and up to date job descriptions;<br><br>b. be organized around key performance categories such as productivity, timeliness, quality of work, skills, and professional development;<br><br>c. be developed by managers and supervisors with staff collaboration; and<br><br>d. reflect major performance indicators for each key performance category.<br><br>Step 2: Communicate these expectations to staff.<br><br>Step 3: Train persons conducting evaluations on the utility of these performance expectations.<br><br>Step 4: Use these performance expectations in the evaluation of staff. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
| Time Frame | July 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 5-4*

# Periodically Evaluate Personnel Practices

| | Recommendation 1 |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the district's personnel practices. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a system to assess the effectiveness of the district's personnel management office, including the effectiveness of its personnel practices. Develop goals, objectives, standards, and benchmarks to assess performance. |
| | Step 2: Evaluate the Office of Personnel Management. |
| | Step 3: Report, in writing, the results of the evaluation to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources. |
| | Step 4: Use the results to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of Personnel Management. Refer to the action plan for evaluating district programs on page 4-22 (Action Plan 4-4), in the Performance Accountability section, for detailed step by step directions. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director and Office of Personnel Management staff |
| Time Frame | October 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |
| | Recommendation 2 |
| Strategy | Determine if the ethnicity of district staff compares to that of its community and students. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Annually, conduct a written analysis of the ethnicity of the school districts staff compared to that of its community and students. Data for the analysis is available from the Department of Education's "Staff in Florida's Public Schools" statistical brief and the Florida Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic research. |
| | Step 2: Provide results of the analysis on an annual basis to the school board and appropriate district staff. Utilize the results to focus future recruiting efforts. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |
| | Recommendation 3 |
| Strategy | Identify the absenteeism rates for teachers and school site administrators and compare Manatee County to peer districts. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Verify accuracy of data collected and submitted to the Department of Education. Develop a formal process to ensure data is verified at the school site when appropriate. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Step 2: Use information, which is available from the Department of Education, to identify the average days of school site teacher and administrator absences in Manatee County and its peer district. |
| | Step 3: Compare the absenteeism rates to Manatee County's peer districts. |
| | Step 4: Develop conclusions and report, in writing, to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources. |
| | Step 5: Conduct an analysis of teacher and administrator absenteeism by school to identify schools with staff that have the highest number of absences and develop a strategy to reduce the number of absences. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director and principals |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 4

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify the absenteeism rate of district administrative positions and compare Manatee County to peer districts. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify key administrator positions, such as the positions identified in Exhibit 5-13, and determine the absenteeism rate in Manatee County. |
| | Step 2: Define absenteeism to ensure consistency of data collected. |
| | Step 3: Collect similar data from peer districts and compare absenteeism rates. |
| | Step 4: Identify positions with high absenteeism rates based on comparison to peer districts and develop a strategy to reduce high absenteeism rates. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director and principals |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 5

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify the turnover rate of district administrator positions and compare Manatee County to peer districts. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify key administrator positions, such as the positions identified in Exhibit 5-13, and determine the turnover rate in Manatee County. |
| | Step 2: Define turnover to ensure consistency of data collected. |
| | Step 3: Collect similar data from peer districts and compare turnover rates. |
| | Step 4: Identify positions with high turnover rates based on comparison to peer districts and develop a strategy to reduce the high turnover rates. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director and principals |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 5-5*

# Properly and Efficiently Maintain Personnel Records

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify an alternative method to retain leave records. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Determine where leave forms should be maintained or if paper leave forms are necessary.<br><br>Step 2: Develop and submit revised policy for board consideration and approval.<br><br>Step 3: Develop procedures to implement board policy. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director and Finance director |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Increase the use of technology to reduce and eliminate unnecessary paperwork. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The new management information system should be designed to<br><br>    a. reduce the flow of paper work;<br><br>    b. integrate personnel and payroll;<br><br>    c. tie in with the applicant data system;<br><br>    d. eliminate the need to keep state required information on personal computers;<br><br>    e. eliminate the double entry of certain personnel information; and<br><br>    f. link to the student data base (i.e., course numbers). |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services and Personnel director |
| Time Frame | September 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 3 | |
| Strategy | Develop a formal records management program that includes personnel records. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Determine whether services need to be required from the Bureau of Archives and Record Management to improve the districts record management program.<br><br>Step 2: Implement decision in Step 1 to improve the district's records management.<br><br>Step 3: Implement recommendations of review. |
| Who Is Responsible | Warehouse manager and records specialist |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 5-6*

# Ensure That Employee Benefit Costs Are Reasonable

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Implement procedures to periodically review the cost of employee benefits insurance. |
| Action Needed | **Step 1:** Develop procedures requiring staff to regularly review employee benefits that, at a minimum, include developing appropriate benchmarks and standards; identifying and comparing benefits to comparable peer school districts; if appropriate, identifying and comparing benefits to other government agencies or private industry; comparing both the benefits and the costs to provide the benefits, including board and employee shares when applicable; and preparing an analysis of benefits along with staff recommendations regarding appropriateness of benefits offered. |
| | **Step 2:** The district should identify options to reduce the cost of its health insurance coverages to be more in line with its peer districts.  The average peer district's cost for single coverage is $1,814.46 per year, which is 13% less than Manatee's total cost for single coverage.  The average peer districts costs for family coverage is $4,636.94 per year, which is 24% less than Manatee for family coverage.  To reduce these costs, the district will need to revise its benefits and consider providing other health care plans such as those offered by HMO providers.  If the district elects to continue its current coverages in addition to HMO coverages in addition to HMO coverages, employees should be allowed to select this option and to pay the additional cost. |
| | **Step 3:** The district should consider expanding its coverage options to include employee plus spouse and employee plus one plans.  These options allow the employer and employee to recognize that these coverages cost less than the regular family option.  These coverage options provide employees an option to obtain coverages that better meet the size and composition of their families. |
| | **Step 4:** The district should consider revising its contribution rate for single and family coverages to be more in line with its peer districts.  Contribution rates would also have to be developed for employee plus spouse and employee plus one coverages.  Such revisions should be developed in conjunction with a new benefits package.  If the district elects to pay 100% of single coverage for all employees, the net savings to the district would be approximately $4.25 million annually.  However, if the district elects to pay 100% of single coverage and contribute no more than highest peer district for family coverage and split the savings for the other family options, this option would save the district about $2.75 million annually. |
| | **Step 5:** Present results to the board for consideration. |
| Who Is Responsible | Personnel director |
| Time Frame | April of every year |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources.  However, the district could save about $10.25 million over five years if the district implemented OPPAGA's recommendations identified above. |

# *Use of Lottery Proceeds*

*Action Plan 6-1*

## Define Educational Enhancement

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Define educational enhancement. |
| Action Needed | Implement a coordinated broad-based effort to develop a definition of educational enhancement. The district's finance director should coordinate steps 1-3. |
| | Step 1: The county office team, director of school management, and other interested school district staff should develop a definition of enhancement based on document input from stakeholders outside the district school system [joint parent organization (JPO), chamber of commerce, etc., and school site-based staff, SAC members, teachers, parents, etc.]. Input should be obtained from stakeholders in the form of formal meetings. |
| | Step 2: The district's Finance director should present the definition developed by the stakeholder to the school board during a meeting or workshop to provide board members an opportunity to be involved in developing the district's definition of enhancement. |
| | Step 3: The school board needs to adopt a definition of educational enhancement that clearly defines enhancement and goes beyond identifying types of appropriate lottery fund expenditures. |
| Who Is Responsible | School board |
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 6-2*

## Ensure That the District Uses Its Lottery Funds Consistent With Its Definition of Enhancement

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a procedure to ensure that lottery fund expenditures are consistent with the district's definition of enhancement after the district defines enhancement. |

| Action Needed | Step 1: | The Budget Office needs to develop a procedure to ensure that its allocation of district discretionary lottery funds is consistent with the districts definition of enhancement. At a minimum, the procedure should include the following elements: |
|---|---|---|
| | | • a form which identifies the districts expenditures and the rationale for each type of expenditure as to how it is consistent with the districts definition of enhancement; |
| | | • the signature of the Finance director; and |
| | | • approval by the county office team. |
| | Step 2: | Develop procedures that relate to the expenditure of lottery funds by district staff and that at a minimum include: |
| | | • a process to ensure lottery funds allocated in the budget do not exceed the district's appropriation of lottery funds; |
| | | • proviso requirements (define enhancement and identify types of expenditures that are considered consistent with its definition of enhancement); |
| | | • a rationale for why the expenditures are consistent with the districts definition of enhancement; and |
| | | • benefits derived from various types of expenditures. |
| | Step 3: | Develop procedures that relate to the expenditure of lottery funds by SACs, that at a minimum include: |
| | | • the SAC's requirements regarding the expenditure of funds; |
| | | • accounting guidelines; and |
| | | • reporting requirements. |
| | Step 4: | Include the procedures that relate to the expenditure of lottery funds by SACs in the school's business practice manual that is currently being developed by the Finance director. |
| | Step 5: | Submit the procedures identified above to the state Department of Education as required in proviso language. |
| Who Is Responsible | Finance director | |
| Time Frame | March 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

| **Recommendation 2** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a mechanism to collect and report information on how the SACs spend their lottery funds | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Develop a standardized SAC expenditure statement that at a minimum includes |
| | | • types of expenditures; |
| | | • amounts of expenditures; |
| | | • who benefits from expenditures; |
| | | • indication whether an expenditure is directly related to implementing the school improvement plan (cite the goal and objective(s) the funds are being used to implement and how the expenditure is expected to assist towards meeting the goal); |

- indication whether an expenditure is new or recurring from prior year; and

- SAC chair signature to validate that SAC elected to spend its funds on the expenditures identified on the form.

Step 2: Require SACs to bi-annually submit an expenditure statement to the Finance director in May and December.

Step 3: Create a summary of SAC expenditure statements. Provide this summary to appropriate district staff including staff that supervise principals, the assistant superintendent of support services, and the school board.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Finance director |
| Time Frame | March 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Inform SAC of available funds (new allocations and carry forward). |
| Action Needed | Develop and implement a strategy to ensure that SAC members are aware of available funds to be used at the discretion of the council. |
| | Step 1: In writing, communicate to the principal and the SAC chair the funds available to the SAC. |
| | Step 2: The SAC and/or principal should communicate the information about the available funds to each SAC member during an appropriate meeting at the beginning of each new school year. |
| Who Is Responsible | Finance director |
| Time Frame | March 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 6-3*

# Improve the Process by Which
# District Accounts for the Use of Its Lottery Funds

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Use written guidelines to ensure the appropriate management of lottery funds. |

| Action Needed | Step 1: | Develop written guidelines that, at a minimum, include |
|---|---|---|
| | | a. the requirement to allocate lottery funds from the budget equal to the appropriation from the state; |
| | | b. a procedure to ensure the district uses a unique project number for the expenditure of its lottery funds; |
| | | c. a procedure to ensure expenditures are consistent with the district's definition of enhancement – describe how the expenditures are consistent with the definition; |
| | | d. a process to evaluate the benefit the district is receiving as a result of how the district is spending its lottery funds; and |
| | | e. a procedure to provide the results of the benefits analysis to the public, school board, and appropriate district staff. |
| Who Is Responsible | Finance director | |
| Time Frame | February 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

*Action Plan 6-4*

# Annually Evaluate and Report the Extent to Which Lottery Fund Expenditures Have Enhanced Student Education

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Annually evaluate the benefits of projects and activities supported with lottery funds. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Develop a procedure for district staff to use to ensure that the projects and activities supported by district discretionary funds are evaluated and the benefits identified.  These procedures, at a minimum, should include |
| | | • a written document from the district that identifies the methodology and results of its evaluation; |
| | | • a clear communication in writing of the goals and measurable objectives the district has established for how it uses its lottery funds and a determination whether the goals were achieved; and |
| | | • the results of the evaluation to be annually reported to the school board and the public. |

Step 2: Develop a procedure for SACs to use to ensure that the projects and activities supported with its lottery funds are evaluated and the benefits identified.

- The SAC should document the methodology it used to assess the effects of its lottery-funded programs or activities and identify the SAC members involved in the assessment.

- The SAC should report its evaluation results in writing to its members and other interested parties.

- The SAC should report its evaluation results in its school improvement plan.

- The SAC should submit its evaluation results together with its expenditure statement (refer to recommendation 2, page 6-11) to the Finance director.

- The SAC should use the results of its evaluation in determining future lottery fund expenditures.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | School improvement specialist |
| Time Frame | May 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 2 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Communicate to the public, on a quarterly basis, how the district is using its lottery funds, including the benefits derived from the use of these funds. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a process to inform the school district community and the general public, on a quarterly basis, how the district is using its lottery funds and the benefits associated with using these funds. The community relations coordinator for the district needs to ensure lottery expenditures and benefits are reported quarterly<br><br>• in the Manatee Educator publication to inform school district staff;<br><br>• in the Perspectives newsletter to inform parents and students; and<br><br>• in press releases to inform the general public and community of the Manatee County School District. |
| Who Is Responsible | Finance director |
| Time Frame | November 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Use of State and District Construction Funds*

*Action Plan 7-1*

## Improve Cost Efficiency in the Use of Construction Funds

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Examine the year-round schedule opportunities. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Form committee of educators and parents to examine year-round schedules and make a recommendation to the Board regarding the possible implementation in Manatee County. This committee should look at programs that have been implemented in other districts and evaluate the possibility of creating pilot programs in Manatee County. |
| | Step 2: Develop multi-track year-round schedules for use in the selected schools. The schedule should reflect at least a four-track system so that the capacity of the facility will be increased by 25%. (one-quarter of the students are on break at any given time). |
| | Step 3: Present results of the committee findings and possible multi-track year-round schedules for the Board's consideration. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | Form Committee - Fall 1998 |
| | Report to board - Spring 1999 |
| | Implement year-round schedule (if approved) – 1999–2000 year |
| Fiscal Impact | This could reduce the need for facilities by 2.5% resulting in an annual savings of $880,000. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Implement value engineering. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Form value engineering teams consisting of educators and design professionals. |
| | Step 2: The team will then perform a value engineering analysis on all major projects (new schools and remodeling in excess of 25% of total value). This process should be completed at the completion of the schematic design phase so there is sufficient information regarding the project but it is not too late to make cost saving changes. |
| | Step 3: Implement cost savings recommendations as appropriate. The cost savings will be based primarily on the examination of systems and materials proposed. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities Planning |
| Time Frame | Implement value engineering design savings – January 2000 year |
| Fiscal Impact | This could reduce construction costs by an average of 0.5% resulting in an annual savings of $146,000. |
| **Recommendation 3** | |
| Strategy | Develop facilities design manual. |

| Action Needed | Step 1: | Develop a design manual that will increase standardized materials and maintenance standards for all new and/or renovated schools. Specifically, the design manual, where practical, should allow only two or three manufacturers of products for items that are used regularly throughout the district. (i.e., lockers, toilet accessories, plumbing fixtures, food service equipment, etc.)  This standardization will save costs over time because excessive parts stocking will not be required and training on the repair of multiple type of equipment will not be necessary. |
|---|---|---|
| | Step 2: | Products approved for inclusion in the design manual should be proven products of performance that have been reviewed and approved by both facilities construction and operations. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities Planning | |
| Time Frame | Develop and Implement design manual standards – July 1999. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This could result in an annual savings of $10,000. | |

*Action Plan 7-2*

# Minimize Maintenance and Operations Costs in New Facilities

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Include maintenance and operations personnel on the committee to develop a design manual in order to better identify standardized materials that are cost effective from the users point of view. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Appoint maintenance and operations personnel to the design manual committee. |
| | Step 2: | Include personnel representing both district wide and site level maintenance functions. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities Planning | |
| Time Frame | Form committee - fall 1998 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This could be implemented with existing resources. | |
| Recommendation 2 | | |
| Strategy | Include maintenance and operations personnel on all facility project teams. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | When facility project teams are created, for both the development of educational specifications and the project team, include personnel that are currently involved in the maintenance and operations aspect of the facility. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities Planning | |
| Time Frame | Begin with any new committees formed. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This could be implemented with existing resources. | |

# *Facilities Construction*

*Action Plan 8-1*

## Establish Written Procedures for Educational Facilities Planning

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | The district should provide written procedures that will allow for full implementation of the flexible organizational chart and provide a strong framework for carrying out the facilities planning function of the district. The facility needs are well documented within the five-year plan and, since the amount of actual construction will depend on the funding availability, the procedures will need to allow for a reasonable process to be utilized as the needs and resources change. |
| Action Needed | Provide written procedures that will:<br><br>• Determine positions within the organizational chart that need to be immediately filled in order to carry out the first year of the five-year plan.<br><br>• Plan the number of positions (and corresponding funding level necessary) for each year of the facility plan.<br><br>• Provide for annually budgeting according to the facilities need<br><br>• Streamline the hiring process so positions can be filled quickly. |
| Who Is Responsible | Board of Education – funding and approvals<br>Assistant facilities director – development of procedures |
| Time Frame | Development of Procedures – immediately<br>Funding of positions – as workload dictates |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Procedures and guidelines need to be developed and implemented that will guide the personnel involved with the facility planning process. The implementation of the new organizational chart will require that both new job descriptions and facility planning procedures be developed. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Clearly define the responsibilities that are associated with each position included in the flexible organizational chart. This needs to include a clear definition of responsibility for each project, including financial responsibility.<br><br>Step 2: Thoroughly develop the policies and guidelines, with input from department staff.<br><br>Step 3: Submit policies and guidelines to the assistant superintendent for review and ultimately to the board for approval.<br><br>Step 4: Clearly define the role that any construction management process will have in the facilities process.<br><br>Step 5: Periodically review policies in order to keep them current and eliminate any that are outdated. |

| Who Is Responsible | Assistant director of Facilities Construction |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | Development of Policies and Procedures – Fall 1998<br>Adoption and Implementation – Spring 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 8-2*

## Establish a Standing Facilities Committee

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Establish a facilities standing committee. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Assistant superintendent should develop criteria for the committee and present to the board for approval.  At that point solicitations should be made for staff and community members to serve.<br><br>Step 2: Superintendent should appoint facilities committee members.<br><br>Step 3: Facilities director should coordinate committee activities. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | Development of Criteria  -  Fall 1998<br>Board Approval – January 1999<br>Committee appointed and in operation – Fall 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 8-3*

## Assign One Person With the Responsibility to Keep Construction Projects Within Budget

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Assign one person with the responsibility and authority to keep construction projects within budget. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Assign the responsibility of keeping construction projects within budget to the assistant director for Facilities within the new flexible organizational chart.<br><br>Step 2: Clearly define the role of the assistant director within the new organizational chart, with the responsibility for the overall construction budget, and communicate this to all district personnel.<br><br>Step 3: Define, within the position description for the assistant director, the qualifications necessary.  These should include experience in both educational facility planning and construction process. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities |
| Time Frame | January 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 8-4*

# Assign the Budget Oversight for Each Project or Group of Projects to a Single Project Manager

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Assign the budget oversight for each project or group of projects to a single project manager. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Clearly define the role of the project manager within the new organizational chart with the responsibility for budget oversight. |
| | Step 2: Define the qualifications necessary to carry out the role of project manager. |
| | Step 3: Communicate the responsibilities and qualifications to district staff. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities |
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 8-5*

# Form a Districtwide Site Selection Committee

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Form a districtwide site selection committee. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Development of criteria for the committee along with a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities. |
| | Step 2: Secure board approval and solicit committee members based on the adopted criteria. The criteria to include the committee representation, who will work with the committee and that all members will be free from conflict of interest. |
| Who Is Responsible | Superintendent for the formation of the committee, the site and planning manager for the assistance to the committee. |
| Time Frame | January 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Include an architect and local government planner on the site selection committee. |
| Action Needed | In the development of criteria for the committee, include the need for architectural and community planner representation. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 8-6*

## Conduct a Thorough Review of All Facilities

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Conduct a thorough review of all facilities to determine and rank physical condition, educational condition, technological readiness, and utilization rate. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Determine the standards to be utilized. Base the facility condition on the program needs. Include in the standards a physical condition analysis, educational suitability analysis, and technological readiness analysis. |
| | Step 2: Board approval of condition assessment |
| | Step 3: Conduct condition assessment based on criteria developed. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities and Construction |
| Time Frame | September 2000 |
| Fiscal Impact | The district's cost to implement this recommendation will be approximately $150,000. |

*Action Plan 8-7*

## Development of a Process of Architect Evaluation

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a formal process for architect evaluation. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a process within each project team for formal architect evaluation. |
| | Step 2: Utilize the results when selecting future architectural services. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | Fall 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 8-8*

## Develop Guidelines for the Development of Educational Specifications

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop guidelines for the development of educational specifications. |

| Action Needed | Step 1: | Develop guidelines regarding the general statements that are to be included in the educational specifications for each major project. These will provide guidance to educational specifications committees regarding the need for project rationale, historical perspectives, etc. They will also provide district standards regarding the size of instructional spaces, square footage costs, etc. |
|---|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | | Fall 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 8-9*

# Formation of Educational Specification Committees and the Development of Educational Specifications for Each Major Project

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | | Formation of education specification committee and the development of a complete set of educational specifications for each major project. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Appointment of educational specification committees. The development of educational specifications by the committee, with architect input, for each major project. The committees would work within the guidelines prepared by the district. |
| Who Is Responsible | | Site administrators to recommend educational specification committee appointments and ensure their completion. |
| Time Frame | | Educational committees for each project— beginning 1999-2000 year. |
| Fiscal Impact | | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 8-10*

# Utilization of the Educational Specifications in the Evaluation of the Design Solution

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | | At the value engineering phase, and at the completion of each project, evaluate the final design solution based on the program goals as defined in the educational specifications. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | A formal procedure should be developed to ensure that the educational program is included as a part of the value engineering review and that there is a complete post occupancy evaluation based on the ability of the design to meet the goals as specified in the educational specifications. |
| Who Is Responsible | | Site administrators and Facilities director |
| Time Frame | | Process completed for all projects beginning in the 1999-2000 year |

| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
|---|---|

*Action Plan 8-11*

## Conducting an Analysis of Utilizing the Traditional System or an Alternative System of Facilities Construction

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Conduct a thorough analysis of the pros and cons, including the possible costs and cost savings of project management, construction management, design build and traditional design-bid processes. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Evaluate the costs incurred and the cost savings (if any) that have occurred in both Manatee County and other school districts when alternative construction processes have been utilized. |
| | Step 2: Evaluate findings and provide a recommendation to the board. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent |
| Time Frame | January 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | Implementing this recommendation will save the district $3,700,000 over the next five years. |

*Action Plan 8-12*

## Conducting Post-Occupancy Evaluations

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Regularly conduct post-occupancy evaluations. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop procedure to ensure that post occupancy evaluations regularly occur and include educational adequacy, function, safety, efficiency, and suggestions for future improvements. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities and Construction |
| Time Frame | October 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 8-13*

## Analyze Maintenance and Operations Costs at Recently Completed Facilities

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Analyze maintenance and operations costs at recently completed facilities. |

| Action Needed | Step 1: | Develop a procedure to ensure that post-occupancy evaluations include an analysis of the maintenance and operations costs. Compare these costs with other district facilities. |
|---|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities and Construction | |
| Time Frame | Include with the implementation of post-occupancy evaluations – beginning in the fall of 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

# *Facilities Maintenance*

## *Action Plan 9-1*

## **Develop Board Approved Guidelines**

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategies | Develop board-approved written guidelines for the following items: | |
| | • Replacement and selection of equipment | |
| | • Purchasing of supplies and materials | |
| | • Standards for maintenance of facilities | |
| | • Maintenance and operations budget criteria | |
| | • Personnel staffing levels | |
| | • Personnel training | |
| | • Personnel accountability, productivity and performance standards | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations, in conjunction with the department supervisors, will prepare draft guidelines for the procedures. |
| | Step 2: | The director will present the draft guidelines to the board for review and comment. |
| | Step 3: | The director will revise the guidelines as appropriate. |
| | Step 4: | The director shall submit to the board to consider for approval. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations | |
| Time Frame | December 1998 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

## *Action Plan 9-2*

## **Develop and Improve Staffing Formulas**

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategies | Develop a staffing formula for the maintenance trades. |

| Action Needed | Step 1: | The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations, in conjunction with the department supervisors, will research staffing formulas. |
| | Step 2: | The director and supervisors will establish the factors which affect work load for each trade. These factors will be related to existing staffing levels and the amount of work order backlog and the amount of deferred maintenance as identified in the five-year plan. |
| | Step 3: | The director and the supervisors will develop a staffing formula which will enable the district to eliminate all deferred maintenance in five years and maintain the facilities to the district standards. |
| | Step 4: | The director shall submit the staffing formula to the board for review and approval. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations | |
| Time Frame | June 1998 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

| Recommendation 2 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategies | Adjust the current custodial staffing formula to reflect a staffing level of 1:19,000 | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | The supervisor of Sanitation and Grounds will adjust the current custodial staffing formula so that it produces a staffing level of 1:19,000 |
| | Step 2: | The supervisor shall submit the revised formula to the board for review and approval. |
| Who Is Responsible | Supervisor of Sanitation and Grounds | |
| Time Frame | December 1998 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

| Recommendation 3 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategies | Develop a custodial staffing budget to reflect a staffing level of 1:19,000. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | After reviewing and approving the staffing formula, the board shall consider budgeting the additional funds for achieving the staffing formula. |
| Who Is Responsible | School board | |
| Time Frame | January 1998 | |
| Fiscal Impact | If the board approves a staffing level of 1:19,000 square feet, this would require approximately $300,000 annually. | |

*Action Plan 9-3*

# Update Job Descriptions

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Expedite the process of updating the job descriptions for the Maintenance and Operations departments. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Contact the Office of Personnel Management and establish a timeline for the review of the new job descriptions. |
| | Step 2: | Make all necessary revisions and updates. |

Step 3:   Submit revised job descriptions to the board for review and approval.

| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | August 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 9-4*

# Develop Performance Standards and Improve Staff Performance

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategies | Develop performance standards for frequently repeated maintenance tasks. The standards shall clearly define the task and the number of staff hours necessary to complete the task in an efficient manner. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:   The supervisors of Building Maintenance, Internal Controls, and Sanitation and Grounds shall identify tasks, which are appropriate for the application of performance standards. |
| | Step 2:   The supervisors shall research any existing industry/military standards, which are applicable. |
| | Step 3:   Utilizing the work order tracking software, the supervisors and their lead forepersons shall develop performance standards for the most commonly repeated tasks. |
| | Step 4:   The supervisors and the lead forepersons shall hold staff meetings to explain the performance standards.  The standards shall be made available to all staff members.  Sanitation and Grounds should communicate the performance standards for custodians to the site administrators. |
| | Step 5:   The supervisors shall track the performance of their staff as measured against the performance standards for six months and adjust the performance standards as needed to reflect the most efficient standards. |
| | Step 6:   The director shall review the performance standards with the board. |
| | Step 7:   The board shall approve the use of the performance standards for the performance evaluations of staff. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations and the supervisors of Building Maintenance, Internal Controls, and Sanitation and Grounds |
| Time Frame | September 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Develop a training program for the maintenance and operations staff which is targeted at improving job performance. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:   The director and supervisors of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations departments shall meet with the appropriate staff of the Staff Development Department and outline a training program for the |

| | staff. |
|---|---|
| | Step 2: The Staff Development Department shall develop training courses which meet the goals and objectives established in Step 1. |
| | Step 3: The board shall review and approve the training program and budget the necessary funds to implement the program. |
| | Step 4: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations shall implement the training program. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations |
| Time Frame | June 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 9-5*

# Develop a Staff Development Program

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff in the areas of job skills, job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations and his supervisors will meet with the respective staffs to determine the types of training the staffs feel are needed. |
| | Step 2: The director and the supervisors shall meet with the Staff Development staff and develop staff training in the following areas at the least:<br>• job safety,<br>• team work,<br>• use of tools,<br>• interpersonal communications,<br>• work habits, and<br>• job skills. |
| | Step 3: Staff Development shall prepare a training schedule, which allows for all Maintenance and Operations staff to receive at least two training sessions per year. |
| | Step 4: The director of Facilities shall develop a training budget based on the schedule prepared by Staff Development. |
| | Step 5: The director of Facilities and the director of Staff Development shall present the training curriculum, schedule, budget, and expected outcomes to the board. |
| | Step 6: The board shall review, revise and consider the approval of the training program. |
| | Step 7: The program will be evaluated annually. Staff feedback will be part of the basis for the evaluation. |
| Who Is Responsible | The directors of Facilities and Staff Development |

| Time Frame | December 1999 |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 9-6*

# Develop Budget Guidelines for Maintenance and Operations

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop guidelines for budgeting in each budget category for maintenance and operations. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations and the director of Finance and budget shall work together to develop guidelines for budgeting in each budget category for maintenance and operations.<br><br>Step 2: The directors shall review the guidelines with the board.<br><br>Step 3: The director of Facilities shall use the guidelines in developing the next budget. |
| Who Is Responsible | Directors of Facilities and Budget and Finance |
| Time Frame | December 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Associate the goals and objectives of the maintenance and operations department with budget amounts. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Department supervisors shall identify the departments goals and objectives on the departmental budget worksheets.<br><br>Step 2: The supervisors shall develop the costs necessary to achieve these goals and objectives.<br><br>Step 3: The director shall review and approve the budgets which are based on the goals and objectives.<br><br>Step 4: The board shall review and consider approving the budgets which are based on the goals and objectives. |
| Who Is Responsible | The department supervisors |
| Time Frame | Annually |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 3** | |
| Strategy | Develop a long range (10-year) maintenance plan which will eliminate all the deferred maintenance in the district and not allow new projects to occur. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations shall develop a 10-year budget plan based on the current list of identified needs.<br><br>Step 2: The board shall review and consider the budget plan. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations. |
| Time Frame | July 1999 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | The long-range maintenance plan can be developed with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 9-7*

## Effectively Provide Adequately Maintained Facilities in Accordance with Existing Facility Standards

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a long-range (five-year) plan which identifies the manpower, budget, and equipment needs to meet the goals and objectives of the plan. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director and the supervisors shall analyze the existing list of identified needs for improvements to facilities and include all needs which have been removed from the list due to lack of funds or manpower. |
| | Step 2: The director and the supervisors shall project manpower, budget and equipment needs necessary to complete all the identified needed facility improvements. |
| | Step 3: The director and supervisors shall prioritize the needs and develop a five-year plan with clearly stated goals and objectives for each year. The plan shall project manpower, budget, and equipment needs for each year. |
| | Step 4: The director shall present the long-range plan to the board. |
| | Step 5: The board shall review and consider approving the plan. |
| Who Is Responsible | The director and supervisors of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department |
| Time Frame | April 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Develop and implement an annual survey of the customers of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations shall oversee the completion of the existing customer survey. |
| | Step 2: The results of the current survey shall be used to establish the format and content of an annual survey. The director will implement the necessary mechanism so that the annual survey is conducted at the same time every year by a responsible staff person. |
| | Step 3: The results of the annual surveys shall be reported to the board and used to improve the operations of the department. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations |
| Time Frame | June 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop management practices which utilize work order completion data to more effectively manage the department. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director and supervisors of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations should design work order data reports which can be used to evaluate the responsiveness of the department, the productivity of the staff, and to project work schedules.<br><br>Step 2: The work load control manager should produce the reports on a monthly basis and distribute them to the director and supervisors.<br><br>Step 3: The director and supervisors should meet monthly to analyze the data and develop strategies to improve the effectiveness of the department. |
| Who Is Responsible | The director and supervisors of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department |
| Time Frame | January 1999 and ongoing |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 9-8*

# Prioritize Establishment of Inventory Tracking System

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop plan to prioritize the establishment of an inventory tracking system . |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities, Maintenance and Operations will meet with the manager of the Warehouse and determine the necessary steps to the establishment of an inventory tracking system.<br><br>Step 2: The director and the manager will identify any additional manpower required to input all inventory into the new software system. |
| Who Is Responsible | Director of the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department |
| Time Frame | April 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 9-9*

# Develop External Benchmarks for Health and Safety

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategies | Use external benchmarks in determining a cost-effective manner of meeting health and safety standards. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities shall meet with the supervisor of Sanitation and Grounds to identify the appropriate benchmarks and appropriate districts to measure the cost-effectiveness of the district. |

| Step 2: | The supervisor shall research the benchmarks, develop comparisons of the district to the benchmarks and prepare a report. Some benchmarks might be those noted below. |

- Ratio of custodians to gross square feet
- Cost of cleaning supplies per gross square feet
- Number of staff accidents per staff
- Number of student accidents per student
- Number of security staff per facility

Step 3: The supervisor and the director shall present the report to the board.

| Who Is Responsible | Supervisor of Sanitation and Grounds |
| --- | --- |
| Time Frame | December 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 9-10*

## Increase the Accessibility of All Facilities

| Recommendation 1 | |
| --- | --- |
| Strategies | Increase the accessibility of all district facilities to persons with disabilities. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The director of Facilities shall review the most current facility review for accessibility. If one has not been completed within the last five years, he shall have one done.<br><br>Step 2: The director shall develop a schedule for the completion of all necessary projects to eliminate any impediments to accessibility.<br><br>Step 3: The director shall review the schedule and cost of the projects with the board.<br><br>Step 4: The board shall review, revise, and approve the schedule and budget. |
| Who Is Responsible | The director of Facilities and the board |
| Time Frame | Ongoing for probably the next five years |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

# *Student Transportation*

*Action Plan 10-1*

## Develop Performance Benchmarks

| Recommendation 1 | |
| --- | --- |
| Strategy | Adopt cost-comparison and other performance benchmarks as appropriate for both student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance. |

Action Needed    Step 1:   Review benchmarks that are appropriate, feasible, and useful for both student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance. Selected benchmarks should support the district strategic plan. Staff should consider the following list of performance measures for student transportation operations.

a.   Cost per mile for school bus operations

b.   Failure to furnish sufficient manpower to transport students (trips missed), measured as incidents per month

c.   Failure to comply with pick-up or delivery schedules within prescribed time ranges (late arrivals), measured as incidents per month

d.   Customer service evaluation rating as good, as measured by routine customer service surveys of principals and parents

e.   Number of all accidents, measured as incidents per 100,000 miles

f.   Number of all preventable accidents, measured as incidents per 100,000 miles

g.   Parent complaints, measured by number of phone calls and categorized by type of complaint (on-time, discipline, safety concerns, vehicle maintenance, driver performance, etc.)

Step 2:   Staff should also consider this list of performance measures for vehicle maintenance.

a.   Vehicle re-repairs, measured as incidents per month or percent of total monthly maintenance cost

b.   Failure to certify school buses, measured as incidents per month or percentage of total monthly maintenance cost

c.   Down time of buses, measured as days out of service

d.   Number of breakdowns per 100,000 miles

e.   Maintenance cost for each vehicle, measured against average for all comparable vehicles

f.   Turnaround time for scheduled and corrective maintenance by type of vehicle

g.   Vehicle maintenance hours as a percentage of total hours charged

h.   Vehicle to mechanics ratio

i.   Average maintenance cost per mile by type of school bus

j.   Accidents or breakdowns due to defective equipment, measured as number of incidents or percentage of total monthly maintenance cost

k.   Repairs delayed due to parts being out of stock, measured as number of incidents or total time out-of-service

l.   Safety inspections, measured as a percentage of all repair work time

Step 3:   For all performance measures that are selected, devise a reporting mechanism and frequency appropriate for that particular measure.

Step 4:   Collect information on actual performance and report on it at

|  | selected intervals. |
|---|---|
|  | Step 5:  Establish performance standards for future school years. |
| Who Is Responsible | Student transportation operations and vehicle maintenance staff, in consultation with assistant superintendent for human resources and support services |
| Time Frame | June 1999:  Identify which benchmarks are appropriate and feasible, and establish the mechanism for measuring them. |
|  | August 1999:  Begin collecting baseline performance information for the 1999-2000 school year for each of the established benchmarks. |
|  | June 2000:  Establish performance standards for the 2000-01 school year based on actual recent performance. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

*Action Plan  10-2*

# Develop a Regular Performance Reporting Mechanism

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a regular reporting mechanism as part of the new information management system to provide information on performance in the student transportation area. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  For each established benchmark (see action plan beginning on page 10-8), develop an appropriate means and frequency of reporting. The format should be user friendly, be standardized as much as possible, and include complete explanations about what is or is not being reported.   Identify the measures to be reported to senior management and the school board on an ongoing basis. |
|  | Step 2:  During the 1999-2000 school year, provide regular reports at least monthly from staff to the assistant superintendent for human resources and support services.  Allow for revisions of the reporting format, as may seem appropriate. |
| Who Is Responsible | Student transportation and vehicle maintenance staff, in consultation with assistant superintendent for human resources and support services |
| Time Frame | June 1999:  Select format and frequency of reporting on benchmarks. |
|  | August 1999:  Begin reporting as part of the collection of baseline performance information for all established benchmarks |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 10-3*

# Ensure Increased Information on Costs and Performance

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Implement a more comprehensive management information system to provide accurate information on student transportation performance and costs. |
| Action needed | Step 1: In conjunction with developing the new management information system, ensure that information related to student transportation performance and costs will be included and tracked on a regular basis. |
| Who Is Responsible | Those individuals from vehicle maintenance and student transportation operations who are already serving on the task force for the new management information system |
| Time Frame | July 1999: implementation of the new management information system |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be accomplished with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 10-4*

# Initiate a School Bus Purchase Plan to Meet the Board's Policy on Age of Buses

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Create a school bus fleet with an adequate number of operational buses no more than 15 years old. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify all currently non-operational buses that cannot be repaired cost-effectively and sell them at auction. |
| | Step 2: The school board should reaffirm its intention to run buses no longer than 15 years before they are replaced. In developing its annual five-year bus acquisition plan, staff should identify all currently operational buses that will exceed 16 years of age during the next school year and plan to phase them out during the next three cycles of bus purchases. Replacing these overage buses should be in addition to acquiring new buses needed to accommodate growth. (Example: During year one, the district should acquire enough buses to equal one full year's normal replacement plus all of the buses that are needed to accommodate district growth for that year plus enough buses to replace approximately one-third of the number of buses identified as over-age during year one.) |
| | Step 3: At such time as the district has substantially met the goal of replacing all of its over-age buses, it should consider the prospect of revising the 15-year standard to a standard of more frequent replacement. A cost-benefit analysis in connection with this should be able to make use of improved data quality from the management information system. |

| Who Is Responsible | Vehicle maintenance staff and purchasing department staff and the school board |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | By June 1999 for Step 1<br>By June 2001 for Step 2<br>By June 2002 for Step 3 |
| Fiscal Impact | The economic impact of purchasing these extra buses to retire all of the over-age buses would be $554,000 a year for three years.  (This is calculated as nine new buses at $64,264 each, or $578,400, less the receipts from the sale of nine old buses at auction at $2,716 each, or $24,400.) |

# *Food Service Operations*

*Action Plan 11-1*

## Recommendations to Improve Program Control

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Adhere to board policies and procedures regarding the evaluation of cafeteria managers. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Both the Food Service supervisor and principals have input into evaluations of cafeteria managers.  (See Exhibit 3-19, Step 4.) |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent for Academics and the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services |
| Time Frame | Immediately; upon initiation of the next evaluation cycle for cafeteria managers (April 1999) |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Revise the evaluation form for cafeteria managers to include areas specific to food production. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Contact peer districts and obtain a copy of the evaluation form used for cafeteria managers.<br><br>Step 2: Identify areas of the evaluation form specific to Food Service duties and the efficient preparation of meals for inclusion in a revised cafeteria manager evaluation form.<br><br>Step 3: The Food Service supervisor work in conjunction with the personnel department and principals to update and revise the evaluation form for cafeteria managers. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the personnel department |
| Time Frame | The revised evaluation form should be implemented upon initiation of the next evaluation cycle for cafeteria managers (April 1999). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Establish a policy in the school board policies and procedures governing the dismissal of a cafeteria manager. The policy should require input from both the Food Service supervisor and the school's principal before a cafeteria manager can be dismissed. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services should draft a policy outlining procedures for firing a cafeteria manager. |
| | Step 2: Obtain Food Service supervisor input. |
| | Step 3: Obtain principal input. |
| | Step 4: Obtain input from the personnel department. |
| | Step 5: Submit the draft policy to the superintendent for review, approval, and adoption. |
| | Step 6: The superintendent should present the policy to the board for review, approval, and adoption. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to draft a policy outlining the dismissal of a cafeteria manager and presenting the policy to the board. |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 4

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Where feasible, implement a breakfast program in schools without one. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify barriers to implementing a breakfast program at schools without such a program. |
| | Step 2: The Food Service supervisor and principals should design and implement a written plan to address breakfast program barriers. |
| | Step 3: If necessary, the board should direct that all district schools will have a breakfast program. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to implement breakfast programs at those schools without a program. If necessary, the superintendent should bring the issue before the board and request a requirement that all schools participate in the National Breakfast Program. |
| Time Frame | Each school in the district should have a breakfast program at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999) |
| Fiscal Impact | Revenues generated would more than offset the costs associated with this recommendation expected revenue each year is $38,232. |

## Recommendation 5

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Make Food Service policies and procedures available to all Food Service employees. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The Food Service supervisor should review and update the program policies and procedures with input from four stakeholder groups. |
| | • Cafeteria managers |
| | • Vendors |
| | • Principals |

- Food service workers

Step 2: Ensure that a copy of the Food Service policies and procedures are available in each cafeteria for review by any employee.

Step 3: Inform all Food Service employees in writing that policies and procedures are available for their review. Include an outline and/or table of contents of the available materials with the memo.

| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | The first memo should be distributed to Food Service employees at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999) and provided again at the beginning of each new school year. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 6

| Strategy | Adhere to the Food Service mission statement. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a training curriculum for all Food Service workers, not just cafeteria managers. |
| | Step 2: Obtain feedback from Food Service employees and cafeteria managers regarding training needs. |
| | Step 3: Obtain training information/examples from peer districts. |
| | Step 4: Explore any training packages provided by USDA or other federal or state nutritional programs |
| | Step 5: Outline a training package, options to access training, and training timelines for distribution to cafeteria managers and employees. |
| | Step 6: Staff development should cooperate with the Food Service supervisor to ensure appropriate training is developed and offered to Food Service employees and should note completion of training in employee records. |
| | Step 7: Solicit input from Food Service customers about program performance. (See Strategy No. 2, page 11-18.**)** |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | Training programs and materials should be available to employees at the beginning of the 99-2000 school year (August 1999) |
| | Develop and implement feedback methods by February 28, 1999; repeat annually in this same time frame (obtain customer feedback during the second quarter of each school year). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 7

| Strategy | Develop a five-year Food Service strategic plan with measurable goals and objectives. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop goals, objectives, priorities, benchmarks, and plans of action to maximize Food Service program efficiency. |
| | Step 2: For assistance in developing goals and objectives, see Action Plan 4-1, page 4-9. |
| | Step 3: For guidance in developing benchmarks, see Action Plan 4-3, page 4-18. |
| | Step 4: Include input from three stakeholder groups. |

- Food service central office staff
- Cafeteria managers
- Principals

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to see to it that a five-year Food Service strategic plan is developed. |
| Time Frame | Implementation of the five-year Food Service strategic plan should begin at the start of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan11-2*

# Increasing Meal Participation Rates

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a districtwide Food Service promotion campaign to increase meal participation rates. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Outline options to adopt at individual schools to increase meal participation rates. |
| | Step 2: Obtain information from peer districts regarding successful methods used to promote Food Services and increase participation. |
| | Step 3: Obtain input from and brainstorm with cafeteria managers as to what promotional programs may work in their schools. |
| | Step 4: Contact the USDA for input/information about meal program promotion efforts. |
| | Step 5: Solicit input from principals and discuss the feasibility of identified options. |
| | Step 6: Select specific promotion efforts to be piloted at individual school sites. |
| | Step 7: Implement promotion efforts on a pilot basis, requiring cafeteria managers to monitor and report resulting participation rates. |
| | Step 8: Coordinate with teachers and principals to tie nutritional education curriculum with the Food Service promotion campaign. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services should direct the Food Service supervisor to develop and implement a Food Service promotional campaign. |
| Time Frame | Identify successful promotional efforts and implement them at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999) |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| Recommendation 2 | |
| Strategy | Obtain Food Service customer feedback to identify barriers to meal participation. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Solicit input from Food Service customers about program performance. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Step 2: Contact peer districts to identify effective methods of obtaining customer feedback. |
| | Step 3: Consult and brainstorm with cafeteria managers about effective methods of obtaining customer feedback. |
| | Step 4: Consult the USDA and/or other federal or state nutritional programs to identify effective methods of obtaining customer feedback. |
| | Step 5: Discuss potential feedback options with school principals to identify any barriers/areas of concern. |
| | Step 6: Select and implement procedures for obtaining customer feedback as appropriate to the school population. |
| | Step 7: Require cafeteria managers to report and analyze feedback and identify problems and successes with the method used to obtain feedback. |
| | Step 8: Revise feedback methods based on initial implementation results. |
| | Step 9: Implement revised feedback methods. |
| | Step 10: Continue to solicit input from customers and make necessary program adjustments as a result of the feedback. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | Develop and implement feedback methods by February 28, 1999; repeat annually in this same time frame (obtain customer feedback during the second quarter of the school year). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 11-3*

# Improving Program Monitoring and Administration

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify program benchmarks to assess program performance. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop program benchmarks. (For assistance in developing benchmarks see Action Plan 4-3, page 4-18)  Include the areas listed below. |
| | • Meals per labor hour |
| | • Meal participation rates |
| | • Costs per meal |
| | • Employee wages, salaries, and benefits |
| | Step 2: Include input from the following stakeholders |
| | • Food service central office staff |
| | • Cafeteria managers |
| | • Principals |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to see to it that a Food Service program benchmarks are established and included in the five-year Food Service strategic plan. |
| Time Frame | Implementation of the five-year Food Service strategic plan and related benchmarks should begin at the start of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999) |

| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
|---|---|

| **Recommendation 2** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Review the Food Service supervisor duties, compensation, and responsibilities to ensure they are commensurate with the position's authority. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services should conduct a review of the duties, compensation, and responsibilities assigned to the Food Service supervisor position and identify those that exceed the authority of a supervisory level position. |
| | Step 2: The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services should draft a proposal for the transfer of duties that exceed supervisory authority and identify who will be responsible for the duties. |
| | Step 3: The superintendent should review the proposal, provide feedback, and present it to the board for review, approval, and adoption. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to review the Food Service supervisor duties, compensation, and responsibilities and presenting a proposal to the board should these duties, compensation, and responsibilities need to be restructured. |
| Time Frame | January 1, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 11-4*

# Evaluating Program Performance

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop Food Service program benchmarks to identify areas to increase revenue and cut costs. |
| Action Needed | See Strategy No. 1, page 11-21 (benchmarks). |
| | See Strategy No. 7, page 11-15 (strategic plan). |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to see to it that a Food Service program benchmarks are established and included in the five-year Food Service strategic plan. |
| Time Frame | Implementation of the five-year Food Service strategic plan and related benchmarks should begin at the start of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 2** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify per meal costs and provide cost information to cafeteria managers to allow for alternative meal cost calculations. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Calculate the cost per meal for the main menu and distribute this information to cafeteria managers with the menu. |
| | Step 2: Develop a list of per item costs for all items served and distribute the list to cafeteria managers. |
| | Step 3: Update the per item cost list as prices change. |

| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | Both price lists should be distributed to cafeteria managers by December 15, 1998. The price lists should be updated as prices change and/or bids are renewed or rebid. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 3

| Strategy | Establish an acceptable per meal cost range that ensures production costs do not exceed the income for the meal. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Based on main meal calculated costs, develop and disseminate a per meal cost range that cafeteria managers must adhere to.<br><br>Step 2: Require cafeteria managers to calculate per meal costs and report this information to the central office. If per meal costs exceed the acceptable range, managers must submit documentation as to why this occurred. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | Implement the acceptable per meal price range and require cafeteria managers to report to the central office per meal costs on a monthly basis with the submission of their inventory records starting January 1, 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 4

| Strategy | Evaluate Food Service employee wages, salaries, and benefits. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Obtain peer district and statewide average information regarding Food Service manager and employee salaries and benefits.<br><br>Step 2: Obtain applicable private sector information regarding Food Service manager and employee salaries and benefits.<br><br>Step 3: Contact the personnel department to identify data and data format needs.<br><br>Step 4: Do an analysis of the information obtained from peers and private sector, develop a written analysis, and provide this information to the personnel department to be included in an overall assessment of district salaries and benefits. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for ensuring that a review of employee wages, salaries, and benefits is completed and the resulting information is submitted to the Personnel Department. |
| Time Frame | January 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 5

| Strategy | Obtain Food Service customer feedback. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | See Strategy No. 2, page 11-18. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | Develop and implement feedback methods by February 28, 1999; repeat annually in this same time frame (obtain customer feedback during the second quarter of the school year). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan11-5*

# Assessing Delivery Alternatives and Additional Nutritional Programs

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Compare Food Service delivery systems. |
| Action Needed | **Step 1:** Identify data necessary to compare district warehousing, direct delivery, and privatization of Food Services. |
| | **Step 2:** Gather baseline data regarding district warehousing and direct delivery. Data should include the items below. |
| | • Direct costs |
| | • Indirect costs |
| | • Cost per item (including any volume discounts) |
| | • Delivery costs |
| | • Storage costs |
| | • Personnel/labor costs |
| | • Rental costs |
| | **Step 3:** Solicit information from vendors regarding costs associated with privatizing the entire Food Service program. |
| | **Step 4:** The Purchasing supervisor and warehouse manager should work with the Food Service supervisor to identify current direct delivery costs, identify past direct delivery costs, and project costs if the district were to return to internal warehousing. |
| | **Step 5:** Compare the costs and benefits of district warehousing, direct delivery, and Food Service privatization and develop a written report outlining the most cost-efficient delivery system. |
| | **Step 6:** If the most cost-efficient method is one other than the policy currently being utilized in the district, identify needed changes to increase the cost-efficiency of the current delivery system. |
| | **Step 7:** Develop a report for presentation to the board outlining improvements to the current delivery system and the potential for adopting alternative methods of program delivery. |
| | **Step 8:** The school board should review the analysis and adopt either changes to the current delivery method to increase its cost efficiency or an alternative delivery system. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for overseeing the comparison of delivery alternatives and should play an active role in analyzing and summarizing comparison findings and for presenting the findings to the board. |
| Time Frame | Program adjustments and/or program changes should be implemented starting in December 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Assess vendor direct delivery of food to determine if predicted cost savings have been realized. |

| Action Needed | Step 1: | Using cost information gathered in Strategy No.1, compare direct delivery costs to district warehousing costs to determine whether the predicted $3,860 annual cost savings is being realized. |
|---|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services | |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

| **Recommendation 3** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Determine whether additional nutritional programs could be added to district schools. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Identify requirements for an after-school nutrition program and determine whether there are school sites where a program could be piloted. |
| | Step 2: | Cafeteria managers should work cooperatively with the Food Service supervisor to identify and select pilot after-school nutrition program sites. |
| | Step 3: | Meet with principals to design and implement a pilot after-school nutrition program. |
| | Step 4: | Assess the pilot project outcome and submit a written report to the superintendent recommending either expansion or discontinuation. |
| | Step 5: | Obtain feedback from and brainstorm with cafeteria managers and principals to identify potential events to increase Food Service revenue, e.g., catering, banquets, meetings, contracting with other state agencies or organizations. |
| | Step 6: | The Food Service supervisor should oversee the implementation of any additional services, document costs and income, and report this information to the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for directing the Food Service supervisor to outline and implement additional nutritional programs. | |
| Time Frame | Explore potential additional Food Services for implementation at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999). | |
| | Implement the pilot after-school nutrition project at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999). | |
| | Assess the pilot project at the end of the 1999-2000 school year and do a written report outlining either expansion of the project or discontinuation by June 2000. | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

*Action Plan 11-6*

# Improving Fiscal Monitoring

| **Recommendation 1** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop Food Service program fiscal goals. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Develop program fiscal goals to guide annual budget development. Program fiscal goals should be incorporated into the |

| | five-year strategic plan.  (See Strategy No. 7, page 11-15) |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to see to it that Food Service program fiscal goals are established and included in the strategic plan. |
| Time Frame | Implementation of the five-year Food Service strategic plan should begin at the start of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999). |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 2** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Review revenue and expenditure projections and actual and budgeted expenses on a regular basis and compare these figures to the established program fiscal goals. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  Track revenue and expenditure projections as well as actual and budgeted expenses and provide the data in a format that projections and actual can be easily compared.<br><br>Step 2:  The Food Service supervisor, Purchasing supervisor, and the Finance and Accounting supervisor should meet to review projected expenditures, revenue, and actual expenditures to make necessary program adjustments to reduce costs and maximize revenue. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for ensuring that parties from each department (Food Services, Purchasing, and Finance and Accounting) meet to review Food Service program projected expenditures, revenue, and actual expenditures and report meeting results and recommended program adjustments. |
| Time Frame | The Food Service supervisor, Purchasing supervisor, and Finance and Accounting supervisor should meet every quarter following the beginning of the 1998-99 school year to review projected expenditures, revenue, and actual expenditures.  Program adjustments should be made as necessary following these meetings. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 11-7*

# Improving Financial and Management Practice Review

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Review financial and management performance to identify necessary adjustment to minimize program costs. |
| Action Needed | Step 1:  The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services and the Food Service supervisor should meet to review program performance and identify areas for improvement.<br><br>Step 2:  The Food Service supervisor should meet with the Purchasing supervisor and the supervisor of Finance and Accounting to discuss program performance and obtain identify areas for improvement.<br><br>Step 3:  Cafeteria managers should implement program adjustments and |

|  | report results to the Food Service supervisor. |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for ensuring that parties from each department (Food Services, Purchasing, and Finance and Accounting) meet to review Food Service program performance and for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to monitor implementation of suggested program revisions. |
| Time Frame | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services and the Food Service supervisor should meet quarterly following the start of 1998-99 school year to discuss program performance. |
|  | The Food Service supervisor, Purchasing supervisor, and supervisor of Finance and Accounting should meet annually during the last month of the school year (June) to assess program performance and develop strategies to implement for the upcoming school year to improve program efficiency. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 2

| Strategy | Evaluate and recommend a Food Service automation package to be used in conjunction with the new management information system. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Continue to explore automation packages used by peer districts. |
|  | Step 2: Identify and outline, in writing, areas of anticipated improved efficiency and cost containment as a result of automation implementation. |
|  | Step 3: Identify the district's Food Service automation needs in conjunction with the implementation of the new management information system. |
|  | Step 4: Outline central office data/automation needs. |
|  | Step 5: Outline individual school automation needs. |
|  | Step 6: Identify data that should routinely be available to Finance and Accounting. |
|  | Step 7: Identify data that should routinely be available to the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services. |
|  | Step 8: Select an automation package that meets the district's data needs. |
|  | Step 9: Outline the components of the automation package and the related implementation timelines. |
|  | Step 10: Outline the cost of the data system and the timeline for purchasing the package. Present this outline to the board for review. |
| Who Is Responsible | The superintendent is responsible for directing the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services to oversee the selection of an automation package and is responsible for presenting a selection package to the board for review, approval, and adoption. |
| Time Frame | Present the automation package selection to the board by the end of the 1998-99 school year (June 1999). The district should purchase and implement the selected Food Service automation package based on the approved purchase and implementation timeline. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Increase the charge per meal for elementary paid lunches and all breakfasts. |
| Action Needed (may need to differentiate between breakfast and lunch prices) | Step 1: Prepare necessary paperwork for submission to the board for approval to raise meal prices.<br><br>Step 2: Obtain board approval to raise meal prices.<br><br>Step 3: Implement increased meal prices. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for directing the Food Service supervisor to prepare a price increase proposal for presentation to the board. |
| Time Frame | Meal price increases should be implemented by February 1, 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This would result in a first-year increase in income of $202,243 with annual increased incomes of $404,487 each year thereafter. |

*Action Plan 11-8*

# Improving Purchasing Practices

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Evaluate Food Service purchasing practices. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop an instrument to guide the evaluation of Food Service purchasing practices.<br><br>Step 2: Compare prices between years for the same vendor and like items between vendors to determine whether the district is getting the best price per item.<br><br>Step 3: Classify and summarize any cafeteria manager complaints regarding vendor service.<br><br>Step 4: Note the number of times a vendor has shorted an order, substituted an order, or not had an item that was requested.<br><br>Step 5: Compare delivery costs between years for the same vendor and between vendors for like items.<br><br>Step 6: Prepare a summary report of price comparisons and vendor satisfaction.<br><br>Step 7: The Food Service supervisor and Purchasing supervisor should meet and, using the Purchasing review instrument, review Food Service purchasing practices.<br><br>Step 8: As a result of the meeting to review purchasing practices, the following information should be noted in writing:<br><br>• specific planned purchasing adjustments;<br><br>• an explanation as to why the change is being made;<br><br>• who will be involved in implementing the change;<br><br>• their specific role; and<br><br>• an anticipated time frame for completion of the change(s).<br><br>Step 9: Both the Food Service supervisor and the Purchasing supervisor |

|  | should sign-off on agreed upon changes to purchasing practices and a copy of the changes should be provided the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services. |
|---|---|
|  | Step 10: Both the Food Service supervisor and the Purchasing supervisor should implement agreed-upon changes to the purchasing practices as they relate to the specific departments (Food Service and Purchasing). |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for reviewing and approving suggested purchasing practice changes and for monitoring their implementation. The assistant superintendent overseeing the Purchasing Department is responsible for reviewing and approving suggested purchasing practice changes and for monitoring their implementation. |
| Time Frame | Food service purchasing adjustments should be implemented at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year (August 1999) or to coincide with the request for bid or bid renewal cycle. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 2

| Strategy | Review and document Food Service bid specifications. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: The Food Service supervisor, Food Service specialists, Purchasing supervisor, and select cafeteria managers should meet to review and update bid specifications. |
|  | Step 2: Changes to bid specifications should be documented as well as an explanation as to why the changes were made. The Purchasing Department should maintain this documentation in the event that a vendor should have a question or want to review the bid specifications. |
| Who Is Responsible | The assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate parties meet to review the Food Service bid specifications and that any changes are documented and maintained. |
| Time Frame | The Food Service supervisor, Food Service specialists, Purchasing supervisor and select cafeteria managers should meet at least annually, prior to requests for bids or bid renewals, to review and update bid specifications. The first meeting should occur within the 1998-99 school year in preparation for bids that will be effective in the 1999-2000 school year. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 3

| Strategy | Develop and adopt a policy requiring the Purchasing supervisor and one other person verify bid analysis and document this analysis. |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a policy requiring the Purchasing supervisor and one other person, designated by the Purchasing supervisor, verify bid analysis and document this analysis. |
|  | Step 2: Include this policy in the board's Purchasing policies and procedures. |
|  | Step 3: The assistant superintendent overseeing Purchasing must present the policy to the board. |
|  | Step 4: The board must review, approve, and adopt the policy. |
| Who Is Responsible | Purchasing supervisor |

| Time Frame | By the end of the 1998-99 school year in preparation for the 1999-2000 school year bid process |
|---|---|
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 4** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify why vendors are not submitting bids and adjust the request for bid process as necessary. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: The Food Service supervisor and Purchasing supervisor should together identify and agree upon a method to obtain feedback from potential bidders to identify barriers to bid submission. Potential methods include<br><br>a. holding a bidder's conference,<br>b. interviewing potential bidders, and<br>c. surveying potential bidders.<br><br>Step 2: Based on the information obtained identify needed adjustments to the request for bid process. Needed adjustments should be documented. Adjustments pertaining to the bid and purchasing process should be reported to the assistant superintendent overseeing Purchasing, and adjustments pertaining to the Food Service program should be reported to the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services.<br><br>Step 3: Based on bidder feedback and the assistant superintendent's feedback, the Food Service supervisor and Purchasing supervisor should initiate implementation of the adjustments to the request for bid process. |
| Who Is Responsible | Food Service supervisor and Purchasing supervisor |
| Time Frame | Prior to bid renewal or requests for bids for the 1999-2000 school year |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 11-9*

# Improving Inventory Control

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Until the Food Service inventory is automated and can be regularly monitored, compare inventory reports, production reports, and vendor delivery receipts for each school. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Require cafeteria managers to submit their meal production sheets with inventory records.<br><br>Step 2: Spot-check each school for inventory accuracy and/or problems.<br><br>Step 3: Randomly select 7 to 10 food items for comparison/monitoring during the on-site review.<br><br>Step 4: Include a section in the on-site review instrument requiring notation of the spot-check for inventory accuracy and/or problems. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |

| | who conduct the site reviews |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | Each school should be reviewed annually and attempts should be made to spot-check the inventory every three months. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 2

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop and implement procedures for the receipt, handling, and storage of food items. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Include in the cafeteria manager's handbook a procedure requiring the cafeteria manager or the manager's designee to sign for vendor deliveries. |
| | Step 2: Include in the cafeteria manager's handbook a procedure requiring the cafeteria manager or the manager's designee to inspect deliveries and check deliveries against the delivery invoice before the invoice is signed. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | November 30, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Reduce the overall inventory presently in the contracted storage facility by half and establish a policy restricting how much inventory individual schools can maintain at any given time. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Transfer palatable commodities not likely to be used during the 1998-99 school year. |
| | Step 2: Identify how much inventory is presently located at each school and restrict further purchases of items until the inventory represents no more than 10 days worth of items. |
| | Step 3: Use existing items before ordering/requesting more. |
| | Step 4: Trade items between schools to increase timely use. |
| | Step 5: Develop and adopt a policy that is disseminated to all cafeteria managers requiring that no more than 10 days of inventory be on-hand at any given time.  If there is a need to exceed this requirement, the cafeteria manager should notify and obtain approval in writing of the Food Service supervisor. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | February 28, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 4

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Spot-check the private storage facility to ensure first in first out (FIFO) and pack date information is being noted and monitored to ensure the oldest items are being issued first. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Inspect the storage facility to ensure FIFO is being practiced and pack dates noted and commodity distribution records match what is actually in inventory. |
| | Step 2: Include in the storage bid specifications that FIFO be regularly |

practiced.

Step 3: If the storage facility is not regularly practicing FIFO, the Food Service supervisor should notify the facility in writing that this breach provides grounds for canceling the contract.

Step 4: The storage facility should be monitored at least every three months to ensure FIFO is regularly practiced. If the facility continues to not practice FIFO after receiving written notification the contract should be canceled.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | The storage facility should be inspected by November 30, 1998. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 5

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Conduct an inventory at the private storage facility to ensure record accuracy and the notation of item pack date. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Physically inventory USDA commodities at the private storage facility. |
| | Step 2: Test commodities that have exceeded their shelf life based on pack date for palatability. |
| | Step 3: Contact the Department of Agriculture and submit the required paperwork for non-palatable expired items. |
| | Step 4: Begin the process of transferring or quickly using items at or near their recommended shelf life based on pack date. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | November 30, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

## Recommendation 6

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Purchase and install external thermometer readings on freezers to reduce the need for key access. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify freezers without external thermometers. |
| | Step 2: Develop an outline of the cost of purchasing and installing the external freezer thermometers and submit this information to the assistant superintendent overseeing Food Services for approval. |
| | Step 3: Purchase and install external thermometers. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | June 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This recommendation will require a one-time cost of $2,100. |

## Recommendation 7

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop and implement a key control policy to restrict access to food items. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop a key control policy outlining who should have access to freezer and food storeroom keys and under what conditions. |
| | Step 2: Collect all freezer and food storeroom keys not under control of the cafeteria manager. This includes keys from custodians and principals. |

| | Step 3: | The key control policy should include a provision for emergency access to a freezer and/or food storeroom key as well as documentation when the emergency provision must be utilized. |
|---|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor | |
| Time Frame | February 28, 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |

*Action Plan 11-10*

# Improving Equipment Utilization and Maintenance

| Recommendation 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop a long-range equipment replacement and preventative maintenance plan. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Identify equipment replacement needs and costs for the next five years. |
| | Step 2: | Obtain input from cafeteria managers on equipment use rates. |
| | Step 3: | Inspect and document current equipment conditions. |
| | Step 4: | Develop equipment maintenance plans to maximize the life of the product and minimize replacement costs. |
| | Step 5: | Submit the equipment replacement and maintenance plans to the maintenance department for inclusion in an overall equipment plan. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor | |
| Time Frame | June 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |
| Recommendation 2 | | |
| Strategy | Assess the need for existing kitchen equipment and sell or trade unneeded or underutilized equipment. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Consult with cafeteria managers about kitchen equipment that is not needed or is rarely used. |
| | Step 2: | Identify whether the equipment can be sold or traded for needed equipment or whether equipment can be transferred among schools to increase utilization. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists | |
| Time Frame | February 1999 | |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. | |
| Recommendation 3 | | |
| Strategy | Identify kitchen design flaws that result in increased reliance on disposable items and outline costs to remedy the situation. | |
| Action Needed | Step 1: | Solicit information from cafeteria managers regarding design flaws that restrict the use of equipment or require increased use of disposable items such as Styrofoam trays. |
| | Step 2: | Identify what steps are required to remedy the situation and at what |

cost.

Step 3: Develop a retrofitting plan to increase the efficiency of existing facilities. Project associated costs and any anticipated savings from the reduced use of disposable items and/or reduced labor.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | February 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 11-11*

# Improving Meal Production

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Improve USDA commodity ordering to minimize waste and maximize the USDA commodity allocation. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Compare USDA item prices with vendor prices to maximize value per dollar prior to ordering commodities. |
| | Step 2: Consult cafeteria managers about order needs and potential use rates of USDA commodities. |
| | Step 3: Compare the current inventory of USDA commodities with original receipt amounts to assess use rates to assist in identification of high and low use commodities prior to ordering. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | June 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 2 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Reduce on-hand inventory by half resulting in a reduction in storage costs. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Reduce USDA commodity inventory by half to reduce storage costs. (See Strategy No. 3, page 11-46.) |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | February 28, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | The annual fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation is an annual savings of $46,500. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Include serving utensil information and under-production on cafeteria production reports and require the reports be sent to the central office. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Revise the meal production report instrument to require notation of serving utensils and individual portions as well as cases of under-production of food. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | November 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 4

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Train all Food Service staff in portion control. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Develop training for all Food Service employees regarding portion control and serving.<br><br>Step 2: Work with staff development to ensure the appropriate training is offered and documented in the individual employee's file.<br><br>Step 3: Establish a schedule for training implementation. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor in cooperation with staff development |
| Time Frame | February 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 5

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Require notation of waste and over-production on the cafeteria site review instrument. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Revise the annual cafeteria site review instrument to require notation of what students throw away and over-production of food.<br><br>Step 2: Provide a copy of the completed site review instrument to the cafeteria manager to allow for meal production adjustments. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | February 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 6

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Increase the number of meal recipes available to cafeteria managers.  Obtain customer feedback before adopting the recipes for repeated use. |
| Action Needed | Step 1: Identify additional recipes to utilize on-hand USDA commodities and distribute the recipes to cafeteria managers.<br><br>Step 2: Solicit recipes from cafeteria managers, students, and school staff where appropriate.<br><br>Step 3: Brainstorm with cafeteria managers how to introduce the new recipes and get customer feedback.<br><br>Step 4: Require the cafeteria managers to report successful/well-liked recipes to be shared with other cafeteria managers. |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor with the assistance of the Food Service specialists |
| Time Frame | June 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 7

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Identify per meal costs and provide cost information to cafeteria managers to allow for alternative meal cost calculations. |
| Action Needed | (See Strategy No. 2, page 11-25.) |
| Who Is Responsible | The Food Service supervisor |
| Time Frame | December 15, 1998; price lists should be updated as prices change and/or bids are renewed or rebid. |

| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
|---|---|

# *Cost Control Systems*

*Action Plan 12-1*

## Internal Auditing

| Recommendation 1 | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Establish specifications for committee size, qualifications, and length of service. |
| Action Needed | Board approval of committee guidelines and committee membership |
| Who Is Responsible | School board |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 2** | |
| Strategy | Develop mission statement that incorporates committee's overall risk assessment. |
| Action Needed | Board approval of mission statement |
| Who Is Responsible | Audit Committee |
| Time Frame | March 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 3** | |
| Strategy | Develop long-range plan to meet mission objectives. |
| Action Needed | Board approval of long-range plan |
| Who Is Responsible | Senior internal auditor in association with Audit Committee |
| Time Frame | April 30 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 4** | |
| Strategy | Develop short-range (annual) plans with related time budgets and staffing plans. |
| Action Needed | Internal Audit Committee approval of short-range plan |
| Who Is Responsible | Senior internal auditor |
| Time Frame | May 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |
| **Recommendation 5** | |
| Strategy | Determine resource needs of Internal Audit Department based on long- and short-term plans. |
| Action Needed | Internal Audit Committee makes a recommendation to board relating to resource needs. |

| Who Is Responsible | Internal Audit Committee |
|---|---|
| Time Frame | May 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 6** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop performance criteria for the internal audit function based on short- and long- range plans. |
| Action Needed | Internal Audit Committee communicates performance criteria to the internal auditor. |
| Who Is Responsible | Internal Audit Committee |
| Time Frame | June 30, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| **Recommendation 7** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Develop process for presentation and reporting of internal audit findings. |
| Action Needed | Internal Audit Committee develops a process for reporting audit findings. |
| Who Is Responsible | Internal Audit Committee |
| Time Frame | June 30, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 12-2*

# Project Accounting

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Ensure the accuracy of management reports detailing capital outlay project activities. |
| Action Needed | Produce project ledgers from accounting system or reconcile manually prepared project ledgers to accounting system. |
| Who Is Responsible | Finance manager |
| Time Frame | July 1, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 12-3*

# Management Control Methods

| **Recommendation 1** | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Determine district's position on its commitment and support of strong internal controls. |
| Action Needed | Incorporate this position in ethics policy, which must be approved by the board. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services |

| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| --- | --- |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 2 | |
| --- | --- |
| Strategy | Develop and maintain detailed procedures manuals for all financial management activities. |
| Action Needed | Upon approval of the manuals, distribute them to all users. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services |
| Time Frame | Total completion by December 31, 1999, with earlier completion of some parts |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 3 | |
| --- | --- |
| Strategy | Identify critical finance processes and develop a cross-training policy. |
| Action Needed | After critical finance processes are identified, develop a cross-training schedule. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services |
| Time Frame | Some informal cross-training is currently done.  Formalized cross-training plan to be developed by December 31, 1999. |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 4 | |
| --- | --- |
| Strategy | Develop district policy for the reporting of suspected improprieties. |
| Action Needed | Board approval of policy |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services |
| Time Frame | January 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

*Action Plan 12-4*

# General Controls

| Recommendation 1 | |
| --- | --- |
| Strategy | Require all network technicians to report to the Information Systems function. |
| Action Needed | Board approval of organizational changes |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services and assistant superintendent for Academic Services |
| Time Frame | July 1, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

| Recommendation 2 | |
| --- | --- |
| Strategy | Through the district's Technology Council, ensure that a common network platform is developed that is suitable for all district functions. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Specifications developed that guide the purchase of future hardware and software products to ensure network compatibility |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services, assistant superintendent for Academics |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Require computer programming changes to be reviewed and approved by appropriate Information Services Staff.  Document review and approval including approval by user requesting change. |
| Action Needed | Establish procedures that provide for the documentation of changes made as well as documentation of the review and approval of the changes. |
| Who Is Responsible | Information Services supervisor |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 4

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Require that changes be loaded into production files by employees other than the ones making the changes. |
| Action Needed | Establish system controls preventing programmer access to production files. Provide access to non-programming administrative staff who will load programming changes into production. |
| Who Is Responsible | Information Services supervisor |
| Time Frame | December 31, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 5

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Establish methodology for allocating time spent on programming changes to be charged to the work-order (project). |
| Action Needed | Establish procedures requiring programmers to charge time to various work-orders (programming changes) assigned to them. |
| Who Is Responsible | Information Services supervisor |
| Time Frame | March 31, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 6

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Restrict access of Information Service programmers to data files. |
| Action Needed | Establish system controls and system audit controls that will provide documentation of all data file changes by programmers. |
| Who Is Responsible | Information Services supervisor |
| Time Frame | June 30, 1999 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |

### Recommendation 7

| | |
|---|---|
| Strategy | Establish procedure to notify Information Services of employees who require password status changes due to termination or transfer. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Action Needed | Establish procedures that will require that the notification to Information Services will be documented. |
| Who Is Responsible | Assistant superintendent for Business Services |
| Time Frame | November 30, 1998 |
| Fiscal Impact | This can be implemented with existing resources. |